

CONFIRMING THE WITNESS OF CHRIST NO. 2875

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

“Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.”
1 Corinthians 1:6.

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

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

This is the next lesson that is taught us—let us never judge men by their talents—but by the use which they make of their powers, by the end to which they devote their talents, by the interest which they bring to those pounds which their Master has entrusted to them. Paul, in the commencement of his Epistle, very gently hints at the right use of gifts and talents. And he tells us that they are sent to us that we may “con-

firm the testimony of Christ.” If we do not use them for this purpose, we misuse them! If we do not turn them to this account, we abuse them! We ought to use our endowments as the Corinthians did *not* use theirs, but as they ought to have done—in confirming the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

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

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

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

ing over a sea of darkness, but yet uniting Abel with the last of the Patriarchs?

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

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

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

I was thinking, just now, of a picture which I saw, a few days ago—a beautiful painting of a brook with steppingstones in the water, upon which the traveler crossed. And the idea has just flashed upon my

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

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

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

First, let me remark that *Christ witnesses directly from Himself* and that is one thing in which He is superior to all the Prophets and the other holy men who testified to the Truth. What did Isaiah say? What did Elijah say? Or Jeremiah? Or Daniel? They only said second-hand things—

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

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

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

Yet, further, *Christ’s testimony was perfect in testifying to all the Truth of God*. Other men only gave testimony to parts of the Truth, but Christ manifested it all. Other men had the threads of Truth, but Christ took the threads and wove them into a glorious robe, put it on, and came forth clothed with every Truth of God. There was more of God revealed by

Christ than in the works of Creation, or in all the Prophets. Christ was a Testifier to all God's attributes and He left none of them unmentioned. Do you ask me whether Christ bore testimony to the Justice of God, I tell you, "Yes." See Him hanging there, languishing on Calvary, His bones all dislocated. Did He bear testimony to God's Mercy? Yes. See those poor creatures who were limping just now—the lame man is leaping like a hare, the poor blind man is beholding the sun and rejoicing! Did Jesus witness to the Power of God? I say, "Yes." You see Him standing in the little boat and saying to the winds, "Be still!" and holding them in the hollow of His hand. Has He not borne testimony to everything in God? His testimony was perfect! Nothing was left out—everything was there.

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

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

tion as Gill, or Booth, or Rippon, or Carey, or Ryland or some of those who have just been taken away—they did not pretend to say anything new. They only said, “Brothers and Sisters, we come to tell you the same old story. We are not testifiers of new things—we are only confirmers of the Witness, Christ Jesus.”

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

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

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

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

First, *the very fact of our conversion tends to confirm us in the Truth.* “Oh,” says the Christian, “do not tell me there is no power in religion, for I have felt it! I was thoughtless like others, laughed religion to scorn and those who attended to it. My language was, ‘Let us eat and drink, and enjoy the sunshine of life.’ But now, through Christ Jesus, I find the Bible a honeycomb which hardly needs to be pressed to let the drops of honey run out it is so sweet and precious to my taste that I wish I could sit down and feast on my Bible forever! What has made this alteration?” That is how the Christian reasons. He says, “There must be a power in

Grace, otherwise I never should be so changed as I am. There must be the Truth of God in the Christian religion, otherwise this change would never have come over me.” Some men have ridiculed religion and its followers and yet Divine Grace has been so mighty that those very men have become converted and experienced the new birth! Such men cannot be argued out of the truth of religion. You may stand and talk to them from dewy morn to the setting of the sun, but you can never get them to believe that there is no Truth in God’s Word, for they have the Truth of God confirmed in them.

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

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

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

thing has failed of all that the Lord has promised”? That is the best confirmation of the Truth of God.

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

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

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

Then, again, *if you can bear the taunts of wicked men without returning them*, that will be a good way of confirming religion. When I have entered into controversy with some men and have been betrayed into heat of temper, I could have bitten my fingers off that I should have done so! If you can keep your temper when men laugh at you and if, when they re-

vile you, you do not return it, you will confirm the Truth of God. They will say, "There is something in that man's religion, otherwise he could not so keep his temper." You have read of James Haldane. Once, when unconverted, he threw a ship's tumbler at the head of a person who had insulted him. But when he was regenerated, on another occasion of insult, simply said, "I would resent it, but I have learned to forgive injuries and overlook insults." Men were obliged to say of him, "There is something in the religion which can bring such a lion as that down and make him such a lamb." Thus you will confirm the witness of Christ if you quietly endure persecution. If you can patiently bear the laugh and jeer of wicked men, you will confirm the Truth of God.

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

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

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

seek God's Grace that you may not let it be a vow not carried out, but may you be able to live to the Glory of God, and to the honor of His blessed name! Amen.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

PARTNERSHIP WITH CHRIST

NO. 2580

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

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

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

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

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

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

ever.” He has been a faithful God until now and it is, therefore, right for us to conclude that He will always be the same—

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

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

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

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

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

And think yet further, dear Friends, at that time we were not simply undeserving, but we were also unwilling! There is, in the natural heart of man, an unwillingness to yield unconditionally to God and Christ. The ways of Free Grace are not palatable to human pride! Even when we were religiously inclined, our religion consisted of our own prayers, our own repentance, or our own faith. You know how long we ran from one way to another, but it was always the same kind of way—we were to *do* something by which we were to get right with God, or to *feel* something, or to *know* something—everything was of self and for self! But the Grace of God, at last, weaned us from this folly and took us off the breasts of self-righteousness, which had always been empty. Then we were prepared to

go to God and, as one whom his mother comforts, so did He comfort us. We found, in our Father God and in His well-beloved Son, all that we needed, even wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption! Well, my Brothers and Sisters, if God brought us to Himself when we were stray sheep without any willingness to return, how much more will He continue to keep us, now that, at any rate, the will is present with us, though often how to perform that which is good we find not? He that loved the undeserving, He that loved the unwilling, will not forsake us now. "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

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

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

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

yourself, and much good may it do you! I am prepared to hang all my hopes upon the finished work of Jesus Christ my Lord!

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

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

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

I. First then, Beloved, all who truly believe are CALLED INTO THE SOCIETY OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

We enjoy that society *when we draw near to God in prayer* and, indeed, whenever we draw near to God at all! We dare not come to God without Jesus Christ—that dear name should begin and end all our prayers. He is the one Mediator between God and men. He is our Great High Priest and Intercessor. “No man comes unto the Father but by Me.” “I am the door”—the way of access to God. He is the Mercy Seat, the Propitiatory where God meets with us and hears our prayers—so that we always pray in the society of Christ. There is no true praying without it.

And, next, *we always praise God in the society of Jesus Christ*. There is no hymn, or Psalm, or spiritual song that could be accepted of God unless our Lord Jesus Christ was with us when it was sung. Prayers and praises, alike, must ascend to God through the merit of His atoning Sacrifice.

More than this, we have been called into the society of Christ in this high sense—that we are always regarded by God as being with Christ and in Christ. *We stand before God in Christ*. I—I alone, dare not stand before God. No, my Brothers and Sisters, a sinner cannot stand there—he would be swept away! But Christ stands before God and we stand there in Christ, and so we are “accepted in the Beloved.” That is a beauti-

ful picture which the poet puts into words when he prays that God will look through Christ's wounds, as through a window—

**“Him, and then the sinner see—
Look through Jesus' wounds on me.”**

We are accepted before God, not as we are in ourselves, but as we are in Christ! In Christ's life made to live—in Christ's righteousness beautified—in Christ's blood cleansed—in Christ's perfection made perfect, for, “you are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power.” Is it not beautiful that we should thus be so associated with Christ that God always thinks of us in connection with His Son? God does not simply look at you and me, but at Christ covering you, me and all His people, and so His chosen ones are thought of as being in Him, their Covenant and Federal Head. They are so completely in Him that He, as it were, robes them before God. This is being brought into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, standing before God in Christ.

But there is more than that in this expression. We are brought, Beloved, not only to have Christ with us in our approaches to God and to stand before God in Christ, but also to be *in Christ by virtue of a living union with Him*. The Spirit of God quickens our spirit and gives us life, but, more than that, Christ says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” The life of the Believer is not in himself, but in his Lord. “He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.” “I live,” says the Apostle Paul, “yet not I, but Christ lives in me.” And, writing to the Colossians, he says, “For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Just as this finger of mine lives because of its union with the head, and with the heart, and with the rest of my being where life is to be found, so do you and I live because we have been joined unto Christ! If there were no life in the stem, there would be no life in the branch. If the branch is severed from the vine, it has no life in itself and you and I, dear Friends, are living branches because Christ lives and we live in Him and His life flows into us. Is not this a very wonderful thing?

Do you see that man who once was in the habit of going in and out of the tavern? His speech, in those evil days, was foul, filthy, abominable. His poor wife was bruised and battered by his cruelty. His children were starved and shoeless. He is now with us in this House of Prayer and he is a member of Christ's mystical body! If I were to ask him to stand up and tell us about the great change that has been worked in him, we would all rejoice to hear him testify that the Lord has forgiven him, washed him, cleansed him and renewed his heart! Did that man, in his unregenerate state, ever think that the life of Christ would be in him quickening his mortal body and changing his whole nature? Such a thought never occurred to him! Is he not a wonder of Grace? Why, I do verily believe that if the devil were to be converted and become a holy angel, again, it would not be more amazing than the conversion of some who are now present! The Lord has done strange things, marvelous things for them, and our hearts are glad as we think of what He has done. With His mighty arm, He reaches even to the ends of the earth those who have gone far in sin—and He brings them to His heart, to His House, to His Throne and into

fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Oh, the wonders of God's Grace! Let us bless and praise Him now and forever!

Then, dear Friends, there is also this wonderful fact, that we are so called into the society of Christ that if we live as we ought to live, *the Lord Jesus Christ is the most familiar acquaintance we have in all the world.* The most loving husband often has to go out to business during the day and he can only get back to his spouse in the evening. But the Bridegroom of our souls is with us all day long! Whether we are at home or out in the world, He is still with us. You have a dear friend, somewhere, and you love to be in his company. But you cannot always be with him, so you sometimes have the sorrow of parting with him. But your best Friend is never far away from you, day or night. "When I wake," says David, "I am still with You." Perhaps, one of these days, we may have to go out to the utmost ends of the earth, but our Friend will be with us in the vessel as we cross the sea. He will be with us when we land on the distant shore. He will be with us everywhere and at all times. He is the "Friend that sticks closer than a brother," whose company need never be lost. He never gets tired of His beloved ones! His delights are with the sons of men. If we would but walk by faith and carefully observe His Laws, we would find Him abiding with us and we would be abiding with Him. Spoke I not truly when I said that to His people, He is the most familiar Friend that they have? He dwells in them and they dwell in Him. "I in them, and You in Me," said Christ to His Father—a wonderful union! And our union with Christ ought to be, in its enjoyment, as perpetual as Christ's union with the Father, for He speaks of it in the same terms! "I in them, and You in Me." Yes, Beloved, we are, indeed, brought into fellowship with Jesus Christ our Lord, seeing that we are permitted to have Him for our constant Companion and Friend!

And now, we are so called into the society of Christ that if we are living as we ought to live, where we go, Christ goes. *We are to represent Christ among men.* Most of them do not know much about Christ, but what they do know of Him, they will very largely learn from us. I am grieved to say that Christ has sometimes had a bad name because of the conduct of those who have professed to be His friends. "Ah," men say, "so this is your Christianity, is it?" But the man who really is in the society of Christ lives in such a way that men take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus and has learned of Him. We are Christ's representatives in the world and He trusts His honor and His cause in our hands. We are so much in His society that we compromise His dignity if we do wrong—but we adorn His Doctrine in all things if, by His Grace, we are enabled to do what is right. May you and I know to the fullest what it is to be in the society of Christ and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called!

II. Now I want to turn to my second point, which is this—WE ARE CALLED INTO PARTNERSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

I do not know when I have felt so utterly unable to speak my thoughts as now that I have reached this part of my subject. If I could only make you enjoy a hundredth part of what I have enjoyed in looking into this subject, I would be perfectly satisfied! But I am afraid that I cannot.

However, I will tell you as well as I can how thoroughly and how perfectly every true Christian is brought into partnership with Christ.

For, first, *the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has given to every true Believer all that He possesses.* That is a splendid partnership when He, who is Lord of All, unto whom the Father has committed all power in Heaven and on earth, has been pleased to give over to His poor partners full right and title to all that He has! If we are heirs of God, we are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ—Christ is heir to nothing to which His people are not also heirs.

He has given us His life. That is a wonderful partnership of which He says, “Because I live, you shall also live.” He actually laid down His life for us! “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” His very Self, His life, He brought into the partnership—it was the biggest asset in the whole concern, the costliest thing that could be contributed to this wonderful joint-stock company—Christ & Co. We without Christ would be poor worthless things, but Christ is ours, and Christ is All, so we have all. Oh, what a wonderful partnership is this in which He gave us His life!

He has also given us His Father. Hear His message to His disciples after His resurrection—“I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.” Christ has not a Father if I have not one! Christ has not a God if I have not one, for He says, “My Father, and your Father; My God, and your God.” Oh, but what a wonderful Father Christ has! The Only-Begotten, who has always perfectly kept His Father’s Commandments, who is eternally and essentially One with Him—what a Father He has! That Father is the Father of all the saints. What a God Christ has! Who can imagine the wealth of the Godhead? But all that Godhead’s fullness and Glory belong to every soul that is in Christ! God has given Himself to Christ, that all fullness might dwell in Him. “And of His fullness have we all received, and Grace for Grace.” So, He has given us His life and He has given us His Father.

Notice, next, He has given us His Kingdom. This makes me almost stagger as I say it, yet here are His own words to His disciples, “I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto Me” If Christ is King, you are kings! If He reigns, you must reign, too! When men crown the king, they also crown the queen—and if she is crowned, she is queen. And when Christ is King, His Church is queen and she shall reign with Him forever and ever. Oh, that the great marriage-day were come and that the bride had made herself ready to glory and rejoice with her adorable Bridegroom!

Notice, too, that Christ has given us His Throne. “To Him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on My Throne, even as I, also, overcame, and am set down with My Father on His Throne.” It is the Throne of God and Christ occupies it with His Father, but not alone, for He shares it with all His people! What a wonderful partnership is this! Christ gives us His life, His Father, His Kingdom and His Throne, as part and parcel of the joint-stock company He shares with us. This is one meaning of our being brought into fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

But there is something more which is quite as amazing, namely, that, *inasmuch as Christ gave us His all, He took our all.* “Of course He did,”

you say. Ah, but what had we to bring into the partnership? All that we had to bring were rags, beggary, poverty, sins, curses, death, Hell—that was all we could contribute to the joint-stock.

Yet Christ was willing to become a partner with us, for, first, He took our nature. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also, Himself, likewise took part of the same.” He would not let His chosen ones be men without Himself being a Man, too! And if they were to be compassed with infirmities, He must be compassed with infirmities, too! And if they had to suffer hunger, cold and nakedness, He would suffer them, too, so that He could say, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head.” This all came because He took upon Himself our nature.

Then, still more wonderful, He took upon Himself our sin. Though in Him was no sin, yet the Lord made to meet upon Him the iniquity of us all. He was the Scapegoat upon whose head the sin of Israel was, by imputation, laid, and He carried our sin away into the wilderness where it could never be found. He willingly bore all the consequences of our sin and, therefore, He became a partaker of our curse. It does seem amazing that the Son of God should be, in any sense, cursed, yet so it was. “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.” And He did hang on the tree and bleed and die for us.

Among other things which Christ took on our behalf, it always astounds me that He endured even a sense of His Father’s deserting Him till He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” God must turn away His eyes from sinners—and if Christ occupies the place of sinners, the Father leaves Him to die in the dark! Is not this an amazing partnership, that Christ should take upon Himself all that appertained to us, even to sorrow and broken-heartedness and, at last, death itself? That blessed body, though it saw no corruption, yet was as truly dead as that of anyone else who ever died! Christ took everything that belonged to us into that wonderful partnership!

Now see the result of this union—*thus Christ meets all our needs*. For instance, I bring my sin, but against that He sets His Atonement. I bring my bondage, but against that He sets His Redemption. I bring Him death, but He brings His Resurrection. I bring Him my weakness and He meets it with His strength. I bring Him my wickedness and He is made of God unto me, righteousness. I bring Him my evil nature and He is made of God unto me, sanctification. Whatever there is of evil that I have to contribute to the partnership, He covers it all with a splendor of goodness that blots it out and makes my soul much richer than it was before. Oh, what a wonderful thing it is to be brought into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord!

Now, Brothers and Sisters, if it is thus with us, *we must make this fellowship real on our part*. We must yield to Christ all that we have if we are brought into this partnership with Him. What little we have, we must bring. He has already taken all the bad we have, and if we have any good thing, He has *given* it to us, so let us bring it all to Him. I have a something inside here for which He has done much by His Grace—something

which was black as night, but which He has washed and changed. Here it is, my Lord—my heart. You say, “My son, give Me your heart.” I do deposit it with You, with all the love, all the ardor and all the zeal that I have, and place it entirely at Your disposal. Seal my heart against all intruders, that it may be wholly for Yourself. Will not you, also, my Brothers and Sisters, bring your hearts to Him who loved you and gave Himself for you?

Well, what else do you have? Have you a tongue? Then give your tongue to Him and speak for Him as best you can. But perhaps you cannot say much. Have you a purse? Then give it to Him—all the substance that you have—use as His steward, for His Glory. Have you time? Spend some of that in caring for one of Christ’s friends—I mean, yourself! And in caring for others of His friends—your wife, your children, your neighbors—for He bids you do that for Him. All the rest of your time is His—therefore waste none of it, but give it all to Him. It is only a few farthings you can ever put into the treasury by the side of His great masses of gold bullion, but do put in what you have, and feel a pleasure in saying, “Yes, I have contributed something to the partnership, little as it is.” Have you any sort of ability? Have you prayers? Have you tears? Come, put them all in! Are you so poor and so obscure that this is all you have to bring? Then be much in prayer, for my Lord will accept your cries, tears, sighs and groans—and they shall all go into the joint-stock account, for He is so condescending that when He takes us into fellowship, He is willing to take our little share and put it with His!

But, next, if we are partners with Christ, *we must share with Him in all that He has*. Are you willing? “Oh, yes,” you say. Ah, but there is something which Christ carries which is ugly to some eyes and heavy to some shoulders. I mean, His Cross. And, you know, His Cross goes with His crown—there is no dividing them. As we say in the old proverb, “No sweat, no sweet,” so, depend upon it, it is, “No cross, no crown.” You were laughed at, yesterday, were you not, for Christ’s sake? Brother, Sister, did you stick to your partnership? Did you say, “Thank you. I am glad to receive a share of what the world gives my Lord. I am thankful that I am counted worthy to share with Him even in that”? If you are reproached for Christ’s sake, you should be happy! In that way you are proving the reality of your partnership. It must have been a glorious thing to the martyrs that they had the high privilege of dying for their Lord. He sustained and cheered them, but the grand thought that made them patient in the midst of agony—and triumphant in the hour of cruel death—was that they could say, “Now we are partakers of His sufferings! We are filling up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ for His body’s sake, which is the Church.” They were such thorough partners with Christ that they took all that came—and if we go in to be partners, we must be partners. We must take the rough as well as the smooth.

If you marry a wife, it must be for better or worse. And if you enter into fellowship with Christ, there can be no “worse” to those who are one with Him! But if it *seems* to be worse, you must cleave to Him all the more closely! There is no true fellowship with Christ if we are not willing to go with Him wherever He goes—into any measure of shame, or scorn,

or loss, or suffering, or even to death by martyrdom, itself, for His dear sake.

I told you that in this partnership, the Lord Jesus Christ supplies our needs. When we put the need down, He puts the supply down. Now, I want you who have been called into this fellowship to do the same with Christ, for *we are to supply His need*. What does He need? Well, He has gone away to Heaven. He is not here in bodily Presence, so Christ needs a voice with which to go and call in the other sheep that are not yet folded. Christ needs a voice in your house to speak to the children about their souls! Will you lend Christ your voice? There is somebody—a neighbor of yours—who never goes to any place of worship and Christ wants a voice to speak to that Sabbath-breaker. Will you lend Christ your voice? Perhaps, in the pew with you, there is somebody who only needs just a word and he or she would be decided for Christ. Will you lend—no, it is not a case of *lending*—will you *give* Christ your voice? Our tongues should be so consecrated to Christ that they are wholly His.

There is a story which will be in the Magazine next month [*The Sword and the Trowel*, April, 1883—Visit <http://www.pilgrimpublications.com/swtrowel.htm> for copy availability] which you will read, I daresay, with pleasure. I was delighted with it when I read it. It was to the effect that some people's blunders seem to be more in the line of doing good than are other people's best efforts. A young girl, belonging to the Normal College in New York, went home and said, "Oh, Father, young Mr. Spurgeon, Mr. Spurgeon's son, addressed us today, and instead of trying to make us laugh, as most visitors do, or to give us the 'good advice' that we have heard a hundred times, he gave us something new! He spoke about Jesus and he invited us all to Christ, and did it so naturally, and simply, and affectionately, that all the girls seemed interested. Oh, how much good it did me, Father! I wish you had been there to hear him."

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

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

great London as He would have lived if He were multiplied ten thousand times and dwelt among our citizens.

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

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

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

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

***"With them numbered may we be
Now, and through eternity"—***

but if we are not holy, if we are not truly sanctified, how can we expect to be numbered with the Church of Christ? Where there is no true holiness, there is no work of the Spirit of God. For all the holy ones Paul desires Grace and peace, for they still need these blessings. The holiest of men

still have spots about them and they need that Grace and peace should be given to them from day to day through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

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

9. *God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

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

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

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

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

But will they persevere? Will they hold on? When the world is so full of temptations in the midst of this age of sham. When godliness, when true godliness is as much hated as ever it was and when spiritual religion is

as great a mystery as it was to the sages of Areopagus in the days of Paul—will these men and women, especially the younger ones of them—will they all be found faithful—or will they disgrace the cause? Will they stain the escutcheon of Christ? Will they turn their backs in the day of battle and prove recreant cowards, traitors to our Lord and Master?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But when this particular call came, did you struggle against it? Perhaps you did, but you had more than your match! Oh, the Divine influence, when you threw down your sword and said, "Great God, I yield. I

know not how it is, but I feel sweet yearnings within. My soul relents. I can be Your enemy no more. Your love has destroyed me and made me powerless to resist. You have whispered something in my ear—I know not how You did it, but 'tis there and I surrender at discretion. Do what You will with me, only allow me to know Yourself, that I may be saved.”

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

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

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

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

To repeat the old saying of John Bradford when he saw a cartful of men going off to Tyburn to be hanged, “There goes John Bradford but for the Grace of God.” When you see the swearer in the street, or the drunkard rolling home at night—there are you, there am I—but for the Grace of God. Who am I—what should I have been if the Lord, in mercy, had not stopped me in my mad career! I know there are some of us who can remember the old story of Rowland Hill, when a good Scotchman called

to see him and without saying a word, sat still for some five minutes, looking into the good old gentleman's face.

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

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

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

God has called us! Let us look back upon the time of our calling and if some such thoughts as these should rise in our minds, they will not be unprofitable. They will fill your souls with grateful joy in retracing the steps by which you have been led. They will put courage into your souls

in realizing the Grace by which you now stand. They will clear the mist from your eyes in looking forward with cheerful hope to the future. I think they will prompt you to take your harp down from the willows and touch the strings with melodious song—

***“Every fallen soul, by sinning,
Merits everlasting pain.
But Your love, without beginning,
Has restored Your sons again.
Countless millions
Shall in life, through Jesus, reign.
Pause, my Soul! Adore and wonder!
Ask, ‘O why such love to me?’
Grace has put me in the number
Of the Savior’s family—Hallelujah,
Thanks, eternal thanks, to You!”***

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

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

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

that the saints may be with Him where He is—we desire to be with Him there, too. He desires to drive out sin—behold we fight under His banner.

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

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

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

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

well, Christ is exalted—and I am perfectly content.” This is to have fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

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

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

Come, put on your silver sandals, daughter of Zion! Wrap yourself now in your scarlet and fine linen which your Lord has bought for you! Come with Him up to the mountain and sit with Him awhile, “Far from this world of grief and sin,” and let Him speak to you while He tells you, “You

are Mine and I am yours.” Then will you be able to say, “Truly, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

***“Oh, believe the message true,
God to you His Son has given.”***

Cast yourself upon Him! Trust His Grace and Heaven is yours forever! The Lord add His blessing, now, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

THE WORD OF THE CROSS

NO. 1611

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

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

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

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

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

ogy to keep abreast of it—which simply means that a popular lie shall take the place of an offensive Truth of God.

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

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

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

Some seem to imagine that the Gospel does not contain within itself sufficient force for its own spreading and, therefore, they dream that if it is to have power among men it must either be through the logical way in which it is put—in which case all glory is to *logic*, or through the handsome manner in which it is stated—in which case all glory is to *rhetoric*. The notion is current that we should seek the aid of prestige, or talent, or novelty, or excitement, for the Gospel, itself, the doctrine of the Cross, is, in itself, impotent in its hands and lame upon its feet. It must be sustained

by outside power and carried, as by a nurse, wherever it would go. Reason, elocution, art, music, or some other force must introduce and support it, or it will make no advance—so some injuriously dream.

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

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

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

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

But what about other voices and other words? They are not voices from Heaven, nor words from God, for He has not, in one place, spoken one

thing, and in another place, another! Neither is it according to the Spirit of the Gospel that there should be one form of Gospel for the first six centuries and then another form of it for the 19th Century. Is it not written, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever”? If the Atonement were in *progress*. If the great Sacrifice were not complete, then I could understand that there should be progress in the preaching of it. But, inasmuch as, “It is finished,” was pronounced by Christ upon the Cross and then He bowed His head and gave up the ghost—there can be no further development in the *fact* or in the *doctrine*!

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

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

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

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

nothing but “the word of the Cross,” which is none other than the word of the crucified Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us!

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

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

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

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

“No more the bloody spear,

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

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

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

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

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

Thus have I set before you the word of the Cross. May the Holy Spirit bless the message.

II. We have the unpleasant task, in the second place, of listening to THE WORD OF ITS DESPISERS. They call the Doctrine of the Atonement, “foolishness.” Numbers of men call the Doctrine of Salvation by the blood

of Christ, “foolishness.” It is most assuredly the *wisdom* of God and the *power* of God, but they stick at the first assertion and will not acknowledge the wisdom of the wondrous plan. It is, therefore, no wonder that they never feel its power! No, it is foolishness to them—a thing beneath their contempt. And why foolishness? “Because,” they say, “see how the common people take it up. Everybody can understand it. You believe that Jesus is a Substitute for you and you sing with the poorest of the poor—

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

“There,” they say, “that’s a pretty ditty for educated men. Why, the very children sing it and are able to believe it and talk of it. Psha, it is sheer foolishness! We don’t want anything so vulgar and commonplace. Don’t you know that we take in a high-class review and read the best thought of the times? You don’t suppose we are going to believe just as common plowboys and servant girls do?” Ah me! How mighty wise some people think themselves! Is every truth which can be understood by simple minds to be thrown aside as foolishness? Is nothing worth knowing except the fancy thinking of the select portion of humanity? Are the well-known facts of Nature foolishness because they are open to all? Is it quite certain that all the wisdom in the world dwells with the superfine gentlemen who sneer at everything and take in a review?

These superficial readers of superior literature are they the umpires of truth? I wish that their culture had taught them modesty! Those who glorify themselves and sneer at others are usually not wise, but otherwise! And those who call other people fools may be looking in the glass and not out of the window. He who is truly wise has some respect for others and the most profound respect for the Word of God. But why is it that *you* count the Gospel of the Cross to be foolishness? It is this—because this religion of ours, this Doctrine of the Cross—is not the offspring of *reason*, but the *gift* of Revelation. All the thinkers of the ages continued to think, but they never invented a plan of salvation in which Divine Justice and mercy would be equally conspicuous. The Cross was not in all their thoughts. How could it be?

As a thought, it originated with the infinite mind and could have originated nowhere else! The Doctrine of the Cross is not a speculation, but a Divine Revelation—and for this reason the learned ones cannot endure it. It is *God* telling *men* something which they could not otherwise have known! And this does not suit the profound thinkers who cannot bear to be told anything, but must excogitate everything, evolving it from their inner consciousness, or from the depths of their vast minds. Now, inasmuch as nothing can come out of a man that is not in him, and as the supreme love of God never was in such an unlovely thing as an unregenerate man, it happens that the Doctrine of Atonement never originated with man but was taught to him by God at the gates of Eden.

The plan which blends vengeance and love was never invented by human imagination. Since man has such an aversion to the great Atonement, he could not have been the author of the idea and he was *not* the

author of it—God alone reveals it in language that babes may understand and, therefore, carnal *pride* calls it, “foolishness.” Besides, the carnal man thinks it foolishness because it makes him out to be a fool—and you may take my word for it that anything which proves either you or me to be a fool will, at once, strike us as being very foolish! Our conscience is dull and, therefore, we retaliate upon those who tell us unpleasant truth. “What? Am I nobody, after all? I, bound in the best black cloth, and wearing a white cravat? So religious and so respectable, so thoughtful, so studious, so profound—am I to be a nobody?”

“Do you dare to say to *me*, ‘Unless you are converted and become as little children, you shall in nowise enter the kingdom’! My dear Sir, you cannot know what you are talking about! Why, I am a professor, a philosopher, a doctor of divinity and, therefore, you cannot really mean that I am to receive truth as a little child! Such talk is foolishness!” Of course they say so! We always reckoned that they would say so! I have rejoiced when I have read the skeptical papers and have seen how they sneer at the old-fashioned Gospel! The Bible *said* that carnal men could not receive spiritual things—how true is that statement! It is written, “There shall come in the last days scoffers.” Here they are, hastening to prove, by their conduct, the things which they deny!

One is grieved that any should scoff and yet, in a measure, we are rejoiced to find such confirmation of the Truth of God from the lips of her enemies. As long as the world lasts, ungodly men will despise a Revelation which they are unable to understand. It is beyond their sphere and, therefore, its preachers seem to be babblers and its Doctrines to be foolishness. But, in every deed it may well seem foolishness to them, for it treats on subjects for which they have no care. If I were able to explain to a general audience how to make unlimited profit upon the Stock Exchange, or in some other market, all the world would listen with profound attention! And if I make my point clearly, I would be pronounced a really clever preacher, a man well worth hearing.

But when the sermon is only about the Word of God, eternity, the soul and the blood of Jesus—most people turn on their heels—they are not sure that they *have* souls and they refuse to argue upon the supposition of a future existence which is an old wife’s fable to them. As for eternity, their philosophy has no room for it, and they do not concern themselves about it. One said in argument, the other day, “I believe I shall die like a dog.” I could give him no better reply on the spur of the moment than to say, “If I had known that you were a dog I would have brought you a bone.” As I had the notion that he would live forever, I came to talk to him upon subjects suitable to an immortal being. But as I found out that he was going to die like a dog, what could I do for him but provide such cheer as the creature could enjoy?

These men call the Gospel foolishness because they look after the main chance and care more for the body than for the soul. One of their wise men said, “Why do you preach so much about the world to come? Why not preach about the world which now is? Teach these people how to ventilate their sewers—that is a much more necessary matter than their believing on Jesus Christ.” Well, sanitary matters *are* important and if any

of you feel that you have nothing to live for but ventilating sewers, I wish you would live at a great rate and get it done as quickly as you can! Meanwhile, as we are convinced of the need of other things besides drainage and, as many of us expect, soon, to take our happy flight to a place where there are no sewers to ventilate, we shall look into those things which concern our future life seeing they also fit us for the life which now is!

They call the word of the Cross foolishness because they regard all the Truths of God with which it deals as insignificant trifles. "Soul?" They say, "What does it matter whether we have a soul or not? Sin—what is it but the blunder of a poor creature who knows no better?" Of all things, the eternal God is the greatest trifle to unbelieving men. It is merely a name to swear by, that is all. They admit that there may be a great master force in Nature, or an energy co-extensive with the existence of matter and, therefore, they allow Theism or Pantheism, but they will not endure a personal God whom they are bound to obey! And besides, Pantheism is only a mask for Atheism. These men will have no personal God who loves them and whom they love. God is a nonentity to them and, therefore, when we speak of God as real, and sin as real, and Heaven as real—and God knows they are the *only* real things—then straightway they mutter, "Foolishness." As for us, we deplore their folly and pray God to teach them better. Having entered by a new birth into the realm of spiritual things, we know the reality and power of the word of the Cross.

Now, Brothers, I say of these gentlemen who pronounce the Gospel foolishness that you need not take much notice of them because they are not capable witnesses. They are not qualified to form a judgment upon the subject. I do not depreciate their abilities in other respects, but it is certain that a blind man is no judge of colors, a deaf man is no judge of sound and a man who has never been quickened into spiritual life can have no judgment as to spiritual things! How can he? I, for instance, have felt the power of the Gospel, and I assert that I have done so. Another man declares that I am not speaking the truth. Why not? Because *he* has not, *himself*, felt that power! Is that sound reasoning?

Have you not heard of the Irishman who, when five men swore that they saw him commit a theft, made answer that he could produce 50 people who did not see him do it? Would there have been any force in that negative evidence? And what if all the world except two men should say, "We do not feel the power of the Cross"—would *that* be any evidence against the fact asserted by the two? I think not! Two honest men who witness to a fact are to be believed, even though 20,000 persons are unable to bear such witness! The unspiritual are incapable witnesses—they put themselves out of court, for at the outset they assert that they are not cognizant of those things concerning which we bear testimony! Their assertion is that they never were the subjects of spiritual influences and we quite believe what they say—but we do not believe them when they go further and assert that, therefore, what we have seen, tasted and handled is all a delusion! Concerning that matter they are not capable witnesses.

And I beg you to notice that those who call the Gospel of the Cross folly are, themselves, if rightly looked at, proofs of their own folly and of the

sad results of unbelief. The Christians in Paul's days felt that the Gospel had emancipated them from the bondage of idolatry and vice—and when they heard others that were captives under these delusions telling them that the emancipating force was foolishness—they looked at them and smiled at the absurdity of the statement. They noticed that such men were, themselves, perishing! What a calamity it is for a man to be perishing! A house is unoccupied, its floor is untrod, its hearth knows no genial glow. It suffers from neglect, it is perishing. Men who are not living to God are missing the end of their being and, like deserted houses, are falling into ruin—they are perishing!

While unoccupied by good, such minds are surrounded by powers of evil. Yonder is a tree. I have seen many such—around its trunk the ivy has twisted itself, grasping it like a huge python and crushing it in its folds. The tree is perishing! Its very life is being sucked out by the parasite that grasps it. Multitudes of men have about them lusts and sins—and errors that are eating out their life—they are perishing! Their souls and characters are as timber devoured by dry rot! It remains in the fabric of the house, but it is perishing. Ungodly men are devoured by their own pride, eaten up by self-confidence. Unbelieving men are comparable to a ship that is drifting to destruction—its cable has snapped—it is nearing the rocks, it will be broken to pieces, it is perishing!

Those that believe not in Jesus are drifting towards a sure *eternity* of misery! They are daily perishing and yet, while they perish, they condemn the means of rescue! Fancy drowning mariners mocking at the lifeboat! Imagine a diseased man ridiculing the only remedy! That which we have tried and proved, they call “foolishness.” We have only to answer them, “You are, yourselves, as you remain captives to your sins, the victims of foolishness. You are, yourselves, as you waste your lives and as you drift to destruction, proofs that the foolishness is not in the Cross, but in you that reject it.”

The preaching of the Cross is, to them that perish, foolishness, but to nobody else! O that their hearts were changed by the power of the Word of God—then would they see all wisdom in the word of the Cross!

III. We come, in the third place, to notice THE WORD OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE. What do they say of the Cross? They call it power, the power of God! The more we study the Gospel, the more we are surprised at the singular display of wisdom which it contains, but we will not say much upon that point, for we are not qualified to be judges of wisdom. But we do say this—the word of the Cross is power! It has been the power of God to us! It has worked upon us as nothing else has ever done! Its work upon many of us has been so remarkable that even onlookers must have been surprised at it. The phenomenon of conversion is a fact. Men and women are totally changed and the whole manner of their life is altered.

It is of no use to deny the fact, for instances of it come before us every day! Unbelievers become devout, the immoral become pure, the dishonest become upright, the blasphemous become gracious, the unchaste become holy! Evil ways are all of a sudden deserted and penitents struggle towards virtue. We see persons in all ranks of society undergoing a radical transformation—self-satisfied people are humbled by the discovery of their

unworthiness—and others, who were steeped in immorality, renounce their vicious pleasures and seek happiness in the service of God. How do you account for this? We who are the subjects of such a change account for it in this way—it is worked by the Doctrine of the Cross—and the power which accomplishes the change is the power of God! No force less than Divine could have effected so great a change. The word of the Cross has delivered us from the love of sin—no sin is now our master—we have broken every fetter of evil habit.

We fall into sin, but we mourn over it and hate the sin—and hate ourselves for committing it! We have been delivered from the bondage of corruption and made free to serve the Lord. We have also been delivered from the dread which once bowed us down—a horrible dread which held us in bondage—and made us tremble before our Father and our Friend. We thought harshly of God and fled from Him, but from this we are now delivered, for now we love Him and delight in Him! And the nearer we can approach Him, the happier we are. We have been delivered, also, from the power of Satan. That evil prince has great power over men and once we were led captive at his will. Even now he attacks us, but we overcome him through the blood of the Lamb.

We are also daily delivered from self and from the world and from all things that would enthrall us. We are being saved—yes, we *are* saved. Every day a saving force is operating upon us to set us free from the thralldom of corruption. This we feel and know! We are bound for the Kingdom of God and nothing can keep us back! We are bound for purity, for ultimate perfection—we feel eternal life within us, urging us upward and onward, beyond ourselves and our surroundings! We sit here like eagles, chained to the rock by the feebleness of our bodies, but the aspiration within us tells us that we are born to soar among pure and glorified spirits. We feel that Heaven is born within us—born by the word of the Cross through the Spirit.

We could tell the histories of some here present, or, better still, they could tell them themselves—histories of changes sudden but complete, marvelous but enduring—changes from darkness to light, from death to life! How gladly could we detain you with details of our being held up when our temptations have been almost overwhelming—and kept pressing forward in Christ's service when we had been altogether without strength had not the word of the Cross poured new energy into us! We have been ready to die in despair until we have looked to the Cross and then the clouds have yielded to clear shining! A sight of the bleeding Savior and a touch of His hand have made us men, again, and we have lifted up our heads as from among the dead! Under the power of the Cross we *still* advance from strength to strength! There is power in the word of the Cross to make a man grow into something nobler than he ever dreamed of. We shall not know what we shall be till we shall see our Lord and Savior as He is!

Why, Brothers and Sisters, the power with which God created the world was no greater than the power with which He made us new men in Christ Jesus! The power with which He sustains the world is not greater than the power by which He sustains His people under trial and temptation! And

even the raising of the dead at the end of the world will be no greater display of Divine power than the raising of dead souls out of their spiritual graves! These wonders of power are being performed in our own experience every day of the week, entirely through the Cross. I appeal to you who are truly converted—were you converted through the wisdom of man? I appeal to you that are kept from sinning—are you led towards holiness by the power of elocution, of rhetoric, or of logic?

I appeal to you who are despairing—are you ever revived by musical words and rhythmical sentences? Or do you owe all to Jesus Crucified? What is your life, my Brothers, but the Cross? Where comes the bread of your soul but from the Cross? What is your joy but the Cross? What is your delight, what is your Heaven, but the Blessed One, once crucified for you, who always lives to make intercession for you? Cling to the Cross, then! Put both arms around it! Hold to the Crucified and never let Him go! Come afresh to the Cross at this moment and rest there, now and forever! Then, with the power of God resting upon you, go forth and preach the Cross! Tell the story of the bleeding Lamb! Repeat the wondrous tale and nothing else!

Never mind how you do it, only proclaim that Jesus died for sinners. The Cross held up by a babe's hand is just as powerful as if a giant held it up! The power lies in the word, itself, or rather in the Holy Spirit who works by it and with it. Brothers, believe in the power of the Cross for the conversion of those around you! Do not say of any man that he cannot be saved. The blood of Jesus is Omnipotent! Do not say of any district that it is too sunken, or of any class of men that they are too far gone—the word of the Cross reclaims the lost! Believe it to be the power of God and you shall find it so. Believe in Christ Crucified and preach boldly in His name and you shall see great things and gladsome things. Do not doubt the ultimate triumph of Christianity! Do not let a mistrust flit across your soul. The Cross must conquer!

It must blossom with a crown—a crown commensurate with the Person of the Crucified and the bitterness of His agony. His reward shall parallel His sorrows. Trust in God and lift your banner high—and with Psalms and songs advance to battle, for the Lord of Hosts is with us—the Son of the Highest leads our van! Onward with blast of silver trumpet and shout of those that seize the spoil! Let no man's heart fail him! Christ has died! Atonement is complete! God is satisfied! Peace is proclaimed! Heaven glitters with proofs of mercy already bestowed upon ten thousands times ten thousands! Hell is trembling! Heaven adoring, earth waiting! Advance, you saints, to certain victory! You shall overcome through the blood of the Lamb!

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PREACHING CHRIST CRUCIFIED

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“But we preach Christ crucified.”
1 Corinthians 1:23.

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

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

Now, in these days there are some who would be glad if we would preach anything except Christ crucified! Perhaps the most dangerous among them are those who are continually crying out for intellectual preaching, by which they mean preaching which neither the heavens nor the preachers, themselves, can comprehend—the kind of preaching which has little or nothing to do with the Scripture and which requires a dictionary rather than a Bible to explain it! These are the people who are continually running about and asking, “Have you heard our minister? He gave us a wonderful discourse last Sunday morning! He quoted Hebrew,

Greek and Latin. He gave us some charming pieces of poetry—in fact it was altogether an intellectual treat!” Yes, and I have usually found that such intellectual treats lead to the ruination of souls. That is not the kind of preaching that God generally blesses to the salvation of souls and, therefore, even though others may preach the philosophy of Plato or adopt the arguments of Aristotle, we preach Christ crucified, the Christ who died for sinners, the people’s Christ and, “we preach Christ crucified” in simple language, in plain speech such as the common people can understand!

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

I. First of all, WHAT WE PREACH. Paul is the model for all preachers and he says, “We preach Christ crucified.”

In order to preach the Gospel fully, there must be a very clear description of the Person of Christ, and we preach Christ as God—not a man made into a God, nor a God degraded to the level of a man, not something between a man and a God, but, “very God of very God.” He is One with His Father in every attribute—eternal, having neither beginning of days, nor end of years. Omnipresent, filling all space. Omnipotent, having all power in Heaven and on earth. Omniscient, knowing all things from eternity—the great Creator, Preserver and Judge of all—in all things the equal and the express Image of the invisible God! If we err concerning the Deity of Christ, we err everywhere! The Gospel that does not reveal a Divine Savior is no Gospel at all—it is like a ship without a rudder—the first contrary wind that blows shall drive it to destruction and woe be to the souls that are trusting to it! No shoulders but those almighty ones which bear the earth’s huge pillars can ever carry the enormous weight of human guilt and human need. We preach to you Christ, the Son of Mary, once sleeping in His mother’s arms, yet the Infinite even while He was an Infant! Christ the reputed Son of Joseph, toiling in the carpenter’s shop, yet being all the while the God who made the heavens and the earth! Christ, who had nowhere to lay His head, the despised and rejected of men, who is, nevertheless, “over all, God forever.” Christ nailed to the accursed tree, bleeding at every pore and dying on the Cross, yet, living forevermore. Christ suffering agonies that are indescribable, yet being at the same time the God at whose right hand there are pleasures forevermore. If Christ had not been Man, He could not have sympathized with you and me, nor could He have suffered in our place. How could He have been the Covenant Head of the sons and daughters of Adam if He had not been made in all points like them, except that He was without sin? With that one exception, He was just as we are—bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh—yet He was as truly God as He was Man, the One of whom Isaiah was Inspired to prophesy, “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” So, in preaching Christ crucified, we preach the Glory of

Heaven conjoined with the beauty of earth—the perfection of humanity united with the Glory and dignity of Deity!

Then, next, we must very clearly preach Christ as *the Messiah, the Sent One of God*. It had long been foretold that a great Deliverer would come who would be “a light to lighten the Gentiles,” and to be the Glory of His people, Israel, and Jesus of Nazareth was that promised Deliverer, of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write. He was sent of God to be the Savior of sinners. He took not this office upon Himself without authority, but He could truly say, “Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God.” He became the Substitute for sinners, but this did not happen accidentally, but by Divine Decree, for we read, “the Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.” A priest unordained, a prophet unsent of God, a king without Divine authority would have been only a mockery—but our great High Priest was Divinely anointed, our peerless Prophet was sent of God and our king is King of kings and Lord of lords, rightly ruling as the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father! Sinner, this Truth of God should bring you hope and comfort—the Christ whom we preach is the Lord’s Anointed! And what He does, He does by God’s appointment. When He says to you, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” He speaks for His Father as well as for Himself, for He has the warrant of the Eternal to support His declaration! Therefore, come confidently to Him and put your trust in Him!

When the preacher has laid a good solid foundation by preaching the Person of Christ and the Messiahship of Christ, he must go on to preach *the work of Christ*. I can only give a brief summary of what would take all eternity to expound. We must so preach as to show how, in the Everlasting Covenant, Christ stood as the Surety and Representative of His people and how, in the fullness of time, He came forth from the ivory palaces dressed in the garments of flesh—and how He first worked out an active righteousness by the perfect obedience of His daily life—and at the last worked out a passive righteousness by His sufferings and death upon the Cross. Beginning at the Incarnation, going on to the great work of Redemption, telling of Christ’s burial, Resurrection, Ascension, intercession before His Father’s Throne and glorious Second Coming, we have a theme that angels might well covet—a theme that may well awaken hope in the sinner’s heart!

But it is especially *Christ crucified* whom we are to preach. His wounds and bruises remind us that we must tell you that “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” It is at Calvary that salvation is to be found! Where Jesus bowed His head and gave up the ghost, He overcame the powers of darkness and opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers! There is one word that every true servant of Christ must be able to speak very distinctly—that word is Substitution. I believe that Substitution is the keyword to all true theolo-

gy—Christ standing in the place of sinners and numbered with the transgressors because of their transgressions, not His own—Christ paying our debts and discharging all our liabilities. This Truth of God involves, of course, our taking Christ's place as He took ours, so that all Believers are beloved, accepted, made heirs of God and, in due time, shall be glorified with Christ forever! Brother ministers, whatever you fail to preach, make your hearers always clearly understand that there is a Divine and all-sufficient Substitute for sinners—and that all who put their trust in Him shall be eternally saved!

When we have preached Christ thus, we must also preach His offices. We must preach Him as the one great High Priest who always lives to make intercession for us. We must preach Him as the Prophet whose words are Divine and, therefore, come to us with an authority that cannot be set aside. And we must mind that we always preach Him as King, putting the crown of praise upon His royal head and claiming from His people the unfaltering allegiance and loyalty of their hearts—and the undivided service of their lives!

We must also preach *the qualifications of Christ for His offices*. Is He a Husband? We must tell how loving and how tender He is. Is He a Shepherd? We must proclaim His patience, His power, His perseverance—and we must especially tell of His self-sacrificing love in laying down His life for His sheep. Is He a Savior? We must show how He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him. We must talk much of the gentleness that will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. We must delight to speak of Christ as bending over the broken in heart, binding up their wounds and having His ears always open to hear the cry of a contrite spirit! It is the Character of Christ that is the magnet that attracts sinners to Himself—and upon this blessed theme one might go on speaking forever! When Rutherford was talking of the beauties of the Christ whom he loved so dearly, one of his hearers was compelled to cry out, “Now, mon, you are on the right string, keep to that!” And, indeed, this is a theme that might stir the stammerer to speak with power and make the very dumb to be eloquent for Christ! Oh, how glorious is our blessed Lord! With the spouse we may well say, “Yes, He is altogether lovely.” We cannot exaggerate His excellence and charms and it must be our constant aim to paint such a portrait of Him that sinners may fall in love with Him and trust Him to save them with His great salvation!

We must mind that we always preach Christ as *the sinner's only hope*. In the olden times, there were certain simpletons who sought after a universal remedy for all diseases—a catholicon. But their search was in vain. All the advertisements of quack medicines that ever deceived silly people will never convince sensible folk that such a catholicon for all the diseases to which flesh is heir has ever been or will ever be discovered. Yet there is a catholicon for the diseases of the soul, and that catholicon is Christ! Be your disease what it may—the raging fever of lust, the shivering fits of doubts and fears, or the fell consumption of despair—Jesus

Christ can heal you! Whatever form sin may take—whether it is the blind eye, or the deaf ear, or the hard, stony heart, or the dull, seared conscience—there is a medicine in the veins of Jesus that we may well call the Divine Heal-All! No case that was ever submitted to Christ has baffled His skill and He is still “mighty to save.” We must be very clear in telling the sinner that there is no hope for him anywhere else but in Christ. Nine out of ten of the arrows in a minister’s quiver ought to be shot at the sinner’s good works, for these are his worst enemies. That “deadly doing” that needs to be cast “down at Jesus’ feet”—that *trying to be or to feel something* in order that they may save themselves—this is the curse of many! O Sinner, if from the crown of your head to the soles of your feet, there is no sound part in you, but you are full of wounds, bruises and putrefying sores, yet, if you will but believe in Jesus, He will make you whole every whit, and you shall go your way a sinner saved by Grace!

We must also preach Christ as *the Christian’s only joy*. We needed Christ as a life buoy when we were sinking in the waves of sin, but we need Him to be our meat and our drink, now that He has brought us safely to land. When we were sick through sin, we needed Christ as medicine, but now that He has restored our soul, we need Him as our continual nourishment. There is no lack which a Christian ever has which Christ cannot fully supply and there is nothing in Christ which is not useful to a Christian. You know that some things that we have are good, but they are not altogether of service to us. For instance, fruit is good, but there is the skin to be pared off and the seed to be thrown away. But when Christ gives Himself to us, we may take the whole of Him and enjoy Him to our heart’s content! Everything Christ is and everything Christ has, is ours. Therefore, Christian, make a covenant with your hands that you will lay hold on Christ’s Cross for your only confidence! Make a covenant with your eyes that you will look nowhere for light but to the Sun of Righteousness! Make a covenant with your whole being that it shall be crucified with Christ and then be taken up to Heaven to live and reign with Him forever! Yes, let this be the utterance of your heart—

**“You, O Christ, are all I need,
More than all in You I find.”**

II. Now, secondly, TO WHOM ARE WE TO PREACH THIS?

Possibly, one Brother says, “You ought to preach Christ to the *elect*.” But how are we to know who are the elect? I read a sermon, some time ago, in which the minister said, “I have been preaching to the living in Zion—the rest of you are dead and I have nothing to say to you. The election has obtained it and the rest are blinded.” Preachers of that sort have life to preach to the living, medicine to prescribe for those who are whole, but what is the good of that? Fancy Peter standing up with the 11 on the day of Pentecost and saying to the crowd gathered around them, “I do not know how many of you who are here are elect, but I have to say to you that the election has obtained it and the rest are blinded.” How many would have been converted and added to the Church through such a

message as that? Now Peter was, at that time, filled with the Spirit—and it was by Divine Inspiration that he preached Christ crucified to the whole of that mixed multitude and then, when they were pricked in their heart and cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” He was equally Inspired when he answered, “Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

I mean to do as Peter did, for I regard Christ’s commission to His disciples as binding upon us today—“Go you into all the world, and *preach the Gospel to every creature.*” I cannot tell whether every creature to whom I preach is elect or not, but it is my business to preach the Gospel to all whom I can reach, resting assured that all of them whom God has chosen unto eternal life will certainly accept it! When a certain clergyman asked the Duke of Wellington, “Does Your Grace think it is any use preaching the Gospel to the Hindus?” he simply replied, “What are your marching orders?” As a soldier, he believed in obeying orders. And when the clergyman answered that the orders were, “Preach the Gospel to every creature,” the Duke said, “Then your duty is quite clear. Obey your Master’s orders and don’t you trouble, about anybody else’s opinions.”

The main business of a true minister is to *preach the Gospel to sinners* and he is never so happy as when he is preaching to those who know themselves to be sinners! When he is preaching to those who are self-righteous, he is in great trouble about the effect of his message, for he fears that it may prove to be a savor of death unto death to them. But when he meets with those who sorrowfully confess that they are guilty, lost and undone, then he rejoices in hope of blessed results from his preaching. He feels that he is now among fish that will soon take the bait, so he drops his line into the river and soon has the joy of bringing many to land! He knows that bread is always sweetest to hungry men and that even bitter medicine will be eagerly swallowed by the man who is very ill and who longs to be cured. He understands that it is the naked that need to be clothed and the penniless who clamor for alms. O Sinners, if you realize that you are foul and vile, full of all manner of evil, with nothing of your own that is worthy to be called good—and if you are longing to be delivered from evil of every sort and to be made holy as God is holy, I am glad that my Master has given me in His Word such a message as this for you—“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Still, a true minister of Christ will not confine his preaching to sinners who are sensible of their guilt, but he will *preach the Gospel to sinners of all ages.* To the young, whose lives have not yet been defiled by the vices of age, he preaches Christ crucified as the children’s Savior and he is glad, indeed, when the boys and the girls trust in Jesus and are saved. To you who have reached middle life, he preaches Christ crucified as the balm for every wound, the cordial for all care and thankful is he when you, also, are saved by Grace through faith in Jesus! To the old and gray-headed, to the decrepit, to those on the very verge of the tomb, he

still preaches Christ crucified! If he could find a sinner who had reached the age of Methuselah, he would have the same Gospel to preach to him, for he knows that there is no Savior but the crucified Christ of Calvary! And he also knows that, old or young, or if neither old nor young—all who trust Him are immediately saved and saved forever!

And as he preaches Christ to sinners of every age, he also *preaches Christ to sinners of every rank*. He has nothing better than Christ to preach to queens, princes and nobles—and he has nothing less than Christ to preach to peasants, artisans, or paupers—Christ crucified for men of letters and learning and Christ crucified equally for the ignorant and illiterate!

He also *preaches Christ to sinners of every sort*, even to the atheist, the man who says there is no God! He bids him believe and live. He preaches Christ to the openly profane. When they pause for a while in their swearing, he tells them of that great oath which God has sworn, “As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” We preach Christ to the harlots in the street and oh, how joyfully have many of them received Him and how gladly have they found cleansing from their foul stains in Jesus’ precious blood! We preach Christ to the drunk, for we believe that nothing but the Grace of God can rescue him from his degradation and sin—and many such sinners have we seen reclaimed by the Gospel!

The preaching of Christ crucified, the lifting up of the dying Son of God, “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,” has power enough to turn the whole world upside down and to change innumerable sinners into saints, so we mean to keep on *preaching Christ to all sinners of all sorts*! We do not intend to leave out one, not even you, my Friend, who think you are left out, or ought to be left out. We know that there is a Book of Life before the Throne of God and that no more names can be written there—they were all recorded before the foundation of the world when the Father gave to Christ those who are to be eternally His. We cannot mount up to Heaven to read the names that are written there, but we believe the list contains millions upon millions of names of those who have not yet trusted in Christ, so we mean to keep on preaching Christ to sinners of every age, of every rank, of every sort, of every degree of blackness and vileness! And we believe that “there is yet room,” there is yet mercy for the miserable, there is yet forgiveness for the guilty who will come and trust in Jesus Christ and Him crucified!

III. Now, lastly, HOW OUGHT WE TO PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED?

I think, first, we ought to preach Christ very boldly. I recollect a young man going into a pulpit to address a small congregation, and he began by saying that he hoped they would pardon his youth and forgive his impertinence in coming to speak to them. Some foolish old gentleman said, “How humble that young man is to talk like that!” But another, who was wiser, though he was younger, said, “What a dishonor to his Lord and Master! If God sent him with a message to these people, what does it

matter whether he is young or old? Such mock modesty as that is out of place in the pulpit." I think that second man was right and the first one wrong. A true minister of the Gospel is an ambassador for Christ and do our ambassadors go to foreign courts with apologies for carrying messages from their sovereign? It would be a gross insult to the crown of these realms if they showed such humility as that in their official capacity! Let ministers of the Gospel keep their modesty for other occasions when it ought to be manifested, but let them not dishonor their Master and discredit His message as that silly young man did! When we preach Christ crucified, we have no reason to stammer, or stutter, or hesitate, or apologize—there is nothing in the Gospel of which we have any cause to be ashamed! If a minister is not sure about his message, let him keep quiet till he is sure about it! We believe and, therefore, we speak with the accent of conviction! If I have not proved the power of the Gospel in my own heart and life, I am a base impostor to be standing in this pulpit to preach that Gospel to others! But as I do most assuredly know that I am saved by Grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and as I feel certain that I have been Divinely called to preach His Gospel—

***"Shall I, for fear of feeble man,
The Spirit's course in me restrain?
Or undismayed in deed and word,
Be a true witness for my Lord?"***

But while we preach Christ boldly, we must also preach Him *affectionately*. There must be great love in our proclamation of the Truth of God. We must not hesitate to point out to sinners the state of ruin to which sin has brought them. And we must clearly set before them the Divinely-appointed remedy. But we must mingle a mother's tenderness with a father's sternness. Paul was like both mother and father, in a spiritual sense, in his ministry. He wrote to the Galatians, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." And to the Corinthians he wrote, "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel." And every true minister of Christ can, in his measure, sympathize with him in both those experiences. Yes, Sinners, we do, indeed, love you! Often our heart is well-near broken with the longing we have to see you saved! We wish we could preach to you with Baxter's tearful eyes—no, rather with the Savior's melting heart and all-consuming zeal!

Then, next, we must preach *Christ only*. With Paul, every true minister ought to be able to say to his hearers, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." The preacher must never mix up anything else with the Gospel. Every time he preaches, he must still have the same old theme, "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Christ is the Alpha of the Gospel and He is the Omega, too! The first letter of the Gospel alphabet and the last letter—and all the letters in between! It must be Christ, *Christ*, CHRIST from beginning to end! There must be no work-mongering or anything else mixed up with Christ! There must be no daubing with untempered mortar in our building upon Christ, the one Foundation that is laid once for all!

The preacher must also mind that he preaches Christ *very simply*. He must break up his big words and long sentences and pray against the temptation to use them. It is usually the short, dagger-like sentence that does the work best. A true servant of Christ must never try to let the people see how well he can preach. He must never go out of his way to drag a pretty piece of poetry in his sermon, nor to introduce some fine quotations from the classics. He must employ a simple, homely style, or such a style as God has given him. And he must preach Christ so plainly that his hearers can not only understand him, but that they *cannot misunderstand* him even if they try to do so!

Now as the time has gone, I must close by saying that we must try to preach Christ *savingly*. O Sinners, I would that you would trust Christ this very moment! Do you realize how great your danger is? Unconverted Soul, you are standing, as it were, over the mouth of Hell on a single plank—and that plank is rotten! Man, you may be in your grave before another Sabbath dawns and then, if unsaved, you will be in Hell! Beware lest you are taken away unprepared, for if that is your unhappy lot, there will be no ransom that can deliver your lost soul from going down to the Pit! See your need of Christ, Sinner, and lay hold of Him by faith! None but Christ can save you! Christ is the Way! You may go about all your days trying to find another entrance to Heaven, but you will not find it for this is the only one. Why will you not come to God by Christ? Why are you so ungrateful as to despise the long-suffering mercy of God? Will not the goodness of God lead you to repentance? Shall Christ die for sinners and yet will you, O Sinner, turn away from Him who alone can give you life? If you will but trust Him, He will save you! Your sins, which are many, shall all be forgiven you! You shall be adopted into the family of God and in due time you shall find yourself in Heaven to go no more out forever! If you would be happy. If you would enjoy the peace that passes all understanding. If you would have *two* heavens—a Heaven below and a Heaven above—trust in Jesus, Sinner, trust in Jesus this very moment! Go not out of this building unsaved. One believing look will bring you salvation, for—

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

Look unto Him, look unto Him now! May the Holy Spirit enable you to look and live, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

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

Verses 1, 2. *Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth.* Note the humility of Paul in associating with himself an almost unknown Brother, Sosthenes. Although the letter is written by Paul, yet,

as if he did not care to stand in isolation even for a moment, he associates Sosthenes with himself in the salutation—"Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth."

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

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

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

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

5, 6. *That in everything you are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.* [See Sermon #2875, Volume 50—CONFIRMING THE WITNESS OF CHRIST—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] The Church at Corinth was an important Church, with more than the usual number of speaking men among the members. This led to mischief, but had they known how to use this talent aright, the Church at Corinth might have been of great service! Instead, it split itself up into little parties and became one of the worst churches that then existed, as certain communities which imitate them in this present day, have also done.

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

prove the power of His Grace by keeping them unto the end, and then presenting them “blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

9. *God is faithful, by whom you were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.* [See Sermon #2580, Volume 44—PARTNERSHIP WITH CHRIST—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] As Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “Faithful is He that calls you, who also will do it.” To be called by the faithful God is the guarantee of everlasting salvation!

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

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

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

13. *Is Christ divided?* Paul begins with that, for it is the worst of all divisions to make Christ the head of a party in His own Church!

13-16. *Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides I know not whether I baptized any other.* Paul considered that it was a Providential circumstance that He had baptized no more of them, else they would have cried themselves up as superior to those who had been baptized by others.

17. *For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of no effect.* It is true that Baptism is in the original commission of all Christ’s servants, but it occupies a very secondary place compared with the preaching of the Gospel! It was an evil day when the Christian Church began to put

rites before doctrines, and ceremonies in the place that should be occupied by the Gospel, itself! Paul therefore says that his main commission was “not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.”

18-20 *For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Indeed He has! He has let it run the full length of its tether so that we may see the folly that can be taught by wise men!*

21. *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Not by foolish preaching, but by that preaching which men call foolishness.*

22. *For the Jews require a sign. They were always looking for supernatural manifestations.*

22. *And the Greeks seek after wisdom. They would believe nothing but what could be proved to them by logic.*

23-25. *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. They call it foolishness, but it is wiser than men’s wisdom! God at His lowest (if we can imagine such a thing) is wiser than man at his highest “and the weakness of God (if such a thing could be) is stronger than men.”*

26-28. *For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are. [See Sermon #587, Volume 10—GOD’S STRANGE CHOICE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Those that do not even seem to have an existence—those that are so despicable that men do not deign to take any account of them—these are the very ones with which God shall break in pieces the many mighty errors of all the ages!*

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

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

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NOS. 7, 8

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

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

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

And how did the reason of man work out the problem? How did wisdom perform her feat? Look upon the heathen nations—there you see the result of wisdom’s researches. In the time of Jesus Christ, you might have beheld the earth covered with the slime of pollution—a Sodom on a

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

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

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

which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

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

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

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

I. First, we have here A GOSPEL REJECTED. One would have imagined that when God sent His Gospel to men, all men would meekly listen and humbly receive its Truths. We would have thought that God’s ministers had but to proclaim that life is brought to light by the Gospel and that Christ is come to save sinners and every ear would be attentive, every eye would be fixed and every heart would be wide open to receive the Truth! We would have said, judging favorably of our fellow creatures,

that there would not exist in the world a monster so vile, so depraved, so polluted, as to put so much as a stone in the way of the progress of Truth! We could not have conceived such a thing. Yet that conception is the truth. When the Gospel was preached, instead of being accepted and admired, one universal hiss went up to Heaven—men could not bear it—its first Preacher they dragged to the brow of the hill and would have sent Him down headlong—yes, they did more, they nailed Him to the Cross. And there they let Him languish out His dying life in agony such as no man has borne since. All His chosen ministers have been hated and abhorred by worldlings. Instead of being listened to, they have been scoffed at—treated as if they were the offscouring of all things and the very scum of mankind. Look at the holy men in the old times, how they were driven from city to city, persecuted, afflicted, tormented, stoned to death wherever the enemy had power to do so.

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

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

represent you—the representative men. The persons who stand for many of you, who as yet are not called by Divine Grace.

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

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

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

How many are there who never put their trust in Him who was slain for the sons of men? They love a superficial religion, but when a man talks deeper than that, they set it down for cant! You may love all that is external about religion, just as you may love a man for his clothes—caring nothing for the man, himself. If so, I know you are one of those who reject the Gospel. You will hear me preach. And while I speak about the externals, you will hear me with attention. And while I plead for morality and argue against drunkenness, or show the heinousness of Sabbath-breaking, all well and good. But if once I say, “Except you be converted and become as little children, you can in no wise enter into the Kingdom of God.” If once I tell you that you must be elect of God—that

you must be purchased with the Savior's blood—that you must be converted by the Holy Spirit—you will say, “He is a fanatic! Away with him, away with him! We do not want to hear that any more.” Christ crucified is to the Jew—the ceremonialist—a stumbling block!

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

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

you stare death in the face with it and say, "I know that my Redeemer lives"? Can you close your eyes at night, singing as your vesper song—

***"I to the end must endure,
As sure as the earnest is given"?***

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

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

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

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

God has said it—some shall be called, some shall be saved—some shall be rescued—

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

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

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

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

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

III. Now we come to our third point, A GOSPEL ADMIRER. Unto us who are called of God, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Now, Beloved, this must be a matter of pure experience between your souls and God. If you are called of God this morning, you will know it. I know there are times when a Christian has to say—

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

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

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

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

The Gospel is to the true Believer a thing of power. It is Christ, the power of God. Yes, there is a power in God’s Gospel beyond all description! Once, I, like Mazeppa, bound on the wild horse of my lust, bound hand and foot, incapable of resistance, was galloping on with Hell’s wolves behind me, howling for my body and my soul, as their just and lawful prey. There came a mighty Hand which stopped that wild horse, cut my bands, set me down and brought me into liberty. Is there power, Sir? Yes, there is power and he who has felt it must acknowledge it. There was a time when I lived in the strong old castle of my sins and rested in my works. There came a trumpeter to the door and bade me open it. I with anger chided him from the porch and said he should never enter. There came a goodly Personage, with loving Countenance. His hands were marked with scars, where nails were driven and His feet had

nail prints, too. He lifted up His Cross, using it as a hammer. At the first blow the gate of my prejudice shook. At the second it trembled more. At the third, down it fell and in He came. And He said, "Arise and stand upon your feet, for I have loved you with an everlasting love." A thing of power! Ah, it is a thing of power. I have felt it here, in this heart. I have the witness of the Spirit within and know it is a thing of might, because it has conquered me! It has bowed me down—

***"His free Grace alone, from the first to the last,
Has won my affection and held my soul fast."***

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

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

But I behold another scene. A martyr is hurried to the stake. The executioners are around him. The crowds are mocking, but he is marching steadily on. See, they bind him with a chain around his middle, to the stake. They heap fire wood all about him—the flame is lighted up—listen to his words—"Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name." The flames are kindling round his legs. The fire is burning him even to the bone! See him lift up his hands and say, "I know that

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

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

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

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

An idea has long possessed the public mind that a religious man can scarcely be a wise man. It has been the custom to talk of infidels, atheists and deists as men of deep thought and comprehensive intellect. And to tremble for the Christian controversialist, as if he must surely fall by the hand of the enemy! But this is purely a mistake. For the Gospel is the sum of wisdom, an epitome of knowledge, a treasure house of Truth

and a Revelation of mysterious secrets! In it we see how justice and mercy may be married. Here we behold inexorable Law entirely satisfied and Sovereign Love bearing away the sinner in triumph. Our meditation upon it enlarges the mind. And as it opens to our soul in successive flashes of glory, we stand astonished at the profound wisdom manifest in it. Ah, dear Friends! If you seek wisdom, you shall see it displayed in all its greatness. Not in the balancing of the clouds, nor the firmness of earth's foundations—not in the measured march of the armies of the sky, nor in the perpetual motion of the waves of the sea. Not in vegetation with all its fairy forms of beauty. Nor in the animal with its marvelous tissue of nerve, vein and sinew—nor even in man—that last and loftiest work of the Creator. But turn aside and see this great sight! An Incarnate God upon the Cross! A Substitute atoning for mortal guilt! A Sacrifice satisfying the vengeance of Heaven—and delivering the rebellious sinner! Here is essential wisdom enthroned, crowned, glorified. Admire this wisdom, you men of earth. And if you are not blind—even you who glory in your learning. If you will only bend your heads in reverence you will have to admit that all your skill could not have devised a Gospel at once so just to God, so safe to man!

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

And now, my dear Friends, solemnly and earnestly, as in the sight of God, I appeal to you. You are gathered here this morning, I know, from different motives. Some of you have come from curiosity. Others of you are my regular hearers. Some have come from one place and some from

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

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

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

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

CHRIST—THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD NO. 132

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

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

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

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

Gospel, is “the power of God and the wisdom of God.” Christ, that is, *Christ in the heart—true religion*, is “the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

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

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

conquering Samson who had, meanwhile, pulled up the gates of Hell and carried them on his shoulders far away!

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

***"On fiery clouds and wings of wind,
Appointed Judge of all mankind,"***

and then the quickened dead, the startled myriads, the divided firmaments, the, "Depart you cursed," and the, "Come, you blessed," shall proclaim Him to be the power of God who has power over all flesh to save or to condemn as it pleases Him!

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

who know His Grace—extol Him in your songs forever, for He is Christ—the power of God and the wisdom of God!

II. But now Christ, that is, Christ's GOSPEL, is the power and the wisdom of God!

1. Christ's Gospel is *a thing of Divine Power*. Do you need proofs of it? You shall not go far. How could Christ's Gospel have been established in this world as it were, if it had not, in itself, intrinsic might? By whom was it spread? By mitred prelates, by learned doctors, by fierce warriors, by caliphs, by Prophets? No—by fishermen, untaught, unlettered—save as the Spirit gave them utterance—not knowing how to preach or speak! How did they spread it? By the bayonet, by their swords, by the keen metal of their blades? Did they drive their Gospel into men at the point of the lance and with the scimitar? Say, did myriads rush to battle, as they did when they followed the crescent of Mohammed and did they convert men by force, by law, by might? Ah, no! Nothing but their simple words, their unvarnished eloquence, their rough declamation, their unhewn oratory! These it were, which, by the blessing of God's Spirit, carried the Gospel around the world within a century after the death of its Founder!

But what was this Gospel which achieved so much? Was it a thing palatable to human nature? Did it offer a Paradise of present happiness? Did it offer delight to the flesh and to the senses? Did it give charming prospects of wealth? Did it give licentious ideas to men? No! It was a Gospel of most strict morality. It was a Gospel with delights entirely *spiritual*—a Gospel which abjured the flesh—which, unlike the coarse delusions of Joe Smith—cut off every prospect of men delighting themselves with the joys of lust! It was a holy Gospel—spotless, clean as the breath of Heaven! It was pure as the wings of angels! Not like that which spread of old, in the days of Mohammed—a gospel of lust and vice and wickedness—but pure—and consequently not palatable to human nature. And yet it spread! Why? My Friends, I think the only answer I can give you is because it has in it the power of God!

But do you need another proof? How has it been maintained since then? No easy path has the Gospel had. The good boat of the Church has had to plow her way through seas of blood and those who have manned her have been bespattered with the bloody spray! Yes, they have had to man her and keep her in motion by laying down their lives unto the death! Mark the bitter persecution of the Church of Christ from the time of Nero to the days of Mary and further on—through the days of Charles the Second and of those kings of unhappy memory who had not as yet learned how to spell “toleration.” From the dragoons of Claverhouse, right straight away to the gladiatorial shows of Rome—what a long series

of persecutions has the Gospel had! But, as the old divines used to say, "The blood of the martyrs" has been "the seed of the Church." It has been, as the old herbalists had it, like the herb, chamomile—the more it is trodden on, the more it grows—and the more the Church has been ill-treated, the more has it prospered! Behold the mountains where the Albigenses walk in their white garments—see the stakes of Smithfield, not yet forgotten! Behold the fields among the towering hills where brave bands kept themselves free from despotic tyranny. Mark the pilgrim fathers—driven by a government of persecution across the briny deep. See what vitality the Gospel has. Plunge her under the wave and she rises, the purer for her washing! Thrust her in the fire and she comes out the more bright for her burning! Cut her in two and each piece shall make another Church. Behead her and like the Hydra of old, she shall have a hundred heads for every one you cut away! She cannot die, she must live, for she has the power of God within her!

Do you need another proof? I give you a better one than the last. I do not wonder that the Church has outlived persecution as much as I wonder she has outlived the unfaithfulness of her professed teachers! Never was a Church so abused as the Church of Christ has been all through her history! From the days of Diotrephes who sought to have the pre-eminence, even to these latter times, we can read of proud arrogant prelates and supercilious haughty lords over God's inheritance. Bonners, Dunstons and men of all sorts have come into her ranks and done all they could to kill her. And with their lordly priestcraft they have tried to turn her aside—and what shall we say to that huge apostasy of Rome? A thousand miracles that ever the Church outlived that! When her pretended head had become apostate and all her bishops, disciples of Hell—and she had gone far away—wonder of wonders that she should come out in the days of the glorious Reformation and should still live! And even now, when I mark the inactivity of many of my Brothers in the ministry—when I mark their utter and entire inefficiency for doing anything for God—when I see their waste of time, preaching now and then on the Sunday instead of going to the highways and hedges and preaching the Gospel everywhere to the poor! When I see the need of unction in the Church, itself, the need of prayerfulness—when I see wars and fights, factions and disunions—when I see hot blood and pride even in the meeting of the saints, I say it is a thousand, thousand miracles that the Church of God should be alive at all, after the unfaithfulness of her members, her ministers and her bishops! She has the power of God within her, or else she would have been destroyed, for she has got enough within her own loins to work her destruction!

“But,” one says, “you have not yet proven it is the power of God to my understanding.” Sir, I will give you another proof. There are not a few of you who are now present who would be ready, I know, if it were necessary, to rise in your seats and bear me witness that I speak the truth. There are some who, not many months ago, were drunks. Some who were wicked—men who were unfaithful to every vow which would keep a man to truth and right and chastity and honesty and integrity. Yes, I repeat, I have some here who look back to a life of detestable sin! You tell me, some of you, that for 30 years, even, (there is one such man present), you never listened to a Gospel ministry, nor ever entered the House of God at all! You despised the Sabbath, you spent it in all kinds of evil pleasures. You plunged headlong into sin and vice and your only wonder is that God had not cut you off long ago, as cumberers of the ground! And now you are here, as different as light from darkness! I know your characters and have watched you with a father’s love, for, child though I am, I am the spiritual father of some here whose years outnumber mine by four times the number! And I have seen you honest, who were thieves—and you sober, who were drunkards. I have seen the wife’s glad eyes sparkling with happiness! And many a woman has grasped me by the hand, shed her tears upon me and said, “I bless God! I am a happy woman now. My husband is reclaimed, my house is blessed. Our children are brought up in the fear of the Lord.” Not one or two, but scores of such are here! And, my Friends, if these are not proofs that the Gospel is the power of God, I say there is no proof of anything to be had in the world and everything must be conjecture! Yes, and there worships with you this day, (and if there is a secularist, here, my Friend will pardon me for alluding to him for a moment)—there is in the House of God this day one who was a leader in your ranks, one who despised God and ran very far away from right. And here he is! It is his honor, this day, to call himself a Christian! And I hope, when this sermon is ended, to grasp him by the hand, for he has done a valiant deed—he has bravely burned his papers in the sight of all the people and has turned to God with full purpose of heart! I could give you proofs enough, if proofs were needed, that the Gospel has been to men the power of God and the wisdom of God! More proofs I could give, yes, thousands, one upon the other!

But we must notice the other points—Christ’s Gospel is the wisdom of God. Look at the Gospel, itself, and you will see it to be wisdom. The man who scoffs and sneers at the Gospel does so for no other reason but because he does not understand it. We have two of the richest books of theology extant that were written by professed infidels—by men that were

so, I mean, before they wrote the books. You may have heard the story of Lords Lyttleton and West. I believe they determined to refute Christianity—one of them took up the subject of Paul's conversion and the other the subject of the Resurrection. They sat down, both of them, to write books to ridicule those two events and the effect was, that in studying the subject, they, both of them, became Christians and wrote books which are now bulwarks to the Church they hoped to have overthrown! Every man who looks the Gospel fairly in the face and gives it the study it ought to have, will discover that it is no false Gospel but a Gospel that is replete with wisdom and full of the knowledge of Christ! If any man will mock the Bible—he must do it. There are some men who can find no wisdom, anywhere, except in their own heads. Such men, however, are not judges of wisdom! We would not set a mouse to explain the phenomena of astronomy, nor would we set a man who is so foolish as to do nothing but argue, to understand the wisdom of the Gospel. It needs that a man should at least be honest and have some share of sense, or we cannot dispute with him at all. Christ's Gospel, to any man who believes it, is the wisdom of God!

Allow me to hint that to be a believer in the Gospel is no dishonor to a man's intellect. While the Gospel can be understood by the poorest and the most illiterate—while there are shallows in it where a lamb may wade—there *are* depths where leviathan may swim! The intellect of Locke found ample space in the Gospel. The mind of Newton submitted to receive the Truth of Inspiration as a little child and found a something in its majestic being higher than itself, unto which it could not attain. The rudest and most untaught have been enabled, by the study of the Holy Scripture of God's Truth, to enter the Kingdom of God! And the most learned have said of the Gospel, it surpasses thought! I was thinking the other day what a vast amount of literature must be lost if the Gospel is not true. No book was ever so suggestive as the Bible. We have large volumes in our library which it takes all our strength to lift, all upon Holy Scripture! Myriads upon myriads of smaller volumes—tens of thousands of every shape and size—all written upon the Bible! And I have thought that the very suggestiveness of Scripture, the supernatural suggestiveness of Holy Writ, may be, in itself, a proof of its Divine wisdom, since no man has ever been able to write a book which would have so many commentators and so many writers upon its text as the Bible has received, by so much as one millionth part!

III. CHRIST IN A MAN, THE GOSPEL IN THE SOUL is the power of soul and the wisdom of God. We will picture the Christian from his beginning to his end. We will give a short map of his history. He begins

there, in that prison, with huge iron bars which he cannot file—in that dark damp cell where pestilence and death are bred. There, in poverty and nakedness, without a pitcher to put to his thirsty lips, without even a mouthful of dry crust to satisfy his hunger, that is where he begins—in the prison chamber of conviction, powerless, lost and ruined! Between the bars I thrust my hand to him and give him, in God's name, the name of Christ to plead. Look at him! He has been filing away at these bars many and many a day without their yielding an inch! But now he has got the name of Christ upon his lips. He puts his hand upon the bars and one of them is gone and another and another! And he makes a happy escape, crying, "I am free, I am free, I am free! Christ has been the power of God to me, in bringing me out of my trouble." No sooner is he free, however, than a thousand doubts meet him. This one cries, "You are not elect!" Another cries, "You are not redeemed!" Another says, "You are not called!" Another says, "You are not converted!" "Go away," he says, "go away! Christ died." And he just pleads the name of Christ as the power of God and the doubts flee and he walks straight on!

He soon comes into the furnace of trouble. He is thrust into the innermost prison and his feet are made fast in the stocks. God has put His hand upon him. He is in deep trouble. At midnight he begins to sing of Christ and lo, the walls begin to totter and the foundation of the prison to shake! And the man's chains are taken off and he comes out free, for Christ has delivered him from trouble! Here is a hill to climb on the road to Heaven. Wearily he pants up the side of that hill and thinks he must die before he can reach the summit. The name of Jesus is whispered in his ear—he leaps to his feet and pursues his way with fresh courage until the summit is gained, and he cries, "Jesus Christ is the strength of my song! He also has become my salvation!" Look at him again. He is, all of a sudden, beset by many enemies. How shall he resist them? With this true sword, this true Jerusalem blade, Christ and Him Crucified! With this he keeps the devil at arm's length. With this he fights against temptation, against lust, against spiritual wickedness in high places and with this he resists. Now, he has come to his last struggle—the river Death rolls black and sullen before him. Dark shapes rise upward from the flood and howl and frighten him. How shall he cross the stream? How shall he find a landing place on the other side? Dread thoughts perplex him for a moment. He is alarmed. But he remembers *Jesus* died. And catching up that watchword he ventures to the flood. Before his feet the Jordan flies apace—like Israel of old, he walks through, dry shod, singing as he goes to Heaven—"Christ is with me! Christ is with me passing through the stream! Victory, victory, victory, to Him that loves me!"

To the Christian in his own experience, Christ is always the power of God. As for temptation, he can meet that with Christ. As for trouble he can endure that through Christ who strengthens him. Yes, he can say with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Have you ever seen a Christian in trouble, a true Christian? I have read a story of a man who was converted to God by seeing the conduct of his wife in the hour of trouble. They had a lovely child, their only offspring. The father's heart perpetually doted on it and the mother's soul was knit up in the heart of the little one. It lay sick upon its bed and the parents watered it night and day. At last it died. The father had no God—he tore his hair, he rolled upon the floor in misery, wallowed upon the earth, cursing his being and defying God in the utter casting down of his agony! There sat his wife, as fond of the child as ever he could be. And though tears would come, she gently said, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." "What?" he said, starting to his feet, "you love that child? I thought that when that child died you would break your heart. Here am I, a strong man. I am mad—here are you, a weak woman and yet you are strong and bold. Tell me what it is that possesses you?" she said, "Christ is my Lord. I trust in Him. Surely I can give this child to Him who gave Himself for me." From that instant the man became a Believer! "There must," he said, "be some truth and some power in the Gospel which could lead you to believe in such a manner, under such a trial." Christians! Try to exhibit that spirit wherever you are and prove to the worldling that in your experience, at least, "Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God!"

And now the last point. In the *Christian's experience*, Christ is wisdom, as well as power. If you want to be a thoroughly learned man, the best place to begin is to begin at the Bible, to begin at Christ! It is said that even children learn to read more quickly from the Bible than from any other book! And this I am sure of—that we, who are but grown up children—will learn better and learn faster by beginning with Christ than we could by beginning with anything else. I remember saying once, and as I cannot say it better, I will repeat it, that before I knew the Gospel, I gathered up a heterogeneous mass of all kinds of knowledge from here, there and everywhere. A bit of chemistry, a bit of botany and a bit of astronomy and a bit of this, that and the other. I put them all together in one great confused chaos. When I learned the Gospel, I got a shelf in my head to put everything away just where it should be! It seemed to me as if when I had discovered Christ and Him Crucified, I had got the center of the system so that I could see every other science revolving around in order! From the earth, you know, the planets appear to move in a very irre-

gular manner—they are progressive, retrograde, stationary. But if you could get upon the sun, you would see them marching round in their constant, uniform, circular motion. So with knowledge! Begin with any other science you like and truth will seem to be awry. Begin with the science of Christ Crucified and you will begin with the sun—you will see every other science moving round it in complete harmony! The greatest mind in the world will be evolved by beginning at the right end. The old saying is, “Go from Nature up to Nature’s God,” but it is hard work going uphill! The best thing is to go from Nature’s God *down* to Nature—and if you once get to Nature’s God and believe Him and love Him, it is surprising how easy it is to hear music in the waves and songs in the wild whisperings of the winds—to see God everywhere—in the stones, in the rocks, in the rippling brooks and hear Him everywhere—in the lowing of cattle, in the rolling of thunders and in the fury of tempests! Get Christ first. Put Him in the right place and you will find Him to be the wisdom of God in your own experience.

But wisdom is not knowledge. And we must not confuse the two. Wisdom is the right use of knowledge and Christ’s Gospel helps us by teaching us the right use of knowledge. It directs us. Yonder Christian has lost his way in a dark forest, but God’s Word is a compass to him and a lantern, too. He finds his way by Christ! He comes to a turn in the road. Which is right and which is wrong? He cannot tell. Christ is the great signpost, telling him which way to go. He sees every day new straits—he knows not which way to steer. Christ is the great Pilot who puts his hand on the tiller and makes him wise to steer through the shoals of temptation and the rocks of sin. Get the Gospel and you are a wise man. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and right understanding have they who keep His Commandments.” Ah, Christian, you have had many doubts, but you have had them all solved when you have come to the Cross of Christ! You have had many difficulties, but they have been all explained in the light of Calvary. You have seen mysteries, when you have brought them to the face of Christ, made clear and manifest which once you never could have known! But allow me to remark, here, that some people make use of Christ’s Gospel to illuminate their *heads*, instead of making use of it to illuminate their *hearts*. They are like the farmer Rowland Hill once described. The farmer is sitting by the fire with his children. The cat is purring on the hearth and they are all in great comfort. The plowman rushes in and cries, “Thieves! Thieves! Thieves!” The farmer rises up in a moment, grasps the candle, holds it up to his head, rushes after the thieves and,” says Rowland Hill, “he tumbles over a wheelbarrow, because he holds the light to his head, instead of holding

it to his feet.” So there are many who just hold religion up to illuminate their intellect, instead of holding it down to illuminate their practice—and so they make a sad tumble of it and cast themselves into the mire and do more hurt to their Christian profession in one hour than they will ever be able to retrieve! Take care that you make the wisdom of God, by God’s Holy Spirit, a thing of true wisdom, directing your feet into His statutes and keeping you in His ways.

And now a practical appeal and we have done. I have been putting my arrow on the string. And if I have used many light similes, I have but done so just as the archer tips his arrow with a feather to make it fly the better. I know that a rough quaint saying often sticks, when another thing is entirely forgotten. Now let us draw the bow and send the arrow right at your hearts. Brothers and Sisters, how many of you have felt in yourselves that Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God? Internal evidence is the best evidence in the world for the Truth of the Gospel! No Paley or Butler can prove the Truth of the Gospel as well as Mary, the servant girl yonder, who has got the Gospel in her heart and the power of it manifest in her life! Has Christ ever broken your bonds and set you free? Has He delivered you from your evil life and from your sin? Has He given you “a good hope through Grace” and can you now say, “On Him I lean. On my Beloved I stay myself”? If so, go away and rejoice—you are a saint—for the Apostle has said, “He is unto us who are saved, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” But if you cannot say this, allow me to affectionately warn you. If you need not this power of Christ and this wisdom of Christ, now, you will need them in a few short moments when God shall come to judge the quick and the dead—when you shall stand before His bar and when all the deeds that you have done shall be read before an assembled world. You will need religion then! Oh that you had Grace to tremble now—Grace to “kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.”

Hear how to be saved and I have done. Do you feel that you are a sinner? Are you conscious that you have rebelled against God? Are you willing to acknowledge your transgressions and do you hate and abhor them, while at the same time you feel you can do nothing to atone for them? Then hear this—Christ died for you! And if He died for you, you cannot be lost! Christ died in vain for no man for whom He died. If you are a penitent and a Believer, He died for you and you are safe. Go your way! Rejoice with unspeakable joy and full of glory, for He who has taught you your need of a Savior will give that Savior’s blood to be applied to your conscience and you shall, before long, with yonder blood-

washed host, praise God and the Lamb saying, “Hallelujah, forever, Amen!”

Only do you feel that you are a sinner? If not, I have no Gospel to preach to you. I can but warn you. But if you feel your lost estate and come to Christ, come and welcome, for He will never cast you away!

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

GOD'S STRANGE CHOICE

NO. 587

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

“For you see your calling, Brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confuse the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confuse the things which are mighty. And base things of the world and things which are despised has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are: that no flesh should glory in His Presence.”
1 Corinthians 1:26-29.

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

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

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

Coming then, at once to our text, we observe in it very clearly, first, the Elector. Secondly, a strange election. Then the elected. And when we have considered all these a little, we shall pause over the reasons which God has given for His election—that “no flesh should glory in His Presence.”

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

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

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

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

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

a few Patriarchs who still, chosen of God, held fast to the pure worship of the Most High.

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

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

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

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

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

Let us state the case and you will see this. A number of criminals are shut up in prison, all deserving to die. Their guilt is the same. If they are all taken out to execution tomorrow morning, no one can say a word

against justice. Now if some of these persons are spared, to whose discretion should the sparing be left? To their own? True, it will be most gracious to send a messenger and bid them all come forth and receive sparing mercy if they will come. But suppose they all, with one consent, refuse to be saved? Suppose that having been invited to be saved, every one of them refuses to accept pardon? If in such a case superior mercy determines to override their wicked wills and sets itself to secure that some of them shall effectually be saved, with whom shall the choice be left?

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

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

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

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

Jesus, the Husband of the Church, exercises the Sovereignty which His position permits Him and selects His own Bride.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

de Lion that Mohammedanism was put back for awhile. When the sword met sword, then they that took it perished with it!

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

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

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

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

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

gether too inconsiderable to be worthy of his notice. But the “weak things” God has chosen.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What were they in the Apostle's days? Jupiter seated upon his lofty throne holds the thunderbolt in his hand. Saturn reclined as the father of the gods. Venus delighted her votaries with her lustful pleasures. The chaste Diana sounded her horn. Here comes Paul with, "there is no God but God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent." He represents "the things that are not." So contemptible is the heresy of Christianity that if a list were made out of the religions of different countries, Christianity would have been left out of the catalog!

But see the result! Where is Jupiter now? Where Saturn? Where Venus and Diana? Except as classical names in the dictionaries of the learned, where are they? Who bows before the shrine of Ceres in the day of harvest, or who lifts up his prayers to Neptune in the hour of storm? Ah, they have gone. "The things that are" have been brought to nothing by the "things that are not." Let us reflect that what is true in Paul's day is true today. This year 1864 shall see repeated the miracles of the olden times—the things that are shall be brought to nothing by the things that are not.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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THE FOURFOLD TREASURE

NO. 991

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

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

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

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

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

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

being as Christians, and the love and Grace of God in Christ. “Of Him,” (that is of God), “are you in Christ Jesus.” So we will first speak about *our spiritual existence*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

God's people, God's children, God's beloved ones. "You are of God," little children, "and the whole world lies in wickedness."

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

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

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

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

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

No Savior, then no peace in life or death. Oh remember, Beloved Hearer, that you will soon die. Where, where will you look for consolation in your last moments? Your soul will soon have to fly through tracks unknown, and face the burning Throne of Judgment. What will you do, then,

without the hand of love to guide you and the righteousness of Christ to cover you? He who wraps himself about with Christ's matchless robe can say—

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

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

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

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

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

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

That though they affected modesty and did not call themselves “the Sophoi, or wise,” but “the Philosophoi,” or lovers of wisdom. Yet for all that, in their innermost hearts they esteemed themselves to be an inner circle of instructed persons and they looked upon the rest of mankind as

the unilluminated and the ignorant. They had found a treasure which they kept to themselves, and virtually said to their fellow men, "You are almost, without exception, hopelessly ignorant."

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

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

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

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

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

To know is *not* to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the more fools for what they know. There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom. Now that

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pause just a minute. Let none of us ever be so foolish as to suppose that when we have received Jesus and His Gospel, we have occasion to

blush when we are in the company of the very wisest of the present day. Carry a bold face when you confront the bronze-faced philosophy which insults your Lord. The man who does not believe the Bible does not know so much as you do. Blush not, though with mimic wisdom the unbeliever tries to laugh or argue you down. He who knows not Christ, though he propounds wonderful theories as to the creation of mankind and the formation of the world, and though he has a glib tongue, is only an educated *fool*, a learned *idiot*, who thinks his own rush light brighter than God's own sun.

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

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

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

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

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

His blood cleanses us from all guilt—by it pardon is bestowed upon the Believer.

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

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

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

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

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

In God’s sight you are as much “accepted in the Beloved,” as you will be when you stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire. You are Beloved of

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

fit for the child of the free woman, and it moves his heart. The child of the bond woman is driven by the whip, but the child of the free woman is drawn by cords of love. "The love of Christ constrains us."

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

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

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

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

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

"I know that my redeemer lives." The bodies of the saints shall come again from the land of the enemy. Then their body, soul, and spirit—their entire manhood, which Christ has bought—shall be altogether free from

the reign of the enemy. Then will redemption be completed. Remember the saints in Heaven without us cannot be made perfect! That is to say, they wait till we arrive among them. And when all the rest of the chosen ones shall be gathered in, and the fullness of time has come, then shall the bodies of the dead arise.

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

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

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

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

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

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

half His Glory. So blessed is Christ that the orchestra of the countless multitudes of the redeemed, though it continue forever and forever its pealing music, can never reach to the majesty of His name or the glory of His work. "Give unto the Lord, O you mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name."

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

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

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Corinthians 1.

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

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GLORYING IN THE LORD

NO. 1178

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

***“He that glories, let him glory in the Lord.”
1 Corinthians 1:31.***

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

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

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

The prevention of glorying in men, glorying in riches and glorying in self, is glorying in the Lord. “He that glories, let him glory in the Lord.” On

that text we shall now speak. And we shall have these four points. First, let us, dear Brothers and Sisters, as many of us as know the Lord, *glory only in the Lord*. Then, secondly, *let us glory heartily in the Lord*. Thirdly, let us *glory growingly in the Lord*. And, lastly, let us *glory practically in the Lord*.

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

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

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

Since He is so tender of His own name, let us be tender of it, too. If He would bear it, even then it would be wrong of us to test and try Him. But since He will *not* bear it, but is jealous, and His fury goes forth like flames of fire, let us take heed what we do. Think of Nebuchadnezzar and how his proud speech led to his loss of his reason and herding with cattle. Remember Belshazzar and how he was found wanting, because it was said of him, “The God in whose hand your breath is, and whose are all your ways, you have not glorified, but you have praised the gods of silver and gold, and wood, and stone, and iron, which see not, nor hear, nor know.”

Remember how the Lord smote Herod so that he was eaten of worms, because he received divine honors and gave not God the glory—"Give glory to the Lord your God before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains." Glory in the Lord alone, for He will not endure to have it otherwise.

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

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

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

***"Praise the God of all creation,
Praise the Father's boundless love!
Praise the Lamb, our expiation,
Priest and King enthroned above!
Praise the Fountain of salvation,***

Him by whom our spirits live!***Undivided adoration******To the One Jehovah give!"***

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

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

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

II. Now, secondly, may the Spirit of God help us to GLORY HEARTILY IN THE LORD with the whole force of our nature renewed by Divine Grace—not as a matter of form—but in deed and in truth! Let us make our boast in the Lord heartily, doing it so that the humble may hear of it and be glad, since there is good cause for heartily glorying in the Lord, first, because of His love. “God is love.” O you that have tasted of that love, glory in it! Glory that it is eternal, that it never had a beginning, that He fixed His love upon the objects of His choice before the mountains lifted their hoary heads above the clouds! Glory in it! It is no passion of

yesterday, but the deep-seated, fixed resolve of all eternity—the purpose of the Ancient of Days when as yet days had not begun their little round. Speak they of antiquity? Lo, it is here! “I have loved you with an everlasting love!”

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

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

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

You may glory in the faithfulness of God as to all His promises. He has never broken His Covenant, nor neglected to fulfill His Word. To no child of His has He acted unkindly. In no hour of need has He deserted one that trusted in Him. Under no peril and under no provocation has He cast

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

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

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

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

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

**“He bore, that we might never bear,
His Father’s righteous ire.”**

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

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

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

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

I felt, when I was coming up to preach tonight, as if I had been down, like a little child, to the sea, and I had stooped to the wave and filled my palms as well as I could with the sparkling water. But as I have been coming to bring it to you, it has nearly all trickled away, for I am not able to hold it by reason of my leaking hands. Yet, for all that, the little I can bring will make you, I hope, rejoice in the great eternal ocean from which it was taken, for you will never drain God’s love, mercy and Truth dry, though you should draw from it forever! You need never think you will exhaust Infinity! When a child of God thinks he has exhausted the patience and mercy of God he is something like a little fish in the sea which said, “Oh, I am so thirsty, I am afraid I shall drink up the Atlantic.” O little fish,

you have no idea how mighty the ocean is! Countless myriads such as you are may swim in it and the ocean will be none the less.

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

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

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

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

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

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

there are deeper, higher and fuller Truths of God which invite our consideration and will abundantly repay it.

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

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

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

As answers to prayer increase, glorify God more. As Grace is given to you in times of need, time after time, glorify Him more. As you find your-

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

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

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

***“I would begin the music here,
And so my soul should rise,
O for some heavenly notes to bear
My passions to the skies.”***

IV. Now I come to the last point, which is, let us GLORY IN THE LORD PRACTICALLY. And how can we do that? Every Christian ought to glory in the Lord practically by admitting that he belongs to his redeeming Lord. Are you a Christian and are you ashamed of it? How can you be said to glory in the Lord? A man does not hide away that which he glories in! If he glories in it he does not object to its being seen. Why, if he glories in *any*-

thing, if others accuse him that he has something to do with it, he admits the accusation and he says, "It is even so. And I am not ashamed of it. I glory in it."

Charge a veteran with having been at Waterloo and he will glory in it! Accuse an artist of being a Royal Academician and he will not deny the charge. Accuse me of loving my wife and children, and I smile at you. Why, then, blush to be called a follower of Jesus? You that love the Lord, I beseech you, come forward and say that you glory in Him! The Lord deserves that His people should confess with their mouth that which they feel in their hearts. It is the least thing we can do, if He has saved us, to be willing to acknowledge that he is our Savior and that we rejoice in Him. Then, Brethren, after we have thus confessed His Glory, let us continue to glory in Him by talking about it on all fit occasions. Do you not think that we are a great deal too silent in our piety?

We love the Lord, but we seem as if we do not want to tell anybody we do—and our common conversation does not betray us as it ought to do. It ought to be so full of Divine Grace and the Truths of God that men would find us out at once! Even as the rose betrays itself by its perfume, and even the glowworm by its shining, so should our glorying in the Lord reveal us to all observers! I have heard talk of a professed Christian of whom his servant said, "I am glad my master goes to the Lord's Table, for if he had not done so, I would not have known he was a Christian." I should think the chances were he was not a Christian at all—for we ought, in our common conversation, so glorify God that others would at once take knowledge of us—that we truly know and love His name!

A foreigner may speak English well, but he is known by his accent—and the accent of Divine Grace is quite as marked as that of Nature. Speak to all around you about the Savior! I do not know a better way of getting rid of troublesome people than often to talk of Jesus. There are certain ones who vex you with their evil discourses—bring in the Lord Jesus Christ and they will soon go away—for they will not like such weighty discourse. And at the same time better friends will be attached to you who will love to join you in holy glorying. Glory in the Lord by standing up for Him when He is opposed. If you hear the proud ones ridicule His Gospel and despise His people, put in a word for Jesus! Stand out and say, "I am one of His disciples. Despise *me*! I hold those opinions! Ridicule *me*! That way which you call heresy is the same way I worship the Lord God of my fathers."

This is a practical way of glorifying Him, but many who have grown rich and respectable are much too mean-spirited to practice it. I am ashamed of the cowardly spirit of many in these days who give up their Non-conformity because they cannot otherwise get into what they call, "good society." The Lord have mercy on them! Glorify Him, again, by being calm under your troubles. When others are fretting and worrying, possess your soul in patience, and say, "No, I do not serve a fair-weather God, and I am

not to be cowed and put down, for the eternal God is my refuge and underneath me are the everlasting arms. It does not become a man to tremble who has the God of Jacob for his help. I will bear trouble joyfully, if He wills to send it.”

Glory in the Lord, Brothers and Sisters, practically, by having a contempt for those things which others value so much. Do not be greedy after the world. Love God too much to care for earthly treasures. If God gives you wealth, thank Him for it and use it. If He does not, do not worry about it. Feel that you are rich enough without the heaps of yellow metal. You have your God and that is the best wealth! You have a Heaven to go to, and a little Heaven below. Rejoice in that which you find in your God. Live above the world. Pray that God’s Spirit will help you. “Let your conversation be in Heaven.” Thus glorify God and when men look at you, compel them to feel that there is something in you and about you which they cannot understand, for you have been with Jesus and you have learned of Him. In all these ways, “he that glories let him glory in the Lord.”

I am sorry, in closing, to feel compelled to say that I am afraid many do not understand this. Perhaps you have gloried in your priests and thought *they* were great. Very possibly some of you glory in your minister—you think he is very eminent. And some of you, it may be, glory in your purses and your possessions. Some of you glory in your broad acres and large houses. Some of you glory in the skill you have in your trade, or your quickness in business. It may be many of you glory in the fact that you are not as other men are. All these gloryings are evil! God help you to put them down! Even to glory in your Church, and glory in your sect, and glory in your creed is wrong!

To glory in the *Lord* is the work of His Spirit—and to live to make Him glorious in the esteem of men is the only thing worthy of an immortal mind. You will never glory in God till, first of all, God has killed your glorying in yourself. May He be pleased, in His infinite mercy, to show you unconverted sinners that there is nothing about you which you can justly glory in, but everything for which you ought to be ashamed and to loathe yourselves. May He make you fly to Jesus. I pray you trust Him and be saved! The Lord bless you in this matter, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Corinthians 1.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—242, 174, 420.**

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THE MAN OF ONE SUBJECT

NO. 1264

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

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

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

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

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

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

ward and promote the Gospel by proclaiming the Gospel! Whether men would hear or whether they would forbear, he resolved to come to the point at once and preach the Cross in its naked simplicity.

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

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

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

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

The Apostle spoke equally clearly upon the Redeemer's *work*, especially laying stress upon His death. "Horrible!" said the Jew, "How can you boast in a Man who died a felon's death and was cursed because He was hanged on a tree?" "Ah," said the Greek, "tell us no more about your God that died! Babble no longer about resurrection. We never shall believe such unmitigated foolishness." But Paul did not, therefore, put these things into the background and say, "Gentlemen, I will begin with telling you of the life of Christ and of the excellency of His example—and by these

means I shall hope to tempt you onward to the conclusion that there was something Divine in Him and then, afterwards, to the further conclusion that He made an atonement for sin.”

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

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

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

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

will make many friends and, by degrees, your conciliatory conduct will bring them to accept the Gospel.”

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

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

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

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

upon that which is born of men's reason! If we trust to poetic expressions and attractive turns of speech, we look to carnal means.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

a subject for today and tomorrow, and a subject for next year, for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever!

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

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

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

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

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

tions and preaching largely consist of very wonderful declarations of their own admirable condition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

and it will be your *crime!* If any man is doubtful about Christ crucified, recollect Hart's couplet, for it is a truth—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Corinthians 2.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—425, 483, 433.**

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

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

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

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

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

But the Apostle resolved to do no such thing. “No,” he said, “before I enter the gates of Corinth, this is my firm determination—if any good is to be done there, if any are led to believe in Christ the Messiah, their belief shall be the result of hearing *the Gospel*—not of my eloquence! It shall never be said, ‘Oh, no wonder that Christianity spreads, see what an able advocate it has.’ Rather, it shall be said, ‘How mighty must be the Grace of God which has convinced these persons by such simple preaching, and brought them to know the Lord Jesus Christ by such humble instrumentality as that of the Apostle Paul!’” He resolved to put a curb upon his fiery tongue. He determined that he would be slow in speech in the midst of them and, instead of magnifying himself, he would

magnify his office and magnify the Grace of God by denying himself the full use of those powers which, had they been dedicated to God—as indeed they were, but had they been fully employed, as some would have used them—might have achieved for him the reputation of being the most eloquent preacher upon the face of the earth!

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

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

Besides, in Corinth, there was now and then sure to be a political struggle, and I have no doubt that the Apostle Paul felt for his people, the Jews, and he would have liked to see all his Jewish kindred have the privilege of citizenship. Sometimes the Corinthians would hold a public meeting in which they would support the opinion that the Jews ought not to have citizenship in Corinth—might not the Apostle have made a speech at such a gathering? If he had been asked to do so, he would

have said, "I know nothing about such matters! All I know is Jesus Christ and Him crucified." They had political lectures, no doubt, in Corinth, and one man delivered a lecture upon this subject, and another upon that. In fact, all kinds of wonderful themes taken from the ancient poets were descanted upon by different men. Did not the Apostle Paul take one of the lectures? Did he not say, "I may throw a little Gospel into it and so do some good?" No, he said, "I come here as Christ's minister and I will never be anything else but Christ's minister. I will never address the Corinthians in any other character than that of Christ's ambassador. For one thing, only, have I determined to know, and that is Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Would to God that all the ministers of this age had determined to do the same!

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

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

"It matters not what are the amusements of society around him—what fields of science, or gain, or ambition, are open before him—the minister of Christ is to know only Christ and Him crucified. If he cultivates science, it is to be that he may the more successfully explain and vindicate the Gospel. If he becomes in any manner familiar with the works of art and of taste, it is that he may more successfully show to those who cultivate them the superior beauty and excellence of the Cross. If he studies the plans and the employments of men, it is that he may more success-

fully meet them in those plans and more successfully speak to them of the great plan of redemption! The preaching of the Cross is the only kind of preaching that will be attended with success! That which has in it much respecting the Divine mission, the dignity, the works, the Doctrines, the Person and the Atonement of Christ will be successful.

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

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

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

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

You are told by one person that such-and-such a system of theology is based upon the most sound principles of reason. You are told by another that the old doctrines which you have believed are not consistent with these advanced times. You will now and then be met by smart young gentlemen who will tell you that to be what is called a Calvinist is to be a long way behind this progressive age, “for you know,” they say, “that intellectual preachers are rising up and that it would be well if you would become a little more intellectual in the matter of preaching and hearing.” When such a remark as that is made to any one of you, I beseech you to give this answer, “I know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. If you can tell me more about Christ than I know, I will thank you. If you can instruct me as to how I may become more like Christ, how I may live nearer in fellowship with Him, how my faith in Him may become stronger and my belief in His holy Gospel may become more firm, then I will thank you. But if you have nothing to tell me except some intellectual lore which you have with great pains accumulated, I will tell you that although it may be a very good thing for you to preach, and for others who are intellectual to hear, I do not belong to your class, nor do I wish to belong to it—I belong to that sect spoken against everywhere, who after the way that men call heresy worship the Lord God of their fathers—believing

all things that are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I belong to a race of people who believe that it is not the pride of intellect, nor the pomp of knowledge that can ever teach men spiritual things. I belong to those who think that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God has ordained strength, and I do not believe that out of your mouth God has ordained any strength at all! I belong to the men who like to sit, with Mary, at the feet of Jesus, and to receive just what Christ said, as Christ said it, and because Christ said it. I want no truth but what He says is the Truth of God, and no other ground for believing it but that He says it, and no better proof that it is true than that I feel and know it to be true as applied to my own heart.”

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

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

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

If you must come into contact with them, I beseech you to say to them, “I love all truths that you hold, but my love of them can never overpower and supersede my love to Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And

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

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

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

O my dear Friends, if you wish to have your lives made miserable! If you want to be led back to the bondage of Egypt. If you want to have Pharaoh's rope put round your necks once again, take their motto for your motto. But if you wish to live as I believe Christ would have you live, I would entreat you to say, “No, it does me good, sometimes, to hear of the evil heart, but I have made a determination to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and you do not tell me anything about Him.” These men preach one Sunday upon the leper, but do they preach, the next Sunday, upon the leper healed! These men tell all about the

filthy state of the human heart, but they say little or nothing about that river that is to cleanse and purify it! They say much about the disease, but not so much about the Physician! And if you attend their ministry very long, you will be obliged to say, "I shall get into such a doleful condition that I shall be tempted to imitate Judas and go out and hang myself! So, good morning to you, for I have determined to know nothing in my experience but Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

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

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

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

"But did not you," the young man asked, "go through any Slough of Despond?" "Yes, I did. But I found it a great deal easier going through with my burden off than with it on my back." The old woman was quite right! John Bunyan put the getting rid of the burden too far off from the commencement of the pilgrimage. If he meant to show what usually happens, he was right, but if he meant to show what *ought to have happened*, he was wrong. We must not say to the sinner, "Now, Sinner, if

you will be saved, go to the baptismal pool, go to the wicket-gate, go to the church—do this or that.” No, the Cross should be right in front of the wicket-gate and we should say to the sinner, “Throw yourself down there and you are safe. But you are not safe till you can cast off your burden and lie at the foot of the Cross and find peace in Jesus.”

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

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

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

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

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

“I glory in infirmity,

***That Christ's own power may rest on me:
When I am weak, then am I strong,
Grace is my shield, and Christ my song."***

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. *O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You hear not; and in the night season, and am not silent.* Think of what a weight that unanswered prayer was upon the soul of the Well-Beloved. Have you ever felt such a

burden as that? Then, you are not alone in that experience, for He who is infinitely better than you had to think over His day prayers and His night prayers which, for a while, were not answered.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

23, 24. *You that fear the LORD, praise Him; all you the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him, all you the seed of Israel. For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither has He hidden His face from Him; but when He cried unto Him, He heard.* What a change of note! If men could hear us speak when we are in the depths of sorrow, they might conclude that God had forsaken us. But when we get out,

again, how quickly we eat our words and how soon we begin to tell the goodness of the Lord! Then we lift up the joyous strain, “O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy endures forever.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY
TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

HEAVEN

NO. 56

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

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

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

I have hinted that this passage is most commonly applied to Heaven and I shall, myself, also apply it in some measure this morning. But anyone who reads the connection will discover that the Apostle is not talking about Heaven at all. He is only speaking of this—that the wisdom of this world is not able to discover the things of God—that the merely carnal mind is not able to know the deep spiritual things of our most holy religion. He says, “We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, yes,

the deep things of God.” And then he goes on lower down to say, “But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.” I take it that this text is a great general fact, capable of specific application to certain cases. And that the great fact is this—that the things of God cannot be perceived by eye, ear, or heart—but must be revealed by the Spirit of God, as they are unto all true Believers. We shall take that thought and endeavor to expand it, this morning, explaining it concerning Heaven, as well as regards other heavenly matters.

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

And so, moreover, at the close of the Levitical dispensation, the *Prophets* might have thus foretold the coming glories. Old Isaiah, standing in the midst of the Temple, beholding its sacrifices and the dim smoke that went up from them, when his eye were opened by the Spirit of God, might have said—“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love

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

But persons are curious to know what kind of dispensation the Millennial one is to be. Will the Temple, they ask, be erected in Jerusalem? Will the Jews be positively restored to their own land? Will the different nations all speak one language? Will they all resort to one Temple? And ten thousand other questions. Beloved, we cannot answer you! “Eye has

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

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

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

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

***“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dressed in living green.”***

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

Equally does our text assert that “the ear has not heard” it. Oh, have we not on the Sabbath, sometimes, heard the sweet voice of the messenger of God, when he has, by the Spirit, spoken to our souls? We knew something of Heaven then, we thought. At other times we have been entranced with the voice of the preacher and with the remarkable sayings which he has uttered. We have been charmed by his eloquence—some of us have known what it is to sit and alternately weep and smile—under

the power of some mighty man who played with us as skillfully as David could have played on his harp and we have said, "How sweet to hear those sounds! How glorious his eloquence! How wonderful his power of oratory! Now I think I know something of what Heaven is, for my mind is so carried away, my passions are so excited, my imagination is so elevated! All the powers of my mind are stirred up so that I can think of nothing but of what the preacher is speaking about!" But the ear is not the medium by which you can guess anything of Heaven. The "ear has not heard" it. At other times, perhaps, you have heard sweet music and has not music charmed even savage breasts like some of ours? We have heard music, whether poured from the lungs of man—that noblest instrument in the world—or from some manufacture of harmony and we have thought, "Oh, how glorious this is!" And we have fancied, "This is what John meant in the Revelation—I heard a voice like many waters and like exceeding great thunders and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps"—and this must be something like Heaven, something like the hallelujahs of the glorified." But ah, Beloved, we made a mistake! "Ear has not heard" it.

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

***"Where on a green and flowery mount
His weary soul shall sit."***

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

must always come through the Spirit. That is our first thought. It is not a Heaven to be grasped by the senses.

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

Our next point is that *it is not a Heaven of the INTELLECT*. Men who take to themselves the title of intelligent and who very humbly and modestly call themselves, philosophers, generally describe Heaven as a place where we shall know all things. And their grandest idea of Heaven is that they shall discover all secrets there. There the brook which would not tell its origin shall bubble forth its history. There the star which would not tell its date and could not be made to whisper of its inhabitants shall at once unravel all its secrets! There the animal, the fashion of which could scarcely be guessed, so long had it been buried among other fossils in the earth, shall start up again and it shall be seen of what form and

shape it really was. There the rocky secrets of this, our earth, that they never could discover, will be opened to them. And they conceive that they shall travel from one star to another star, from planet to planet and fill their ennobled intellect, as they now delight to call it, with all kinds of human knowledge! They reckon that Heaven will be to understand the works of the Creator! And concerning such men as Bacon and other great philosophers, of whose piety we generally have very little evidence, we read at the end of their biographies—"He has now departed, that noble spirit which taught us such glorious things, here, to sip at the fountain of knowledge and have all his mistakes rectified and his doubts cleared up." But we do not believe anything of the kind! Intellect? You know it not! "It has not entered into the heart of man." It is high. What can you know? It is deep. What can you understand? It is only the Spirit that can give you a guess of Heaven!

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

First of all, we think a Christian gets a gaze of what Heaven is, *when in the midst of trials and troubles he is able to cast all his care upon the Lord*, because He cares for him. When waves of distress and billows of affliction pass over the Christian, there are times when his faith is so

strong that he lies down and sleeps, though the hurricane is thundering in his ears and though billows are rocking him like a child in its cradle! Though the earth is removed and the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea, he says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Famine and desolation come, but he says, "Though the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall there be fruit on the vine. Though the labor of the olive shall fail and the field shall yield no increase, yet will I trust in the Lord and stay myself on the God of Jacob." Affliction smites him to the ground. He looks up and says, "Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him." The blows that are given to him are like the lashing of a whip upon the water, covered up immediately—but he seems to feel nothing. It is not stoicism. It is the peculiar sleep of the Beloved. "So He gives His Beloved sleep." Persecution surrounds him. But he is unmoved. Heaven is something like that—a place of holy calm and trust—

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

But there is another season in which the Christian has Heaven revealed to him. And that is *the season of quiet contemplation*. There are precious hours, blessed be God, when we forget the world—times and seasons when we get quite away from it, when our weary spirit wings its way far, far, from scenes of toil and strife! There are precious moments when the angel of contemplation gives us a vision. He comes and puts his finger on the lips of the noisy world. He bids the wheels that are continually rattling in our ears be still. And we sit down and there is a solemn silence of the mind. We find our Heaven and our God! We engage ourselves in contemplating the glories of Jesus, or mounting upwards towards the bliss of Heaven—in going backward to the great secrets of electing love, in considering the immutability of the blessed Covenant, in thinking of that wind which "blows where it wishes"—in remembering our own participation of that life which comes from God, in thinking of our blood-bought union with the Lamb, of the consummation of our marriage with Him in realms of light and bliss—or any such kindred topics! Then it is that we know a little about Heaven! Have you never found, O you sons and daughters of gaiety, a holy calm come over you at times, in reading the thoughts of your fellow men? But oh, how blessed to come and read the thoughts of God—and work and weave them out in contemplation! Then we have a web of contemplation that we wrap around us like an enchanted garment and we open our eyes and see Heaven. Chris-

tian! When you are enabled by the Spirit to hold a season of sweet contemplation, then you can say—"But He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit." For the joys of Heaven are akin to the joys of contemplation and the joys of a holy calm in God! There are times with me—I dare say there may be with some of you—when we do something more than contemplate—when we arise by meditation above thought, itself, and when our soul, after having touched the Pisgah of contemplation by the way, flies positively into the heavenly places in Christ Jesus! There are seasons when our spirit not only stands and flaps his wings over the gulf, but positively crosses the Jordan and dwells with Christ, holds fellowship with angels and talks with spirits—gets up there with Jesus, clasps Him in his arms and cries, "My Beloved is mine and I am His! I will hold Him and will not let Him go!" I know what it is at times to lay my beating head on the bosom of Christ with something more than faith—actually and positively to get hold of Him. Not only to take Him by faith, but actually and positively to feed on Him—to feel a vital union with Him—to grasp His arm and feel His very pulse beating! You say. "Tell it not to unbelievers. They will laugh!" Laugh they may. But when we are there, we care not for your laughter, if you should laugh as loud as devils—for one moment's fellowship with Jesus would recompense us for it all! Picture not fairy lands. This is Heaven, this is bliss. "He has revealed it unto us by His Spirit."

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

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

And then you see what an easy transition it is to Heaven—

"And when these failing lips grow dumb,

***And thought and memory flee.
When You shall in Your kingdom come,
Jesus, remember me!"***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Till that time we can only have these things revealed to us by the Spirit. And we will seek more of that, by His Grace, each day we live.

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

GRACE FOR GRACE

NO. 2087

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

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

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

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

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

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

“The Lord of Hosts has purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory and to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth.” God’s gracious interposition reveals His sovereignty, His wisdom, His power, His love, His Grace. But it reveals *nothing* in men which can admit a boastful *thought*.

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

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

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

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

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

I. First, then, THE THINGS OF GOD ARE FREELY GIVEN. All the blessings of salvation are a gift. All the inheritance of the Covenant is a

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I am going to dwell for a minute or two upon that word "freely." "The things that are freely given to us of God." Hearken, you that have never found Divine Grace yet. Sing while you listen, you that have found it and are now enjoying it. "Freely given." "Well," you say, "the word 'given' is enough to express the meaning, is it not?" Yes, it would be enough, if men

were willing to understand. But the additional word “freely” is meant to make the meaning doubly plain. When we say “Grace,” there is no need to say *Free Grace*, is there? Yet there are some people who will be conveniently deaf, if they can. We wish to speak so that they not only can understand us but cannot *misunderstand*, even if they try. The text is very expressive—“Freely given to us of God.”

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

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

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

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

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

not be drawing upon me.” And so on, until they have taken full compensation for their shilling out of the poor creature who feels bound to endure the chastisement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The power to *receive* is still of the *Holy Spirit* and the Holy Spirit does not find good in us but *brings it to us*. “Well,” says one, “but surely we must pass through a period of great anguish and distress before we can receive the things of God.” Very often men do suffer greatly from a sense of guilt and the fear of punishment before they lay hold on Christ. But they do not lay hold on Christ by this *experience*. The wounded man is not restored by his pains, the famishing man is not fed by his hunger. The power to lay hold on Christ is a *spiritual power*, which must be *given* from above. It lies not concealed within, but is implanted by the Lord from without. No process of discipline, or education, or evolution can enable a man to lay hold on the things of God. He must be born again from above and his heart must be opened to receive the Grace of God. A man can

receive nothing unless it is *given* him to receive it and that gift is the Holy Spirit.

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

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

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

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

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

If you would find eternal life, go where the Spirit of God works—search the Scriptures and hear the Truth of God through which the Spirit of God

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

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

III. My last head is this—THE KNOWLEDGE OF THESE GIFTS IS FREELY GIVEN.

This is so in the lowest and most ordinary sense, since a knowledge of the things freely given of God is communicated to our minds by the Revelation contained in the inspired Scriptures. These Sacred Writings are open to all and all are invited to search them. Read the Word of God and you will know to the letter what are the free gifts of God to men. But this form of knowledge suffices not—we cannot *savingly* know the things of God by mere reading—neither can they be taught to us by a book. The head learns by nature but the heart must learn by Divine Grace. The way to know the things of God is for that which is written *in* the Word of God to be also written *upon* the heart by the same Spirit who wrote the book.

I heard about repentance but I never knew repentance until I repented. I heard of faith, but I never knew faith until I believed. I heard of pardon but I never knew pardon until I was washed in the blood of the Lamb. I read about justification by faith but I was never justified till, by faith, I received the Lord Jesus to be my Righteousness. Appropriation by faith gives an apprehension by the understanding—experimental enjoyment creates true acquaintance. Beloved, go to the Holy Spirit and ask Him to enable you to take the things which God freely gives and when you possess them, you will “know” them.

If you still desire to know more of the infinite preciousness of the gifts of God, it is a wise ambition. And it will be fully and freely satisfied by the Holy Spirit. Resort to Him, for He is the great Teacher. There is no instructor like He is. His knowledge surpasses all others, for He knows the mind of God. No man can communicate to you what he does not know and no man knows the mind of God but the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit knows the infinite and the unsearchable. And therefore He is able to teach you what you cannot learn elsewhere. The mind and meaning of God in every gift of Grace the Spirit can unfold to you. There is no being taught effectually except you are taught by the Spirit of God. All other teaching is superficial and therefore temporary and vain. But the Holy Spirit speaks to the soul and writes the lines of Truth on the fleshy tablets of the heart,

so that they can never be erased. If you would know the things freely given us of God, the Holy Spirit must lead you into the inner secret of the sacred treasure house.

By the same Divine aid you must be enabled to feed upon these choice things and have a full enjoyment of them. The things of God, as I have said before, are best known by a personal enjoyment of them. Who can know meat and drink except by living upon them? When you can feed upon a Scripture, when you can suck out the marrow of a doctrine, when you can extract the juice from a Divine Promise, when you are made fat and flourishing by inspired teaching—*then* has the Lord made you freely to know the blessings of His Covenant. Oh, that the Holy Spirit may be to you as the seven-branched lamp gladdening your eyes with His light and as the loaves of the show bread nourishing your heart! And then may He lead you within the veil and make you to see the Mercy Seat and all the glory of the Lord your God!

Oh, to realize that blessing, “All your children shall be taught of the Lord!” May we be taught by actual enjoyment and heavenly communion so that we may come into holy familiarity with the choice things that are freely given to us of God. I do not know that I want to hear any lecture on bread. I know all that I want to know about that form of food, because I eat it every day. Even so, we need little talk about Covenant blessings, because they are the continual portion of our souls—our strength in every stage of our heavenward pilgrimage and our song in anticipation of the eternal rest.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, go to this university of Heaven. The terms are “nothing to pay,” though the education is beyond all other. Blessed school, wherein sinners are made saints and saints are made to grow into the likeness of Jesus! Everything is as free in this university as in the first school of humble faith where the sinner learns repentance and ventures to trust His Savior. Eternal life is the gift of God in its first breathing. And it is still the gift of God in its highest development. When you stand before the Throne of the Most High, you will stand there through Divine Grace alone. All along, from sin’s pit to Heaven’s gate, without a break the whole road is paved with Divine Grace.

We do not begin with grace and then go on to trust in works—we do not at first receive freely and then afterwards have to live upon a hard-earned wage. No! Still, still, still He works in us to will and to do and we lovingly work under His Divine guidance as we are strengthened by His Divine power. Grace lays the foundation and—

***“Grace all the work shall crown,
Through everlasting days;
It lays in Heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.”***

What of all this? Listen to me for a very few minutes more. I speak to those of you who know the things that are freely given to you by God. Learn from these things to be humble. If you know anything—you have been taught it. If you possess anything—it has been given to you. You are a charity child. The clothes on your back are furnished by the Lord’s favor. The bread in your mouth is the provision of His love. A proud saint is a contradiction in terms. “What have you which you have not received?”

In the next place, be generous. I cannot believe in a stingy saint. Here again there is a contradiction in terms. All things are freely given you—are you going to hoard them? “Freely you have received, freely give.” He who turns over the coin in his pocket to make it as small as ever he can before he gives it is a poor creature. He gets the smallest change on Saturday that he may give it on Sunday. He is a saint, is he? Let those believe in his saintship who can. The child of God should be free-hearted. He should give *himself* away because Jesus gave Himself for us. You should be of a large heart, for you serve a large-hearted Christ who has given you all things freely to enjoy.

Next, be ready to impart what you know. If the Spirit of God has made you to know the things freely given of God, try to tell somebody else. Don’t act as if you had a patent, or a monopoly and wanted Divine Grace to be a secret. You have not the gift of God yourself if you have no desire that others should have it. The first instinct of a converted man is to try to convert others. If you have no wish to bring others to Heaven, you are not going there yourself.

Try and impart this knowledge in the way in which you received it. You received it by the Holy Spirit. Then go and teach it—not in the words which man’s wisdom teaches—but in the power of the Spirit of God. Last night I felt so sickly that I thought I should not be able to preach today. But I cheered myself with this reflection—if you cannot give wealth of illustration, if you can display no beauty of style, never mind—you can tell out the soul-saving Truth of God in plain words and God will own it. Holy Spirit, bless my feeble words this morning! You can do it and You shall have all the praise.

Go to your Sunday school class this afternoon, dear Friends, and say, “Lord, put words into my mouth and teach me, that I may teach others. Enable me to labor, not in the power of *my* knowledge, eloquence, or experience but under the guidance of Your Spirit.” Better five words in the Spirit than a long oration in your own power.

Lastly, if the Lord has given us all these things freely, let us praise Him. I did not mind hearing our Brother over there cry out “Amen.” He may do it again, if he likes. Sometimes it is well to let the living water of praise to God burst the pipes and flood the streets. What a dumb set we are! The Lord has to pull hard at the rope before our bell speaks at all. Let us praise Him for what He has done for us and make this vow this morning—

***“I will praise Him in life, I will praise Him in death,
And praise Him as long as he lends me breath;
And say, when the death-claw lies cold on my brow,
‘If ever I loved you, my Jesus, ‘tis now.’”***

The Lord Himself bless you all, according to the riches of His Grace. Amen.

Portions Of Scripture Read Before Sermon—1 Corinthians 1:18-31; 2

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—386, 491, 236.

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NATURAL OR SPIRITUAL?

NO. 407

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

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

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

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

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

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

This morning I propose—and O that God the Holy Spirit may bear witness in our hearts!—I propose, first of all, to dwell a little while upon the

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

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

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

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

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

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

Perhaps it was left for this age to permit wickedness to culminate to the highest and to see the growth of the vilest hypocrisy that ever appeared among the sons of men. We have had abundant proof that men of the most scientific minds—persons who have been exceedingly inquiring, men

who have trod the realms of knowledge and gone even to the seventh heaven of wisdom—that these have nevertheless proved that they could not receive the things of the kingdom of God by their determined opposition and enmity against anything like the Truth as it is in Jesus. When you hear them blaspheming the holy name of Christ, when you hear them bringing what they call “scientific facts” against the Truth of Revelation, be not amazed as though it were some new thing. Write this down in your memorandum book—the Holy Spirit said of old—“The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God” and these men live to prove that what the Spirit of God said was very Truth.

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

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

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

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

Better read the almanac than read the Bible, according to some. And as to the doctrines, “Oh,” they say—

**“For forms of faith let graceless zealots fight,
He can’t be wrong whose life is in the light.”**

“O yes, no doubt,” they say, when they see some zealous Brother vindicating a Truth, “you are all right and so is your friend opposite who believes

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

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

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

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

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

more am I confirmed in the fact that the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

O Sirs, the doctrines of God teach you your relationship to your Maker—is not that worth understanding? They teach you your condition before the Most High God—should you not know that? Ought you not to have clear ideas of it? They show you how God can be just to man and yet be gracious—is not that a riddle that is worthy to have an answer? They reveal to you how you can approach God and become His child—how you may be conformed to His image and made a partaker of His glory—is not

that worth understanding? They reveal to you the world to come. They put to your short-sighted eye a telescope which enables you to pierce the darkness and to see the unseen.

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

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

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

III. Thirdly, I propose to speak of THE REASON FOR THE REJECTION OF THE DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL BY NATURAL MEN.

The reasons are to be found in *themselves*. And what are those reasons? The Apostle tells us they cannot receive them for they are foolishness unto them. I think he means they cannot receive them, first of all, *for want of taste*. You have sometimes seen a man standing before a splendid picture. It was painted by Raphael, or Rubens, or Titians and he stands and admires it. "What a noble countenance!" he says, "How well the coloring has been placed! How excellently he understands his lights and shadows! What a fine conception! I could stand a week and admire that splendid picture." Some country bumpkin who is walking through the gallery, hears what our friend, the artist, is saying and he says, "I should not like to stand a week and look at it, it looks to me to be an old decayed piece of canvas that wants cleaning. I do not think the world would be much the worse if it should all get cleaned off."

He walks through the gallery and notices that on the wall outside there is a great daub—a picture of an elephant standing on its head and a clown or two performing in some circus and he says, “*That’s* beautiful—that’s just my taste.” Now you blame our country friend because he cannot admire that which is really excellent, but finds a great deal more satisfaction in a common daub plastered on the wall. It would be quite correct to say of him that he cannot receive the beauties of refinement and taste because he has never been in any way instructed in the matter. He has a want of taste for such things.

Just so is it with the natural man. Give him some work of fiction—a daub upon the wall. Give him some fine piece of imagination, (and what is that when compared with the Word of Him that spoke from Heaven?), and he is satisfied. But before the Book of God, before the Revelation of the Most High, of the All-Wise, he stands and he sees *nothing*. Nothing to admire. Nothing to enchant his heart. Nothing to kindle his imagination. Nothing to enlist his faith. Nothing to arouse his powers. Nothing to excite his hopes. Surely there is a sad want of taste here and the natural man, for want of taste for such things, loves not the things of God.

But it is not merely for want of taste. It is for want of organs by which to appreciate the third. Here is a blind man and we have taken him upon a pilgrimage to the summit of a mountain. What a landscape, my Friend! What a landscape! What do you think of it? “Not much,” says he. Why, look at those lakes there melting into one! Do you not see the mountain yonder across the valley? What a variety of colors upon its sides! Did ever you see such a blending of colors as that which is here produced by the Great Artist? And *there*, cannot you see yonder clouds how nobly they sail along? Look downward. What a pleasant sight is that village which seems to have diminished till it looks like a few children’s toys put together there in sport.

And now turn yonder and see that winding river like a thread of silver going through the emerald fields—what a magnificent view! What do you think of it, my Friend? “I do not think much of it,” he says. You are astonished. At last you say, “Well, if you do not think something of this, you must be blind.” “That is just what I am,” he says, “and of course I can not think much of this when I am blind.”

Now the natural man is blind. The eye of the Christian is his faith. But the natural man, being destitute of a living faith in our living Savior is like a man without eyes. He says it is foolish. It is nothing to him. Do you think you could get a blind man to pay hundreds of pounds for a single picture? It is of no use to him. What would a deaf man give to go where you hear the sweetest singing that ever trilled from human lips? “Oh, no,” he thinks, “it is foolish.” He can hardly understand why men should spend their money and give the time to listen to the numerous combinations of sound produced by a Handel. Or if blind, he cannot comprehend why men should build long galleries and hang their fortunes out in pictures, or why they should travel to the Alps, or wish to cross the sea to view the mighty wonders of other lands.

“No,” he says, “it is foolish and trivial—better stop at home. There is nothing in it.” So is it with the natural man. He lacks the organs—he has

no ear of faith, no eye of faith and he cannot, therefore, receive the things of God. They are foolishness to him.

But more than this—not only does he lack taste and lack organs, *but he actually lacks the nature which could appreciate these things*. I will tell you a fable. There was a certain swine exceedingly learned among its class. It had studied the flavor of all manners of seeds and fruits and acorns and knew right well, by long calculations and experience, the right time when the trough would be full and when it would be time for it to come forth from its resting place. Greatly respected was this aged swine and considered by its fellows to be one of the great dignitaries of the sty. And one day it enlightened its fellows by a speech to this effect—"I saw," he said, "the other night, by the light of the moon, a man—poor simple man he was, looking through a long tube at the stars.

"Now I thought within myself that surely he was mad. If he had been scraping up acorns, there would have been some common sense in it. If he had been getting together husks, why there would have been something practical in it—but for a man with two feet and two hands—to be letting them be still and only using his eyes to look up at the stars—ah, he must be a fanatic and an enthusiast. He is not as sensible and practical as you and I are, who are content so long as we get our barley meal regularly and can creep back and lie down again in our straw."

And all his audience grunted their approbation. They said at once that this human being was far inferior to the swine in the matter of practical wisdom. Do not smile—perhaps you belong to these gentry yourselves. I heard a human swine say the other day—mark, a *human swine*—it was one who sometimes could look through a telescope and this human swine said, "Ah, there you are! You are going to your chapel on Thursday night and to your prayer meeting on Monday and you spend hours in praying and reading your Bible. It is fanaticism. Now, I am the man for common sense. I stick to my business, I do. I say, 'Leave these things to take care of themselves.' I am looking out for the present. I am practical, I am."

And those that were by, grunted their approval, like human swine, as they were and if a really spiritual man had been present he would not have wondered, but he would have said, "Every being to its taste. These are natural men and they set up their own nature. It is a swinish nature and they act up to their swinish spirit." He would not have been angry with them, but he would have pitied them. Poor things, "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God." "What a degrading simile!" says one. It is, Sir, but not more degrading than human nature is. "Why you make us out to be inferior to Christians then!" Of course you are. As much as the brute is inferior to a man so is a mere *natural man* inferior to a *spiritually-minded man*, because we rise by three steps of the ladder.

There is the animal, he lacks intellect. God gives intellect and then comes the man. God gives His Spirit and then comes the Christian—but the Christian is a higher and nobler creature than the mere offspring of Adam. Just as much as the second Adam, who is the Lord from Heaven, exceeds the first Adam, who was but made of the dust of the earth, so do the seed of the second Adam exceed all the offspring of the first Adam—

rising to a higher life, to greater dignities and to a nobler destiny than they.

IV. And now, lastly, I come to THE PRACTICAL TRUTHS WHICH FLOW FROM THIS GREAT, THOUGH SORROWFUL, FACT.

Do you not perceive, Brothers and Sisters, that if what I have stated is true there is *absolute necessity for regeneration, or the work of the Spirit?* An absolute necessity, I say, because in no one single instance can it be dispensed with. You may educate a nature till it should attain the highest point, but you cannot educate an old nature into a new one. You may educate a horse, but you cannot educate it into a man. You shall train the bird that sits upon your finger but you cannot train a sparrow into an eagle—nor is it possible for you to train by the best instruction the natural man into a spiritual man.

Between the two there is still a great gulf fixed. But cannot the natural man, by great efforts at last come to be spiritual? No, he cannot. Let the fish in the water wish as much as ever it likes and despite Dr. Darwin's hypothesis, I declare that no pike by all its wishing ever wished itself into an ostrich and that no single minnow was ever known to make itself into a lark. It may get as high as its own nature can get it but not beyond. It is a transformation which only the Divine Being can effect. So you may by your own efforts make yourselves the best of *natural men*. You may become the most patriotic of statesmen, you may become the most sober and discreet of moralists, you may become the kindest and most benevolent of philanthropists—but into a *spiritual man* you cannot bring yourself.

Do what you will and still at your very best there is a division wide as eternity between you and the regenerate man. But cannot another man help us out of such a nature into a state of grace? No, by no means. As man is powerless for himself, so is he powerless for his fellow. The priest may dip his pretentious fingers into the water which he professes to have sanctified and may put the drops upon the infant's brow but that the child is regenerate is a lie. He may take the child in late life into the baptismal pool if he will and there bury him agreeably to the Apostle's metaphor—but that by immersion any more than by sprinkling a soul can be regenerate is a gross and infamous lie. He may put his hand upon his head and bless him in God's name. He may perform many enchantments over him and conclude at last with the final sacred greasing and dispatch his spirit with extreme unction into another world—but to regenerate another man is as impossible to our fellow men as to create a world or to make another Heaven and rival the majesty of Deity.

How, then, is it to be done? The Spirit of God alone can do it. O Sirs, this is a great mystery, but you must know it if you would be saved. It is a solemn secret, but it is one which must be known in your consciences, or else shut out from Heaven you must be. The Spirit of God must make you new—you must be born again. "If a man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature, old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new." The same power which raised Christ Jesus from the dead must be exerted in raising us from the dead. The very same omnipotence, without which angels or worms could not have had a being, must again step forth

out of its privy-chamber and do as great a work as it did at the first creation in making us anew in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There have been attempts at all times to get rid of this unpleasant necessity. Constantly the Christian Church itself tries to forget it—but as often as ever this old doctrine of regeneration is brought forward pointedly—God is pleased to favor His Church with a revival. The doctrine which looks at first as though it would hush every exertion with indolence and make men sit down with listlessness and despair, is really like the trumpet of God to awake the dead. And where it is fully and faithfully preached—though it grate upon the carnal ear, though it excite enmity in many against the man who dares to proclaim it—yet it is owned of God.

Because it honors God, God will honor it. This was the staple preaching of Whitfield and it was by the preaching of this that he was made as the mighty angel flying through the midst of Heaven preaching the everlasting Gospel to every creature. He was always great upon that which he called the great R—Regeneration. Whenever you heard him, the three Rs came out clearly—Ruin, Regeneration and Redemption! Man *ruined*, wholly ruined, hopelessly helplessly, eternally ruined! Man *regenerated* by the Spirit of God and by the Spirit of God alone wholly made a new creature in Christ! Man *redeemed*, redeemed by precious blood from all his sins—not by works of righteousness, not by deeds of the Law, not by ceremonies, prayers, or resolutions—but by the precious blood of Christ! Oh, we must be very pointed and very plain about regeneration, for this is the very pith and marrow of the matter—“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Another practical inference. If you and I, or any of us, have received the things of the Spirit of God, we ought to look upon that as comfortable evidence that we have been born again. What do you say, my Hearer? Does your faith lay her hand this morning upon the head of Christ and take Him to be your Savior, your Teacher and your All? If so, blessed are you, for flesh and blood have not revealed this unto you. Or does your spirit this morning not only agree to the Truth of divine election, of assured redemption and of the finished work and immutable love of Christ—but do you love the Truth in your heart as well as agree to it in the head? If so—the natural man receives not these things—therefore you are no natural man.

The Spirit of God has brought you into His kingdom because He has enabled you to receive His Truth. Precious is faith indeed because it assuredly evidences to us what is beyond the reach of our senses. You can't tell whether you are born again or not except by your faith. There will be no difference in your face. There will be no difference in your flesh—nor even in your mental characteristics. You may remain to a great extent the same man as far as mind and body are concerned. But *faith*—that which was not there before—*faith* is the grand symptom which betokens returning health. It is the flag hung out upon the castle of the soul showing that the King is the secret tenant in the state-room of the soul. It is the light which shows that the sun has risen. It is the morning star which heralds the full illumination and meridian sunlight of eternal glory. Prize your

faith—ask for more of it—and look upon it as being an evidence that you have passed from death unto life.

And, lastly, my dear Hearers—how this text shows you the necessity of accompanying all your efforts to do good with earnest prayer to God! “Old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon.” When we first begin to preach we think that the doctrines that are so sweet to us will be sure to be sweet to other people. And when persons begin to abuse and find fault we are astonished. Oh, if we had begun to learn the Truth a little better, we should not be astonished at all—except when any receive the Truth—for *that* we should always think to be the greatest miracle of all.

You have been trying to teach your child and it is not converted yet. Ah, don't marvel, but take your child in the arms of your prayer to the spirit of God and say, “O Lord, I cannot put the Truth into this child, for it cannot receive it—if You renew its heart, then it shall receive the Truth indeed!” And specially may I ask your continued and earnest prayers for me. What is the minister of Christ to do? He has to speak to a mountain and bid it be removed. Can his words remove it? He has to speak to fire and bid it change its nature into water. He has to speak to the dead and say, “You dry bones, live!” Is not his ministry a foolish and a futile thing unless the Spirit of God is with him?

I pray you then, be instant in your prayers to God. Strive earnestly at the Throne of Grace for all the ministers of the New Testament—that power may be bestowed upon them—for we are better at home than here if the Spirit of God is not with us.

In vain, O you Unbelievers, you sound your trumpets! In vain, O you Gideons, you break your pitchers that the light may shine! In vain, you Jonahs, you cry through the midst of the wretched city! In vain, you Peters, you preach even to peoples of many nations! If the Spirit come not down from on high like tongues of fire—if God sends not life and energy and light with the Word—you shall go back without your sheaves—you shall return without success, wearied by disappointment, damaged by fear and ready to lay down and die.

But oh, if you come forth, O Spirit of God, there is not a preacher in the corner of the streets who shall not win his souls! There is not a minister today in the humblest conventicle, in the lowest of back streets which shall not be made like Peter on the day of Pentecost. There is not one feeble man or woman teaching children in the Sabbath-School who shall not become a winner of souls when the Spirit of God is with him!

Of all that I have taught this morning, this is the sum—Man is *dead* in sin and spiritual life is a *gift* of God. You who have received it should plead with God that that gift should be bestowed on others. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned.”

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FARM LABORERS

NO. 1602

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

***“I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.
So then neither he who plants is anything, neither he
who waters, but God that gives the increase. Now
he who plants and he who waters are one:
and every man shall receive his own reward
according to his own labor. For we are
laborers together with God: you
are God's husbandry.”
1 Corinthians 3:6-9.***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Beloved's and my Beloved is mine." The Church is God's farm by choice and purchase.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

vineyard, which is mine, is before me: you, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.”

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

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

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

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

In answer to the prayer, “give us this day our daily bread,” He might have bid the clouds drop manna, morning by morning, at each man's door, but He sees that it is for our good to work and so He uses the hands of the plowman and the sower for our supply. God might plow and sow His chosen farm, the Church, by miracle, or by angels, but it is a great instance of His condescension towards His Church that He blesses her through her own sons and daughters. He employs us for our own good, for we who are laborers in His fields receive much more good for ourselves

than we bestow. Labor develops our spiritual muscle and keeps us in health. "Unto me," says Paul, "who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

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

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

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

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

Why, many of the members of our Churches live as if their only business on the farm was to pluck blackberries or gather wild flowers! They are great at finding fault with other people's plowing and mowing, but not a hand's turn will they do themselves. Come on, my good fellows! Why do you stand all the day idle? The harvest is plenteous and the laborers are few. You who think yourselves more cultivated than ordinary people, if

you are, indeed, Christians, must not strut about and despise those who are hard at work. If you do, I shall say, "That person has mistaken his master. He may probably be in the employ of some gentleman farmer who cares more for show than profit, but our great Lord is practical—and on His estate His laborers attend to necessary labor."

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

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

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

Observe that, on God's farm, there is unity of purpose among the laborers. Read the text. "Now he that plants and he that waters are one." One Master has employed them and though He may send them out at different times and to different parts of the farm, yet they are all one in being used for one end—to work for one harvest. In England we do not understand what is meant by watering, because the farmer could not water all his farm—but in the East a farmer waters almost every inch of ground. He would have no crop if he did not use all means for irrigating the fields. If you have ever been in Italy, Egypt, or Palestine, you will have seen a com-

plete system of wells, pumps, wheels, buckets, channels, little streamlets, pipes and so on, by which the water is carried all over the garden to every plant—otherwise in the extreme heat of the sun it would be dried up.

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

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

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

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

Here we have mention of a personal service and a personal reward—“Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.” The reward is proportionate, not to the success, but to *labor*! Many discouraged workers may be comforted with that expression. You are not to be

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

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

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

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

III. So much upon the laborers. Now for the main point again. GOD HIMSELF IS THE GREAT WORKER. He may use what laborers He pleases, but the increase comes only from Him. Brothers, you know it is so in natural things—the most skillful farmer cannot make the wheat germinate, grow and ripen. He cannot even preserve a single field till harvest time, for the farmer’s enemies are many and mighty. In farming there’s many a slip ‘twixt the cup and the lip and when the farmer thinks he shall reap his crop, often there are blights and mildews lingering about

to rob him of his gains. God must give the increase. If any man is dependent on God, it is the farmer and as he, we are, all of us, dependent upon God from year to year for the food by which we live. Even the king must live by the increase of the field.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Addressing the rough crowd in the open air, young man, if you are preaching of pardon through the atoning blood, it is the God of Peter who is testifying of His Son even as He did on the day of Pentecost! O Brother laborers, ours is a high honor, since the Father is with us and works by us! As Mr. Wesley said, “The best of all is, God is with us.” The Lord of

Hosts is with us and, therefore, we cannot fail! If we could, in working with God, be defeated, then God's own honor would be compromised and that cannot be!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I. First, there is NO CHURCH BUT WHAT IS BUILT ON CHRIST, I mean, of course, no true, no *real* Church. There are many churches in the world, so called, but this may be laid down as a first principle that there is but one Church and that this one Church is built upon Christ, alone.

Whatever community, congregation, hierarchy, sect, or corporation may call itself a Church, or even *the* Church, if it is not built upon Christ, is not a Church at all. No matter how great in numbers, nor how ancient, nor how wealthy, nor how learned, nor how pretentious, bigoted, dominant, or exclusive it may be—it is not Christ's Church if it is not built upon Christ!

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

***"Christ is My first elect,' He said,
Then chose our souls in Christ our Head."***

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

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

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

in whom we have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His Grace.

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

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

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

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

The law of Christ is the law of the Church. All the decrees of popes and councils. All the resolutions of assemblies, synods, presbyteries and associations. And all the ordinances of men as individuals, however great they are, when they are all put together, if they at all differ from the Law

of Christ, they are mere wind and waste paper! No, they are worse—they are treasonable insults to the majesty of King Jesus! Those who build apart from the authority of Christ build off of the Foundation and their fabric will fall. There is no Law and no authority in a true Church but that of Christ Himself. We who are His ministers are His servants and the servants of the Church—not lords or lawmakers. To His Law a faithful Church brings all things as to the sure test.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All Your saints come to You and rest on You, O Christ, and in You all the building, fitly framed together, grows unto an holy Temple in the Lord. You are the Stem from which it branches, the Head in which it lives, the Shepherd by whom it is fed, the Captain by whom it is marshaled, the

Husband to whom it is married! You are, indeed, the All in All of the Church which You have redeemed with Your own blood—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jesus is the sum and substance, crown and glory of the Gospel.

If then, you hear a gospel in which the freewill of man is spoken of as the main agent. If you hear a gospel in which the works of man, or the forms and ceremonies practiced by priests are set up as being fundamental things, reject such teaching, for it is not the good news from Heaven! The only Good News is this, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Let others preach what they please, as for us, “we preach Christ Crucified.” Jesus Himself preached the very Gospel of the Gospel when He cried, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Now then, Brothers and Sisters, for I speak to many of you who teach the Gospel, I beseech you to remember my simple text of today and, from now on, teach nothing apart from Christ. The teaching of doctrines is not the teaching of the Gospel if those doctrines are held in a dry, didactic style apart from Christ. Suppose I preach the doctrine of election. That is one thing—but unless I preach that we are chosen *in Christ* I have left out the Foundation and my teaching crumbles to the ground as a bowing wall or as a tottering fence! Suppose I preach final perseverance, it is well. But I have not preached the Gospel unless I show that it is because *Jesus* lives, we shall also live and that the preservation of the saints depends on their union with Him!

Suppose I am teaching justification—it is not the true justification unless it is the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus which I hold forth! Here I commend to you the example of the earlier preachers of the Church. From such of their writings as remain, we gather that they dwelt much upon the actual events of the Redeemer’s *life*. They are not always so clear as one could wish upon the great doctrines as Paul gives them to us, but there is one point in which they excel. You may not hear enough from them about *justification by faith*, but you hear a great deal concerning the *precious blood* of Christ! They do not always speak so clearly upon regeneration as we would desire, but they speak much of the Resurrection of Christ and of the newness of life which His saints enjoy because of it!

Pardon to them is a washing in the blood of Christ. Conversion is being called by Christ. Resurrection is a risen Christ. Everything is brought out as a matter of fact arising from the actual life and death of the Savior and I am free to confess that I greatly admire this way of preaching the Gospel. How does Paul put it? What was the Gospel to him? Hear him—"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; by which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve."

Thus, you see, Paul's body of Divinity was the life and death of that only embodied Divinity, the Lord Jesus. My Brothers and Sisters, always set forth the Gospel in close connection with your Lord, fetching it, as it were, out of Him. The juice of the grape is pleasant, but if you would know what it is in all its purity keep the grapes near you and press them in the vineyard where they grow. So the Gospel is the wine of Christ, but it is sweetest when it flows fresh from the cluster. Preach Jesus Christ when you preach His doctrine, or else you may make the doctrine to be like the stone at the door of His sepulcher, whereas it ought to be like a throne of ivory on which, like another Solomon, your Lord sits resplendent! Some preach experience and they do well—but they should be exceedingly careful to keep Jesus very prominent.

We have a school of Brothers who preach little else than experience and I do not condemn them. But what is the experience of a poor fellow sinner to me? How does it help me to hear that he groans as I do, or sings as I do? It may be of some small service to me, but there are more excellent things! I need to know how Jesus felt and what Christ can do for my Brother and for me. Experience is admirable when Jesus Christ is set forth in it, but if you take up an experimental vein of things, whether of human corruption, or have human perfection and Jesus Christ in the background, you are marring the Gospel! Jesus is the one Foundation and there is no Gospel apart from Him!

So, too, with practice. By all means let us have practical preaching and plenty of it! And let it come down sternly and faithfully on the vices of the times. But merely to preach against this and that vice and extol this and that virtue is a mission fit enough for Socrates or Plato, but does not well become a minister of Jesus Christ! Set Jesus forth, my practical Brother! His example shames vice and encourages virtue! Set Him up as the mirror of all perfection and in Him men will see what they ought to be and learn how to come at it. Jesus Christ, then, is the only Gospel! We leave that point, being abundantly sure that you are persuaded of it.

III. Thirdly. THERE IS NO HOPE OF SALVATION BUT THAT WHICH IS BUILT UPON CHRIST. This is another point upon which I need not speak much. I will only spend a few minutes in talking upon certain other hopes. No doubt some think it must be well with them because they were brought up from their childhood most respectably. Their parents were

excellent Christian people and they believe that they, themselves, having never done anything very wrong, are no doubt safe.

Ah, my dear Hearers, if this is your only hope, you are lost, for you are dead in sin! That which is born of the flesh, the best of flesh that ever was is flesh and flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God! You must be born again! You must have a far better hope than any which can spring out of your birth and your relations. "Yes, but," says someone, "I had all the ceremonies of the Church performed upon me." Yes, and it makes no difference to me what Church it was. If you are building, even, upon rites which God has given, they will not suffice you—they cannot bear the weight of your soul. Baptism, the Lord Supper, or 50,000 sacraments, if men were to make so many, would not help you one solitary inch! The only Foundation for your soul's hope must be Christ and none of these outward things.

"Ah," says another, "but I have diligently performed a great many good works." I would to God you had 10 times as many good works, but if you have committed one single sin, no works can save you! All the good works of the best men that ever lived would make but a rotten foundation for them if they were to place reliance on them. Abound in good works, but do not trust them! Human merit is a foundation of sand. "But I have had special spiritual feelings," says one. "I have been broken down, I have been lifted up." Yes, you may have been crushed down to Hell's door and lifted up to Heaven's gate—but there is nothing in feelings and excitements which can be a ground of hope.

"Why," says one, "it has troubled me that I have not had these feelings." Do not let it trouble you, but go to Jesus Christ and rest in Him! Feelings or no feelings! High frames and low frames are all delusions if they are trusted in. We can no more be saved by our *feelings* than by our *works*. "Oh, but," says another, "I have confidence that I am saved, for I have had a wonderful dream and, moreover, I heard a voice and saw a vision!" Rubbish all! Dreams, visions, voices? Throw them all away! There is not the slightest reliance to be placed upon them. "What, not if I saw *Christ*?" No, certainly not, for vast multitudes saw Him in the days of His flesh—and died and perished, after all! "But surely a dream will save me." It will give you a dreamy hope and when you awake in the next world your dream will be gone!

The one thing to rest upon is the sure Word of testimony—Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and whoever believes in Him is not condemned. I believe in Him and, therefore, I am not condemned! Why do I believe my sin to be forgiven? Because Jesus died to put away the sins of Believers and there is no condemnation to those who are in Him! Why do I believe myself to be justified? Because he that believes is justified—the Word of God says so. How do I know that I am saved? Because Jesus Christ has declared that whoever believes in Him is not condemned! To believe in Him is to trust in Him, to make Him my Foundation! I trust in Him. He is my Foundation and I am saved, or else His Word is not true.

I know that His Word is true and, therefore, I am at rest. It is written, "He that believes in Him has everlasting life." I believe in Him, therefore I

have everlasting life! I have His promise that I shall never perish, neither shall any pluck me out of His hands, therefore I shall never perish, neither shall any separate me from His love. You see, then, there is no hope of salvation but what is fixed upon Christ alone! And I invite and entreat you, if any of you have any hope which goes beyond Christ or besides Christ, get rid of it! Throw it on a dunghill and loathe it as an insult to God! Do as the man did with the bad bank note. When he found it was a forgery he buried it and ran away as fast as he could, for fear anybody should think the note had ever been in his possession!

So, if you are trusting in anything that is not of Christ, bury your faith and run away from it, for it is a false confidence and will work ill to your soul! Let your faith cry, "None but Christ!" All-saving faith delights in that cry. For eternal salvation, "no other Foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid."

IV. Our last point is this—THERE IS NO CHRISTIAN BUT THE MAN BUILT ON JESUS CHRIST. Here is a Christian and of one thing in him I am sure—I cannot tell whether he holds Arminian views or Calvinistic views, but if he is a Christian he has no Foundation but Christ. Here is a person who reverences the Pope. Here is another who glories in the name of Protestant. Here is a third who is a Baptist—which is the Christian out of these? I answer, he is the Christian that is built on Christ, whoever he may be. But if he can do without Christ, he is not worthy of the name of Christian!

What do we mean? Why this. I mean first, every man to be a Christian must *rest His whole soul upon Christ* as to eternal salvation. There must be no stuttering or stammering over that! There must be no mixing up the merits of Jesus with priests or ceremonies. No, it must be a clear—a straight line—Christ for me! Christ *everything* for me—my one and only hope! Any deviation here is fatal. On the Cross is written, *Spes unica* and it remains the one and only hope of a burdened soul.

Next, if you are to be a Christian, *Christ must be your model*. By the aid of His Holy Spirit, you must try to do what He would have done in your position and under your circumstances. You are not to say, "I cannot follow Christ in this." You are never to renounce His leadership. If you do, you must give up being a Christian because you are bound to take up His Cross and follow Him. He claims to be your King when He becomes your Savior. A true Christian is a man who builds upon Christ, as his Model, as walls are built on a foundation. A true Christian is one whose growing up is in Christ, for, strange to say, the Temple of God grows. Nor need we wonder, for it is a *living* temple. I have seen magnificent pieces of architecture masterpieces and it has struck me, when I looked at them, that they must have grown.

An ordinary, clumsy bit of work displays the mason and the carpenter, but perfect architecture looks as if it grew! And Christ's Church does grow, for Christ's people grow. But all our growing up must come out of Christ. When a man says, "Years ago I used to worship with these Christian people and I felt very happy with them, but I have now more education and have got beyond them," he is guided by his pride and not

by Divine Grace. No true Christian talks so! The higher he grows, the more he grows into Christ! The wiser he is, the more he shows the wisdom of Christ. If he has begun aright, he may advance as far as he can, but he never can advance beyond Christ. He will get to be less and Christ will be more and more to him, for he is not a Christian who does not stick to this—that the Foundation goes as far as he means to go and he builds never beyond that—but builds upward *upon* that and upon that alone.

And he, again, is the true Christian who *lives for Christ*, to whom Christ's Glory is the great object of his being. He is a Christian who reckons that time wasted which is not used for Jesus—that substance wasted which is not used in obedience to Jesus—who considers that he does not live except as Christ lives in him. Brothers and Sisters, I pray that you may all be Christians of this sort—only let it be with you forevermore Jesus Christ. I do not like to preach a sermon without feeling the presence of my Master. I have done so, but never to my own comfort. I cannot bear to come away from the Monday evening Prayer Meeting without feeling that the Lord has been there and He generally is.

The true heart does not like to engage in any kind of enterprise without first consulting Him and doing it in His sight. We are a very busy Church and I want you, as a busy Church, doing a great deal to always keep the Master near you. The most holy work gets to be mere routine—to be done mechanically—unless we enjoy His dear love and sweet Presence and blessed smile in the doing of His will. Sit at Jesus' feet with Mary as well as work for Him like Martha. May He be the Foundation of everything, not only of the Church, but of our hope, of our character, of every little thing we do!

When you are laying the first stone of a new enterprise, lay it upon Christ with fair colors. Set it in the vermilion of His precious blood! Perfume it with the oil of gratitude and lay it upon Him alone! And so shall you, by His Grace, build for eternity and glorify His precious name! Amen.

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THE CHRISTIAN'S GLORIOUS INVENTORY NO. 2589

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

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

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

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

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

or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come.”

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

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

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

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

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

You sometimes speak of “my minister.” Yes, you have a particular minister, but then all ministers are yours—not only that special one, but all who are called of God! Whatever may be their peculiar mode of

preaching, they are yours to profit by, if, indeed, they are God's servants. There is Boanerges—he preaches in a thundering manner of the wrath to come. His sermons alarm you. He drags a harrow across your soul. He speaks as if he had just come from the top of Sinai where the thunders of God were pealing and the lightning flashing beneath his feet! He speaks like a man impressed with solemn awe, as if he had, for a while, traversed the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, and had descended into the abyss of Hell and seen the horrid pits where the wicked lie and bite their bonds. Hear him, *he is yours*.

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

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

And, next, "*the world*" is ours. This great world, considered naturally, the home wherein we live, is all ours. Men have carved it out for themselves. Worldlings have said, "So much is mine, and so much is yours. Yonder fields belong to that rich man. And the houses there and that park belong to such another." They may call it theirs if they like, but the world is yours! It is yours as much as if you had a legal title to it here below. It is yours, not in imagination, or conception, but in reality. Do you ask me how it is? I tell you, the world only exists for you! If you and all

your fellow Christians were gone out of it. If the righteous were departed, the world would at once be a desert. "You are the salt of the earth"—the conservers, the preservers of it—it abides for your sake! Take *you* away and the world would be turned into rottenness and perish! The world is but the scaffold of your soul's salvation—it is but the place where you prepare yourselves to enter into the world above. This world would have been consumed by fire long ago if it had not been for the righteous. God bids the flames tarry till He has taken all His children Home! He only keeps the world in existence for the sake of His elect! It is a debased world, the trail of the serpent is all over it. It is spoiled, its beauty is marred, it is a fair world but a false one, its glory is departed. God would utterly destroy it but that He intends His Church to be fostered in the wilderness and He will not sweep the wilderness away till He has carried His people through it. This world is yours—there is not a speck of it which is not yours! The whole of it is yours, from the East to the West, and from the North to the South. The lands of virgin snows are yours. The wide, expansive ocean is yours. Yon blue sky with all its gems of stars is yours. "All things are yours." One man says of a certain part, "That is mine!" He knows not what he says—it is yours! It is let to him for a little while. He occupies it as a tenant. He is only the man who takes care of your house for you. It is your house, though he lives in it and enjoys the comfort of it. He stretches himself on the couch, but the house is yours—and it shall be yours, by-and-by, when Jesus Christ shall come a second time, without sin unto salvation, and shall reign gloriously upon the earth with His ancients! Then shall you wear a crown and shall be made a king and a priest unto your God, and shall reign with Christ upon the earth for a thousand years!

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

truly as He is God, He will hear the cry of the destitute and will not despise your prayer.

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

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

The next thing does not seem to be of any value at all—"or death." But, Beloved, what would life be worth if it were not for death? There are some books that have only plain black letters till you come to the, "Finis," which is illuminated. So it is often with life—it is printed in black letters till you come to the last leaf—but that page is lit up with glory, for that page is death! O Life, I would call you a curse if I could not see Death behind you! To live here always—who would wish it? To walk perpetually

upon this earth and to dwell here absent from the Lord, and present in the body—*that* were, indeed, a curse! But life is a blessing because after life comes death. Yes, death, itself, is a blessing to the Christian! Usually, we look at death, not so much as what it is, as what it appears to be. Death is an angel, the fairest in creation! But Death sometimes dresses itself in terrible garments. It *appears* to be terrible, but it is not. Moreover, we think death to be dreadful because we do not see the whole of death. You know why Belshazzar trembled when he saw the handwriting on the wall—it was because he could see nothing but the hand—he could not see the body. That is why we are afraid of the hand of death, because we see nothing but the hand. If we could see the whole of death, we would count it a cherub! Death, indeed, is not a dreary thing to those who believe in Jesus—those who know how to commune with death from day to day will never be afraid of talking or thinking of it. It is the gate to endless joy—and do we dread to enter there? What is it? The grave is a bath where my body shall, like Esther, bathe itself in spices until its Lord shall say, “Awake!” And I shall rise from my grave, clothed in immortality and glory, to dwell with Him forever!

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

Oh, it is pleasant to think well of death! I have heard of a good Christian who was asked if she was afraid to die. She replied, “I have dipped my foot in the river Jordan every morning before breakfast for these 40 years and I am not afraid of the current.” It is good to die, at last, when we know what it is to die every day. Paul said, “I die daily.” Well, if we die every day, it will not be hard to die in our last day. You will not be afraid of death if you love the Lord. If you knew death, Believer, you would not be afraid of it, but you would feel it to be a joyous thing. You are thinking of that lonely chamber where the friends stand by your side when you bid them all adieu—you are thinking of the pains and groans and strife—and the dread solemnity of that last hour. But think not of such things! Think, instead, that the Lord will come to meet you, for He will come and your soul will stretch its wings in haste and fly away to Heaven! Would you be afraid to die with Jesus? You would not be afraid if you stood where I sometimes stand, by the bedside of the dying saint. I have taken

the hand of such an one and he has said to me, "Brother, this is the place to prove that the Lord is gracious. I am going to be with Jesus! My heart and strength fail me, but He is the strength of my life and my portion forever." And his eyes have flashed with the very fire of Glory! His lips have breathed sonnets, his looks spoke volumes, his heart seemed overflowing with the bliss of eternity—and his whole soul radiant with immortality! Oh, it is a cheering thing to stand by when a Christian dies, to see him stand on the precipice of life, clapping his wings before he takes his flight, not into a vast unknown, but into a sea of light and love in which he floats until he reaches the gates of Paradise! It is doubly sweet and blessed to witness such a spectacle of joy. Death is ours, then, so we will not fear it, for it is, indeed, a privilege to die one day!

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

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

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

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

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

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

II. Now, we come to THE TITLE DEEDS. They are drawn up in the name of Christ—“you are Christ's and Christ is God's.”

As I am, by nature, apart from Christ, none of those things are mine—they are all against me. Death would not be mine without Christ—it would be, indeed, a terrible doom! Life is not mine without Christ—that

were dangerous, indeed, to live here without Him. All I have comes to me through Jesus. Come, then, let me look at the title deeds and see if I am interested in them. They consist of two parts. First, "you are Christ's," and secondly, "Christ is God's."

"*You are Christ's.*" Come, Christian, soliloquize thus with yourself—"My Soul, are you Christ's? Can you say that you are His in a threefold sense? Are you Christ's by the Father's donation of you to Christ? Are you Christ's by the purchase of His blood? And are you Christ's by your own consecration of yourself to Him? Am I Christ's *by eternal donation* because God the Father gave me to the Son? Can I look back and see my name written in life's fair book? Can I, with holy faith, look back and see the roll of destiny and read my name therein? Have I a humble, holy faith that I was given to the Lord long before the foundations of the earth were laid, or the pillars thereof were piled? Am I His? Can I say, "This Covenant, made of old, stands forever fast"? Can I say that I was given to Him? Do I rejoice in that sovereign electing love which gave me to the Savior for no reason whatever in *me*, but simply of His own Grace? If so, that is one proof that I am Christ's!

"But again, my Soul, can you look back and see yourself to be Christ's *by the purchase of His blood*? When you go to Gethsemane, do those drops of gore fall upon the ground for you? When you go to Gabbatha, can you think that ignominy and plucking of the hair was for you? And at Calvary, can you feel that all its agonies and terrors were for you?

Do *you* feel, dear Friends, that you are Christ's by the purchase of His blood? At a Primitive Methodist prayer meeting, a Brother was not able to pray and somebody else, further down in the meeting, according to their rather disorderly manner, called out, "Brother plead the blood, plead the blood! Then you will be able to pray!" The Brother understood well enough—he began pleading the blood of Jesus and then he could, indeed, pray! O my Soul, can you plead the blood? My hearer, can you plead the blood? My Brother, my Sister, can you say that the Sacrifice of Jesus was for you? Do you feel that He bought you and paid for you, that His Sacrifice was made for your guilt, that He died especially for your sins? Can you appropriate Jesus to yourself? If so, you can appropriate *everything*, since "you are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

But, further, we are Christ's *by consecration*. Beloved, are *you* thus Christ's? "Do know the place, the plot of ground, where you met Jesus?" Ah, some of us can look back and tell to an inch, the spot where we first gave our hearts to Jesus! Many of the Lord's people cannot do it and it is not necessary that they should, but yet they can, each one, say, "I am my Lord's and He is mine." Do you feel, this morning, that you have given yourself to the Lord Jesus. That you are not your own, but, being bought with a price, you have willingly given yourself to Him? Have you taken Christ for your All-in-All and have you given up all to Christ? If Christ were to walk up this aisle and come to each one of you, and say, "Sinner, do you love Me?" What answer would you give Him? If He were now to step from pew to pew and look at each of you, showing you His scarred hands with the print of the nails, and asking, "Will you give yourself to Me?" What would your answer be? Do you wish to give yourselves up

wholly to Christ? Have you done so? Then, "all things are yours" because you are Christ's! By consecration you have given yourselves to Him.

If you consecrate yourselves to Jesus, you will never find Him a hard Master. I have known Him some little while and He has been exceedingly kind to His unworthy servant. I have nothing in which to find fault with Him, but much with myself. He is a blessed Master. O youth, or maiden, if you would love Him, you would find Him worthy of your love in all respects! Why, I think His very name is enough to make you love Him! "My Master! How sweetly does 'my Master' sound! Yes, He is my Master and your Master if you have become His servant and have given yourselves to Him. But, if you are not Christ's, you have nothing—you are a poor miserable creature! How can you live if you are not Christ's? How will you face grim death? How will you stand before Christ when He shall sit on His Throne? Do you think that you shall be able to hear His thundering voice say, "Depart, you cursed"? Are your ribs of steel, and bones of brass? If they are, they will be broken when He speaks in His wrath! O then, Beloved, "Kiss the Son, lest He is angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

I must only hint at the other portion. In order to link us thoroughly with God, there is something else besides our being Christ's, and that is, "Christ is God's." With one hand Christ links Himself to men, with the other He is joined to God. And thus God and men are united. Oh, think of this! There is a link between you and the Godhead! The God that you cannot conceive of—the hem of whose garments are dark with ineffable light, too splendid for man to view—that mighty God, filling immensity, the Infinite, the All Things in One, is linked with you! Christ gives you His hand—He is your Brother, flesh and blood like yourself—and He gives God His hand, for He is the equal of the Eternal, the infinite God, very God of very God, and yet, very Man of very Man! Oh, what a glorious thought, that my deed is stamped by the Father and by the Son! It has the seal of Them both! "You are Christ's and Christ is God's." And having Christ and being Christ's, I have all things in Him. "All things are yours. For you are Christ's and Christ is God's."

Before I come to the third point, let me ask you, dear Friends, to put this question to your conscience. *Are you Christ's?* Oh, how many there are who attend God's House and never feel any personal application of the Truth of God! How many are there of you who sit Sunday after Sunday, and weekday after weekday hearing sermons and never getting any profit from them? O Sirs, preaching is not child's play! Some persons say, "I will go and hear Mr. So-and-So," and they go—just to amuse themselves! Do you think that a true minister will preach to amuse you? Is it his business to do so? Oh, believe me, it is solemn work to stand and speak for God and in His name! Did you ever think what it is to preach God's Word? Oh, if at the Last Great Day it shall be shown that we have not preached faithfully to you, if we have not declared the whole counsel of God, you, indeed, must perish, but your blood will be required at our hands!

And then, do you know what solemn work it is to hear? Oh, if the damned spirits in Hell could come to earth, they would let you know what solemn work it is to hear the Gospel! Think not that you can hear the Gospel without having your salvation or damnation affected—there is not a Word of the Gospel that ever enters into man's ear for which he shall not be brought to account! I beseech you, as you believe in the Bible, as you believe that there is no salvation out of Christ, to lay these things to heart! They are not trifles, they are not imaginary things, they are not that which concerns your body—they concern your eternal existence! You are rich, or else you are poor. You are Christ's or the devil's! You are on the road to Heaven or to Hell—which is it? Oh, let the question ring through your *ears—*which is it, Heaven or Hell? Which is it? HEAVEN OR HELL? Oh, let not that question, if it is ever so harshly spoken, be rejected by you! Answer the question to your soul and if you are honestly obliged to say, "I fear I am on the road to Hell," then remember, if you feel *that*—if you confess your sin, Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Not everybody, but, "sinners"—all those who will acknowledge and confess that title shall be saved by Divine Grace! If you are a sinner and you trust Him, He will most assuredly and certainly save you!

III. Now, lastly, WHAT IS THE DUTY OF A MAN WHO HAS SUCH LARGE POSSESSIONS? "Let no man glory in men. For all things are yours."

If a man has everything, he has no need to glory in some one little thing. If a man has only one gold ring, you will see him wearing it on his finger every day—and putting his hand in such a position that everybody may see it. But he who has far more, need not be particular about just one ring being seen! Does the Queen care that other people know what plate and jewels she has at Windsor? Everybody knows that she is rich, that she has an abundance and, therefore, it is not necessary that she should display a portion of it. Whenever you find a person glorying in some little thing, you may be sure he is acting contrary to what he should be. I cannot conceive how a Christian man, who has everything, can be proud because he has a little talent, or a little wealth, or position, or station! Do not be proud of that, but say, "That is one stone in my estate—it is one little pebble that lies in one of the brooks in my large domains. True, it is mine, but it is nothing to boast of." "Let no man glory in men. For all things are yours." Do not be boasting, then, about one thing when all things are yours! The little child, when it has a present, shows it to every person who comes into the house, but when the child becomes a man, he shows not everything that he has, yet he has more possessions than he had before. Thus the worldling may glory in his riches and boast of his strength, but, Christians, you are too far advanced for this—you are too wise, "for all things are yours"—and surely you will not attach undue importance to one.

Now, what does this subject say practically to you? One of you has lost a friend. You are weeping and saying, "I have lost everything." No, you have not—"for all things are yours." He may have been a precious

friend, a most loving one that you have lost. It may be a deep trial, but *think what you have*. You have God! Your sins are forgiven! You have the righteousness of Christ! You have not lost that. It is only some pennies which are gone—your gold is safe, your jewels are not taken away. “But I have lost my jewels,” you say. Have you? Ah, then, you do not know Christ, for you would not venture to call anything a jewel except the precious Lord Jesus! Is it not wrong for you to bemoan and weep so perpetually when “all things are yours”? Another one is expecting such-and-such a relative to be taken away and is weeping over an expected loss. Now you have no promise to help you, for you weep before your trouble comes! God does not promise that He will help you who manufacture your own troubles. Remember, you cannot lose the title deeds of your possessions. If you have lost your copy, you can get another, for the old deed is up in the ark in Heaven!

Now, by way of a practical hint, I might say, if “all things are yours,” *how willing you ought to be to give something to the cause of God!* A man who is poor and has nothing is never expected to give. But a man who has “all things,” should give like a prince! There are many princes in Israel who have all things in their possession and I am sure I may ask them to give something for the Lord's cause.

But I again come back to this all-important question—we must not put it away. We must give an answer to it, either now, or at God's bar—*Are we Christ's?* Some of you, I fear, are not Christ's. You are none of His because your conversation is carnal, your actions are worldly, your behavior is inconsistent and your lives are reproachable. Then, you are not Christ's. Some of you are not Christ's because you are trusting in your own righteousness and not leaning on the blood and righteousness of Christ alone. But we hope that there are some of you who have stripped yourselves of everything and have taken Christ for your All-in-All. If, devoid of all goodness, you make Christ your goodness—if, devoid of everything, you take Christ for all, then He is yours. Hence, you may revel in delights and let your heart leap for joy! Let your melancholy be dissipated and your tears be all dried up! You may rejoice with unspeakable joy and full of glory, for this world is yours, the world to come is yours and Heaven shall be your happy home forever!

The Lord grant that it may be so with all of you when He shall make up His jewels! Amen.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY
TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

THINGS PRESENT

NO. 870

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING MAY 9, 1869,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

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

SOME of the Corinthians had attached themselves to one great religious teacher and others to another. There was a disposition among them to set up rival leaders of opposing parties—a band would follow Paul, another company admired Apollos—and a third extolled Peter. The Apostle, in order to take the minds of Believers off estimating any one of their blessings at too high a rate, leads them to contemplate the exceeding length and breadth of the treasures which God had given to them. Why should they glory in *man* when *all things* were theirs? It is the part of a poor man to set a great value upon the one thing in which he delights.

As in the parable of Nathan, the poor man had but one ewe lamb. This lay in his bosom, and was fed from his own table. He who was possessor of 10,000 sheep in the valley of Jezreel thought but little of any one lamb. Even so, if Believers were poor and God had given them but one mercy and that one mercy were either Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, it were but according to nature that they should exalt the gift and prize it at the highest conceivable rate. But when the bounteous Lord has given to His people *all* ministries and *countless* spiritual blessings, it becomes unseemly in those who are so rich, to glory in any one part of their portion.

Even as it has been said—

***“A little knowledge is a dangerous thing,
Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring,”***

so the sense of possession exercised upon a little will contract and hamper the soul, but a sense of great, yes, *infinite* possession, will enlarge and ennoble us. If our mind, enlarged and stimulated by faith, can stretch its arms like seas and grasp the whole shore of the present and of the future—and seize upon all things as given us by the bounty of Heaven—we shall be cured of the tendency to exaggerate the value of our merely temporal mercies. And all shall so be delivered from covetousness.

How shall they thirst who swim in the cool clear stream? How shall they hunger who sit down at banquets where the provision is beyond all measure? Happy are they who are too rich to care for gold, too happy to hunt after joy, too exalted to be proud, too high to be lifted up! Among the matters which Paul catalogs as belonging to Believers, he enters this item, which contains a mass of mercy, “things present.” This is a *huge* nugget of

virgin gold and one which the mind is ever ready to appreciate. We reckon present things at the highest rate—as the old proverb has it—“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.”

Things present—though in very truth they may be far inferior to things to come, or even in certain respects less precious than the things of the past—yet usually exercise the greatest influence over us from their nearness. It is so even as the moon, though far less than the sun, has the greater power over the earth because she is so much nearer to it. A *present* mercy rates higher in the market than a great blessing which was received years ago and now only lives in our memory. A crust for present hunger is better than the festival of last year, and a small inconvenience, if pressing upon us at this present moment, will distress us far more than the great trial which is threatened, or the still greater affliction which has passed over us.

A slight shower of rain today will more inconvenience you than the heavy snowstorm which overtook you on the Alps seven years ago. The little present, to our apprehension, eclipses the great past or the greater future. Since, then, from the constitution of our nature, we are so out of all proportion affected by *present* things, it is well for us to look at them until we can see them in the bright light which this text casts upon them. Then we shall be all the happier and, being the happier, all the stronger for good. Present things, then, Believer, be they bright or dark, present things—through the Covenant of Grace—are yours today!

I. Subdividing this great and comprehensive term, we shall first observe that in the case of the true Christian, HIS TEMPORAL POSSESSIONS are his own. You will say that this is a most trite remark. So be it. Yet, as a brown husk may hide a golden seed, so may there be important truths within a plain sentence. The ungodly man for awhile engrosses the good things of this life, but they are sent to him oftentimes in anger. They bring a curse with them and are taken away again in wrath. They are not his in the same cheering sense in which they belong to the children of God.

As for you, O true Believer, whatever of earthly good the Lord has apportioned you is in a peculiar sense and in a most blessed manner, your own. I grant you that all our worldly goods belong to God and that we are but stewards of whatever He bestows upon us. Yet, for all that, the good things of this life are ours by a deed of gift far more valid than the title-deeds of noble families or the charters of kings! God gives us all things richly to enjoy, and rights established upon Divine gift are beyond dispute.

When the Lord makes our lines to fall in pleasant places, we are not to receive the gifts of Providence with fear and trembling, as if they were not lawful to be held by Christians. Nor are we to look at them with shy suspicion, as if they could not be consecrated to noblest ends. The temporal gifts of Heaven are ours, as the text declares, and we are bound to regard

them as love gifts of our Covenant God. It is a great comfort when a man knows in his conscience, "What I have, be it little or much, is mine, at least in this sense, that I have honestly come by it." The Christian owns no stolen property or unrighteous gain.

A thief may secure his goodly Babylonian garment and his wedge of gold, but when he has gotten it, though no other man claims it, yet it is not his—he must bury it in the earth, it is a stolen thing—a thing accursed and bringing evil with it. How can men live in peace with fraudulent property about them? David, when he gets the water from the well at Bethlehem, acts towards it as every honest spirit would act towards gold and silver accumulated in unjustifiable speculations, or coined out of the savings of the defrauded poor, or gathered by adulteration and trickery—David would not drink the water, but poured it out! And some men's riches might well be poured out even into Hell itself, where devils might rue the draught if they dared to drink there.

Ill-gotten substance will rot the belly which is filled with it. Dishonest persons may be purse-proud and live in great style, but none of their riches are, in truth, their own. Like the jackdaw in the fable, they wear borrowed plumes. Though no man may get back his own from the man of fraud and no court of law may make him disgorge, yet his gettings are not his, or only his so as to sting him in the end as does a viper. But what *you* have, Believer, is your own! In the getting of it you remembered your Master's word and abstained from covetousness. You strained not after it with an unhallowed greed and now, when it comes to you, though it is not your god and you do not value it in comparison with *spiritual* blessings, yet it comes with this satisfaction—that you have not gathered it with unrighteous hands.

The Believer's possessions are his own because *acknowledged to the great Giver with becoming gratitude*. Gratitude is, as it were, the quit rent to the great superior Owner and until we discharge the claim, our goods are not lawfully ours in the court of Heaven. Some lands are held upon the tenure of a peppercorn—so are our daily mercies. At each meal there should be this payment of the peppercorn in the giving of thanks, which is peculiarly a Christian custom to be carefully observed. On our anniversary occasions—our birthdays and times of memorial—there should be special seasons for blessing the name of the Lord, and, indeed, whenever any great blessing is brought home (and what if I say *any* blessing, for, to such as we are, all blessings are great?), there should be the payment of hearty gratitude, for then only, the mercy becomes legitimately ours!

Wealth is not truly ours till we thank the Lord for it. We have not paid the royal dues upon it—it is contraband and we are illegally using it. Beloved, as you have not failed to give unto the Lord your loving thanks, your mercies are now yours to enjoy as in His sight. I hope, too, that the most of my Brethren can feel that their temporal possessions are theirs

because they have *conscientiously consecrated the due portion* which belongs to God. From the loaf there should be cut the crust for the hungry. From the purse there should come the help for the Lord's work. The tithing of the substance is the true title to the substance. It is not altogether yours till you have proved your gratitude by your proportionate gift to the cause of the Master.

Cheerfully may we look upon the heap which remains when of the gold and the silver a portion has been given to God to conserve the rest from the rust and the canker. You may eat of your harvest with gladness when the Lord's sheaf has been waved and your increase shall be sweet when the first fruits have been laid on the altar. All things are yours in a special manner when dedicated in tithe and sanctified by gratitude. Our mercies are our own, too, because we seek to be *graciously guided in the use of them*. We dare not spend them on our lusts—they are not ours for such a purpose. They are not bestowed upon us so absolutely that we may set them up and cry, "These are your gods, O Israel." They are ours within the lines of Law and Gospel—ours within bounds of sobriety and holiness—ours not as gods, but as gourds. Ours not as masters, but as mercies.

We eat and drink feeling that God, even our own God, has blessed our basket and our store. And therefore whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we do all to His Glory! We put on our raiment with joy because the Lord thus clothes us. That which we possess the Lord has cleansed and therefore we count it no longer common or unclean. The benediction of Heaven sweetens the lawful use of earthly goods. The nether springs are the more delightful because drops from the upper springs fall into them. To see God's hand in every temporal mercy is to enjoy life! But, alas, some men will not so see the hand of God, but only see the bare mercy and fall in love with the creature to the neglect of the Creator. Their worldly goods are perverted into stumbling-stones and are no longer as they should be, a ladder to lift us nearer to God.

Beloved in Christ Jesus, whatever God has given you in this life, upon the conditions which I have already mentioned, are yours, ceded to you by Divine love! Need I say it is not required of you to play the ascetic? John came neither eating nor drinking—you are not John's disciple! The Son of Man, who is your Master, came both eating and drinking. There is no piety whatever in your accounting the gifts of Providence as necessarily temptations. You can make them so, but that is your folly and no fault of theirs. If God has blessed you with wealth or competence, use your substance with joy for His Glory and the good of your fellow men and see upon all that you have the smile of Heaven! Sit not down sullenly to hoard up your gold as though it were a thing of darkness to be concealed, but arise and use the gifts of God in the light and in gladness!

Vain are those who sneer at Nature and the lavish bounty thereof. To me the sunshine is Jehovah's smile and the grass which grows beneath

my feet is beaming with 10,000 flowers, all speaking out my Father's thoughts of kindness towards me. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." This planet is no Pandemonium or Topher! It is no sin to gaze with delight upon verdant valleys and majestic mountains! It is no crime to enjoy the beauties of Nature, but a sign of idiocy to be unaffected thereby! Fair scenes, sweet sounds, balmy odors and fresh gales—your Father sends them to you—take them and be thankful!

If there are any men in this world to whom Nature belongs, these men are the children of the living God! I count it squeamish, sickly sentimentalism and not manly piety, which leads certain excellent men to depreciate their Maker's works and speak of river and forest and lake and ocean as if evil spirits haunted every scene and the whole earth were a temple of Satan! My Brothers and Sisters, it is true that the creation has been made subject to vanity, but not willingly! And that unwillingness of God causes a sunlight upon Nature which Mercy would have her children perceive and rejoice in—

***"The earth with its store
Of wonders untold, almighty!
Your power has founded of old;
Has stablish'd it fast
By a changeless decree,
And round it has cast,
Like a mantle, the sea.
Your bountiful care
What tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air,
It shines in the light,
It streams from the hills,
It descends to the plain,
And sweetly distils
In the dew and the rain.
O measureless might!
Ineffable love!
While angels delight
To hymn You above
The humbler Creation,
Though feeble there lays,
With true adoration
Shall lisp to Your praise."***

There is no sin in trees and winds, brooks and lakes and oceans! And in towering mountains, virgin snows and silent glaciers there are no promptings to evil. The sin is in *ourselves* and if we will but be right-hearted and ask God to enable us to behold His works with clear and anointed eyes, we may see God Himself mirrored in Creation. At all events, all these present things are ours, neither shall any man rob me of my right to rejoice in the works of God's hands. Let us note well before we leave this point, that any of God's saints who are in straits and have but

little of this world's goods—and these are generally the majority of the Church and the holiest and the best—may yet remember that all things are theirs, so that up to the measure of their necessities God will be quite sure to afford them sustenance.

The Lord is your Shepherd and you shall not want. You may be pinched, but you shall not perish. Your strength shall be equal to your day. Your bread shall be given you, your water shall be sure. And, Brother or Sister, remember that a man's life is not to be judged of by what he *has* or has *not*, but by the contentment of his heart—for there lies all true treasure. Are you content, and can you cast your cares upon God? Then you are richer than a thousand anxious misers and wealthier, far, than 10,000 who eat the bread of carefulness. Are you satisfied to sing—

***“Father, I wait Your daily will,
You shall divide my portion still—
Give me on earth what seems You best,
Till death and Heaven reveal the rest”?***

Then you are truly rich! Envy makes men poor—this it is that strips the purple from the prince and dashes the goblet with gall.

Strange is it and yet most true, that covetousness which seems to be the common sin of professors nowadays, is never attributed in God's Word to any one child of God. They had many faults, but never covetousness! No heir of Heaven was charged with that in the Word of God—that is the vice of Judas, the Son of Perdition and not of Peter, or David, or Lot, or Samson! This evil touches not the saints. Into the deep ditch of greed the saints shall not fall. My poor, but believing Brother, you will thank God that you have but little, believing that it is all that would be good for you. You do ask the Lord to give you, day by day, your daily bread and you have it in answer to prayer and in proof of Divine faithfulness.

Your heavenly Friend may suffer you to be brought very low, but He will not utterly leave you, nor suffer your soul to famish. I pray God the Holy Spirit to enable my dear Brothers and Sisters in their poverty to believe that their need is overruled for their true riches. Whereas an abundance of possessions may bring a blessing, the lack of that abundance is far more constantly a source of good. Our present circumstances, whether prosperous or painful, are Covenant blessings from the God of Grace—

***“If peace and plenty crown my days,
They help me, Lord, to speak Your praise.
If bread of sorrows is my food,
Those sorrows work my real good.”***

II. In the long list of things present we must include TEMPORAL TRIALS. Tribulations are treasures, and if we were wise, we should reckon our afflictions among our rarest jewels. The caverns of sorrow are mines of diamonds. Our earthly possessions may be silver, but temporal trials are, to the saints, invariably gold. We may grow in Divine Grace through what we enjoy, but we probably make the greatest progress through what we

suffer. Soft gales may be pleasant for Heaven-bound vessels, but rough winds are better. The calm is our way, but God has His way in the whirlwind and He rides on the wings of the wind.

Saints gain more by their losses than by their profits. Health comes out of their sicknesses and wealth flows out of their poverties. Heir of Heaven, your present trials are yours in the sense of medicine. You need that your soul, like your body, should be dealt with by the beloved Physician. A thousand diseases have sown their seeds within you—one evil will often bring on another and the cure of one too frequently engenders another. You need, therefore, oftentimes to gather the produce of the garden of herbs which is included in your inheritance—a garden which God will be sure to keep well stocked with wormwood and bitters.

From these bitter herbs a potion shall be brewed, as precious as it is pungent, as curative as it is distasteful. Would you root up that herb garden? Would you lay those healing beds all to waste? Ah, then, when next a disease attacks you, how could you expect help? I know the good Physician can heal without the lancet if He wills and restore us without the balm, but for all that, He does not choose to do so, but will use the means of *affliction*—for by these things men live and in all these is the life of their spirit. Be thankful, therefore, for your trials and count them among your treasures.

Our present afflictions also strengthen us greatly. No man becomes a veteran except by practice in arms. We shall not man our fleet with able-bodied seamen at home, on the boisterous deep and in the thundering battle, if we search among mere landsmen and gentlemen whose boldest voyage was on the glassy Thames! Experience works patience and patience brings with it a train of virtues—and all these make the man a man, and cause him to be mighty among his peers! Be grateful, then, for that without which probably you would be always children—apart from which you must remain always untried and consequently unskillful. Be grateful for your present trials and count them the choicest of your goods.

Brothers and Sisters, our trials ought to be greatly valued by us as windows of agates and gates of carbuncle through which we get the clearest views of our Lord Jesus Christ. Trial is the telescope through which we gaze upon the blessed Star of Bethlehem more clearly. Christ says to us, “Come, My Beloved, let us go forth into the field; there will I give you My loves.” When there fails a blight on creature comforts and the withering blast goes out against terrestrial joys, oh, then how bright is the Rose of Sharon and how fair the Lily of the Valley in the esteem of His people! “Come up with Me to My Cross,” says Christ—and the mystic invitation, though it involves so deep an anguish, is not to be rejected!

Do you understand what it is to come up to Christ’s Cross and to be conformed unto His death? It is only as you do this that you will have fellowship with Jesus and understand what His love is towards you. The

sufferings of Christ are not learned by the hearing of the ear—though we set them forth constantly to you, yet you will not really comprehend them—it is in the drinking of His cup and being baptized with His baptism, that by sympathy you will comprehend what your Lord really endured for you. Thus will you be more effectually planted with Him in the likeness of His death, that you may be planted in the likeness of His Resurrection.

Brothers and Sisters, you who are cross-bearers this morning! I would remind you for your comfort that you have to bear *the cross, but not the curse*. Your Lord endured both Cross and curse, but to you there is not so much as a drop of Divine anger in all that you are suffering! There may be much vinegar, but no venom! There may be anguish, but there is no anger! Christ has exhausted the penal result of sin—He endured it all and now the cross that comes to you is garlanded with *love*. All over it is inscribed with lines of affection. I know that this is hard to be believed, especially while you are carrying a green cross, new to your shoulder, for this always frets the soul. It is when you become accustomed to sorrow by having borne the yoke in your youth that you fret not and mourn not, as though some strange thing had happened to you.

I cannot speak so favorably of some men's crosses as I can of the crosses of Believers who patiently wait upon their God, for some make their own crosses in wantonness of discontent. There are crosses made of crab tree, put together by our own wicked temper! And these we ought to burn at once. I can promise you no cures for crosses which you make for yourself. If you plait your own crown of thorns and find your own nails, your own vinegar and sponge, it is your own crucifixion and you may find your own comfort. But when it is Christ's Cross, a cross that Christ sends, a cross that Providence ordains—remember it is a thing of mercy to be rejoiced in as a blessing of Heaven!

So too, Believer, remember that your Lord sends you *a cross but not a crush*. It is meant to bear you down, but not to break you and grind you in the dust. Your cross is proportioned to your strength. In all the potion there is not one chance atom—the medicine has been compounded by no ordinary skill! Infinite Wisdom, which balanced the clouds and fixed the cornerstone of the world, has been employed to compound the ingredients of your present trial. Your affliction shall not be too much for you—it shall be just such a trial as you require. There shall be no more and no less of weight in it.

It may help to comfort you if you remember that *your cross is not a loss*. It may look like a loss, but it shall only be a putting out to interest that which is taken from you that it may be returned soon with usury. Weep not because the vessel of your present comfort has gone out to sea and you have lost sight of the white sails. It shall come back again to you laden with nobler treasure. Weep not because the sun has gone done, for

it descends that the dews may be brought forth and the earth may be watered and the flowers may drip with perfume. Wait awhile and the sun shall come back to you again and the morn shall be the brighter because of the gloom of the night.

O sorrow not, Heir of Heaven, because the skies are clouded—the clouds are big with mercy and each cloud is the mother of 10,000 blossoms and harvests He concealed in yonder darkness! O be confident that among all your jewels, all your precious ornaments and tokens of love that God has given you, you have nothing brighter than the jet jewels of affliction! No diamonds of a finer water than those of trouble! May we understand by faith, then, the great Truth of God that our present trials are our treasures, to be looked upon with thankfulness.

III. In the third place, all our CIRCUMSTANTIAL SURROUNDINGS ought to be regarded by us as ours. I have already touched upon a branch of this subject, namely, that all our outward circumstances are meant to be conducive to our perfection. I have already said that our trials and troubles are, by God's Grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit, really made to promote our growth. So ought all, whether of brightness or darkness in our present lot, to be helpful in preparing us for the better land and the mansions of Glory.

I shall also insist upon another point—all our circumstances are ours as subservient to our usefulness. Has this ever struck you? You wish to win souls? Before you enter upon the actual service, you say to yourself, "I wish I were a minister," but very probably you have not the gift of utterance. You have a family round about you and you are evidently tied to something far other than a pulpit. You have to keep to that farm, to manage the shop. Now the temptation with you will be to say, "These plows and harrows, these bullocks and horses—I do not see how I am to serve God with all these! These scales and yard measures, these groceries and draperies—I cannot see how these can be instruments with which I may serve God."

Now, my dear Friend, begin by correcting that mistake! All these things are yours and you are, therefore, to look upon them as being not detriments, but *assistants* to the discharge of your peculiar life-work. You are to consider that the position which you occupy is, all things considered, the most advantageous that you could possibly have occupied for doing the utmost that you are capable of doing for the Glory of God! Suppose the mole should cry, "How I could have honored the great Creator if I could have been allowed to fly"? It would have been very foolish, for a mole flying would be a very ridiculous object—while a mole fashioning its tunnels and casting up its castles is viewed with admiring wonder by the naturalist who perceives its remarkable suitability to its sphere.

The fish of the sea might say, "How could I display the wisdom of God if I could sing, or mount a tree, like a bird!" But you know fish in a tree

would be a very grotesque affair and there would be no wisdom of God to admire in fishes climbing trees! But when the fish cuts the wave with agile fin, all who have observed it say how wonderfully it is adapted to its habitat—how exactly its every bone is fitted for its mode of life! Brother, it is just so with you. If you begin to say, “I cannot glorify God where I am, and as I am,” I answer, neither could you anywhere if not where you are! Providence, which arranged your surroundings, appointed them so that, all things being considered, you are in the position in which you can best display the wisdom and the Grace of God.

Now, if you can once accept this as being a fact, it will make a man of you. My Christian Brother, or my dear Sister, it will enable you to serve God with a force which you have not yet obtained, for then, instead of panting for spheres to which you will never reach, you will enquire for immediate duty, asking, “What does my hand find to do?” You need not use your feet to traverse half a nation to find work—it lies close at hand. Your calling is near at home—your vocation lies at the door, and within it. What your hands find to do, do at once and with all your might and you will find such earnest service the best method in which you can glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

“A large family,” says one, “what can I do?” Train them in the fear of God—these children are yours to serve the Lord with! What nobler service can a mother render to the republic upon earth and to the kingdom in Heaven, than to educate her children for Christ? “Working in a large factory with ungodly men, what can I do?” Needless enquiry! What *cannot* the salt do when it is cast among the meat? You, as a piece of salt, are just where you should be! Confine Christians in monasteries and nunneries—why it is like putting salt into a strong iron box and burying it in the ground! No, but the salt of the earth must be cast all over that which is to be conserved by it and each of us must be put in a position where our influence as a Christian will be felt.

“I am sick,” says another, “I am chained to the bed of languishing.” But, my Friend, your patience will magnify the power of Divine Grace and your words of experience will enrich those who listen to you! Your experience will yield a richer wine than ever could have come from you had you not been cast into the winepress and trod by the foot of affliction. I tell you, Brothers and Sisters, I cannot go into instances and details, but it is a most certain fact that all about you, though it is a blind eye, a disabled arm, a stammering tongue, a flagging memory, poverty in the house, or sickness in the chamber—though it is derision and scorn and contempt—everything about you is yours! And if you know how to use it rightly, you will turn these disadvantages into advantages and prosper by them.

Look at the seaman when he finds himself out at sea! Does he sit down and fret because the wind will not blow from the quarter that he would most prefer? No, but he tacks about and catches every cupful of wind that

can be of use to him and so reaches the haven at last. You are not to expect that God would ordain everything just as *you* would like to have it—spoon feed you with pabulum like babes upon the lap! But He will train and try you and you must make use of all that He sends for the promotion of His Glory. Look at a good commander, he not only selects a good position for his troops, but if he occupies a bad position, he turns that to account and often makes the worse become the better!

To use a very homely illustration, look at yon miller on the village hill. How does he grind his grist? Does he bargain that he will only grind in the west wind, because that is so full of health? No, but the east wind, which searches joints and marrow, makes the millstones revolve and the north and the south are all yoked to service. Even so with Believers—all your ups and your downs, your successes and your defeats are all yours that you may turn them to the Glory of God! Standing here now, and taking a somewhat broader range than our own individualities, let me remind you, Brethren, that on the great and broad scale of Providence all things belong to the Church of God.

There are great changes in politics just now—there will be greater changes still. Fancy not that anything is stable that is of merely human appointing. Imagine not that any form of government can eternally survive the waves of change which break at its base. The ensign of this age is, “Overturn, overturn, overturn, till he shall come whose right it is, and *he* shall have the kingdom.” But there shall be no crumbling columns. There shall be no bowing wall or tottering fence but what shall minister to the solidity of the Church of God! All changes, however radical! All catastrophes, however horrible, shall all happen to the advantage of the cause of Christ!

All things are yours. Earthquakes of popular opinions may make dynasties shake and reel and at last be prone in ruin. Opinions, institutions and customs, which we would gladly conserve at the peril of our lives may be rolled up and cast aside like worn out vestures! Heaven and earth may shake and stars may fall like fig leaves from the tree, but everything must subserve the progress of the conquering kingdom of Christ! His Glory *shall* fill the earth! All flesh *shall* see it together! From land and sea there must yet go up the universal hallelujah unto the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. All things then, O Church of God, are yours!

IV. I have somewhat outstripped my time and therefore I must only give a hint or two on the last point. SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGES, which are many of them present things, belong to Believers. Now what are they? The favor of God is not for Heaven only—it is ours today. Adoption into His family is not for eternity only—it is for this present time. We are today heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus! Today to be instructed, to be fed, to be clothed, to be housed, to have the Father’s kiss and live in the Father’s

heart! All things are ours! God Himself is ours, our eternal inheritance! Lift up your eyes, O heir of Grace and see what a treasure is opened up to you!

Again, Christ is present and He is ours. There is today a “fountain filled with blood,” which puts away all sin. It is ours! There is a Mercy Seat where all prayer is prevalent—it is open today. It is ours—come to it boldly. There is an Intercessor who takes our prayers and offers them. He is ours, and all His mighty pleas and Divine authority, which makes Him so successful an Advocate, are all at our service today! Not were ours *yesterday*, nor *shall be* ours in some happier hour, but they are ours now!

Are any of you depressed, do you feel yourselves great sinners? Then the fountain is yours as sinners, the Intercessor is yours while you are yet guilty, for it is written, “If any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father.” O lay hold upon these present things and rejoice! The Holy Spirit, too, is a present blessing to you! The Comforter comes to you as a present blessing from Christ and He brings you present enlightenment, present guidance, present strength, present consolation! All these are yours—all beams of the seven-branched golden candlestick and all the oil that is treasured up for the lamps. The light and the Source of the light are alike yours and yours, now.

And if, Beloved, there is any promise today written in the Word of God—if there is any blessing today guaranteed to the elect family. If there is any mindfulness of Providence, or any abundance of Divine Grace—all these are yours, and yours, now. Come, then! Why do you pine, you Saints? Why do you mourn and lie upon your dunghills till the dogs of Hell lick your sores? Come, wrap yourselves in your scarlet and fine linen, you Heirs of Heaven! Live according to your portion! Fare according to the banquet! All things are yours! Let those harps be taken from the willows and let that sackcloth and ashes be laid aside. Put on the beautiful apparel of gratitude and sing the song of thankfulness unto the Shepherd who has promised that you shall not want, and whose all-sufficiency will fill your heart, till like a cup it runs over!

May God bless these words and especially bless them to the unconverted, that while they look over the hedge, as it were, and see the fruit that grows from God’s people, they may wish that they had right to enter. If any of you do so wish, let me remind you that there is a door to enter by and that door is Christ! Whoever trusts in Him shall have every mercy of the Covenant to be his present and eternal portion. May you be led so to trust in Jesus and unto God shall be the Glory, world without end. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
Psalm 23 and John 14.**

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“THINGS TO COME”

NO. 875

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 13, 1869,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

**“Things to come, all are yours.”
1 Corinthians 3:22.**

A SHORT time ago we meditated upon the former words of this verse, “Things present, all are yours.” [“Things Present,” #870, Vol. 15.] Friends have asserted that it was a pleasant and profitable meditation—may we have more than equal of the blessing of God’s Spirit this morning. The waters are deeper in the things to come than in the things present, but they are, every drop of them, as sweet. The horizon is wider in the future than in the present, but it is equally clear. If the clouds which threaten us in the future are darker than any we have up to now experienced, the Covenant rainbow shall span them all. And if the glories which are to be revealed are more sublime than any we have yet beheld, they are as certainly ours as those of less bewildering luster, for there are no hesitations here, but plainly and boldly does the text assert, “Things to come, all are yours.”

Without further preface let us advance at once to consider the cheering truth of the text. First, let us view *the general future as ours*. Then let us rejoice that *the brightest of all the future is ours*. And lastly, *if ours, what light does the future cast upon the present?*

I. First, THE BROAD FUTURE IS OURS. We are very apt to wish to pry into it by vain forebodings and vainer prognostications, but Divine Grace forbids us to indulge such impertinence and foolish curiosity. The leaves of the book of destiny are folded. The volume is sealed as with seven seals—you need not desire to read a single line, however—for the Lord tells you that whatever may be recorded in it, it is all yours! It must all work for your good. It must all promote your highest happiness.

Why should you wish to see the mystic writing for yourself? Your faith is sure of the issue—let that content you. In the dark days of superstition, the pretended magician would hold up a crystal globe and bid his dupe look in it, and when he saw nothing, he would tell him that he had an untaught, unaccustomed eye. But when the soothsayer stared into that ball himself, he pretended that he saw the future. My text is a crystal ball which does *not* tell you what the future shall be as to facts and minutiae, but it assures you concerning all coming events what it is far better for you to know—that all things are yours, if you are Christ’s—all future

things are vested in your name, to be your possession by a Covenant of salt to minister to your comfort and to increase your highest wealth.

Let that content you. Gaze not through the telescope to see the future, lest you breathe upon the glass and then mistake the haze of your own breath for thick clouds and overshadowing tempests. Be content to quiet vain curiosity by leaving the future in His hands to whom it is even now present. The Lord your God will surely bear your burdens, therefore be quiet as a weaning child. We may expect in the future, Brethren, such a degree of joy as may be fitting this side Canaan. Albeit that the mention of the word, "future," inevitably suggests to anxious mind's dreams of dread, yet we have no reason to expect that the rest of our life will be more unhappy than the years which are passed already with the years beyond the flood.

As Christians, we dare not and would not murmur at Providential appointments. Life to us has had its sorrows, but goodness and mercy have followed us up to now and they shall, with equal certainty, follow us all the days of our life. Though this is not our rest and we are strangers and foreigners, as all our fathers were, yet for all this, "He makes us to lie down in green pastures. He leads us beside still waters." "The lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places and we have a goodly heritage." We will not speak ill of God's name who daily loads us with benefits, but we will sing, "Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name, who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

We have reason to expect that in the future our lot will include a fair measure of joy, even as the past has done. Summers will bring their flowers and autumns their mellow fruits. Days shall be bright with sunlight and nights gorgeous with moon and stars. Whatever is beautiful shall still give its rill of joy. Whatever is tender shall yield its ray of comfort. Perhaps to sorrowful hearts the brightest part of their mortal existence is yet to come—they shall pass from Bochim to Beulah. Lay hold on this hope, poor Weeper! You who are in the heyday of your youth, looking to the joys of the future, reckon not too surely upon them—but still you have a right to expect a measure of joy even here below. You who are struggling in the service of your Divine Master, you may reckon up the joy or success, or at least of acceptance at His hands. You who are contending against sin may anticipate the joy of conquest. You who are planning how you can serve God on a wider scale and in a wiser manner may expect the joy of His guidance.

The Truth of God which I desire to bring before your minds is this—these joys which God may allot to you in the future are yours. Start not back from them as though the golden goblet of Divine love must necessarily be filled with a poisoned wine. Mercy may be abused into sin, but in itself the bounty of Providence is pure. No, Sirs, when God gives pleasure it

is safe, pure and elevating—you need not suspect its character. There is a joy of the Lord which is the strength of godly souls. There is a rejoicing in Christ Jesus which makes fat the bones and causes the soul to sing! And it purifies the nature by the Divinity of its power, making us live above the inferior joys of sin because we possess higher and nobler delights.

Believer in Christ Jesus, be not afraid of future comfort—it is yours! All things are yours and in the things to come, if there is anything that is bright, anything that is sparkling, anything that is precious, anything that can make you glad, anything that can make your tongue sing loud hallelujahs, accept it right cheerfully from the hand of your Covenant-keeping God and say, “It is mine.” Still, though we touch that string, we have to return to the old paths and remind you that in the future, without any foolish forebodings, you may expect troubles. Necessarily and unavoidably, if you and I shall be spared to live to an old age, there are certain trials that must happen to us.

Changes in circumstances may arise. Poverty may supplant wealth and slander replace fame. Where barns were filled to bursting, there may arise a famine. And those whose broad acres could scarcely be traversed in a day, may come to a scanty plot of ground, or none at all. But if that does not happen to you, yet at any rate your friends must die, if you do not. Those who, in your younger days were your familiar acquaintances and companions, must pass away and if you survive, you shall gradually find yourself like a lone tree of the forest when the woodman, month after month has exercised his craft.

They that knew you shall have departed and the generation that has followed shall not know Joseph. During the lapse of years your children, one by one, may die. Your spouse so dear to your soul may be taken from you. Brothers and Sisters may also leave the vale of tears. It must be so. Can you hope that the arrows of death will forever turn aside from your family? Are you of an immortal race and your children and your sires and all you love—are these immortal, too? No, they must depart, so Nature has decreed. We must expect, sooner or later, that infirmities of body will set in. To some they come, alas, too soon, but to all they must come in their time. The windows, little by little are darkened. The pillars of the house tremble. The grinders fail because they are few and the strong man finds the grasshopper to be a burden.

These things must come. To all men are such trials measured out. And there must come temptations and inward conflicts and outward afflictions, in all which we shall have need to possess our souls in patience lest we be overcome by evil. Trials will arise from our own household, even more severe than if our Absalom had been cut off by death. Alas, how often is the living cross far more heavy and galling than if it had been dead. And certainly to us all there must come (unless Christ shall soon appear) the valley of death-shade, the passage of the black river, the clammy

sweat and the mortal anguish of the last dread hour, “for it is appointed unto men once to die.”

Alas, our fears find it an easy task to paint a very terrible picture out of these gloomy materials. The pains and groans of our dying strife frighten us. The giants, the hills of difficulty and the valleys of humiliation alarm us. We picture the path of the heavenly pilgrimage as a valley of the shadow of death—throughout full of confusion, dark with adversities, beset with snares—watched over by dragons and blocked up by Apollyons. Let our text *encourage* us, for it declares to us that all these things are ours! There is not in the whole area of our future life a single plot of stony ground which shall not yield us fertile harvests of joy.

As Midas of old touched even the most valueless objects and turned them into gold, so does the hand of Divine Love transmute every trial and affliction into everlasting joy for His people. Two seeds lie before us—the one is warmed in the sun—the other falls from the sower’s hand into the cold dark earth and there it lies buried beneath the soil. That seed which suns itself in the noontide beam may rejoice in the light in which it basks, but it is liable to be devoured by the birds, and certainly nothing can come of it, however long it may linger above ground. But the other seed, hidden beneath the clods in a damp, dark sepulcher, soon swells, germinates, bursts its sheath, upheaves the mold, springs up a green blade, buds, blossoms, becomes a flower, exhales perfume and loads the wings of every wind!

Better far for the seed to pass into the earth and die, than to lie in the sunshine and produce no fruit—and even thus for you the future, in its sorrow, shall be as a sowing in a fertile land—tears shall moisten you, Divine Grace shall increase within you—and you shall grow up in the likeness of your Lord unto perfection of holiness, to be such a flower of God’s own planting as even angels shall delight to gaze upon in the day of your transplanting to celestial soil! All the future is yours! I trust the Holy Spirit will make this Truth of God full of comfort to you, for to my own soul it is as balm to a bleeding wound, or a cool wind to a fevered cheek.

If I can but be persuaded that every occurrence of the future will most surely work for my good and is by God’s decree ordained to be a *blessing* to me and an honor to Himself, then, it seems to me, I can have no choice—for no evil can happen to me and seeming ill is but another form of benediction. If all events shall aid me, what matters in what dress they come, whether of scarlet and fine linen, or sackcloth and ashes? Trial may be very hard to bear for a time, but since in the very hardness of the endurance lies the *blessing*, the bitter is sweet and the medicine is food. Courage, Brothers and Sisters, you shall meet nothing but friends between this and the pearly gates, or, if you meet an enemy, it shall be a conquered one who shall crouch at your feet and you shall put your foot

on his neck and win a brighter victory and a heavier crown because of the encounter!

Courage, Brothers and Sisters, the winds which toss the waves of the Atlantic of your life are all sworn to bring your boat safely into the desired haven! Every wind that rises, whether soft or fierce, is a Divine monsoon, hurrying in the same direction as your soul's desires is aiming. God walks the tempest and rules the storm! Order reigns supreme in the uproars of elements or men, for the Divine hand compels the most rebellious creatures to obey without fail the Divine and all-wise decree. What cheer is this for the saints of God!

Passing on a little further in the Word of God, we have certain dark hints as to the grand events of the future which concern the Church and the world. I must confess myself to be, in the presence of the writings of Ezekiel and Jeremiah and John of Patmos, as a little child wandering through the museum, marveling at the Egyptian hieroglyphs and the Assyrian cuneiform characters, but quite unable to spell them out. I fancy, sometimes, that I have the key of the mysteries and soon discover some new form of Divine symbology which quite confuses me and makes me confess that I am but of yesterday and know nothing.

Yet does it appear that we are to expect the overturning of many things which now we regard as permanent. The rule of the coming ages is to be, “overturn, overturn,” till He shall come whose right it is. Heaving and convulsions there will be till all the things which can be shaken will be removed in the general conflagration when the earth and all the works that are in it shall be burned up and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. I am not putting these events in order, for I do not even *know* their order—and am neither a prophet nor an expounder of prophecy—but it is clear we are to look for the establishment of the Jews in their own land and the conversion of Israel with the fullness of the nations.

We are to expect the literal advent of Jesus Christ, for He Himself, by His angel told us, “This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven,” which must mean literally and in Person. We expect a reigning Christ on earth—that seems to us to be very plain and to be put so literally that we dare not spiritualize it. We anticipate a first and a second resurrection—a first resurrection of the righteous and a second resurrection of the ungodly who shall be judged, condemned and punished forever by the sentence of the great King.

We foresee from the Word, despite its obscurity, that strange and wonderful events will happen such as are depicted by vials and warriors with avenging swords and falling stars and a shriveled sky and a reeling earth and I know not what beside. But when we have put all together and have been sorely amazed at the visions that flit before us like dreams of the

night, we rejoice to learn at the end of them all, "All these things are ours, whatever they may be."

In the present political crisis there is much alarm and trepidation felt by some as to what may become of a movement which is very dear to most of us, and to accomplish which we would almost be prepared to die. But I foresee in the distance no adversary who can long withstand us and the brief opposition which may be offered will increase the ultimate victory. All things that shall happen, be they ever so cross to your thoughts and counter to your wishes, will, nevertheless, come up, like Blucher at Waterloo, at the exact moment when they shall help on the grand old cause! Justice must reign! The Church of God must be free from her adulterous connection with the State.

God orders everything in Providence—neither the good by excess of zeal, nor the bad by their malice shall mar His work. Through the thick darkness I hear the tramp of another host marching to battle and though I cannot see their plumes, yet I am assured that whether friend or foe, they must, before the battle is over, have yielded no mean service to our holy cause. Homage must be done, even by the powers of darkness, to the great King, the Lord of Hosts. Therefore, by the Cross and by the crown of Jesus, you lovers of truth and justice, you children of a free Church and a just God, charge home against the foes of God and man, who, under pretense of religion would continue to oppress the sister isle!

You that love the Lord, hate evil, abhor the doing of evil that good may come. Believe in the true and the just, but have no faith in wrong. Jesus your Lord would not worship Satan though all nations were showed him as a bribe, neither must we be guilty of injustice, though we anticipated from it the happiest results. Let right be done, come what may. Consequences are with God—duty alone is ours. Sever the Church from the State let it cost what it may. Even if for the moment advantage should seem to be given to the enemies of our faith, it is but so in appearance, or if it were real we can afford to give it to them and yet defeat them!

We can hurl down, this day, the gauntlet of our God and of His Christ in the presence of earth and Hell and let those take it up who dare! With all the deadliest odds against us we shall triumph yet, for the Lord is in the midst of His Church and therefore is she invincible. We will give Goliath his leg armor of brass, his spear, his armor and his shield, for what are these? The Lord's power and a stone from His servant's sling shall lay the monster in the dust! Let every Christian, then, look forward to future events, on the largest scale, with complete complacency. Let empires shake. Let crowns fall from anointed heads. Let the great ones of the earth put their hands upon their loins like women in travail. Let those that were full hire themselves out for bread and let the rulers be astonished. But as surely as God is God, the day comes when the Lord will maintain the right and avenge the oppressed and set up His Great White Throne from which

He will “judge the poor,” and “save the children of the needy,” and “break in pieces the oppressor.” So be it, good Lord, and we will bless Your name!

Once more, among the things to come, we mainly consider the Heaven of God and the eternal blessedness which are ordained for the righteous. Now, whatever Heaven is and wherever Heaven may be, this one thing the text declares, that it is *ours*. The Heaven of the separate spirit *before* the resurrection, the place where disembodied souls dwell with Christ—this is ours. The perfect Heaven of the saints, after the body shall be raised in the likeness of Christ, when soul and body in one man shall sit down at the right hand of God—all this is *ours*. To attempt to describe Heaven as some have sought to do is to prove our folly. It shall suffice us to wait till we enjoy it! And meanwhile we will comfort ourselves with this thought—that all its delights are ours!

II. I shall beg your special attention, in the second place, to THE BRIGHT ETERNAL FUTURE as being ours. Come with me, dear Hearers, again to the text. Come with me and let down the bucket and draw the water fresh and living from the ever-springing well. “Things to come, all are yours.” Notice that the text is not in the subjunctive mood—it reads not “all *may* be yours.” According to the doctrine of certain esteemed Brethren, a Christian may have a *hope* of Heaven, but he can never have a *certainty* of it, for a child of God may go back into perdition and an heir of the promises may miss the inheritance.

Alas, there must be scant store of food when the doctrine that the saints may perish everlastingly is not only accepted for a Truth of God but actually regarded as a theme for song! Samaria was shut up when the coarsest offal sold at a high price for food—and men must be thoroughly famished when they desire benefit from words like these—

**“O Lord, with trembling I confess,
An heir of God may fall from grace.”**

If it is indeed so, the text ought to run, “It is *possible* that all things to come may be yours.” “Things to come *may* be yours,” if—if—if—with ifs in a long line, such as *if* you are faithful to Divine Grace. *If* you do this and that. It is premature, I think, on Paul’s part, on our friends’ theory, to say that things to come *are* ours. The Apostle should have waited awhile to see how we hold on. Those angels in Heaven are exceedingly impudent on this theory, for they rejoice in the very bud of Grace “over one sinner that repents.”

Why they should do so if that repentant sinner may, after all, fall back and be damned I can hardly see! Their songs would be more appropriate when the battle is *won*, than when the young knight buckles on his harness. Wise men shout at harvest home and not at seed-sowing. If penitents do not, by God’s Grace, become dwellers in Glory, there is small cause of angelic joy! Ah, the angels believe the Truth of God and doubt not His infallible love—how I wish the saints on earth were all equally sound

on a matter of such importance! The angels know full well that such as Jesus has redeemed, such as God has called, such as unfeignedly believe, such as have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit shall be saved!

All things, you faithful in Christ, are yours—not as the Pope gave England to the Spanish king—if he could get it! But all things are laid up, prepared and ordained for you and the grant which Christ has made to you stands good and entails the blessing upon you world without end. “All things to come are yours.” Please notice, too, that the text is not in the future tense—“Things to come *shall be* yours.” If it were so written, it would read most grammatically and according to the strictest requirements of language! “Things to come *shall be* yours” is not enough. How can they be ours till they have come?

The text speaks in the *present* tense. And Brothers and Sisters, all the bliss of the future and the Heaven of God as yet unrevealed are ours at this very moment, for we have a title to them, clear and good. And though, like young nobles who are under age, we come not into our estates until a little time has passed and we have reached our majority, yet those estates are as much ours by indisputable right as if we did possess and enjoy them at this moment. When one of our English kings demanded of his barons where were their title deeds to their lands, a hundred swords flashed from the scabbards, as every man swore to maintain his right by his good sword! We take no sword from its scabbard, but we point to the Person of our blessed Lord in whom we trust, for He is both our God and our right and we are persuaded that as our Surety and our Representative, He will preserve our inheritance for us! The heritage which He claims as Son of God, the devil shall not defraud Him of and since all that He has He has made over to us, our title is good and valid and we are not afraid to claim this day that “things to come *are* ours.”

Notice, again, that in the text there is no exception—“Things to come, *all* are yours.” All! Then there is nothing excepted. Whatever may be the future glory of the saints, it belongs, according to this text, to them all—“All are yours.” And as there is no exception of things, so there is no exception of persons. Not, “All future glories belong to a few of you and only a portion to others,” but all the blessings that are to come belong to all the people to whom Paul was speaking—that is, to all who are sanctified in Christ Jesus and called by the Spirit. I mention this because there is a new doctrine springing up (and there is generally a new doctrine every week nowadays)—a new doctrine that some of us who may not hold certain views of the millennium, or who may not be so readily duped as others are with fanatical views of the future—we are not to have a share in the kingdom and to be shut out from many Divine favors.

There is not a word of Scripture to back such an idea, and my text, if there were nothing else, puts its foot upon so wretched a notion and crushes it outright! All that is promised in Scripture. All that Heaven will

disclose belongs to every child of God. “All are yours and you are Christ’s.” We shall have them next affirming that some of the saints are not Christ’s. We shall have them claiming to be of a higher caste than we poor Pariah’s who are destitute of their elevated knowledge! Indeed, the one assembly of Jesus Christ, as a certain sect delights to call itself—when it does not utterly excommunicate all who differ from it—when it is in its more charitable mood, promulgates a theory of a sort of aristocracy and democracy of saints! On their theory we may expect to see a gradation of principalities and powers, they themselves occupying places at the right hand of the Lord in His kingdom, while poor benighted Believers like ourselves may charitably be permitted to pick up the crumbs that fall from the rich man’s table!

It is ours to believe that all God’s people are *equally* regenerated, *equally* adopted, *equally* washed in blood, *equally* justified and *equally* made to be inheritors of the possessions which belong to us by the Covenant of Grace. Oh, trouble not your heads with these whimsies of modern fanaticism! “All things to come are yours” if you are Christ’s! Whoever you may be, there is not one mercy excepted from you, nor are you excepted from one of them. Let this be your comfort and delight! The text speaks without a grain of contingency as to the things to come. It does not say Heaven is ours *if* there is a Heaven and glory is ours *if* it shall indeed be revealed—but the blessings are spoken of as though they must come—“Things to come.”

And so, Beloved, our future Glory is ordained by Divine decree. It is hastened on by every event of Providence. It is prepared by the ascension of our blessed Lord and His sitting at the right hand of God. It is existing even now. In measure, beatified saints are already partakers of it and we may rest assured that by no means shall we be defrauded of the bliss which God has promised. To introduce you a moment into this Glory, let me remind you of a choice text, which like a golden gate, leads us into the city. It is in the 16th Psalm, just at the close of it—“You will show me the path of life: in Your Presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand *there are* pleasures forevermore.” Here is as brief and yet complete a description of Heaven as I can well give you.

The things to come thus mentioned belong to all the saints. Life is yours—not mere existence, but life filled with happiness and bliss. Life and the path of it—that mysterious secret which only Jesus could reveal. That narrow path the eagle’s eyes have not seen and the lion’s whelps have not trod. It is the secret of the Lord which is with them that fear Him. And that path of life is yours today! Think of it! Christ in you is that path of life—He is yours! The life eternal is in you now. The life of Heaven is none other than the life of Believers developed. “I give unto My sheep eternal life.” They have it *now*, the same life that sums itself in the Pres-

ence of God is the life which reveals itself this day in prayer, which groans in desire and which sings with holy joy in gratitude to the Most High.

You have already, then, as yours, the life and the path of life which constitute Heaven. “In your Presence,” says the Psalmist—the Divine Presence *is* Heaven! To see the face of God, to be consciously and acceptably near to God—no longer set afar off by sin or divided by frailty, or anything besides—this is our glorious rest! But, Beloved, ours is this Divine Presence *today*—according as we are able to bear it, we behold the face of our Father *now*. Though, by reason of our mortality, we could not endure to behold His unclouded splendor, yet, in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Mediator, we perceive the brightness of the Father’s Glory. Heaven, in the text, is described as nearness to God, in the words, “At Your right hand.”

How near the glorified are in Heaven, only they themselves know, but we are near, also. And though not always near as to our own perception, yet faith rejoices that the justified are a people near unto God—as near, indeed, as Christ Himself is. The right hand is also the place of honor. Kings seat their favorites at their right hand. The inhabitants of Heaven are an honored company, but we, also, though sojourning below, are at God’s right hand this day in a certain respect. Though it does not yet appear what we shall be, yet today are we the sons of God, His chosen and His beloved. The right hand of God is a place of safety, and though immunity from every peril is a thing to come, in a certain sense, yet is it ours to enjoy today—for the Lord covers us with His feathers and under His wings do we trust. His Truth has become our shield and buckler.

The Psalmist speaks of fullness—“At Your right hand there is fullness of joy.” This bliss, Believer, will fill all your powers to the brim! This exceeding weight of Glory will be more than your heart can conceive! This joy is more than your ear has ever heard men tell of and yet it is all yours and yours today. Though you have not yet reached the everlasting fullness, yet you have tasted some of the spray of its joyous waves and these have made your heart dream of what immortal joys must be. Fullness of *joy* is spoken of by David—here is the suitability of Heaven for us. It is such as to be *really* joy to us, not a banqueting place for angels only, but a festival for men. Our joy shall be the joy of our Lord, the Man Christ Jesus—such joy as will suit our nature.

“At Your right hand there are pleasures.” Here is their *variety*. Heaven’s joys are not one bare delight, but *many* rich pleasures. I cannot stay to read into the catalog now, but heavenly joys shall be like the Tree of Life in the New Jerusalem which brings forth 12 manner of fruits and yields her fruit every month. Robert Hall used to cry, “O for the everlasting rest!” but Wilberforce would sigh to dwell in unbroken love. Hall was a man who suffered—he longed for rest. Wilberforce was a man of amiable spirit, loving society and fellowship—he looked for love.

Hall shall have his rest and Wilberforce shall have his love! There are joys at God’s right hand suitable for the spiritual tastes of all those who shall come there. Best of all, these pleasures are “forevermore!” Mark their continuance—they shall never cease. There shall be no pause in the hallelujahs of Heaven. No nights to eternal days. No winters to close celestial springs. Nor do the words alone declare continuance, they tell of *perpetuity*. “Forevermore.” There shall be no end to the rest which remains for the people of God.

The text says that all which David spoke of is ours and so, indeed, it is. Heaven is ours in the price—the blood of Jesus has opened the gates of Heaven to us. It is ours in the promise, for the Lord has promised eternal life to Believers, and Jesus wills that His people be with Him where He is, that they may behold His Glory. It is ours in the first principles—holiness in the heart is Heaven begun below. The Holy Spirit’s indwelling is the pledge and earnest of our inheritance. Once more, Heaven is ours in our Representative, for Jesus has taken possession on our behalf and its goodly land is seized and claimed by Him who is our Head, our Leader and our All.

Here let us close this part of our meditation and occupy one moment or so with practical truth, light shed upon the action of the present by the brightness of the future.

III. Very hurriedly then, beloved Brothers and Sisters, if things to come belong to all the saints, EXAMINE WELL YOUR TITLE-DEEDS, to see whether they belong to *you*. It will help you if you remember that the saints are Christ’s. Are you Christ’s? Do you trust Him? Do you love Him and serve Him? If so, your title is clear and all future things are yours. Next, set greatest store by your best treasure, and, as the best things are *to come*, let go of the present. The present is a shadow, a bubble that is dissolved—the future lasts forever. Where your treasure is, there let your heart be.

Rejoice even now, I pray you, in your inheritance. As you are thus rich, let your spending money be dealt out with a generous hand. You are on your way to the mansions of the blessed—rejoice as you make the pilgrimage. If you have no present reason for thankfulness, yet the future may yield you much. Break forth, therefore, into joy and singing and with songs and everlasting joy upon your head make your way towards Zion. If it is so, that all the future is yours, meditate much upon it—make Heaven the subject of your daily thoughts. Live not on this present, which is but food for swine, but live on the future, which is meat for angels!

How refined will be your communications if your meditations are sublime! Your life will be heavenly if your musings are heavenly. Take wings to your spirit and dwell among the angels. All these things are yours—then prepare for them. Day by day, in the all-cleansing blood of Jesus, which is the path of purity, wash your souls. By repentance cast off every

sin. By a renewed application to Jesus and His Spirit, obtain fresh power against every evil. Stand ready for Heaven with your loins girt about and your lamp trimmed. Be waiting for the midnight cry, “Behold the Bridegroom comes!” Let your life be spent in the suburbs of the Celestial City, in a devout sanctity of thought and act. Live upon the doorstep of the pearl gate, always waiting for the time when the angelic messenger shall say, “Come up here.”

If, indeed, all things are yours day by day, gratefully bless God that though you deserve to descend into Hell, you have such a place reserved for you as Heaven. You might have been cast away—the damnation of Hell might have been your only outlook. It is Divine Grace, alone, that has made you to differ and given you a portion among them that are sanctified. Therefore bless God as long as you have any being and let none hinder you in your sacred joy. Praise Him night and day for what He has done for you.

And, lastly, if you have no title for these things to come. If they are none of them yours, be amazed and confounded, for it will be an awful thing for Christ to come and you to have no part in Him—for Heaven to come and you no entrance into it—for then there will remain for you nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation! Alas, for you, judgment shall summon you and the Judge shall condemn you and outer darkness and weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth shall be your portion forever!

God grant, poor Soul, that you may lay hold on Christ this morning by an act of simple and humble faith, taking Him to be your only confidence. Thus, and thus only, the blessings of Christ shall become yours. But if you refuse to believe on Christ Jesus, then fearfulness and dismay will lay hold on you in the day when He shall come to judge the world in righteousness according to His Gospel. The Lord bless you richly, each one of you, for His name’s sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Revelation 21.

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“STEWARDS”

NO. 3350

A SERMON
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**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE PASTORS’
COLLEGE ASSOCIATION, 1887.**

***“Let a man so consider us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.”
1 Corinthians 4:1, 2.***

MY beloved Brothers—I might even say with Paul, “My dearly beloved and longed for”—it gives me intense delight to look into your faces once again, and yet I feel weighted with a solemn responsibility in having to direct your thoughts at this time so as to give the keynote to our solemn conference. I ask your continued prayers that I may speak aright, saying the right thing in the right way.

There is considerable advantage in the freedom of the usual inaugural address. It may take the methodical form of a sermon, or it may wear looser garments and come forth in the undress of a speech. Certain freedoms which are not usually accorded to a set sermon are allowed me in this rambling discourse. You shall call my talk by what name you choose, when I have done, but it will be a sermon—for I have a very definite and distinct text in my mind—and I shall keep to it with at least an average closeness.

I may as well announce the text, for it will furnish you with a clue to my intent. You will find the passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, in the first verses of the fourth Chapter—“*Let a man so consider us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.*”

The Apostle was anxious to be rightly considered and well he might be, for ministers are not often estimated rightly. As a rule, they are either gloried in, or else despised. At the commencement of our ministry, when our stores are fresh, and our energies are full—when we blaze and flash and spend much time in the firework factory—people are apt to think us wonderful beings! And then the Apostle’s word is needed, “Therefore let no man boast in men” (1 Cor 3:21). It is not true, as flatterers insinuate, that in our case the gods have come down in the likeness of men—and we shall be idiots if we think so! In due time foolish expectations will be cured by disappointment and then we shall hear unwelcome truth mingled with unrighteous censure. The idol of yesterday is the butt of today!

Nine days, nine weeks, nine months, or nine years—be it more or less—time works disenchantment and changes our position in the world’s view. The primrose day is over, and the nettle months are come! After the time of the singing of birds has passed away, we come nearer to the season of fruit, but the children are not half as pleased with us as when they wandered in our luxuriant meadows and strung our daisies and buttercups into crowns and garlands. In our more autumnal years, the people miss our flowers and greenery. Perhaps we are becoming sensible that it is so. The old man is solid and slow, whereas the young man rode upon the wings of the wind! It is clear that some think too much of us, and some think too little of us—it would be far better if they considered of us soberly “as the ministers of Christ.” It would be for the advantage of the Church, for our own benefit and for the glory of God if we were put in our right places and kept there, being neither overrated, nor unduly censured, but viewed in our relation to our Lord, rather than in our own personalities. “Let a man so consider us, as of the ministers of Christ.”

We are *ministers*. The word has a very respectable sound. To be a minister is the aspiration of many a youth. Perhaps if the word were otherwise rendered, their ambition might cool. Ministers are *servants*—they are not guests, but waiters, not landlords, but laborers. The word has been rendered “under-rowers,” men who tug the oar on the lowest bench. It was hard work to row a galley—those rapid strokes consumed the life of the slaves. There were three banks of oars. Those on the upper bank of oars had the advantage of fresh air. Those who were beneath were more closely shut in and I suppose that the lowest bank of rowers would be faint with heat, as well as worn out with sore travail. Brothers, let us be content to wear out our lives even in the worst position, if by our labor we can speed the passage of our great Caesar and give speed to the ship of the Church in which He has embarked! We are willing to be chained to the oar and to work on through life to make His boat cleave the waves. We are not captains, nor owners of the galley, but only the oarsmen of Christ! The text, however, does not call us simply ministers or servants, but it adds, “*of Christ.*” We are not the servants of men, but of the Lord Jesus! Esteemed Sir, if you think because you subscribe to my support that I am bound to do your bidding, you are mistaken! Truly, we are “ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” But in the highest sense our sole responsibility is to Him whom we call Master and Lord. We obey superior orders, but we cannot yield to the dictation of our fellow servants, however influential they may be. Our service is glorious because it is the service of Christ—we feel honored in being permitted to wait upon Him whose shoe laces we are not worthy to unloose!

We are also said to be “stewards.” What are stewards? Let us consider—

I. WHAT IS THE OFFICE OF STEWARD? What is required of stewards? This is our duty. We are not now speaking of anybody outside,

but of you and myself, therefore, let us make personal application of all that is said.

First, *a steward is a servant and nothing more*. Perhaps he does not always remember this—and it is a very pitiful business when the servant begins to think that he is “my lord.” It is a pity that servants, when honored by their master, should be so apt to give themselves airs. How ridiculous Jack-in-Office makes himself! I do not refer now to butlers and footmen, but to ourselves! If we magnify ourselves, we shall become contemptible—and we shall neither magnify our office nor our Lord. We are the servants of Christ, but not lords over His heritage.

Ministers are for churches—not churches for minister. In our work among the churches we must not dare to view them as estates to be farmed for our own profit, or gardens to be trimmed to our own taste.

A steward is a servant of a peculiar kind, for he has to superintend the other servants and that is a difficult thing to do. An old friend of mine, who is now with God, once said, “I have always been a shepherd. Forty years I was a shepherd of sheep and another forty years I was a shepherd of men—and the last flock was a deal more sheepish than the first.” This witness is true. I think I have heard that a sheep has as many diseases as there are days in the year, but I am sure that the other sort of sheep are liable to ten times as many! A pastor’s work is an anxious one. All sorts of difficulties occur with our fellow servants and, alas, unwise stewards make a great many more than there need be by expecting perfection in others, although they do not possess it themselves! Our fellow servants are, after all, wisely selected, for He who put them into His household knew what He was doing—at any rate, they are *His* choice and not ours. It is not our place to find fault with our Lord’s own election!

The other servants will take their cue from us. A steward who is dull, inert and slow, will have a slow team of servants about him and the business of his lordship will fare badly. Those who travel will have noticed that the servants in a hotel are very much like the landlord—if the landlord is cheery, attentive, and obliging—all the maids and waiters partake of his geniality! But if he looks sourly at you and treats you with indifference, you will find that the whole establishment is of a disdainful order. Oh, that we may always be alive and earnest in the service of the Lord Jesus and that our people may also be alive! A minister must give himself wholly to his work. I have read of a Puritan divine, that he was so full of life that his people said he lived like one who fed on live things! Oh, for a life sustained by living bread! We shall not be good stewards in the management of our fellow servants unless we are, ourselves, filled with the Grace of God! We must set our fellow servants an example of zeal and tenderness, constancy, hopefulness, energy and *obedience*. We must ourselves practice constant self-denial and select as our own part of the work that which is the hardest and most humiliating. We are to

rise above our fellows by superior self-forgetfulness. Be it ours to lead the forlorn hopes and bear the heaviest burdens. Archdeacon Hare was giving a lecture at Trinity College when a cry of, “Fire!” was raised. His pupils rushed away and formed themselves into a line to pass buckets of water from the river to the burning building. The tutor saw a consumptive student standing up to his waist in the water and cried to him, “What? *You* in the water, Sterling?” The reply was, “Somebody must be in it, and why not I as well as another?” Let us say to ourselves, “Some fellows must be doing the drudgery of the church and laboring in the hardest places—and why should not I take that post?”

Next, remember that *stewards are servants under the more immediate command of the great Master*. We should be as the steward who daily goes into his lord’s private room to receive orders. John Ploughman was never in the squire’s parlor, but the steward is often there. If he neglected to consult the squire, he would soon be doing amiss and involving himself in heavy responsibility. How often ought you and I say, “Lord, show me what You would have me to do!” To cease to look up to God, so as to learn and practice His will, would be to quit our true position. A steward who never communicates with his master? Give him his wages and let him go! He who does his own will and not his master’s is of no value as a steward! Brothers, we must continually wait upon God. The habit of going for orders must be cultivated. How grateful should we be that our Master is always within call! He guides His servants with His eyes and with His guidance He also gives the necessary power. He will make our faces to shine before the eyes of our fellows if we commune with Him. Our example must encourage others to wait upon the Lord. As our business is to tell them the mind of God, let us study that mind very carefully.

Again—*stewards are constantly giving account*. Their account is given as they go along. A business-like proprietor requires an account of outgoings and incomings from day to day. There is great truth in the old proverb that “short reckonings make long friends.” If we make short reckonings with God, we shall be long friends with Him. I wonder if any of you keep account of your faults and shortcomings. Perhaps the time will be better spent in constant efforts to serve your Master and increase His estate. We ought, each one, to ask himself, “What am I doing by my preaching? Is it of the right kind? Am I giving prominence to those Doctrines which my Lord would have me put in the forefront? Am I caring for souls as He would have me care for them?” It is a good thing thus to review one’s whole life and enquire, “Do I give sufficient time to private prayer? Do I study the Scriptures as intensely as I should? I hurry about to many meetings, but am I, in all this, fulfilling my Master’s orders? May I not be gratifying myself with the appearance of doing much, whereas I could really be doing more if I were more attentive to the quality than to the quantity of the work?” Oh, to go often to the Master and to be right

and clear in our accounts with Him! This will be profitable both to our churches and to ourselves.

To come to the main point—a *steward is a trustee of his master's goods*. Whatever he has belongs to his Master and choice things are put into his custody, not that he may do as he likes with them, but that he may take care of them. The Lord has entrusted to each one of us certain talents—and these are not our own. Gifts of knowledge, thought, speech and influence are not ours to glory in, but ours in trust for the Lord alone! It is *His* pound that gains five pounds!

We ought to increase our capital stock. Are all you young Brothers doing that? Are you increasing in gift and capacity? My Brothers, do not neglect yourselves! I observe that some Brothers grow and others stand still, dwarfed and stunted. Men, like horses, are very disappointing creatures—good colts drop suddenly lame, or develop a vice of which they were never before suspected. To be always giving out and never taking in tends to emptiness.

Brothers, we are stewards of the mysteries of God—we are “put in trust with the Gospel.” Paul speaks of the Gospel of the blessed God which was committed to his trust. I hope none of you have ever had the misfortune to be made a trustee. It is a thankless office. In executing a trust, there is little scope for originality—we are bound to carry out a trust with literal exactness. One person wishes to receive more money and another desires to alter a clause in the deed—but the faithful trustee falls back upon the document and abides by its provisions. I hear him say, as they worry him, “Dear Friends, I did not make this trust. I am simply the administrator of it and I am bound to carry it out.” The Gospel of the Grace of God needs great improvement—at least, so I am informed—but I know it is no business of mine to improve it! My part is to act upon it. No doubt many would improve God, Himself, from off the face of the earth if they could. They would improve the Atonement until it vanished. Great alterations are demanded of us, in the name of the spirit of the age. And of course we are warned that the very notion of punishment for sin is a barbarous relic of mediaeval ages and must be given up! And with it the Doctrine of Substitution and many other old-fashioned dogmas! We have nothing to do with these demands—we have only to preach the Gospel as we find it. Stewards must keep to their orders and trustees must carry out the terms of their trust!

My Brothers, we are at this present hour set for the *defense* of the Gospel. If ever men were called to this office, we are so called. These are times of drifting—men have pulled up their anchors and are driven to and fro with winds and tides of divers kinds. As for me, I have in this hour of danger not only let down the great bower anchor, but I have cast four anchors out of the stern! That may be quite the wrong place, but in these times we need anchoring both fore and aft. Now I am fixed! Skep-

tical reasoning might have moved me at one time, but not now! Do our enemies ask us to lay down our swords and cease to fight for the old faith? Like the Greeks to Xerxes, we answer, “Come and take them!” The other day the advanced thinkers were going to sweep the orthodox into limbo, but as yet, we survive their assaults. These boasters do not know the vitality of evangelical truth! No, glorious Gospel, you shall never perish! If we are to die, we will die fighting. If we shall personally pass away, fresh Evangelists will preach upon our graves. Evangelical truths are like the dragon’s teeth which Cadmus sowed—they breed men all armed for the fray. The Gospel lives by dying! Brothers, at any rate, in this contest, if we are not victorious, we will at least be faithful!

A steward’s business is to dispense his Master’s goods according to their design. He is to bring forth things new and old—to provide milk for babes and strong meat for men, giving to each one his portion of meat in due season. At some tables I fear the strong men have been waiting a long time for the meat and there is small hope of its yet appearing—the milk and water is more plentiful by far! Someone went to hear a certain preacher last Sunday and complained that he did not preach Christ. Another remarked that perhaps it was not the due season, but my Brothers, the due season for preaching Christ is every time you preach! God’s children are always hungry and no bread will satisfy them but that which came down from Heaven.

A wise steward will maintain the proportion of the Truths of God. He will bring forth things new and old—not always Doctrine, not always practice, and not always experience. He will not always preach conflict, nor always victory—not giving a one-sided view of the Truths of God, but a sort of stereoscopic view which shall make the Truth of God stand out “*evidently set forth*” before them. Much of the preparation of spiritual food lies in the correct proportion of the ingredients. Excess in one direction and failure in another may breed much mischief! Let us, therefore, use weight and measure—and *look up* for guidance!

Brothers, take care that you use your talents for your Master, and only for your Master. It is disloyalty to our Master if we wish to be soul-winners in order to be thought to be so! It is unfaithfulness to Jesus if we preach sound Doctrine with the view to be thought sound, or pray earnestly with the desire that we may be known as praying men. It is for us to pursue our Lord’s Glory with a single eye and with our whole heart. We must use our Lord’s Gospel, our Lord’s people and our Lord’s talents for our Lord and for Him alone.

The steward should also be the guardian of his Master’s family. Look to the interests of all who are in Christ Jesus, and let them all be as dear to you as your own children. Servants in the olden times were often so united to the family and so interested in their masters’ affairs, that they spoke of *our* house, *our* land, *our* carriage, *our* horses and *our* children. Our Lord would have us thus identify ourselves with His holy business

and especially He would have us love His chosen. We, beyond all others, should lay down our lives for the Brothers and Sisters in Christ! Because they belong to Christ, we love them for His sake. I trust we can heartily say—

**“There’s not a lamb in all Your flock
I would disdain to feed.”**

Brothers, let us heartily love all whom Jesus loves! Cherish the tried and suffering! Visit the fatherless and the widow! Care for the faint and the feeble! Bear with the melancholy and despondent! Be mindful of all parts of the household and thus shall you be a good steward.

I shall cease from this picture when I have said that *the steward represents his master*. When the master is away, everybody comes to the steward for orders. He had need to behave himself well who represents such a Lord as ours! A steward should speak much more carefully and wisely when he speaks for his lord than when he speaks on his own account. Unless he is guarded in his utterances, his lord may be forced to say to him, “You had better speak for yourself. I cannot allow you thus to misrepresent me.” My beloved Brothers and fellow servants, the Lord Jesus is compromised by us if we do not keep His way, declare His Truth, and manifest His spirit. Men infer the master from the servant. Are they not to be excused if they do? Ought not the steward to act after his master’s manner? You cannot dissociate the squire from the steward—the lord from his representative. A Puritan was told that he was too precise, but replied, “I serve a precise God.”

If urged to utter your own thoughts rather than revealed Truth of God, follow Jesus, who spoke not His own things, but those of the Father. In this you will be acting as a steward should do. Here lies your wisdom, your comfort, and your strength. It was a sufficient vindication for a steward, when one accused him of folly, that he could reply, “Say what you please of what I did, for therein I followed my master’s orders.” Caviler, do not blame the steward! The man has done according to the command of his superior—what else would you have him do? Our conscience is clear and our heart is restful when we feel that we have taken up our cross and have followed the footprints of the Crucified One! Wisdom is justified of her children.

The second part of our study is—

II. OUR OBLIGATIONS AS STEWARDS. “It is required in stewards that a man be found *faithful*.” It is not required that a man be found brilliant, or that he be found pleasing to his associates, or even that he be found successful! All that is required is that he be found faithful—but truly this is no small matter! It will need that the Lord, Himself, be both our wisdom and our strength, or we shall surely fail. Many are the ways by which we may come short of this requirement, however simple it may seem to be.

We may fail to be faithful through *acting as if we were chiefs instead of servants*. A difficulty arises in the church which might readily be settled by loving forbearance, but we “stand upon our dignity” and then the servant grows out of his livery. We can be very high and mighty if we please—and the smaller we are, the more easily do we swell out. No cock is greater in fight than a bantam—and no minister is more ready to contend for his “dignity” than the man who has no dignity! How foolish we look when we play the grandee! The steward thinks he has not been treated with proper respect and he will “let the servants know who he is.” His master was roughly used the other day by an angry tenant—and he took no notice, for he had too much mind to be put out with so small a matter—but his steward passes by nothing and fires up at everything! Is this as it should be? I think I see the gentle Master lay His hand upon His furious servant’s shoulder, and I hear Him say, “Can you not bear it? I have borne far more than this.”

Brothers, our Master “endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself,” and shall we be weary and faint in our minds? How can we be stewards of the gentle Jesus if we behave ourselves haughtily? Let us never ride the high horse, nor attempt to be lords over God’s heritage, for He will not have it—and we cannot be faithful if we give way to pride.

We shall also fail in our duty as stewards if we begin speculating with our Master’s money. We may play ducks and drakes with our own, but not with our Lord’s money. We are not bidden to speculate, but to “occupy” till He comes. Honest trading with His goods is one thing, but to play a high game and run unlawful risks is quite another! I do not intend to speculate with my Master’s Gospel by dreaming that I can improve it by my own deep thinking, or by soaring aloft with the philosophers! We will not, even with the idea of saving souls, speak other than the Gospel! If I could create a great excitement by delivering novel doctrine, I would abhor the thought! To raise a revival by suppressing the Truth of God is dealing deceitfully—it is a pious fraud and our Lord wants no gain which might come by such a transaction! It is ours simply and honestly to trade with our Master’s pounds and bring Him such increase as they gain in fair dealing.

We may become false to our trust *by acting as men-pleasers*. When the steward studies the good pleasure of the plowman, or the whims of the maid, everything must go wrong, for everything is out of place. We are influenced by one another and we influence one another. The greatest are unconsciously influenced in some measure by the least. The minister must be overwhelmingly influenced by the Lord, his God, so that other influences may not warp him from his fidelity. We must resort continually to headquarters and receive the Word from the mouth of the Lord, Himself, so that we may be kept straight and true! Otherwise we shall soon be biased, although we may not be aware of it. There must be no holding back to please one person—no rushing forward to satisfy another.

er—no moving an inch even to gratify the whole community! We must not harp upon a certain string to win the approval of this party. Neither must we be silent upon an important Doctrine to avoid offending that clique! What have we to do with idols, dead or alive? O Brothers, if you go in for pleasing everybody, you have indeed set yourselves a task! The toils of Sisyphus and the labors of Hercules are nothing to this! We must not flatter men. We must speak plain words—and words which conscience will approve. If we please men, we shall displease our Lord, so that success in our self-imposed task would be fatal to our eternal interests! In trying to please men, we shall not even succeed in pleasing ourselves! To please our Lord, though it may seem very difficult, is an easier task than pleasing men. O Steward, have your eyes only upon your Master!

We shall not be found faithful stewards *if we are idlers and triflers* Do you ever meet with lazy ministers? I have heard of them, but when my eyes sees them, my heart abhors them. If you plan to be lazy, there are plenty of avocations in which you will not be needed, but, above all, you are not needed in the Christian ministry! The man who finds the ministry an easy life will also find that it will bring a hard death. If we are not laborers, we are not true stewards, for we are to be examples of diligence to the household. I like Adam Clarke’s precept—“Kill yourselves with work and pray yourselves alive again.” We shall never do our duty either to God or man if we are sluggards.

Yet some who are always busy may yet be unfaithful, if all that they do is done in a jaunty, trifling manner. If we play at preaching, we have chosen an awful game. To shuffle texts like cards and make literary essays out of themes which move all Heaven and Hell is shameful work! We must be serious as death in this solemn work. There are boys and girls who are always giggling, but who never laugh—and they are the very image of certain always-jesting preachers. I like an honest laugh. True humor can be sanctified and those who can stir men to smile can also move them to weep. But even this has limits which the foolish soon exceed. Be seriously in earnest. Live like men who have something to live for and preach like men to whom preaching is the highest exercise of their being! Our work is the most important under Heaven, or else it is sheer imposture! If you are not earnest in carrying out His instructions, your Lord will give His vineyard to another, for He will not put up with those who turn His service into trifling.

When we *misuse our Master’s property*, we are false to our trust. We are entrusted with a certain amount of talent, strength and influence—and we have to use this trust money with a single purpose. Our purpose is to promote the Master’s honor and Glory. We are to seek God’s Glory and nothing else. By all means, let every man use his best influence on the right side in politics—but no minister has liberty to use his position in the Church to promote party ends! I do not censure workers for tem-

perance, but even this admirable purpose must not push out the Gospel! I trust it never does. I hold that no minister has a right to use his ability or office to cater for the mere amusement of the multitude. The Master has sent us to win souls—all is within the compass of our commission which tends towards that—but that is chiefly our work which drives directly and distinctly at that end. The danger lies at this time in setting up theatricals, semi-theatricals, concerts, and so forth. Until I see that the Lord Jesus Christ has set up a theater, or planned a miracle play, I shall not think of emulating the stage or competing with the music hall! If I do my own business, by preaching the Gospel, I shall have enough to do. One objective is enough for most men—one such as ours is enough for any minister, however many his talents, however versatile his mind.

If we would be faithful as stewards, *we must not neglect any one of the family*, nor neglect any portion of the estate. I wonder whether we practice a personal observation of our hearers. Our beloved friend, Mr. Archibald Brown, is right when he says that London needs not only house-to-house visitation, but room-to-room visitation! We must, in the case of our people, go further and practice man-to-man visitation. By personal contact, alone, can certain persons be reached. If I had a number of bottles before me, and were to play upon them with a fire-engine, how much of the water would be lost? If I want to make sure of filling them, I must take them up, one by one, and carefully pour the liquid into them. We must watch over our sheep, one by one. This is to be done not only by personal talk, but by personal prayer. Dr. Guthrie says that he called upon a sick man who greatly refreshed his soul, for he told him that he was known to accompany his minister in his visits. “While I lie here, I shall follow you in your visitation. I keep on *remembering* house after house in my prayer, and I pray for the man, his wife, his children and all who dwell with him.” Thus, without moving a step, the sick saint visited Macfarlane, and Douglas, and Duncan, and all the others whom his pastor called to see! We ought thus to beat the bounds of our parish and go round and round our congregations, forgetting none, despairing of none, bearing all upon our hearts before the Lord. Especially let us think of the poor, the crotchety, the desponding. Let our care, like the hurdles of a sheepfold, enclose all the flock!

Another thing must not be overlooked. In order to faithfulness *we must never connive at evil*. This injunction will be warmly commended by certain Brothers whose only notion of pruning a tree is to cut it down. A gardener comes to a gentleman’s house and when he is told that the shrubs are a little overgrown, he answers, “I will see to it.” In a few days you walk round the garden. He has seen to it with a vengeance! He has done the garden, and it is done for! Some persons cannot learn the balance of virtues—they cannot kill a mouse except by burning down the barn! Did I hear you say, “I was faithful, I never connived at evil”? So far so good! But may it not happen that by a bad temper you produced more

evil than that which you destroyed? Yield in all things personal, but be firm where truth and holiness are concerned! We must be faithful, lest we incur the sin and penalty of Eli. Be honest to the rich and influential. Be firm with the wavering and unsteady, for the blood of these will be required at our hands. Brothers, you will need all the wisdom and Grace you can get in order to fulfill your duties as pastors! There is an adaptation to rule men which would seem to be quite absent from certain preachers—and the place of it is supplied by an adaptation to set a house on fire, for they scatter firebrands and burning coals wherever they go. Be you not like they! Strive not, and yet wink not at sin!

Some neglect their obligations as stewards by *forgetting that the Master is coming*. “He will not come yet,” whisper some. “There are so many prophecies to be fulfilled and it is even possible that He will not come at all, in the vulgar sense of the term. There is no particular need for us to make haste.” Ah, my Brothers, it is the unfaithful servant who says, “My Lord delays his coming.” This belief allows him to put off labor and travail. The servant will not clean the room by daily duty because the master is away—and she can have a great clean up, in the form of a revival, before her lord arrives. If we would each feel that each day may be our last day, we would be more intense in our work. While preaching the Gospel, we may someday be interrupted by the blast of the trumpet, and the cry, “Behold, the Bridegroom comes; go you out to meet Him!” This expectation will tend to quicken our pace. The time is short, our account is near—our Lord is at the door! We must work with all our might. We must not be eye-servants, except in this sense—that we labor in the Lord’s Presence since He is so near!

I am impressed with the rapid flight of time, the swift approach of the last great audit. These annual conferences return so speedily! To some of us it seems only a day or two since that of 1886—the last of them hastens on. I shall soon be giving in the account of my stewardship, or, if I should survive for a while, others of you may be summoned to meet your Lord. You will soon go home to your Lord if your Lord does not soon come to you! We must work on from hour to hour with our eyes upon the audit, that we may not be ashamed of the record which will be found in the volume of the book.

The *reward* of faithful stewards is exceedingly great—let us aspire to it. The Lord will make the man who was faithful in a few things to be ruler over many things. That is an extraordinary passage where our Lord says, “Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He comes, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself and make them to sit down to meat, and He will come forth and serve them.” It is wonderful that our Lord has already served us, but how can we comprehend that He will serve us again? Think of Jesus rising up from His Throne to wait upon us! “Behold,” He cries, “here comes a man who

served Me faithfully on earth! Make way for him, you angels, and principalities, and powers! This is the man whom the King delights to honor.” And to our surprise, the King girds Himself and waits upon us! We are ready to cry, “Not so, my Lord.” But He must and will keep His Word! This unspeakable honor He will pay to His true servants. Happy man to have been the poorest and most despised of ministers, to be now served by the King of kings!

Beloved Brothers, we are bound to go forward, cost us what it may, for we dare not go back—we have no armor for our backs. We believe ourselves to be called to this ministry and we cannot be false to the call. If I must be a lost soul, let me be lost as a thief, a blasphemer, or a murderer rather than as an unfaithful steward to the Lord Jesus! This is to be a Judas, a son of perdition, indeed! Remember, if any of you are unfaithful, you win for yourselves a superfluity of condemnation. You were not forced to be ministers. You were not forced to enter upon this sacred office. By your own choice you are here. In your youth you aspired to this holy thing and thought yourselves happy in attaining your desire. Brothers, if we meant to be untrue to Jesus, there was no necessity to have climbed this sacred rock in order to multiply the horrors of our final fall! We could have perished quite sufficiently in the ordinary ways of sin. What need to qualify ourselves for a greater condemnation? This will be a dreadful result if this is all that comes of our college studies and our burning of the midnight oil in acquiring knowledge. My heart and my flesh tremble while I contemplate the possibility of any of us being found guilty of treachery to our charge and treason to our King! May the good Lord so abide with us, that at the last we may be clear of the blood of all men! It will be seven heavens in one to hear our Master say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP

NO. 2440

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1895.
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“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”
1 Corinthians 4:2.

IT is well that our dear Brothers and Sisters should make a right account of us. Paul says, in the verse preceding our text, “Let a man so think of us,” for there are some who make a wrong reckoning as to the ministers of the Gospel. Some go to an extreme, for they glory in men. One glories in Paul, who is so deep in doctrine, another in Cephas, who is so energetic and plainspoken, another in Apollos, who is so exceedingly eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures. But Paul says, in the latter verses of the third chapter, “Let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and you are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.” You do not belong to your ministers, you must not put yourselves down as followers of *them*—you belong to Christ and Christ, Himself—and all His ministers belong to you.

But while some erred in thinking too much of their ministers, as no doubt they still do—God deliver them from such a delusion—there were, no doubt, others who erred in not thinking enough of them, not appreciating their position and condition so as to sympathize with them and *pray* for them. Had they known to what a responsible office they were called and what was required at their hands, they would lovingly have borne them upon their hearts, and gone with their names to the Mercy Seat in continual prayer. Hence, it is very important that men should so think of us as to judge us correctly, so that while they do not rely upon us in any wrong sense, they may, at the same time, feel an affectionate sympathy with us and constantly bear us up before the Throne of Grace.

Paul goes on to tell us how we ought to think of the ministers of Christ. The word should be, “servants,” of Christ. There is a great respectability about the word, “minister,” which really does not belong to it, for, if you take it to pieces, it means an under-rower, one of those men who had to take an oar on the lowest benches of the slave ships. There were three benches for the rowers and it was a hard task for all who were at the oars—but to the under-rowers, who had to bend to their work in the most trying position as they sent the galley flying through the water, it was stern toil, indeed! Now, God’s ministers, if they act as they should, are under-rowers of Christ. They are tugging away at a very heavy oar and they may well ask you to pray that as they use up their strength,

fresh force may be imparted to them from the God of All Power, that they may not labor in vain, nor spend their strength for nothing!

We ask men, therefore, to think of us as servants, not as masters. The word, “bishop,” has come to have a wonderful significance about it which is not in the least degree Scriptural. We are simply to be shepherds of the sheep—and a shepherd is no great lord. He is the servant of all the sheep and though he leads them, it is by *going* first, taking the brunt of all that comes, and finding out the best places for them to feed and to rest. Let a man so think of us as servants, but not merely as servants to the Church, certainly not as servants to men, but as servants of Christ! That is our *honor* as ministers—we serve the Lord Jesus Christ—the best of Masters! But, as He deserves to have the best of servants, the responsibility of the position weighs down the honor attached to it. Oh, if they who serve men should serve them faithfully, how much more should they be found faithful who are the servants of Christ!

Then the Apostle adds that men are to think of us as stewards. And it is about *that* office that I am going to speak to you—“It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” Although my text, no doubt, refers, in the first place, to those who labor in word and doctrine, to whom it is a life’s vocation, yet *all the people of God are stewards*, and each child of God, in his own way and in his own place, should reckon that whatever gift he has should be used for the Lord Jesus Christ, and laid out for Him. And he should also remember that he is *made* one of the Lord’s stewards and that it is required of him that he be found faithful. And I may even add that every *unconverted* man has a stewardship to fulfill. As God’s creature, he is bound to be God’s servant—and at the Last Great Day he will have to give an account of every opportunity and capacity for service which God has given to him! And woe unto him if he is found an unfaithful steward in the day of his Lord’s reckoning!

If I should seem to speak rather more about ministers than about anybody else, I will ask you kindly to pick out all that belongs to yourselves, you who are private Christians, and you who are not Christians at all. I pray the Lord to make use of what I say to myself and then to you who are His people—and to those, also, who *are* not His people—that they may be pricked to the heart and made to feel how ungenerously they have acted towards the great Lord of the house. To begin, then, I will first ask—*how are we stewards?* Secondly, if stewards, *how are we to behave?* Next, *how are we in danger of misbehaving?* And, lastly, *what will be the result of right behavior or of misbehavior in those who are stewards?*

I. First, then, HOW ARE WE STEWARDS?

Well, God’s ministers are stewards, first, *as appointed to look after other servants*. You know, dear Friend, if you are a servant, you have enough to do to mind your own work. But if you happen to be an upper servant, such as a steward is, you have not only your own work to mind, but it is a part of your own work to look after the work of other people. There are some who are so foolish that they look only at the *honor* of this position, whereas, if they were wise, they would look more at the *respon-*

sibility of it. Brothers and Sisters, if I had my choice, I would rather look after a horse than look after a man! The second is much the more difficult animal to manage! And to look after *many men*—oh, this is, indeed, a difficult task!

I had an old friend, who was, for 40 years, a shepherd, and after that he became a minister—and he lived to be 40 years a shepherd in a spiritual sense. I asked him, once, “Which was the easier flock to manage?” “Oh!,” he replied, “the second flock of sheep was a deal more sheepish than the first.” I understood what he meant. They say that sheep have as many diseases as there are days in the year. Yes, but *men* have as many complaints as there are *minutes* in the year! It is not long that they are free from one malady or another! I mean, men and women—all those that belong to the spiritual flock of which the minister is the shepherd—there is a certain form of trouble arising out of each one. True, there is a certain amount of comfort and joy arising out of every Christian, but there is a measure of difficulty that must come to the steward from everyone of his fellow servants. It is by no means a position which any man who understands it might desire for himself! The real steward is one who has been *appointed* to the position—and if he is not appointed, why, he has no right to be a steward at all! It is the great Master of the house who calls this one or that one to look after the other servants—and it is from this calling that he has the right to interfere in any respect with them.

Next, notice that the servants of God—whether called ministers or not—those who are really so, are stewards *because they are under the Master’s near command*. An ordinary servant in God’s house may take his orders from the steward, but the steward takes no orders from anybody but the Master and, therefore, he is in an evil case and the household is in an evil case, too, if he does not often resort to the Master—if he does not distinctly recognize his position as an underling of his Master—and if he does not so keep up his daily fellowship with the Master that he, himself, knows the Master’s mind and is able to communicate it to his fellow servants.

There are many of you, dear Friends, who have around you your children, your servants, your fellow workers. Well, in that respect, you are a steward to them—they have to do a good deal that you tell them. Then do, I pray you—and I speak this to myself as well as to you—let us wait upon the Master! Let us come forth to speak to our fellow servants, not our own words, but the words of Him who is Master and Lord to the whole household! How beautifully Jesus, the greatest of all stewards, did this! How constantly He said, “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwells in Me, He does the works.” He was always referring those who were His brethren back to the great Head of the family—and He did not speak without His Father’s authority. Having taken up the position of a subordinate in order to work out our redemption, He continually declared that He was His Father’s servant.

It is an ill day for us when we begin to think that our thoughts are to be given out in the house instead of the Master’s thoughts! It is not for us to deliver our own speculations, but to go straight away to the Word of

God and, by the teaching of the indwelling Spirit, to come forth to the people with what we have *received*—not what we have *invented*! You shall find no power, my Brothers and Sisters, in doing Christian work unless you keep on doing it as receiving your mission and commission from the great Lord of All!

I recollect how McCheyne says, “It is God’s Word that saves, not our comment on God’s Word.” And I am sure that it is so. It is God at the back of the steward who blesses all in the household. But when the steward does not go to the Master and get his orders from Him, he soon puts everything into confusion. He loses his own standing and he is apt to do desperate mischief to all who are round about him.

Then, the true steward *is called upon to give an account*—and if he does it often, so much the better! I am persuaded that, in the things of God as well as between man and man, “short reckonings make long friends,” and if we will often go to our Master with our service and present it to Him, and overhaul it under His Divine Guidance, confessing our shortcomings and blessing Him for every particle of success that has attended it, we shall do much better than if we go on for a long stretch without a reference to Him. Brothers and Sisters, you who are teaching your classes of boys or girls, bring your Sunday work to the Lord at the end of the Sabbath! And when we have finished a sermon, those of us who stand up to preach, let us not be satisfied until we have brought that piece of our work under our Master’s eyes. I am sure that if the steward can get to the side of his Master every evening, or every morning say to Him, “We did such and such yesterday, and there is such and such which we propose to do today,” that is the way for the house to be well-ordered! Things go right when there is no absentee landlord, but when the great Master is always close at hand and the steward constantly goes to Him with an account of all his work!

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let us constantly do this! We do not live near enough to God, do we? I know that some of you wait upon Him day and night and you abide under the shadow of the Almighty, but I fear that there are some workers who forget to do this. We should work with the hands of Martha, but yet keep near the Master with the heart of Mary! We need a combination of activity and meditation. When we get that—when we inwardly retire for consultation with our Lord and then come out actively to labor for our Lord—then shall we be good stewards in the little part of the great house with which He has entrusted us.

Further, a steward is a man who *is put in trust with his master’s goods*. This is the main point of his stewardship—nothing is his own—it is all his master’s. When he begins to open an account of his own, it is wonderful how apt he is to mistake what is his master’s and to call it his own and, by-and-by, he gets into a muddle and cannot distinguish his master’s accounts from his own. Oh, it is a glorious thing when you have not any, “own”—when you do not live for yourself at all, but wholly for Christ! Then you will not make any blunders! There will not be any of Christ’s property getting into your cash account, so that you will have a

difficulty in disentangling it. “No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life,” for he can say—

**“’Tis done, the great transaction’s done,
I am my Lord’s,”**

“and all the business I have here below is His. I have no sub-ends or secondary objectives, but all I have and am is for Him.” Then it is easy to keep our accounts and to make no mistakes in them.

The true steward is put in trust with his master’s property, first, to protect it. Oh, with what earnestness ought we to guard the Gospel of Christ! With what holy valor ought we to contend earnestly for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints! “Hold fast the form of sound words,” wrote Paul to Timothy—not only the words, but the particular *form* of them which the Apostle had delivered! Not merely sound doctrine, but the very words in which those doctrines had been made to take shape! The true steward is to defend his master’s treasure with his very life. The Lord has put us in trust with the Gospel—and all the people of God, in their measure—have also become trustees of those inestimably precious doctrines wherein will be found the Glory of God and the salvation of the sons of men! So we are to defend our Master’s property.

And next, we are to dispense it. It is the steward who provides for the table of the household. He brings out of that treasury things new and old. He never forgets, when the table is spread, to put the bread and the salt on it. The bread is Christ, Himself, on which we feed. And the salt is the Grace of which we cannot have too much. The true steward does not starve the children, but he sees that each one is fed with convenient food. To one he brings milk, for he is a babe. To another, he gives strong meat, for he is a man who has had his senses exercised to discern between good and evil. The steward keeps his master’s stores and sees that they are not wasted—but he also takes care to magnify his master’s liberality by seeing that none of the household know any need.

I have known some who pretended to be stewards of Christ who evidently did not understand the business. There was an old fable of a man who gave bones to the sheep and grass to the dogs, but neither of them did well on such fare. And some preaching seems to me just like that! The preacher assumes, in his opening prayer, that all his hearers are converted, and the whole service goes on as if everybody was a Christian! And yet, if you listen carefully, you will hear that there is an undertone implying that nobody is really saved and that everybody is saved in imagination. Brothers, if we cannot discern between the righteous and the wicked, we shall never be as God’s mouth to our hearers! If we have not a javelin for God’s foes, as well as butter in a lordly dish for His friends, He will never make use of us as stewards in His house. There is much Grace needed in the dispensing of our Master’s goods—the rightly dividing of the Word of God—and bringing out every Truth of God in due proportion and in due season,

These are two parts of the steward’s business—to protect his master’s property and to dispense it.

Besides this, he is to use his master’s property for his master’s benefit. The goods entrusted to him are to be put out to interest, or used in busi-

ness to bring in profit for his master. I trust that there are many of us here present who are using the Gospel for the glory of Christ. What little we know, we try to proclaim, that sinners may be converted and that the Savior may be glorified. It is a wonderful thing for us to have the Bible, is it not? But oh, to use the Bible every day so as to bring Glory to God! It is a good thing even to be a tract-distributor, or to do the least service in the Kingdom of Christ, but the one point for us to aim at is to do it so that the profit of it may come, not to us, but to our Master! The steward must not get to trading on his own account. As I have said before, if he does that, there is apt to be a lot of mistakes made in the reckoning! Everything that the steward does is for his master.

Abraham said, "The steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus," and Abraham trusted him to go and find a wife for Isaac. So does our Lord use us and trust us, as His stewards. Our great God trusts us to go and find a spouse for Christ—and our business is to go and discover her, to find her out and ask her to come with us that she may be joined to that blessed Lord of All, the Son of the Great Father, to whom He has left the inheritance. Happy are we, when, like the steward of Abraham, we can bring back the beloved one for our Master's Son! This is a part of our work, to make use of everything that the Master entrusts to us for His own dear Son and to look upon the Church with which we have to deal as the bride we are to bring to Jesus, that she may be married to Him forever.

I will say no more upon the first part of my subject except this—a *steward is charged with the general care of the family*. He has not merely to look after the stores, but he has to take care of *all* the family. The steward of the olden times used to reckon all that belonged to his master as if it were his own—and he got into the habit of talking of it in that way. His Lordship once asked his steward, "What is that coming up the drive?" "Oh," he answered, "it is our horse and carriage, my Lord." "Our horse and carriage?" exclaimed the nobleman, "and who may be in it?" "Oh, my Lord," replied the faithful servant, "it is our wife and children!"

Exactly so—the man had come to look upon everything that belonged to his master as belonging to himself—and that is the spirit which our Lord would have us cultivate! Those children of His, they are *our* children. Those that are newly converted to God, oh, they are especially ours and we love them dearly! And this great Church—well, it is a bride to us even as it is to Christ. Our whole life is given up to the blessed service to which Christ has given up Himself. Oh, that we could come anywhere near to this ideal of what a true steward should be! God help us to do so!

II. Our second enquiry is "HOW ARE WE WHO ARE STEWARDS TO BEHAVE?" Our text supplies the answer—"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

Note, the Apostle does not say, "it is required in stewards, that a man be found brilliant." No minister will be blamed if he does not prove to be brilliant, nor even if he should not be successful. We shall not be condemned even if the seed does not spring up, provided that we sow it. You are responsible, not for the *result* of what you do, but for doing it hon-

estly, sincerely, devoutly, prayerfully, believingly. I do not think that in such a case you will be unsuccessful—certainly not as *God* judges success. Still, the Apostle's point is that "it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." What, then, should each one of us be with regard to faithfulness?

First, *faithful to our Master*. Oh, whatever we do, let us not be traitors to Him! Let us not be apparently doing His work, yet not really doing it. Let us not be preaching without praying. Let us not be talking about doing good without always trusting in Him without whom nothing *can* be good, or strong, or right! O God, may we, each of us, be able to say at the last, "I am clear of the blood of all men"! If we have dealt truly with our Master, if we can feel that we are sincerely seeking not our own glory, but His Glory, and working not for men, but for Him alone, it is well with us.

Next, we must each one be *faithful to our office*, whatever that office may be. If you, as stewards of Christ, are called to be ministers, be faithful to your ministry. If you are called to have substance, and to give it away, give it with cheerfulness and be faithful in your office. If you are called to teach half-a-dozen children, and no more, it is quite enough to give an account for at the last—so be faithful to your office. Do not run about finding fault with your fellow servants and thinking that you could do their work better if you had it to do. But oh, for Christ's sake, and for the sake of His great Grace, do what you have to do with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. Make full proof of your ministry, whatever that ministry is.

Then, next, *be faithful to the goods committed to you*. I have already dwelt upon the necessity of earnestly defending the faith. Oh, do not, I pray you, tolerate in yourselves any quibbling at God's Word, any picking and choosing out of the great Truths of Inspiration! Endeavor to know the Lord's way, the Lord's truth, the Lord's life and in way, truth and life, follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Search the Scriptures and follow where the Scriptures lead you. Let no book composed by the wisest of men dictate your conscience. Remember that the Bible, and the Bible, alone, has the stamp of Infallibility upon it. Follow its guidance and so be faithful to the treasure that is entrusted to your hands. Had good men, in past ages, been but faithful to the Word of the Lord, there had not been so much of schism, heresy and false doctrine in the world. And if all professing Christians shall always be faithful to the pure Word of God, then will come the days of the true unity of the Church of Christ, and the conquest of the world by Christ!

Next, we are bound to be *faithful to every person in the household*. This is a difficult work, but let us try to accomplish it. All of us, according as we are put into the stewardship, must labor for the good of all our Brothers and Sisters in Christ. We sang just now—

**"Have You a lamb in all Your flock
I would refuse to feed?"**

and I hope that our answer is, "No, great Shepherd of Israel, there is not a single lamb in all Your flock which we do not reckon to be better than ourselves." Do you not sometimes feel as if, if you could be as sure of being right as the very least of the Lord's family, you would be perfectly

content? We long to rise to the greatest heights of holiness and consecration, but yet, if we are allowed to wash the saints' feet, it will be a great honor for us. To do *anything* for Jesus, to be a doormat at the Temple gate, is a high privilege for any of us! Let us try, then, to do all that we ought to do in love and kindness to all the members of our Master's household.

And then we must be *faithful to the outside world as well*. You see, a steward who looked to everything indoors, and then allowed people out of doors to cheat his master and run away with his goods, would not be a faithful steward! And you and I have much to do with the souls of men *outside* the Church of Christ. Oh, what a world this is! What a world it is! Shall we be clear of the blood of all these millions in London? Ride or walk from one end of this great city to another and see if you do not feel a mountain of granite pressing on your soul! O Lord, what can we do? "Who is sufficient for these things?" Living in such an age as this and in such a thronged city as this, oh, how shall we be faithful to all the people?

When George Fox was dying, he said, "I am clear, I am clear." I have envied him a thousand times, for I believe the Quaker *was* clear of the blood of men. He said many odd things and some things he had better not have said, but he never kept back anything that seemed to come from his soul. It mattered not to whom he spoke—whether it was to the king or to a beggar—he said what he believed, without fear of mortal man. Think of brave John Knox, of whom they could say when they buried him, "Here lies he who never feared the face of man." O stewards of God—and I have already said that all you Christians are, in your measure, stewards of Christ—may this be said of you! "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." I have shown you what a wide field that one requirement covers—only the Grace of God can be sufficient for us that we may be found faithful.

III. Now, very briefly, indeed, I want to answer the third question, HOW ARE WE, IN OUR STEWARDSHIP, IN DANGER OF MISBEHAVING? Well, we can very readily misbehave *by acting as if we were masters*. You know the tendency of Jack in office—let us avoid anything like that. Remember what our Lord said about the man who began to domineer over his fellow servants and to beat them. This is *not* the way for a steward to behave, for he is, himself, only a servant. He has to look after other servants but his master will look after him—and if he gives himself great airs, he must beware lest his master should dismiss him from his service, and say to him, "You shall no longer be steward."

Next, a great deal of misbehavior is caused by endeavoring to please men. If the steward begins to try to please his fellow servants and to curry favor with them that they may speak well of him, he will very soon be a traitor to his master. O dear Friends, seek to please men for their good to edification, but never forget that he who is the servant of men cannot be the servant of God, for "no man can serve two masters." May the Lord help us to feel that we are not judged of men's judgment, but

that we are going to do our duty as under the great Taskmaster's own eyes!

Next, we can very much injure our stewardship *by idling, or trifling, or growing careless, or leaving our hearts out of our work*. We can do this in the Sunday school and we can do this in the pulpit! When a man's heart is in his service, he does not need to tell you that it is, for you can soon see it. And I believe that there is more power in downright sincerity than in all the talent that God ever gave to men! A simple, humble, lowly speaker who only says what the Holy Spirit prompts him to say—and who is quite indifferent about how he says it so long as he can say it in a right spirit—he is the man who will reach the hearts of other men! Brothers, if we begin turning over our words, so as to find out comely syllables with which we may please and tickle human ears, we shall lose all power over our hearers! I think that the very best nosegay we can ever give to our friends may be made by plucking a handful of field flowers just as we find them, and then saying, "These grew in God's garden. We have not arranged them very prettily, for their innate beauty is such that anything artificial would but injure them." Oh, let us see to it that we live wholly and alone for this great work of winning souls and glorifying our Master—and let us always speak with the accent of conviction!

If you do not believe the Gospel, do not tell it to others! But if you *do* believe it, say it as if you meant it! I read, the other day, the story of a minister, whose boys came to him and asked if they might go to a certain show, and he said, "Well my dear boys, I—I—I—I hardly like it. I will show you, by-and-by, the objections there are to it. I do not decidedly forbid you"—and the boys were out of the room in a minute! They ran off to their companion and said, "Jack, we may go." Yes, their father's hesitation was quite enough for them. He was going to say, "I do not decidedly forbid you, but, but, but"—only the boys did not care about his, "buts." And there are some ministers who, in preaching, say that a false doctrine is true, to some extent, only there are certain objections, difficulties and so on. People do not wait to hear the objections and difficulties, but off they go at once with a bit of bad doctrine! It is often so, and it is a pity that it should be so. Ah, me, this trifling with Divine Truth, this playing with God's Word will be sure to do an infinite deal of mischief and mar the stewardship of any man who yields to it!

Next, we can prove ourselves unfaithful stewards *by misusing our Master's goods*, employing what He entrusted to us for some other end than His Glory, or *by neglecting some of the household*. We may so preach that there is never any milk for babes and, on the other hand, we may so preach that there is never a morsel of meat for men—and the milk may be so watery that it is not good enough even for babes! It is a sin to neglect any one member of the household, for we must be found faithful to them all if we would be judged to be faithful at all.

We can also misbehave ourselves as stewards *by conniving at whatever is wrong in our fellow servants*. "Anything for a peaceful life!" is the motto of the unfaithful steward. "Let men live as they like. We cannot rebuke them because then they might quarrel with us." Ah, dear me, if we

are not prepared to bear a little of that sort of reproach! Even if reproof of sin must bring unkindness in return, we must not withhold that reproof, but must administer it with all the more prayerfulness and kindness! It must be given lest, as it was with Eli, a curse shall come upon our house because our sons made themselves vile and we restrained them not.

And, dear Friends, there is one other thing that any steward may do and, thereby, spoil his stewardship. That is, prove unfaithful *by forgetting that his Lord will soon come*. He may come before we begin our next piece of work. He may come while we are in the middle of it, or He may come just as we are closing it and, may then and there require an account at our hands! Oh, how earnestly we should live if we were sure that Christ would come tonight! What family prayer you would have tonight if you knew that before the morning dawned, Christ would come! Some of you, perhaps, would want to give something extra to His cause, if you knew that it would be the last opportunity you would have of doing so. Some of you would go and wake your children up and talk to them about Christ if you knew that He would come before the morning light.

There is a great deal left undone by most of us—we are not all like Mr. Whitefield, who could say when he went to bed, “I have not left even a pair of gloves out of their place. If I were to die tonight, everything is right.” It is a beautiful thing to live, so, and that is how God’s stewards should live! “Ready, yes, ready,” to live or to die, to go on or to leave off, to stop here or to go to Heaven—whichever the Master appoints! This is good stewardship. But if we forget that He will come, we shall get into a loose and slovenly way of acting—and that will be to our own discredit and to our Master’s dishonor.

IV. Now, finally, WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT OF OUR STEWARDSHIP?

Supposing we are good stewards, what will the result be? *A reward from our Master’s own lips*. In the Day of Account He will say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Now, after that, you do not need a crown, do you? You do not need any ruling over many cities! You will have all that, but I think that this utterance of our Master is quite enough for any steward of His, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Oh, if He should ever say that to us, there is enough in it to make a whole eternity of bliss!

But suppose that, at the last, we are found unfaithful, what will the result be? Punishment from the Lord’s own hand! If it is so, that we have never washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. If it is so that our hearts have never been renewed by Divine Grace. If it is so that we have never been saved from our sin and, consequently, have never been saved from our unfaithfulness—if it should turn out that we have never been saved from living to ourselves, never been saved so as to live honestly and faithfully to God—then what will the result be? I mean, for you who profess to be Christians? Here are our Lord’s words. I am not going to enlarge on them any more than I did on the other words—“The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looks not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers”—as if that was the

worst punishment that could be meted out to him! God grant that none of us may ever have that portion!

But oh, you who are unbelievers—do you not see that *your* portion is that which God will appoint to these who are unfaithful and only worthy of condemnation? What is your *portion*? It is something truly terrible, for it will be that which God appoints as a *punishment* for the worst of sinners, the treacherous and the unfaithful! O unbelievers, I would not be in your place five minutes for all the world! As the Lord lives, there is but a step between you and Hell! Only a breath and you may be gone. If I were in your place, I would be afraid to eat a morsel of bread, tonight, lest a crumb should go the wrong way and, by causing my death, should land me in everlasting misery! One might be afraid to shut his eyes, tonight, as an unbeliever, lest, as he closed them on earth, he shut them forever to all light and hope, world without end—

***“You sinners, seek His Grace,
Whose wrath you cannot bear!
Fly to the shelter of His Cross
And find salvation there.”***

Oh, fly to Jesus at once, for He has said, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” God help you to trust to Christ, tonight, and to go out of this Tabernacle saved men and saved women, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
LUKE 12:35 -48.**

Verses 35-37. *Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning; and you yourselves like unto men that wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding; that when he comes and knocks, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.* This is a wonderful passage. Christ has already had one turn as a Servitor. He was Master and Lord, yet He washed His disciples’ feet. But He says that if we are watchful and faithful, if we truly serve Him, the day shall come when, in all His robes of Glory, He shall gird Himself and serve us.

38-40. *And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken into. Be you therefore ready also: for the Son of Man comes at an hour when you think not.* This is a warning to Christ’s own people, but it is still more a warning to those who do *not* know Him. Suppose He were to come tonight—where would you be, you who have, up to now, lived as if you were your own masters and were by no means the servants of Christ? Take heed unto yourselves, for you know not when your Lord shall come!

41-44. *Then Peter said unto Him, Lord, speak, then, this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he has.* What rewards Christ has in store for His people! If we will but be His servants, now, and the servants of our Brothers and Sisters, He will make us rulers over all that He has! I cannot attempt to explain all that these words mean, but I bless the Lord that they are absolutely true!

45, 46. *But and if that servant says in his heart, My master delays his coming; and shall begin to beat the male and female servants and to eat and drink, and to be drunk; the master of that servant will come on a day when he looks not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.* Again let me say that I cannot attempt to explain all that these words mean, but, oh, what will be the horror, the terror, of the punishment which will fall upon the unfaithful steward, the minister who is untrue to his holy calling, the professor who says that he is a child of God and a steward of Christ, and yet is unfaithful to his trust? I will read our Lord's words again. You know how we are sometimes accused of saying things too dreadful about the wrath of God in the world to come, but, Beloved, we never say anything dreadful enough! If you will carefully examine the Word of God, you will find there expressions such as even Dante or the mediaeval preachers, with all the horrors they depicted, never surpassed! We cannot exaggerate the awful depth of meaning which we find in the words of the loving Christ, Himself! Let me read this verse again—"The master of that servant will come on a day when he looks not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

47, 48. *And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and did not prepare himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomever much is given, of him shall be much required and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.* Judge you, then, Brothers and Sisters, how much of ability and talent your Lord has entrusted to you—and be not content to have rendered Him *some* service—but look for proportionate service and humble yourselves in His Presence if your service is not in proportion to the opportunities entrusted to you! Who among us can refrain from humbling himself before God when he thinks of this?

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY
TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

PRIDE CATECHIZED AND CONDEMNED

NO. 1271

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 2, 1876,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“For who makes you to differ from another? And what have you that you did not receive? Now if you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?”
1 Corinthians 4:7.

PRIDE grows apace like other ill weeds. It will live on any soil. In the natural heart it flourishes, springing up without sowing and growing without watering. And even in the renewed heart it all too readily takes root when Satan casts abroad a handful of its seed. Of all creatures in the world, the Christian is the last man who ought to be proud and yet, alas, we have had mournful evidence both in past history and in our own observation—and worst of all in our own personal experience—that Christian men may become lifted up to their own shame.

Paul set himself very earnestly to deal with this disease when he saw it raging among the Corinthians. He felt it necessary to do so, for it was leading to other mischiefs of the most disgraceful kind. Pride and self-conceit had led the members of the Church in Corinth to choose for themselves distinct leaders and to arrange themselves under separate banners—the followers of this man thinking themselves better than the followers of that. Thus the body of Christ was divided and all sorts of ill feeling, jealousy, emulation and envy sprang up in the Church of God where all ought to have been mutual helpfulness and loving unity.

Paul, earnestly and with great wisdom, assailed the spirit of pride. He was well aware of one fact, namely, that pride is shallow and superficial. It cannot endure honest questioning and so Paul tried it by the Socratic method and put it through a catechism. He puts three questions to it in this verse and these three all called upon his friends to go a little lower in their contemplation of themselves than their pride had, before, allowed them to go. Pride said, “I have such-and-such gifts,” but Paul replied, “What have you that you did not receive?” Thus he dug deeper and undermined Pride.

The receipt of those gifts from God, Pride had forgotten altogether, therefore, by bringing that fact to mind, the Apostle took Pride right under the root, and that is always the best way to destroy a weed. To cut off the green top and leave the crown of the root, so that it may spring up in the next shower, or the next sunshine, is of no use. But to go deep down and tear up the root is effective. This Paul did with Pride by reminding the vainglorious Corinthians that the gifts which they possessed were no ground of glory because they had received them as alms from the charity of God.

Another Truth of God is also illustrated by Paul's procedure, namely, that pride is always inconsistent with the true doctrine of the Gospel. You may use this test concerning any preaching or teaching that you meet with—if it legitimately and logically leads a man to boast of himself, it is not true. Our chemists use litmus to discover the presence of acid in any liquid submitted to them, for the paper then takes a reddish tint. And you may use this as your test, that when a doctrine makes you red with pride it contains the acid of falsehood. That which puffs up is not of God, but that which lays a man low and exalts Jesus Christ has at least two of the tokens of the Truth of God.

That which glorifies man cannot have been revealed by God, for He has said that no flesh shall glory in His Presence. Such teaching may appear very lustrous with affected holiness and very fascinating with pretended spirituality—and there may be much in your fondest desires which inclines your heart towards it, as there always is in the novelties of the present day—but try it whether it is of God by the test which is here suggested. If, with a sleek hand it brushes your feathers the right way and makes you feel, "What a fine fellow I am," you ought to flee from it at once! The very fact that it flatters you should be to you like a fog horn to warn you of danger. Say to every doctrine which fosters pride, "Get you behind me, Satan, for you smell not of the things that are of God and of Truth, or you would not speak so well of me."

My objective this morning shall be to attempt to do with our own pride what Paul sought to do with that of the Corinthians, namely, to go a little deeper than we generally go when measuring our own abilities. And then I shall try to use the silver spade of the Doctrines of Grace, so that this hemlock of pride may be taken up by the roots. Looking at the text I notice, first, *a question to be answered with ease*—"Who makes you to differ from another? And what have you that you did not receive?" Secondly, *a question to be answered with shame*—"Now if you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?" And then, thirdly, I shall occupy your attention a few minutes with *other questions which these questions suggest*. May the Holy Spirit graciously bless the word.

I. In a two-fold form the Apostle gives us A QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED WITH EASE. There may be some who would be puzzled with these questions, but I do not suppose there are any such people present. At any rate, there are no such members in our Church. When we are asked, "Who makes you to differ from another?" our answer is immediately, "God, by His Grace has made us to differ." And if we are asked, "What have you that you did not receive?" we reply, "We have nothing but our sin, for every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of Lights."

We are all the more glad to hear Paul say this, because he was what is, nowadays, styled a "self-made" man! It very frequently happens that a man who makes himself has very great respect for his maker. Is it not natural that he should worship his creator? Paul was a man who, as far as the Christian Church is concerned, at any rate, had forced his way up without aid from others. He began in the Church with no respect and un-

der very much suspicion. The Brethren had heard that he persecuted the saints, so that, at first, they would scarcely receive him! His name was a terror rather than a pleasure. But Paul, with that high spirit, that consecrated ardor, that indefatigable industry, that wondrous courage of his, backed, of course, by the Grace of God, came to the front until he could honestly claim, without egotism, that he was “not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles, though,” said he, “I am nothing.”

Paul was a man who had not been borne upon the crest of the wave into an eminent position. He did not wake up one morning and find himself famous. He put forth all his powers in the struggle of life and labored with persistent energy year after year. When he persecuted the saints of God he did it ignorantly, in unbelief, and thought he did God a service. And all his life long, for him to know a thing to be right, was to strive after it. He had been kept from self-seeking and deceit. He had been an intensely active, strong-minded, high-souled man and he had done a grand lifework by which the Church is still affected. And yet Paul, himself, had nothing of which to glory.

His testimony of his own indebtedness to God’s Grace is so plain and given so many times over that we cannot mistake it. He says distinctly, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” He counted his own righteousness as worthless and only desired that he might be found in Christ, arrayed in the righteousness which is of God by faith. Do we address today any self-made man, as the world calls men who have risen from the ranks? Have you taken credit to yourself, dear Friend, for your success in life? Do you plume yourself upon your having risen by your own exertion? Then cease from such boasting! And in the spirit of the Apostle, ask yourself the question, “Who makes you to differ, and what have you that you did not receive?”

Our question is easy to answer, whether it is applied to natural gifts or to spiritual ones. There is a tendency to boast in *natural gifts*, but if questioned concerning them, we must give the self-evident answer that any natural gifts we possess are not to be set to *our* credit, but were bestowed on us by God. Some gifts come to us as the result of *birth* and, of course, in that matter we had no hand. It may be we were born of Christian parents and that pedigree is one for which we shall always be thankful—we had sooner number our parents with the saints of God than with the peers of the realm—but truly, Brothers and Sisters, we should be foolish to boast of godly ancestors, for we had not the choosing of them!

Children of pious parents, you cannot look with disdain even upon those who are basely born, for you did not cause yourselves to be born any more than they did. From their birth some derive physical strength. It always seems to me to be a very insane thing for a man to glory in his animal force, for there can be no merit in it. Yet there are some who do so. In the strength of those brawny limbs of theirs and those powerful muscles, some praise themselves abundantly. Though the Lord takes not pleasure in the legs of a man, yet some count it a very wonderful thing that they can out jump or outrun their fellows.

O athlete, though you are as strong as Samson, or swift as Asahel, what have you that you have not received? Had you been born with a tendency to consumption, or with some other hereditary *weakness*, could you have prevented it? And now that you are strong, are you to be praised for that, any more than a horse or a steam engine? The same is true of the beauty of a person, which too frequently is the cause of vanity. Beauty is often a snare on this account. What if your features are delicately chiseled. What if your eyes are bright as the morning and your countenance fair as the lily? What if there is a charm in your every glance? What have you in all these for which to praise yourself?

Jezebel, also, was fair to look upon and is she to be praised? Is not your beauty the gift of God? Bless your Creator for it, but do not despise those who are less beautiful, for in so doing you will despise their Maker. How often do we hear a laugh raised behind their backs against persons who are somewhat grotesque, or it may be, deformed? But God made them and who is he that shall dare to taunt the Maker with what He has done? What have you, O you fairest among women? What have you, O you most handsome among the sons of men, but what you have *received*? Cease, then, those mincing airs and tossing of the head.

The same is true with regard to the rank which comes of birth. Some men are born—according to heraldic arrangements—noble. In what way is a new-born *babe* noble? Can true nobility arise out of anything but personal character? They are, however, born with the reputation of nobility and are at once regarded with respect. Are they not our future rulers? Through no deed or desert, or talent or heroism of their own, some are, as it were, by accident, or rather by the sovereign ordinance of Providence, placed above others. Why, then, should they glory in what is so purely a matter of gift?

O you who are great and honorable among men, what have you but what you have received? Walk in lowly gentleness and live with true nobility of character—and so make your rank a blessing. Brothers and Sisters, how much all of us owe in the matter of birth for which we sometimes take to ourselves credit! We have never fallen, perhaps, into the grosser immoralities, but should we not readily have done so if we had been huddled together in chambers where decency struggles for existence, or been compelled to take our walks abroad where blasphemy and vice contend with law and order and are not to be subdued? If the worst of examples had been before us instead of the best, what might we not have become? We have sinned enough as it is, but very much of the fact that we have not sinned more must be laid to the account of our having commenced life under favorable circumstances than to any meritorious conduct of our own.

In this respect, what have we that we did not receive? You have been honest, thank God for it. But you might have been a thief if your father had been so. You have been chaste and modest, be glad of it—you might not have been so had you been encompassed with other surroundings. You are, at this time, respected and reputable, and you carry on business in an upright manner. Had you been as poor as some, you might have

been tempted to do as dirty transactions as they are charged with. In these common matters of morality we cannot tell how much we owe to birth and how little to ourselves. Certainly self-applause ceases as we hear the question, "What have you that you did not receive?"

In the matter of *talent* there are very great differences. One man will very soon make his way in the world where others fail. Put him where we will, he will make his fortune—and his friends laughingly say that if he were transported to the desert of Sahara he would sell the sand at a profit! But who gave him that talent? What has he that he has not received? Another can study an art or a science and become proficient in it in a short time—as a boy he is a leader at school—and as a man he is eminent in his sphere. Still, are not his wisdom and insight gifts from Heaven?

Another man has the gift of eloquence and can speak well, while his fellow has the pen of a ready writer. In either of these gifts a man may take so much content as, by-and-by, to become vainglorious, but the Truth of God taught in our text ought always to prevent that folly. "What have you that you did not receive?" That which God gave to you He might have withheld and the man whom you despise might have had your gifts. He would have been foolish to despise you if you had been without them and you are foolish, now, to despise him.

What differences there are, too, as to what men are helped to make of themselves by *education*. Nowadays there is a better opportunity of education for all ranks and conditions of men, for which I am earnestly thankful, and hope that true religion will be connected with the advantage. But all boys trained in the same school do not leave it equally educated. One is quick and another dull. One manages to place himself foremost and another is doomed to be in the rear. Whether the difference is in the original conformation of the man, or is the result of different teaching, the result must, alike, be subject for thankfulness to God, for whether it is natural talent or excellent education, both are *received*.

Equally so is it with *wealth*. I may address someone to whom God has given large substance, but, my dear Friend, in the course of the accumulation of that substance you have had plenty of evidence that, "it is God that gives you power to get wealth." There was a time when you had little enough and it was a singular Providence which put you in the way of rising. There have been times, too, when a little turn of the scale would have sent you into bankruptcy, but the markets went the other way and you were made. You have seen others who were ahead of you in the race of prosperity left far behind—and God has prospered you—I know there have been anxious moments when you have had to lift up your eyes to the Most High and beseech Him by His tenderness and mercy to help and deliver you.

Well, inasmuch as this wealth is a blessing if you know how to use it rightly, credit the possession of it to God, who has made you His steward. Do you tell me that you have had a keener eye and exercised more industry than others, as well as a better judgment? True, but who gave you the judgment and who gave you the health with which to be industrious? Many another man has been as industrious and yet has failed! Many an-

other has been as willing to work, but he has been disabled by sickness. Many another man has had as keen an eye, but alas, his judgment has been baffled by misfortune. Another man began life with as clear a brain as you, but now he is confined in the asylum and you still are in possession of all your faculties.

O Sirs, never sacrifice to your own net and drag and say, “We brought up these treasures from the deep,” but bless God who gave you all that you have of earthly things, for what have you that you have not received? I would that you felt more than you do that you are only stewards, that your possessions are *lent* to you to be used for God’s Glory and the good of others—and neither to be squandered nor hoarded for yourselves. But now, Brothers and Sisters, this is very emphatically true as to *our spiritual gifts*, and I invite you to consider this Truth—“What have you that you did not receive?”

There has long been a great doctrinal discussion between the Calvinists and the Arminians upon many important points. I am, myself, persuaded that the Calvinist, alone, is right upon some points and the Arminian, alone, is right upon others. There is a great deal of the Truth of God in the positive side of both systems and a great deal of error in the negative side of both. If I were asked, “Why is a man damned?” I should answer as an Arminian answers, “He destroys himself.” I should not dare to lay man’s ruin at the door of Divine Sovereignty. On the other hand, if I were asked, “Why is a man *saved*?” I could only give the Calvinistic answer, “He is saved through the Sovereign Grace of God and not at all of himself.”

I should not dream of ascribing the man’s salvation in any measure to himself. I have not found, as a matter of fact, that *any* Christian people dare, seriously, to quarrel with a ministry which contains these two Truths in fair proportions. I find them kicking at the inferences which are supposed to follow from one or the other of them, and sometimes needlessly crying to have them “reconciled,” but the two Truths together, as a rule, commend themselves to the conscience and I feel sure that if I could bring them both forward this morning with equal clearness I should win the assent of most Christian men.

At this time, however I have to confine myself to the statement that all the Grace we have is the gift of God to us and I trust none will, therefore, suppose that I deny the other side of the question. I believe assuredly that we have nothing good in us but what we have received. For instance, we were dead in trespasses and sin and we were quickened into spiritual life! My Brothers and Sisters, did that life spring out of the ribs of death? Did the worm of our corruption beget the living seed of regeneration? It were absurd to think so! God be praised for His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sin, which led Him to quicken us by His Grace!

We have been forgiven our great sins—wholly forgiven—through the precious blood of Christ we have been made clean. Did we deserve it? Does any man who professes to be a Christian say, for a single moment, that he deserved the ransom paid by Christ and deserved the pardon of his sins? It would be monstrous blasphemy even to *imagine* such a thing!

Oh no, "By Grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." God forgave us freely. There could not possibly have been any quality in sin which could have called forth forgiving love. He had mercy upon us because He would have mercy upon us—not because we could claim anything at His hand.

Everything, dear Friend, that makes you to *differ from the common sinner* is the gift of God's Grace to you. You know it is. You have faith in Christ, yes, but did not the Holy Spirit work it in you? Do you not cheerfully subscribe to the doctrine that faith is of the operation of *God*? You have repentance of sin, but was the repentance natural to you? Did you not receive it from Him who is exalted on high to give repentance? Is not your repentance His gift? "Truly," one will say, "but the same Gospel was preached to others as to us." Precisely so. Perhaps the very sermon which was the means of your conversion left others as they were.

What made the difference, then? Do you reply, "We willed to believe in Jesus." That is true—an unwilling faith would be no faith—but, who influenced your will? Was your will influenced by some betterness of nature in *you* so that you can claim credit for it? I, for one, reject with abhorrence any such an idea! Do you reply, "Our will was influenced by our understanding and we chose what we knew to be best." But, then, who enlightened your *understanding*? Who gave you the light which illuminated your mind, so that you chose the way of Life? "Oh," you say, "but our hearts were set towards salvation and the hearts of others were not."

That, also, is true, but who set your hearts that way, who was the prime mover? Was it you or God? There is the question, and if, my dear Brother, my dear Sister, you dare affirm that in the matter of your own salvation *you* were the prime mover I am at a loss to understand you—and I hope there are few of your creed! Jesus is not Alpha to you. You do not love Him because He first loved you. You were evidently not converted, or turned at all—you turned yourself! You are not a new creature, but are your own new-creator! Do you look to see the same thing in others? Why, then, do you act as you do? Why do you pray the *Lord* to turn others if you believe that He did not turn *you*?

Do you pray the Lord to convert your children? Why do you do it? If it is left entirely to them to be the prime movers, why pray to God about them? "Ah," says one, "God must treat all alike." I ask again, why do *you* pray for your *children*? You ask God to do a wrong thing in blessing your children in preference to other people, if it is true that He is bound to treat all alike. When you go practically to work, these sentiments do not hold water! The man who knows that the Holy Spirit was first in his operations upon the mind, and who calls Christ Jesus the Alpha and the Omega of his salvation, is the man who can fairly go to the Lord and pray for the conversion of this man or that. And he, too, is sure to give God all the glory of his salvation and magnify and bless the Grace of the Most High.

Perhaps, my dear Brother, there is a difference *between you and other saints*. I am sure there is reason for some saints to eclipse others, for some professors are very poor things, indeed. Well, Brother, you have a

great deal more faith than others—where did you get it? If you received it from anywhere but from God, you had better get rid of it! Dear Brother, you have more joy than some and possibly you feel ashamed of your fellow Christians who are so doubting and sad—beware that you do not become vain of your joy! And remember, if your joy is *true* joy, you *received* it of the Lord. Are you more useful than others? You cannot help looking at certain professors who are idle and wishing that you could stir them up.

I know I do! I would put a sharp pin into their downy cushions if I could. But, for all that, who gives us activity, who gives us usefulness, who gives us zeal, who gives us courage, who gives us *everything*? If you, dear Friend, get into such a condition that you begin to whisper to yourself, “I have improved my gifts and Graces at a very noble rate and am getting on exceedingly well in spiritual things,” you will soon have to come down from your high places. If you register yourself A-1 at Lloyd’s, I will not sail with you, Brother, for I fear your proud ship will tempt the tempest! I would rather sail with some poor Christian man whose weather-beaten vessel would go to the bottom if Jesus were not on board, for I am persuaded he is safe.

“Blessed is the man that fears always.” Blessed is the man who lies low at the foot of the Cross and who, concerning everything that he has, whether temporal or spiritual, ascribes *all* to the Giver of all Good! Now we must pass on, briefly, to think of the second point.

II. THERE IS A QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED WITH SHAME. “If you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?” If any of us have fallen into vainglory and we all have, more or less, done so, let us answer this question with confusion of face. Brother, Sister, have you gloried in anything you have received? Then think about how wrongly you have acted, for you have robbed God of His honor. To glory in man is altogether inconsistent with glorying in God. Depend upon it, every particle of praise we take to ourselves is so much stolen out of the revenues of the King of kings!

Will a man rob God? Will a *redeemed* man rob God? Will a poor sinner snatched from between the jaws of death and Hell by undeserved mercy, rob God? Lord have mercy upon us! When we boast, we also leave our truthful position and every Christian ought to be ashamed to stand anywhere but in the Truth of God. When I confess myself to be weak, helpless and ascribe all I have to Grace, then I stand in the Truth! But if I take even the remotest praise to myself, I stand in a lie. The Lord have mercy upon us if we have dared to act falsehood in His Presence. Let us remember, too, that whenever we prize ourselves highly we are sure to esteem our Lord less. Do you see any *spiritual* beauty in yourself? Then it is because you do not know what true beauty is?

Do you say, “I am rich and increased in goods”? Then you know nothing, or very little, of what true wealth is. You have mistaken gilt for gold and rags for raiment. I counsel you, buy of Jesus gold tried in the fire and fine linen with which you may be clothed. Depend upon it, our judgment is very much like a pair of scales—if Christ goes up, self goes down. And if

self rises, Jesus falls in our esteem. No man ever sets a high price upon self and Christ at the same time—

***“The more Your glories strike my eyes
The humbler I shall be,”***

is a rule without exception. Besides, if you and I have gloried in what we possess, we have undervalued our fellow Christians and that is a great sin. They are very dear to Jesus and He accounts even their deaths precious. “Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones that believe in Me.”

But if we overestimate ourselves, the natural consequence is that we underestimate others. Have I ever thought, “I am a rich man and these poor people, though good Christians, are nobodies compared to me. I am of far more consequence to the Church”? Have I conceived, because I have a measure of talent, that those holy men and women who cannot speak for Christ are of no great account? Or have I, because I happened to be an old, experienced Christian, snuffed out the young ones and said, “They are only a pack of boys and girls”? Is this the way to speak of those who were bought with the blood of Christ and are members of Christ’s body? It will not do for us to despise the least saint!

I believe there are many who are now pushed into the background and shoved into any hole and corner, whom Christ looks upon with special delight and will place first when He comes. Verily I say unto you, “There are first that shall be last, and there are last that shall be first.” Besides, all this honoring of ourselves generally puts us off from the right course as to our gifts and makes us forget that these things are only lent to us, to be used for our Master. It is required of stewards that they are found faithful, not that they praise themselves and deck themselves in their Master’s goods. We have too much to do, to afford to boast!

Look at yonder young soldier who has just received his armor and his helmet. He has just entered the service. Look with what pleasure he sees his handsome face reflected in his breastplate! How much he admires his plume—he thinks how grand he shall look in such gear. My dear Fellow, all this while you have forgotten that to wear these things in the thick of the battle, where they will bear the dint of the sword, is what awaits you! And you better consider that, not your gallant appearance—your valor is what we want to see! When a man exalts himself because of what he *possesses* he does not act as a soldier of the Cross should do.

Here we will insert an illustration or two. There is a tendency in some to exalt themselves because God has placed them in *office*. They are ministers, deacons, elders, superintendents, or something. What mighty airs they give themselves! “Honor to whom honor is due”—they seem to have learned the text by heart and to have seen a *personal* reference in it. Have you ever seen the footmen of princes when they are playing the great man? What wonders of nature and art they often are! I was admiring one of them the other day with all the reverence due. The vision of his pomp quite staggered me, for he was so gorgeous to look upon. I feel sure that that nothing could compare to his royal master and certainly nothing could have been more pompous or aristocratic.

While I was looking on with due wonder and reverence, somebody cruelly remarked, "What a flunky!"—a most irreverent observation and yet very natural. My Brothers, whenever you and I, because we have our best clothes on and are ministers, or deacons, or elders, act as if we were very great men, somebody or another is to call us flunkies, too! Not, perhaps, exactly in so many words, but in language to the same effect. Do not let us expose ourselves to such contempt! And if ever we have done so, let us be rebuked at once by the thought of what we have seen in others.

Some persist in boasting about their experience. This also is vanity. Suppose a man here, who is a great pedestrian, has been over the Alps and traversed Europe? Here is his walking stick and it boasts, "I am the most traveled walking stick in creation. I have climbed the craggy brows of the Alps and bathed myself in the Nile." "Well," says one, "but wherever you have gone, you have been carried by a power beyond yourself." So let the man who boasts in experience remember that in the paths of peace he has gone nowhere except as the Lord's hand has borne him onward! He has been nothing but a staff in God's hands—and while he should be *grateful*—he should never be proud.

I was in a beautiful garden the other day, upon the rocks, where the choicest of flowers and tropical plants are growing, while all around the rocks are bare with scarcely a trace of vegetable life. Now, suppose that garden were proud and boasted of its fruitfulness? The answer would be, "Every basketful of earth had to be carried up to you and you would not bear fruit, now, if it were not for the stream of water that is turned on and tracked through many little mazes and brought to the root of each plant you bear. You would be a rock, again, in a few months if you were left to yourself. Therefore let the gardener of the garden rejoice in his work, but the garden, itself, may not glory."

That is what the most fruitful Believer would be if God left him alone—a barren rock, a wilderness! Suppose I address some Christian who is happy, joyous and cheerful? And suppose he has such dainty bits sent home to him out of the promises, such precious Words from Scripture applied to his heart? Dear Friend, are you apt to think that there is something specially good about you because you get all these remarkable enjoyments? Then let me clear your mind. It is your *weakness* which gets you these favors! When you are living in a hotel you will remark that certain persons have their dinners sent upstairs. What for? Oh, that is because they are ill. If you are well you must go down to the *table d'hote* with the rest—but if you are ill they will send it upstairs—and pay you extra attention.

These very comforts that God gives you ought to make you enquire whether there is not something wrong with you and, instead of thinking you are strong and well, you should search and see if there is not some weakness which the Lord, in His mercy, intends to remove by the double comforts which He gives to you. Nothing in the world ought to be a cause of self-exaltation! Nothing that our God gives us ought to make us think highly of ourselves! Lower down, Brother, lower down, and so you will rise.

The way to Heaven is downhill, not uphill. As Christ went down to the grave that He might come up, again, and fill all things, so must you go to the Cross—and down to the grave of self and be buried with Christ—and learn the meaning of your Baptism and make it true that you are buried with Him to all the world, and to yourself, also, for so only can you rise into the fullness of the new life.

III. OTHER QUESTIONS WHICH THESE QUESTIONS SUGGEST shall now, in the third place, occupy our attention. What are they? The first is this. *Have I ever given to God His due place in the matter of my salvation?*—A question that I may very well put, for I remember when I was converted to God, and truly converted, too, but I did not know that it was the work of the Spirit in my heart. I did not understand that it was the result of special Grace. I had heard the Gospel generally preached, but I had not learned the peculiar doctrines of Grace.

And I remember very well sitting down and thinking to myself, “I am renewed in my mind, I am forgiven, I am saved. How came that about?” And I traced it to this, that I had heard the Gospel, but as I knew that many never had an opportunity of hearing it, I saw special Grace in my having had the opportunity to hear it. But then I said, “There are others who have heard it, but it was not blessed to them—how came it to be blessed to me?” And I thought for awhile whether it could be something good in me that made the Gospel useful to me, for if so, I deserved to have credit for it.

Somehow the Grace which God had given me made me fling that theory to the winds and I came to this conclusion, “It must be *God* that made the difference,” and having got that *one* thought into my mind, the Doctrines of Grace followed as a matter of course. Only by experimentally knowing that there has been a special work of Grace in your own soul will you be likely to place the Lord where He should be in your creed, for some provide a very inferior place for the Lord in the matter of their salvation. With them, man is very great, and God is made little. But true theology makes God the very sun of the system, the center, the head, the first and chief! Have you done so? If not, correct your views and get a clearer view of the Gospel of Grace. May the Holy Spirit help you to do it! To know the Doctrines of Grace will be much to your comfort, will tend to your stability and will also lead you to seek the glory of God.

The next question is this, Have I, this morning, the spirit of humble gratitude? How do I feel? Do I take God’s mercy as a matter of course and view my own gifts without thankfulness? Then I act like the brutes that perish! Let me pray, this morning, that humble, lowly gratitude may daily rule my spirit. Such gratitude will make you cheerful, it will make you earnest, it will, in fact, be an atmosphere in which all Christian Graces will grow by the blessing of God’s Spirit. Next, seeing I have been a *receiver*, what have I done towards giving out, again? It cannot have been intended that I should receive and never give out, for if that is the case, there is a sad lot for me.

You know they used to make and do still make in the North of England, earthenware saving boxes for children. You can put what you like in, but

you cannot get it out until you break the box. And there are persons of that sort among us. Some have died lately and their estates have been reported in the Probate Court. There was plenty put in to them, but you could never get anything out and, consequently, they had to be broken up. I only hope when they were broken up, the gold and silver went the right way. What a pity to be like money boxes—to be of no good until you are broken up!

One would like to get and give at the same time. We ought not to be as a stagnant pond, a Dead Sea which receives from rivers all the year round, but gives forth no stream in return and so becomes a stagnant, putrid lake. Let us be like the great lakes of America which receive the mighty rivers and pour them out again, and consequently remain fresh and clear. The next question is—Since what I have, I have received by God's Grace, might I not receive more? Come, Brothers and Sisters, with regard to gracious things I want you to be covetous! Covet earnestly the best gifts! If you have had faith, why should you not have more? If God gave you hope, joy, experience, why not more? You are not straitened in Him—you can only be straitened in yourself. Try to remove those hindrances and ask the Lord to give you more Grace.

One other question—If all that Christians have, they have received, Sinner, why should *you* not receive as well as they? If it were true that Christians took these good things *out* of themselves, then you, poor Sinner, might despair, for you know you have no good thing in *you*! But if the best of saints, the best Christian in Heaven, has not *anything* but what he *received*, why shouldn't you receive? To receive, you know, is never a difficult thing. I guarantee you that out of all the people in London, there is not a man but what could receive.

Try it on the present occasion. Let it be a thousand pounds and see how many among us would be unable to receive. If there is a person about who would not receive, I tell you who it is—it is the man who thinks himself so rich that he does not care to have any more. Even so the proud, self-righteous Pharisee cannot receive—but you poor, good-for-nothing, empty sinners can receive and here is the mercy—“to as many as *received* Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on His name.”

Open that empty hand! Open that empty heart! God grant they may be opened, now, by His own Divine Spirit, and may you receive, and then I know you will join with us in saying, “Of His fullness have we all received, and Grace for Grace.”

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
Psalm 103 and 1 Corinthians 4.**

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—108 (VERS. 1), 233, 235.

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A CATECHISM FOR THE PROUD

NO. 1392

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 6, 1878,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For who makes you to differ from another? And what have you that you did not receive? Now if you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?”
1 Corinthians 4:7.***

THE Corinthian Church was exceedingly gifted. Perhaps no other Church of the period had in it so many persons of education and talent. The Apostle says of them, “In everything you are enriched, in all utterance and in all knowledge, so that you come behind in no gift.” Alas, its Divine Grace was not in proportion to its gifts and, consequently, a proud spirit was developed in the Church which manifested itself in divisions and contentions. Parties were formed. One said, “I am of Paul,” and probably prided himself on the depth of his thought. “I am of Apollos,” said another, and probably gloried in the brilliant eloquence of his language. “I am of Cephas,” cried a third, and boasted in the plain, unvarnished practicality of Peter’s teaching.

“You are all wrong,” exclaimed a fourth, “and I will have nothing to do with you. I am of no sect and no system, for I am of Christ and exclude you all because I wish to promote love and unity.” Party leaders are sure to be found where there is a party spirit—and party spirit is a fungus which grows upon the dunghill of conceit! The Apostle grieved greatly to see that the brethren had no discipline, could not keep rank and were not content to work under anybody or with one another. He lamented that each man wanted to be foremost and he was so ashamed of them that he thanked God that he had baptized none of them!

Probably the adherents of the various parties had only used their leaders’ names to make a sect in order that they, themselves, might be made the more prominent. They gloried in men that other men might glory in them. From all this may we, as a Church, be preserved! May God grant that whatever gifts and talents we may have, we may always be filled by His good Spirit so abundantly that we may walk in all lowliness of spirit and abide in hearty, loving union with each other. Our Apostle displayed great wisdom in his rebuke of the Corinthians. He did not cry down their talents. He did not say that it was altogether a thing of no value to be able to argue, to be able to preach, to be able to discern spirits, or to be able to speak with tongues.

This is a mode of procedure which suggests itself very readily, but it is not a good one. You very seldom lower a man’s opinion of himself by undervaluing his gifts. He knows that you are treating him unfairly and he, naturally, resents the injustice and becomes more proud than ever. He

remembers the fable of the fox and the sour grapes and is fully persuaded that you only decry his abilities because you do not possess them yourself! Pride is not to be cured by injustice! One devil will not drive out another! Pride often finds fuel for itself in that which was intended to dampen its flame. The man who is undervalued feels that if his gifts are despised by others. He knows their value, if nobody else does, and so he has another reason for considering himself to be a person of superior abilities.

The Apostle follows a far more sensible course—he does not deny the talent, but asks where it comes from! He does not irritate, but cuts deep while he asks one or two questions which strike at the very root of self-esteem. In effect these questions were as follows, “If you are a superior person and a man fit to be a teacher of others, from where did you obtain this superiority? If you are different from the common people, who makes you to differ? If you are a person of remarkable gifts, how did you come to possess them? If all your distinguishing abilities are gifts from God, why do you boast? Why do you exalt yourself? What have you which you have not received? If you received everything as the gift of Divine charity, why do you glory as if you had not received it?”

These questions may well hide pride from man and I pray that such may be the result upon our minds while at this time we pursue the train of thought suggested by the text. To this end we shall need the assistance of the Holy Spirit, for nothing is more difficult than to overcome our self-conceit. Pride takes a thousand forms and hides itself under numberless disguises. Many talk of lowliness, but humility still remains among the rarest of jewels! Many take pride in what they call having no pride about them—it is very easy to be proud of not being proud—and perhaps some Brothers and Sisters here are in that condition. Perhaps we, ourselves, have said, “No, we are not such fools as to boast.” *That* is not boasting, I suppose?

“I could not be vainglorious,” says one. “I know too much of my unworthiness to give myself airs and ride the high horse,” says another. Quite so, my Friends, and yet at the bottom of such a speech there may lie a world of self-confidence! In fact, your humble confessions may be only another form of blowing your own trumpets. It is easy to be proud while sneering at pride and to glorify self while denouncing all self-exultation. There was great truth in Plato’s observation when Diogenes trampled on his valuable carpets and said, “I trample upon the pride of Plato?” “Yes,” said Plato, “and with greater pride.”

There are some who are never more ostentatious than when they cry down all display and never more insolent than when opposing insolence. Pride is a subtle serpent-like vice—it will insinuate itself into the most secret chamber and hide in the most unlikely places! It will speak like an angel of light and cringe and fawn and display a mock modesty which might almost deceive the very elect! It will blush and be diffident and hesitating, while all the while Lucifer himself is not more puffed up! To deal

blows at this vice of vanity we shall meditate upon our text and pray God to bless it to us.

First, we shall note that the verse contains a great and comprehensive Truth of God. And secondly we shall observe, as God shall help us, the teaching which may be derived from it.

I. Our text contains within itself A GREAT AND COMPREHENSIVE TRUTH OF GOD—namely, that whatever advantages any of us possess over our fellow men we have received from God. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of Lights.” “The living God gives us richly all things to enjoy.” “He gives to all life, breath and all things.” Everything that we are which is not sinful and everything that we have which is worth having, we owe to the bounty of our God.

And this is true, first, as to all sorts of temporal advantages. Begin at the very lowest—we owe our physical strength and personal comeliness to the Lord. Some persons are born with a fine frame, well knit, healthy, vigorous, strong, fitly proportioned. And others exhibit a beauty of person and countenance which gives them great influence and wins much admiration. One of the most common vices in the world and one of the most silly, is the propensity to boast in mere animal force or physical beauty, whereas the man had no hand in making one single bone or muscle or sinew of his frame! Nor has the fairest daughter of Eve been the creator of her own loveliness! No credit is due to the strong man for his strength nor to the beautiful for their beauty. Strength and beauty are *gifts*, not virtues.

There are some who consider the strongest man to be the best and measure themselves by their capacity to lift weights, or to inflict blows—forgetting that horses and elephants can bear greater loads—and lions and tigers can be fiercer in battle. Mere force belongs to beasts and to steam engines even more than to men! And a man of gigantic strength is outdone at every step by the most common machinery. As for beauty, one of its most potent charms lies in its modest unconsciousness—it is greatly marred when accompanied by vanity. It may seem natural that a peacock should expand its tail in self-admiration, for the bird knows no better. But for a man or woman possessed of reason to gaze in the glass and admire their own bright eyes, glossy hair and delicate features is contemptible vanity!

Lovely is the modesty which does not even *think* of itself, but like the sweetly perfumed violet hides itself among the leaves to be sought out by those who have pleasure in lowly worth. O fine lady, why so haughty? Did you make yourself? Then be proud of yourself! O strong athletic man, why so arrogant? Are you your own creator? Did you, O man, or woman, give yourself strength or comeliness? Those legs of a man so swift for running—has the runner fashioned them himself? Those eyes of woman, so bright for fascination—did she kindle their wondrous light herself? No, these personal advantages are evidently gifts distributed at the Divine pleasure.

The Lord has made one athletic while another is born a cripple—one is uncomely and another fair as beauty's self. We meet with persons who are born blind, or deaf and dumb, or deformed in limb, or weak in spine and, therefore, we see that our vigor of physical frame is the gift of Providence. To each favored one we may say, "What have you that you did not receive? Now if you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?" Position, too, in this world is a thing very commonly boasted of. This man is born with a silver spoon in his mouth—another man comes into the world with nothing silvery about him. The first man boasts because he is a gentleman and has come from a wealthy family—but what had he to do with it?

What determined the place of his birth? What but a Providential arrangement altogether apart from himself? And after all, in the matter of birth we are all pretty much upon a level if we trace our pedigrees to their common meeting-place in the father of all living. Among the numerous kinds of pride this is one of the most ridiculous—the boast of blood and vaunting of ancestry! What can there be of all inherited position and rank for which we can claim merit? However great the privilege, no credit is due to those who have it, for we may say to each one, "What have you which you have not received?"

Some men are vainglorious because they claim to have made their own position—we have even heard them say that they made themselves! I observe that persons who boast of being self-made usually worship their supposed maker with great fervency and endeavor to lead others to pay the same homage. But I would ask such, "Who gave you the opportunity to become what you have become? From where did you get that natural talent and force of character which have brought you to the front?" The "self-made man" can only be so called in a very restricted sense, or else the speech is false and blasphemous.

If a man has prospered, his prosperity has come of God's kind permission—"The Lord makes poor and makes rich." And if he has fought his way up from penury and obscurity to dignity and position among the sons of men, he owes it to the gentleness of God, who "raises up the poor out of the dust." Education, the gift of prudent parents, opportunity, the gift of Providence—these have all united to make the man prosperous—what has he that he has not received? Some glory in their talent and knowledge. But here again, if a man commits himself to the nobler pursuits of science and learning and renounces the more groveling ambitions of mere wealth and station. If he endeavors to search out the secrets of Nature so as to become useful to his fellow men—if he should succeed and rise to be numbered with great master minds—has he not received it all?

From the beginning, were there not natural predilections and propensities and talents and capacities bestowed upon him which have been denied to others who have been equally industrious, but could not, in the nature of things, become equally eminent? From where, also, has come the health which has enabled the student to persevere in laborious research? Many have been slain by their devotion to their books. The brain

is very sensitive and many, in burning the midnight oil, have consumed the oil of life at the same time! To whom, then, does the successful student owe his continued mental vigor? The greatest philosopher may wisely thank God that he is not a lunatic! It may be many a time, in the pursuit of knowledge, he has, in the straining of his faculties, come very near to the overstraining of them. "Great wits to madness often are allied" and frequently only the merciful interposition of Heaven has spared the deep student from the madman's fate. What has he that he has not received?

As to wealth, where some are apt to indulge a vulgar vanity, what is there in it, after all? Certainly it is to a man's credit that he did not, in the commencement of his life, squander his money in wanton waste and self-indulgence. It is to a man's credit that he put his shoulder to the wheel and toiled on and did not consume his days in idleness, or fall into habits of drunkenness and dissipation which are the roots of nine-tenths of the poverty in the land. It is to his credit that he has been economical and so has kept the wolf from the door and risen to a competence. But still, what has he that he did not *receive*? These very habits and discretions may be traced to training, or to force of mind, or to happy example and they are, therefore, things *received*.

As for the man's success—it is not only due to his industry, for sickness or accident might have made him unable to earn his bread, or lack of employment might have hampered him. An ill turn in trade would have swept away his little capital, or, trusting in others, he might have found himself robbed of all. Are there not many who are industrious and prudent and all that, and yet nothing seems to prosper with them, or if they do have a little season of prosperity it is soon over? They have not, perhaps, all the wit of some and, therefore, become the prey of hucksters—nor have they all the vigor of mind which is necessary in these days of competition. Alas, some have grown rich by wickedness and have heaped up curses for themselves—but as far as wealth is a blessing—no man possesses it apart from God's goodness.

What do the Scriptures say? "You shall remember the Lord your God; for it is He that gives you power to get wealth." If any man will sit down and trace his progress in life, he will say of each of his mercies, "This, also, comes to me from the goodness of the Lord. It is He who has prospered me. I might have exerted myself as I have done, but unless the Lord had built the house, they who built it would have labored in vain. Unless the Lord had kept the city, the watchmen had wakened in vain. Even if I have labored as in the very fire and risen early and sat up late, yet all would have come to nothing unless His good hand had been with me."

Let us remember this and never indulge the pride which robs God of His praise. It would be a sad thing if we were to become as besotted as ungrateful Israel, of whom the Lord said, "She did not know that I gave her corn and wine and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold." Nor is it only for the power to *get* that we are indebted to the Lord, for the *retaining* of our substance is equally of His favor. Riches take to themselves wings and fly away—and the rich man may be, all of a sudden, stripped of all his

treasure. Houses are soon plucked down unless the Lord keeps them. For the continued supplies of our needs let us thank the Lord who daily loads us with benefits! O man of learning, it is the Lord that gives you power to acquire knowledge—otherwise all your efforts would be fruitless and your mind would prove to be a barren waste!

All faculty, capacity, attainment and influence come from Him. It is He that gives you power, if you are a member of the Christian Church, to take a high position in it and to become a leader of others. If you have any experience by which you can comfort the afflicted. If you have any knowledge of His Word by which you can instruct the ignorant. If you have the Spirit of God resting upon your utterance to convince and awaken, to confirm and to edify—if in *anything* you are favored to bless the Church or the world—you owe this to the great Giver of all good. Bless Him, therefore, and boast not! If any man is prepared to deny our doctrine, we may leave him to his own ungrateful pride—but let him tremble lest, like Nebuchadnezzar, he should be stripped of all power and made, in his fall, to acknowledge the hand of the Lord.

You shall always find that men upon their knees, if they are sincere, bless God for all they have. And the better a man grows and, I will venture to add, the more common sense he gains, the more ready is he to trace all that he *has* and *is* to the good hand of his God! Certainly the more Grace he has and the more he becomes like his God, the more earnestly does he refuse any credit for himself! And the more sweetly does he sing the Psalm, “Non nobis domine”—“Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto Your name give glory.” Like Paul, he cries, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.”

We have thus set forth the great general Truth of God which holds good as to all temporal advantages. I believe it to be an equally sure Truth as to all gracious privileges. The Apostle says, “Who makes you to differ?” Now, my Brothers and Sisters, those of us who have been saved by Divine Grace *do* differ from others. We differ greatly from what *we* used to be! We differ sensibly from ourselves in our former state and we also differ greatly from others who are still unregenerate, for if the Grace of God did not make our character to be different from that of the ungodly, where would its value be? The Lord has taught us what others do not know! He has quickened us with a life which others do not feel! He has given us a sorrow which the world has never felt and, blessed be His name, He has endowed us with a joy with which worldlings cannot intermeddle.

There is a very great difference between him that fears God and him that fears Him not. “Now, who makes you to differ?” is the question to be thought of, this morning, by every saved one. I believe that the Doctrines of Grace would never be doubted if men would follow this question to its legitimate conclusions. Why am I different from other men if I am so? It has been by the hearing of the Gospel as the means, but I must ascribe it to Divine Grace and not to chance, that I was born where the Gospel was preached and not left under the influence of Popery or heathenism. There is distinguishing Sovereignty in the birth of one man in London and the

birth of another in Timbuktu. Neither individual had anything to do with that most important item in his life.

You might have been born in a kraal of the Hottentot instead of in the midst of a family of believers in Christ. The very privilege of hearing the Word of God, you must thankfully acknowledge to be a gift from the hand of God! Others even in your own country may not have been equally favored, for they may not have had such earnest parents, nor have heard so earnest a minister. You were placed where many have been converted—it may be in the country or in London you were early carried to listen to a man whose way of putting the Gospel was warm-hearted, affectionate and likely to be used of God. There, again, is the Sovereignty of God to be seen—that one should be found under a cold, dead ministry and another should hear a soul-saving preacher.

Yet further, there were some who heard the same sermons as you did and were not converted and you were. How come? Will *you* take the glory for it? Were you better disposed? Was there something in your nature superior to that of others? It is true you paid more earnest attention, but why? What led you to do so? Was there some natural betterness about you? No, dear Friend, you will not dare to say so! At any rate, if you said so in the heat of controversy, you would not repeat it on your knees! No Christian will say, “Lord, I was better than other people and, therefore, I am saved and they are not.” No, in prayer we are all Calvinists! In prayer we all agree to ascribe the whole of the praise to the Grace of God! “Who makes you to differ?” has but one answer from Christian people—it is the Grace of God that has done it.

The Apostle next acknowledges that we possess many blessings, but declares that we have received all of them from God. Is that true? Let us enlarge upon the question. I speak only to professed Believers in Christ. You had, at first, conviction of sin—did that arise spontaneously or did the Spirit convict you of sin? Repentance towards God—was that worked in you by the Holy Spirit, or was it the outgrowth of your own free will? You have faith—I venture to ask you if that faith is the gift of God? If it is not, I advise you to get rid of it, for it will never save you! The faith which saves the soul is always spoken of in Scripture as the *gift* of God! Since your conversion you have exhibited some measure of holiness, but was that worked in you by the Spirit or is it the fruit of your natural excellence? Who is to have the praise for it? You have grown in knowledge—have you been taught of God, or did you teach yourself? If you were your own teacher, I know what kind of scholar you are! They say that when a man is his own lawyer, he has a fool for his client and it is very much the same when a man is his own teacher in Divine things.

You have also gained experience. You have felt love to Christ. You have burned with zeal—were these good things the gifts of God to you—or do you claim credit for them as having sprung up in your heart as weeds grow in a garden without sowing or watering? Ah, dear Brothers and Sisters, I know there is no exception to this rule among the children of God—they all confess that their Divine Graces have been received of the Lord.

Whatever their doctrinal views and sentiments, let them but speak with God in prayer or praise and they will all say, "It was all Your work as far as it was good! And unto You be all the honor of it from the first to the last. You have worked all our works in us."

Friend, if your Grace did not come from God, it is worthless! But if it did come from the Lord, let Him have the glory for it and do not boast as though you had not received it! I need to call your attention to the way in which the text is worded. It is not said, "Who made you to differ?" but, "Who *makes* you to differ?" Who distinguishes you *now*? It was God who made you to differ at the first—that we all admit. Who makes you to differ now? Suppose you were left to yourself—could you continue in your state of Divine Grace? Suppose the Grace of God were gone—what would become of you? Is there one man among us who could keep his own soul alive as long as it takes for the eye to blink if God's upholding Spirit were withdrawn?

Is there any folly, is there any fault, is there any *crime* into which the best saint here would not soon plunge if it were not for the restraining Grace of God? Who dares trust himself? What is it that makes us continue to differ from the very worst but the Grace of God? And who shall make us to differ in days to come? To whom do you look for your future preservation? Are you your own keepers? Do you hope that you yourselves, unaided, shall persevere in the road to Heaven? You are not, I trust, so presumptuous! Between this spot and yonder golden gates there will be battles in which we shall surely be slain unless Jehovah shall cover our heads! There are wilderness places into which we shall be sure to wander and lose ourselves forever unless the Shepherd of Israel shall lead us like a flock.

We know that it is so from past experience and present consciousness. The longer I live—and I think it is so with most Christians—the more I feel that everything must be of Grace from first to the last if I am to be saved. Grace chose us and Grace redeemed us! Grace calls us! Grace renews us! Grace preserves us and Grace must perfect us, or else nothing will come of all our hopes and desires! Our religion will all be a flash in the pan, a disappointment at the last and a failure forever. Today I stand here to say that if I have served the Lord from my youth up, He led me into His ways. If I have preached His Gospel faithfully to the utmost of my knowledge, it has been because His grace has urged me to. If any souls have been won to Christ. If a Church has been built up. If young preachers have been encouraged. If the savor of the Gospel has been spread abroad—for these things and all else that has been done I disclaim even the *shadow* of credit!

I loathe the thought! Unto God, alone, be the honor! He has worked in me to will and to do of His own good pleasure. When I bear this personal testimony I feel quite sure that every Brother and Sister here, according to his position and condition, will agree with me in his own case. If there is any virtue. If there is any praise. If there is *anything* that is honest or of good repute—unto the Lord and unto the Lord, alone, be the praise! If we

are without these things the fault is our own—if we have no Grace, if we have not obtained mercy, if we are still unbelievers and disobedient—on our own heads must rest the responsibility and the sin!

But this by no means contradicts the present Truth of God that if there is any goodness in us it is the workmanship of Him who began to save us and will not cease from His work till He has finished it. Thus I have spoken of the great general Truth.

II. Now we come to ITS TEACHINGS. The first teaching of this great Truth of God is that which we have already enlarged upon. It is useful as a rebuke to *pride*. If any Brother is filled with vanity, let him answer the question, “Who makes you to differ?” True, you are no more a drunkard, but why should you boast of your sobriety? Is it not your *duty*? True, you are no more the companion of evildoers, but who was it that took you out of their company and gave you a new heart and a right spirit? What is it that keeps you out of the ways of the wicked at this moment?

It is true you know something of the things of God, whereas others are blinded and the world lies in the Wicked One. But who opened your eyes? What do you say? You were born blind as they were—who opened your eyes? Did you bring light to your own soul? Think of what you used to be. Let any of us look back to our first estate and we shall surely be compelled to lay our finger on our mouth and silence every boast forever! Think of what we would be if Divine Grace were to leave us—how a hasty temper would soon ruin some of us, how natural levity would carry others of us off our feet—how depression of spirit would lead some to despair and carelessness would draw others to presume. Think of how in many ways our besetting sin would overthrow us if it were not for the preserving Grace of God!

Brothers and Sisters, if we say, concerning anything in us that is good, “This is mine and I congratulate myself upon having produced it,” we are robbers and liars! Acknowledge that what you have is received from God! Admit that it belongs to the great Giver and that you, yourself, belong to Christ, and you may take the comfort of every good gift you have—but once say, “This is no gift, it is my own”—and you are uttering a lie and you are acting a knavish part in defrauding the great King of His lawful revenue of praise! Yes, and you are also acting the part of an idolater, making *yourself* into an idol and lavishing incense to please your own foolish vanity. God grant that from a sense of being beggars and nothing but beggars, daily receiving alms at the gate of Mercy, we may be led to behave ourselves in His Presence and among our fellow men with all lowliness of spirit. “Now if you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?”

Secondly, this great Truth becomes an excitement to gratitude. If all I possess I have *received* and if all I am is due to the distinguishing Grace of God, then let me bless the Lord in the depths of my soul! Silence is often the noblest form of worship. I delight to sit before the Lord and feel that unspeakable mercy can only be acknowledged by unspeakable thankfulness. O God, if You had left me where I was. If You had left me to

go on in sin, what might I have been by now? What a servant of the devil! What a well-tutored tempter of others should I have grown to be! Into what shame and disgrace might I have fallen! By what frightful habits might I have been enthralled! Some of you, my dear Hearers, would have been dead long ago if it had not been for the Grace of God—for you were killing yourselves in sin!

Some of you would have been damned long ago if Divine Grace had not stopped you, for you were riding headlong into Hell and did not go at a common prudent pace, as many do, along the broad road. Oh, I say again, what might not some of us have been by now if the Lord had not stepped in with His preventing and converting mercy! Let us, therefore, while we bless Him quietly in the deeps of our own soul, yet oftentimes overflow with praise, such as men may *hear*. Let our hearts flow over, for surely they are full! It is a good thing to spill a bowl of gratitude on an ungrateful man's floor—to make him feel that if he does not bless God, others will do so and will not be ashamed to do it to his face!

This gratitude should take the shape of continual obedience. Nothing which Jesus bids us do should be too hard for us and nothing that He has bid should be forgotten. When we were in bondage under sin we thought if the Lord did but forgive us we should become the most warmhearted and loving servants in His employ. When I had the irons on my wrists and when I sat in sackcloth and ashes in the thick darkness of despair, if anyone had said to me, "The Lord will have mercy upon you and make a minister of you," I would have replied, "Then I will preach with all my heart and soul." I should have hoped to preach a hundred times better than I have ever done!

If it had been put to any one of you, do you not think you would have said, "I will serve Him with my whole being. Redeemed by His blood, pressed to His bosom as a dear, returning child—clothed in the best robe, with a ring on my finger and shoes on my feet—I will live to my Father's praise, yes, live with such intensity that even Apostles and martyrs shall not excel me." You have not done so, my Friend, but the text calls you and me to do it and suggests to us a gratitude which shall manifest itself in effort and glow in every action of our daily life.

Again, my text has another lesson. It is a reminder of *responsibilities*. God has made a great difference between you and others in many respects. He has given you a great many blessings—remember that where much is given, much will be required. If you have 10 talents, have you brought in the proportionate interest? If you possess five talents, have you brought in a five-fold return? It is to be deeply regretted that some of those who have the most ability to do good are doing the least. There are men with large wealth who do not give half as much as many with meager means. I know persons of great attainments in spiritual knowledge who do not teach one half as much as newly converted lads and girls who occupy their posts in the school right earnestly and teach what little they know.

I regret to say that those who could fight best are often the last to go to battle—and those who could plow best most often leave the plow rust—

while feebler hands are worn to the bone. Brother, I will not deny that you have much knowledge, nor question that you have much experience, nor debate with you your right to be our superior if you are so! But will you kindly be so good as to exceed us in consecration, in self-denial, in earnestness and in holiness? In estimating our personal character, let us not so much calculate what we *could* be, as what we *are*. Let us not so much consider what we *might* be if we could, but what we really are doing for the Lord, for *that* is the matter of most importance! You may be a well of water, but you will get no credit for it at the last—the reward comes for the cup of cold water that was given to a disciple in the name of a disciple!

You may be a great bale of cloth, but you will get no honorable mention for it at the Last Great Day—the commendation will be to those of whom the Lord shall say, “I was naked, and you clothed Me.” You may have a fat larder and a fine buttery, but the honor shall only come to you at the last if it can be said, “I was hungry and you gave Me meat. I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, sick and in prison and you visited Me.” God grant we may all think of our responsibilities so that you who could take long strides may not be satisfied to walk like little children—and that you who could do a giant’s work may not be satisfied with attempting that which might be credit enough to a dwarf—but is not at all worthy of your greater powers.

Learn another lesson. The Truth of God before us is a suggestion of great tenderness in dealing with others! Allow me, for a minute, to press that consideration upon you. “Who makes you to differ?” Who but a gracious God has renewed your heart? Yet you met, the other day, with a man fast bound with bad habits and you said, “Nothing can be done with such a wreck of a man. I will not waste words upon him.” Another day you heard of an effort made in the back slums, among the lowest of the low, and you said, “I do not think much can come of it.” Now, my dear Friend, “Who makes you to differ? What have you that you did not receive?”

It would be better to drink into the spirit of holy John Bradford, whose window looked upon the road to the gallows at Tyburn. As from day to day he saw poor condemned prisoners carried in the cart to die, he was known to say, “There goes John Bradford but for the Grace of God.” If you feel so, let me ask you why cannot the Grace of God cause *others* to fear God as well as yourself? Cannot the Grace of God make other sinners to believe in Jesus as you do? I have never despaired of the salvation of *any* man since the Lord saved me. I know no heart that God cannot win if He could conquer mine! If you believe in your heart the precious Doctrines of Grace, you cannot be hopeless of any, but you must be ready to hope for those in whom there is nothing to encourage expectation! We ought never to look for desert in others, since the Lord did not look for desert in us. If Jesus loved us when there was no reason in us for that love, we ought just as freely to love our fellow men!

The last lesson is not for the Christian. It is for any of you here who wish you were saved. The text is an encouragement for seekers. You have begun another year and you are yet unsaved? But still you desire, if it is

possible, to become children of God. Now, do you know an eminent Christian? “Yes,” you say, “I do.” Perhaps it is your grandmother, or it may be some earnest Christian minister. You greatly admire those people, do you not? Now remember that there is nothing good in them but what they have received from God! The Lord can give the same Grace to you—and you can receive even as they have received. Do you believe that? It is true whether you believe it or not!

The Lord, in His abundant mercy can give to you what He has given to the best of His saints, whoever you may be. “Then what have I to do?” one asks. What you have to do is, according to the text, to be a *receiver*. That is all—and that is the easiest thing in the world! *Anybody* here can be a receiver! When you go past the offering box for the College, perhaps some of you cannot be *givers*, however much you may wish to be. But if I were to put a man at the door with a shilling or a guinea for each one—anybody could *receive* it if he chose! Reception is a faculty which belongs to us however low we may sink. When a person is covered with rags, covered with filth, covered with disease, he can still become a receiver! And even if he cannot stretch out his hand, he can find ways and means for receiving.

Receiving implies neither strength, nor merit, nor wisdom. It requires no power, no faculty, no virtue, no *anything*! The power to be a receiver dwells with the weakest of the weak and the worst of the worst. The emptier you are, the more room there is for reception! The blacker you are, the more room to receive washing! The more foul you are, the more reason to receive cleansing! The more sick and near to death, the more room to receive healing! Will you have the blessing which God in Christ Jesus is ready to give? If you will be saved, listen to the voice of God and live! If you are willing to accept His Son Jesus Christ as your Savior and, from this time forth put your whole trust in Him, you shall be saved! May He by His Grace lead you, now, to become a receiver, for it is written—“As many as *received* Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on His name.” Amen.

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***“For who makes you to differ from another?”
1 Corinthians 4:7.***

OR, as it is in the Greek—“For who distinguishes you?” “Who gives you distinguishing and discriminating mercy?” “Who makes you to differ from another?” Pride is the inherent sin of man and yet it is of all sins the most foolish. A thousand arguments might be used to show its absurdity. But none of these would be sufficient to quench its vitality. Alive it is in the heart and there it will be, till we die to this world and rise again without spot or blemish. Yet many are the arrows which may be shot at the heart of our boasting. Take for instance the argument of creation—how strongly that thrusts at our pride. There is a vessel upon the potter’s wheel, would it not be preposterous for that clay which the potter fashions to boast of itself and say, “How well am I fashioned! How beautifully am I proportioned! I deserve much praise!” Why, O lump of clay, whatever you are, the potter made you—however elegant your proportions, however matchless your symmetry, the glory is due to *him* that made you, not to yourself. You are but the work of his hands.

And so let us speak of ourselves. We are the thing *formed*—shall we say of ourselves that we deserve honor because God has formed us excellently and wondrously? No, the fact of our creation should extinguish the sparks of our pride. What are we, after all, but as grasshoppers in His sight, as drops in a bucket, as lumps of animated dust? We are but the infants of a day when we are most old. We are but the insects of an hour when we are most strong. We are but the wild ass’s colt when we are most wise. We are but as folly and vanity when we are most excellent—let that tend to humble us. But surely if these prevail not to clip the pinions of our high soaring pride, the Christian man may at least bind its wings with arguments derived from the distinguishing love and peculiar mercies of God. “Who makes you to differ from another?” This question should be like a dagger put to the throat of our boasting—“and what have you that you did not receive?”—it would be like a sword thrust through the heart of our self-exaltation and pride.

We shall now, for a moment or two, endeavor to put down our pride by observing wherein God has distinguished us and made us to differ and then by noticing that all this comes of him and should be a reason for humiliation and not for boasting.

1. Many of us differ from others in God's providential dealings towards us. Let us think a moment how many there are of God's precious and dearly beloved children who at this moment are in the depths of poverty. They are not walking about in sheepskins and goatskins, persecuted, afflicted and tormented. But still they are hungry and no man gives them to eat. They are thirsty and no man furnishes them with drink—their fires are wasted in poverty and their years in distress. Some there are of God's children who were once in affluence but have been suddenly plunged into the lowest depths of penury. They knew what it was to be respected among the sons of men, but now they are among the dogs of the flock and no man cares for them.

There are some of us who are here present who have all that heart can wish—God has given us food and raiment, the lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places and we have a goodly heritage. Let us gratefully ask—“Who makes us to differ?” Let us remember that all we have is the gift of His Providence. Not to you, O my hands, do I sacrifice because you have toiled for bread. Not to you, O you brains, will I offer incense, because you have thought for my daily livelihood. Not to you, O my lips, will I offer my adulation, because you have been the means of furnishing me with words. No—unto God, who gives power to get and to have and to enjoy—unto Him be all the praise for what He has done for us.

Never let our songs cease, for His goodness is an ever flowing stream. Perhaps none of us can ever know, until the great day shall reveal it, how much some of God's servants are tried. To this day they have “perils by land and perils by sea and perils by false brethren.” To this hour they are pinched by want, they are deserted by friends, they know what despondency means and all the ill which dejection and disappointment can bring to them. They have dived into the lowest depths of the sea of trouble and have walked for many a league over the hot sand of the desert of affliction. And if God has delivered us from these things and has made our path more pleasant and has led us beside the still waters and into the green pastures—if He has distinguished us by the common gifts of His Providence above many others of His children who are far better and far more holy than we, what shall we say?

It is owing only to His grace towards us and we will not exalt ourselves above our fellows, we will not be high-minded, but condescend to men of low estate. We will not lift our necks with the proud, but we will bow down our brows with the humble. Every man shall be called our brother—not

merely those who are arrayed in goodly raiment, but those who are clothed in the habiliments of toil—they shall be confessed to be our kindred, sprung from the same stock. For what have we that we have not received and what makes us to differ from another? I wish that some of the stiff-necked gentry of our Churches would at times remember this. Their condition is smooth as oil and as soft as young down, but their hearts are as high as poplars and their manners as stiff as hedge-stakes. There have been many who would do well if they would learn that they have nothing beyond what God has given them. And the more God has given them, the more they are in debt.

Why should a man boast because he is deeper in debt than another? Do the debtors in the Queen's Bench say to one another, "You are only a hundred pounds in debt and I a thousand, therefore I am a greater gentleman than you"? I think not. But, nevertheless, if they did so, they would be as wise as men who boast beyond their fellow creatures because they happen to have more of rank, wealth, honor and position, in this world. "Who makes you to differ from another? And what have you that you did not receive?"

But the best way for you to feel this part of the discourse is to go tomorrow into the hospital and walk along the wards and see how poor men's bodies suffer—and then go into the operating room and see what flesh and blood may have to endure. Then when you have done, go round the neighborhood to see the sick who have lain for ten, or twelve, or fifteen years upon the same bed. After that go and visit some of God's poverty-stricken children who just exist in this world and it is but a bare existence, maintained on bread and butter and a little tea and but too little of even such things as those. Go and see their poor, miserable, unfurnished rooms—their cellars and their attics and that will be a better sermon to you than anything I can utter. You will come home and say, "Oh my God, I bless You for Your kindness towards me. These temporal mercies which I once thought so little of, I must heartily bless You. I must thank You for what You have given to me and I will ascribe it all to Your love, for You make me to differ. I have nothing that I have not received."

2. But this is not the most important point for us to observe. We are now going to look at, not matters of Providence, but the things of God's grace. Here it is that we who are now assembled as a Church have most reason to bless God and to say, "Who makes us to differ from others?" Take, my dear Friends, in your mind's eye the cases of the careless, the hardened and the thoughtless—of even this present congregation. Side-by-side with you, my Brothers and Sisters, there may sit a man, a woman, who is dead in trespasses and sins. To such the music of the Gospel is like singing to a dead ear and the dropping of the Word is as dew upon a

rock. There are many in this congregation whose position in society and whose moral character are extremely excellent and yet before God their state is awful. They attend the House of God as regularly as we do. They sing as we sing, sit as we sit and come and go as we do and yet they are without God and without hope in the world—strangers from the commonwealth of Israel and aliens from the Covenant of promise.

But what makes us to differ? Why is it that I this day am not sitting down a callous hearer, hardened under the Gospel? Why am I not at this very hour hearing the Word with my outward ear but rejecting it in my inward heart? Why is it that I have not been suffered to reject the invitation of Christ to despise His grace—to go on, Sunday after Sunday, hearing the Word and yet being like the deaf adder to it? Oh, have I made myself to differ? God forbid that such a proud, blaspheming thought should defile our hearts. No, Beloved—

***“’Twas the same love which spread the feast,
That sweetly forced us in.
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perished in our sin.”***

The only reason, my Brothers and Sisters, why you are at this time an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ, a partaker of sweet fellowship with Jesus, an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven, is because HE has made you to differ. You were an heir of wrath, even as others, born in sin and shapen in iniquity. Therefore must you give all the glory to His holy name and cry—“Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name be all the praise.” Even this one thought when fully masticated and digested might feed up our gratitude and make us humbly bow before the footstool of God’s Throne with joyful thanksgiving.

3. Will you please, however, think of other cases? Who makes you to differ from others of this assembly who are more hardened than those to whom we have alluded? There are some men and women of whose salvation, if it were to be worked by man, we must indeed utterly despair—for their hearts are harder than the most stubborn steel. The hammer of the Word makes no impression on such souls. The thunders of the Law roll over their heads—they can sleep in the midst of the tumult—the lightning of Sinai flashes against their hearts, but even those mighty flames seem as if they recoil from the attack. Do you not know such? They are your own children, your husband, your wife, some of your own family and as you look upon them, though you have longed, prayed and wept and sighed for their souls, you are compelled to say in your heart, “I half fear that I shall never see them converted.” You say with sorrow, “Oh, if they are saved it will be a wonder of Divine Grace, indeed. Surely they will never yield their souls to God.

They seem as callous as if their conscience were seared with a hot iron. They appear to have the stamp of condemnation upon their brow, as if they were marked and sealed and had the earnest of the pit upon their hearts before they came there. Yes, but stop—"Who makes you to differ?" Why am I not at this day among the most hardened of men? How is it that my heart is melted so that I can weep at the remembrance of the Redeemer's suffering? Why is it that my conscience is tender and that I am led to self-examination by a searching sermon? How is it that I know how to pray and to groan before God on account of sin?

What has brought the water from these eyes, but the same power which brought the water from the rock? And what has put life into my heart but the same Omnipotence which scattered manna in the hungry desert? Our hearts had still been like the wild beasts of the forest, if it had not been for Divine Grace. Oh, I beseech you, my dear Friends, every time you see a hardened sinner, just say within yourself, "There is the picture of what I should have been, what I must have been, if all-subduing, all-conquering love had not melted and sanctified my heart." Take these two cases then and you have, Heaven knows, reason enough to sing to the praise of Sovereign Grace.

4. But now another—the lowest class of sinners do not mingle with our congregations, but are to be seen in our back streets and lanes and sometimes in our highways. How frightful is the sin of drunkenness, which degrades a man into a beast, which sinks him lower than the brutes themselves! How shameful is the iniquity of blasphemy, which without any object or any chance of profit brings a curse upon its own head! How awful are the ways of the lascivious wretch who ruins both body and soul at once and not content with his own destruction ruins others with him. Cases that come under our observation in the daily newspapers and that assail us in our daily observation and hearing are too vile to be told. How often is our blood chilled with the sound of an imprecation and how frequently our heart is made to palpitate with the daring impieties of the blasphemous?

Now let us stop—"Who makes you to differ?" Let us remember that if we live very near to Christ, we should have lived quite as near to Hell if it had not been for saving grace. Some of you here present are special witnesses of this grace, for you have yourself experienced redemption from these iniquities. Look back some four years with some of you and remember how different were your surroundings then to what they are now. Perhaps four years ago you were in the taproom singing the song of the drunkard as readily as any. But a little while ago you cursed that Savior whom now you love. Only a few months have flitted over your head since you ran with the multitude to do evil. But now, "Who makes you to differ?" Who

has brought this miracle of grace? Who has led you to the stool of the penitent and the table of communion, who has done it?"

Beloved, you are not slow to answer, for the verdict of your heart is undivided. You do not give the glory in part to man and in part to God. No, you cry loudly in your hearts, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." You are washed, you are sanctified and you have been washed in the Redeemer's blood and sanctified with the Spirit. You have been made to differ and you will confess it. You have been made to differ by distinguishing Grace and distinguishing Grace alone. And what upholds the rest of us from being what these, my reclaimed Brethren, once were and what they will become again unless saving grace keeps them?

What preserves the preacher this day from being a lecturer to Infidels, dishonoring the Grace of God which now he glories to magnify? What prevents the deacon from being an assistant in the courts of Satan? What forbids those who open the doors at the house of our God and who serve Him on the Sabbath from being door-keepers in the tents of the sons of Belial? Why nothing—they had been there unless Grace had prevented them. Grace has done it and nothing else. When we pass a prostitute in the street, we say, "O poor creature! I can pity you. I have not a harsh word for you, for I had been as you are had not God preserved me." And when you see the reeling drunkard, be not too hasty to condemn, remember you had been as a beast before God unless the Lord had kept you and when you hear the oath and shudder at it, imagine not that you are superior in yourself to the man who curses God, for perhaps you once cursed him, too.

And certainly you would have done had not the Holy Spirit sanctified you and implanted in you a hatred of that which the wicked so greedily follow. Have you seen a man hanged for murder? Have you seen another transported for the most infamous of crimes? If you hear of one who sins against society so foully that mankind excommunicate him, pause and say, "Oh, but I should have gone as low as that, I should have been as black as he, unless restraining Grace had kept me back in my unregeneracy and unless constraining Grace had pushed me forward in the heavenly race, ever since I have known the will of Jesus."

5. And now we will pause again and think over another evil which stares us in the face in connection with every Church. There are most melancholy cases of backsliding in so large a Church as this. We are compelled often to discover the character of men and women who once seemed fair for Heaven, but who manifested that they never had the root of the matter in them. Oh, well did the poet say—

***“When any turn from Zion’s way,
Alas, what numbers do!”***

No trial is greater to the true minister than the apostasy of his flock. All the rage of men is quite unable to bring tears to our eyes, but this has done it. Alas, when those whom I have loved have turned aside from the way of God—when those who have sat with us at the same table and have joined with us in Church communion, have gone out from us and have brought dishonor upon the Church and upon the name of Christ, there has been woe in my inmost spirit.

Sometimes there are cases as glaring as they are painful and as vile as they are grievous. Some of those, who were once in the midst of God’s sanctuary, have become drunkards and whoremongers—and God in Heaven only knows what else. They have sinned against everything that is seemly, as well as everything that is holy. At the remembrance of these our eyes are filled with tears. “Oh that our head were waters and our eyes fountains of tears, that we might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of our people.” No mischief-makers are so powerful as deserters. None cause so much agony as those who have nestled beneath our wings and then have flown away to feed with carrion vultures on the putrid carcasses of lust and sin.

But now let us pause. How is it that the minister has not forsaken his profession and gone back like a dog to his vomit and like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire? How is it that the deacons of this Church have not turned aside unto crooked ways and denied the faith and become worse than infidels? How is it that so many members of this Church have been kept so that the Wicked One touches them not? O Beloved! I can say for myself, I am a continual miracle of Divine Grace. If you leave me, Lord, for a moment, I am utterly undone—

***“Leave, O leave me not alone!
Still support and comfort me.”***

Let Abraham be deserted by his God, he equivocates and denies his wife. Let Noah be deserted, he becomes a drunkard and is naked to his shame. Let Lot be left awhile and, filled with wine, he revels in incestuous embraces and the fruit of his body becomes a testimony to his disgrace. No, let David, the man after God’s own heart, be left and Uriah’s wife shall soon show the world that the man after God’s own heart has still an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Oh, well does the poet put it—

***“Methinks I hear the Savior say,
Will you forsake Me, too?”***

And now let our conscience answer—

“Ah, Lord! With such a heart as mine,

***Unless You hold me fast,
I feel I must, I shall decline
And prove like they at last.”***

Oh be not rashly self-confident, Christian man. Be as confident as you can in your God, but be distrustful of yourself. You may yet become all that is vile and vicious, unless Sovereign Grace prevent and keep you to the end. But remember, if you have been preserved, the crown of your keeping belongs to the Shepherd of Israel and you know who that is. For He has said, “I the Lord do keep it. I will water it every moment—lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.” “You know who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before His presence with exceeding great joy.” Then give all glory to the King immortal, invisible, the only wise God your Savior, who has kept you thus.

6. Allow me one more contrast—once again let your gratitude go with me. Since you and I have joined the Church how many who were once our companions have been damned while we have been saved? How many who were no worse than we were by nature have sunk into the lowest pit of Hell? Conceive their unutterable torments. Imagine their inconceivable woes. Depict before the eye of your fancy their indescribable agonies. Descend in spirit for a moment to the gates of fire—enter into the abode of despair where Justice reigns supreme on her iron throne. Pass by the dreary cell of those who are everlastingly damned. Behold the twisting of that worm that never dies and the bleeding hearts that are crushed within its coils. Look at that flame unquenchable and behold the souls that are sweltering there in torments to us unknown and look, if you can, look, but you cannot look, for your eyes would be stricken with blindness if you could see their torments! Your hair should be blanched with but a moment’s sight of that horrible exhibition.

Ah, while you stand, then, and think on that region of death, despair and damnation, remember that you would have been there if it had not been for Sovereign Grace. You have a harp prepared for you in Heaven, a crown laid up for you when you have finished your course. You have a mansion, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Oh, why is it you are not already in Hell? Who is it that has given you a good hope through Grace that you shall never come into that place of torment. Oh, tell it to the wide world over. Tell it in time and in eternity—FREE GRACE has done it! Free Grace has done it from the first to the last. I was a brand in the fire, but he plucked me from the burning, quenched me in His blood and now He declares I shall be with Him forever in Heaven!

But oh, pause, Brethren and think that some of your former pot-companions, some of the companions of your debaucheries are now in Hell and you are not there—and by the Grace of God never will be there.

Oh, why this, why this? Blessed be the Lord my God from this time forth and forever. Praise His name. Grace has done it. Grace has done it all.

No, I never shall wear the chain, I never shall be stretched upon that rack, nor feel that fire—

***“But I shall see His face,
And never, never sin.
But from the rivers of His grace
Drink endless pleasures in.”***

But I most confidently proclaim that the reason why I shall escape and shall be glorified, is not to be found in me, but in Him. He has made me to differ. I have nothing but what I have received.

Now what shall we say to these things? If God has made you to differ, the first prayer we should now utter should be, “Lord, humble us. Take pride out of us. O God forgive us, that such beasts as we are should ever be proud.” We might have been with our father the devil at this very hour, if it had not been for Divine love. And if we are now in the house of our Father, which is in Heaven, shall we be proud? Be gone you monster! Go and dwell with the Pharisee. Pride agrees well enough with the man who has in his own esteem been always virtuous. Go away and live with him who has had good works from the first day until now. But away from me—

“I the chief of sinners am,”

and saved by Sovereign Grace shall I be proud? It is not fit that you should live in my heart, you monster! Be gone! Be gone! Find a fitter habitation than my soul. Should I be proud after such mercy, after such ill-deserving, but such God-receiving? Be gone, pride! Be gone!

Another lesson—if God alone has made us to differ, why may He not make others to differ, too? “After the Lord saved me,” said one, “I never despaired of anybody.” And let us each say so, too. If you were brought in, why not another? Will you ever give up praying for anybody now that you are saved? I once heard one say concerning his child, “I think I must give her up, I can scarcely think she ever will be converted.” Why you have been pardoned yourself! And if the Lord can do that, He can do anything. I am sure if the Lord has brought me to His feet there does not remain in the world a case that can ever equal mine. If He has brought me to receive His Free Grace, His sovereign love, His precious blood and has made me to love Him, then there can be nothing too hard for Him.

O Lord, if You have melted this metal heart and dissolved this stony soul, You can break anything. If You have broken the northern iron and the steel, then what remains beyond Your power? Go back then, Christian, armed with this fact—God who has made you to differ can make *anybody* to differ. There can be no case beyond His strength. If He brought you in He can bring all in. If He does but stretch out His hand, no

man need despair. Therefore, “In the morning sow your seed and in the evening withhold not your hand—for you know not what shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.”

Again—who has made me to differ? Has my Lord done it? Then let me serve Him more than others. There was a question asked once by our Savior, “What do you more than others?” That question might well be put to each child of God here present. My dear Friends, we must not be content with doing as much as other people do. In fact, we must never be content with our doings at all, but always be trying to do more for Him who has done so much for us. Should I give my body to be burned, my flesh piecemeal to the knife, my nerves to the rack and my heart to the spear, yet should I not give Him all that He deserves. No, if I should pass through the horrors of martyrdom, it were but a poor tribute to love so amazing, so Divine.

What are you *doing* my Friends—what are you doing my Brothers and Sisters for Christ? I will not name you, I censure myself if I censure you. I will confess my own iniquities and leave you to confess yours. I do try to serve my Master, but I do not serve Him as I would. Each act that I perform is marred, either by want of prayer for a blessing upon it, by want of faith in my Lord, or by pride in looking back upon it. I find too continually a tendency to serve myself instead of serving Christ, a constant longing rather to get through the work than to do it acceptably. And oh, when I think upon all, I must say I am an unprofitable servant. Have mercy O gracious Lord on my good works as well as on my bad ones, for my good works are but bad in the best and cannot be acceptable in themselves.

I am certain some of you have a little more need to say that than I have. Let us cease boasting any more. I know there are some here who are not serving Christ. Some members in this Church are doing nothing. You have not thought of doing anything for Christ, have you? You pay your regular subscriptions, you do what you are told to do, but do you give to Christ secretly? Do you devote your substance unto Him when no one knows it? Do you spend your time for Him? Have you chosen a sphere and have you said, “This is my work and by the Grace of God I will do it”? Oh, you cannot tell how much there is to do and how few there are to do it. I would I could have a Church all alive, all active, so that there never could be a want but those who have would be ready to supply and never a work but those who are qualified would be ready to fulfill. Never fear but we should find too many rather than too few to aid its accomplishment. Oh that we had the good spirit of the ancient Church, the spirit to propagate our Christianity everywhere!

There needs to be in many of the suburbs of London fresh Gospel Churches springing up. I can point to many places in my own vicinity,

seven or eight, nine or ten in a row, where there is a Chapel needed. In each place there are Believers living who do not think about uniting to establish a fresh cause. But as long as their peculiar wants are satisfied, by journeying a long way off, perhaps, they forget the hundreds and thousands who are pressing around them. Oh, there is much to be done and very little time to do it in. A very few weeks and those of us who have been loved more than others, those of us who have thought we could wash Christ's feet with our tears and wipe them with the hair of our heads, will have no more opportunities for spreading the name and fame of our glorious Redeemer.

Let us give of our substance to His cause, give of our time to His service and have our hearts in His love and so shall we be blessed, for in returning Christ's love we shall feel that His love is shed abroad more fully in our hearts and more fully in our understandings. May the Holy Spirit add His blessing upon these broken words—they have been broken because they have broken my heart and therefore I could not help their coming out in a broken way. God accept them. And dear Brothers and Sisters, may he bless them to you by helping you to love Him more, who is my Hope, my Joy, my Consolation and my All.

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PURGING OUT THE LEAVEN

NO. 965

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 11, 1870,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

“Know you not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness. But with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”
1 Corinthians 5:6-8.

“WHAT God has joined together, let no man put asunder.” Evermore in Scripture the Doctrines of Grace are married to the precepts of holiness. Where faith leads the way, the virtues follow in a goodly train. The roots of holiness and happiness are the same, and in some respects they are but two words for the same thing. There have been persons who have thought it impossible that holiness should come out of the preaching of salvation by faith. If you tell men that “there is life in a look at the Crucified One,” will they not conclude that cleanness of life is unnecessary? If you preach salvation by Grace through faith, and not at all by the works of the Law, will they not draw the inference that they need not be obedient to Christ, but may live as they wish?

To this the best answer is found in the godly, honest, and sober lives of the men who are most zealous for the Gospel of the Grace of God. On the other hand, there have been others of Antinomian spirit who have dared to say that because they are saved, and Christ has finished His work for them so that nothing is left undone by way of merit, therefore, from now on they may act as they please, seeing that they are not under Law, but under Grace. Our reply is that the faith which saves is not an unproductive faith, but is always a faith which produces good works and abounds in holiness.

Salvation *in* sin is not possible, it always must be salvation *from* sin. As well speak of liberty while yet the irons are upon a man's wrists, or boast of healing while the disease waxes worse and worse, or glory in victory when the army is on the point of surrendering, as to dream of salvation in Christ while the Sinner continues to give full swing to his evil passions. Grace and holiness are as inseparable as light and heat in the sun. True faith in Jesus in every case leads to an abhorrence of every false way and to a perseverance in the paths of holiness even unto the end.

The Apostle Paul, while he was showing the Corinthians how wrong they were to tolerate an incestuous person in their midst, compared the spirit of uncleanness to an evil leaven. Then the leaven suggested to him the Passover, and turning aside for a moment, he applied the type of the paschal feast so as to make his argument yet more convincing. He would urge purity upon them by every conceivable reason, and his keen eyes saw an argument in the celebration of the Passover.

In using this type he furnishes me with another proof of the fact that hard by any Scripture where you find the safety of the Believer guaranteed, you are sure to see necessary holiness set side by side with it. Here you have at the Passover a favored people safe beneath the sprinkled blood, safe in that dire hour when the destroying angel's sword was unsheathed—but you find that people busily engaged in purging out the defiling leaven from their houses—they were not saved by purging out the leaven, but were preserved by the sprinkled blood. They were *obedient* to the Divine precept, and diligently put away the corrupt and forbidden thing. The purity of the house from leaven went side by side with its safety by the blood.

We shall, this morning, first, consider the happy condition of Believers. Next, the holy duty commended to them, running side by side with their privilege. And thirdly, we shall show how their happiness and holiness, their holiness and happiness, act and re-act upon each other.

I. We have set forth to us THE HAPPY CONDITION OF ALL TRUE BELIEVERS IN CHRIST. “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast.” The habitual normal state of a Christian is that of one keeping a feast in perfect security. We are to be, as a rule, like the Israelites who stood at the table of the Passover festival, with loins girt, and staves in their hands, expectant of a joyful deliverance. Observe how the Apostle puts it—take his words one by one—“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”

“Our Passover,” that by which God's wrath makes a transition, and passes over us who deserve its full vengeance. It passed *upon* the Lamb of God, and therefore it passes *over* us. Christ is sacrificed or slain, His life is taken, for He gave Himself for us. His life and blood, yes, His true Self, He yielded up for us. The word for “us” implies *substitution*. Christ is sacrificed for or *instead* of us. We should never think of saying that Paul was sacrificed for us, though it is true Paul did lay down his life for the Church of God to promote the interests of the faithful, and in a certain sense, since his exertions handed down the Gospel, he died even for us.

But we use the term so generally and so correctly in the sense of substitution, that we should not think of applying it to any but our Lord, who alone, in the fullest sense was sacrificed for us. He is the Lamb of our Passover, sacrificed on our behalf, that we might not be sacrificed—roasted in the fire of suffering that we might go free. It is by the process of substitution that, according to abundant Scriptures, believing sinners are passed over in judgment and so escape eternal condemnation. “For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” “For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin. That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” “For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.” No one can doubt this doctrine who believes the Word of the Lord by the Prophet Isaiah in his fifty-third chapter, “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. And with His

stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way. And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many. For He shall bear their iniquities.” “He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Our great joy is that the Sacrifice through which we are passed over is already slain. No new victim is expected or required. The Sacrifice by which we are delivered is complete. Accursed be all those who say that there is offered to God continually a sacrifice in the “mass” by which the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is rendered complete. He has said, “It is finished,” and they are liars before God who say otherwise. “This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.”

Do you think I am severe in my speech? I say no other than Paul said, “If any man preach any other Gospel, let him be accursed.” All that was wanted to atone for our sin, all that was required to vindicate the Law of God is already offered. There is nothing left to be presented by so-called “priests” on earth or to be made up by the penances and payments of their dupes. Our Passover is sacrificed. Let others offer what they will, ours is the Lamb once slain, and there remains no more sacrifice for sin.

This completeness of sacrifice, indeed, is the main part of the festival which the Christian should perpetually keep. If there were anything yet to be done—if the substitutionary sacrifice were imperfect, how could we celebrate the feast? Anxiety would destroy all enjoyment. “It is finished,” is the joyous peal which rings us into the celestial banquet of present peace! The fact that we are complete in Him—perfect in Christ Jesus—is our soul’s deepest delight.

Our sacrifice is slain—“therefore,” says the Apostle—and it is a natural inference from it—“let us keep the feast.” By which I understand this—Jesus Christ, the Paschal Lamb, not only was offered as a sacrifice towards God, but He has become a festival towards ourselves. In Him we have communion with God, and joy and peace through believing. We are to keep the feast by feeding upon Christ. The paschal lamb was not slain to be looked at, to be laid by in store, or merely made the subject of conversation. But it was slain to be fed upon.

So, Christian, it is your daily business to feed upon Christ Jesus, whose flesh is meat, indeed, and whose blood is drink, indeed. Jesus is the Food on which your faith must be nourished. And what rich nourishment He is! God over all, blessed forever, has redeemed us. The Word made flesh, who dwelt among us, has been sacrificed for us. My soul, what more could be required? What more can you desire, or can the Almighty One demand? A sacrifice Divine, a perfect Man in union with the eternal God, dies for you. What more is needed to make your faith firm and unmoved? Come and feed yourself on this Bread which came down from Heaven!

The infinite love of the great Sacrifice, the amazing wisdom of it, the transcendent merit of it, the abounding fullness of the blessings which it secures—let your souls consider these things, and feed upon them till they are satisfied with favor and full of the goodness of the Lord. Here is a

festival the viands of which never can be exhausted, and from which the guests need never depart. Remember that at the paschal supper the whole of the lamb was intended to be eaten. And even thus, O Believer, the whole of Christ you are to feed upon.

No part of Christ is denied you, neither His humiliation nor His Glory, His kingship nor His priesthood, His Godhead nor His Manhood. All this has He given to you and for you, and you are now to nourish your soul by meditating upon Him. Forget not, moreover, that a feast is not only for nourishment—it is for something more—for joy, for exhilaration. Let us, in this sense also, keep a lifelong feast. The Christian is not only to take the doctrines which concern Christ to build up his soul with them as the body is built up with food, but he may draw from them the wine of joy and the new wine of delight. It is meet that we rejoice in Christ Jesus. He is the bliss of the saints. Is it not a joy unspeakable and full of glory, that my sin will never be laid to my charge if I am a Believer?

My sin has been laid at Jesus' door, and He has put it all away so that if it is searched for it shall not be found! Is it not an intense delight to believe that Jesus has so effectually put away sin that no destroying angel can touch one of His saints? There being no condemnation, there can be no punishment for us either in this world or in that which is to come. We are as safe as Israel when the door was sprinkled with the blood. And more, being justified, we rise to a higher position—we are adopted into the family of God, and if children, then heirs. What a vista of Glory opens before our eyes at the mention of that word, heirs of God!

All things are ours, because Christ our Passover has been slain for us. My Brethren, do not let your religion merely keep you calm and quiet—look for bursts of joy. “Praise Him upon the cymbals, praise Him upon the high-sounding cymbals.” Surely there should be an excitement of delight created by Truths of God so grand, by blessings so inestimable as those of which we are partakers! Let us not treat our religion as merely an ordinary meal for our souls, but as a holy banquet of wine wherein our souls may be exceedingly glad!

When the Jews came together at the Passover, we find that they were accustomed to sing. They did not close the paschal supper without chanting some portions of the great “Hallel,” which consisted of those Psalms at the end of the Book, dedicated to the praise of God. Let us keep the feast in the same way, nourishing our souls with Christ's sacrifice, making our hearts glad by reflecting upon the blessing which this has brought us, and never forgetting to magnify Jehovah, the Father, the Giver of Christ, the Founder of the Covenant, our God in Christ Jesus. Let your praises never cease!

You remember what I started with—that when the Apostle says, “let us keep the feast,” having drawn that exhortation as an inference from the fact that the Passover is killed, he does not mean, “let us *sometimes* keep the feast,” but let us *always* keep it. Our Passover is perpetual. It has no times and seasons, it is lifelong. Salute your God each morning with your hymn of praise, you redeemed ones! Let not the sun go down without another hymn of thanksgiving. Praise Him, praise Him, praise Him!

Ceaseless as your mercies let His praises be! O for the life of Heaven on earth, to be always praising God! Our Sacrifice is slain, therefore let us keep this feast of daily adoration and hourly thankfulness to Him who passed us by in mercy when He might have smote us in wrath. At the Passover the devout Jew was accustomed to teach his family the meaning of the feast. The children said, "What do you mean by this ordinance?" And then the father explained to them how they came out of Egypt, saying, "With a high hand and an outstretched arm Jehovah brought us forth. And on the night when He smote the first-born of Egypt, He smote not us, for the lamb was slaughtered, and when the Lord saw the blood upon the door He passed over us."

Let it be a part of our continual festival—and I do not know a more delightful duty—to tell others what our Redeeming Lord has done! Too many of you need to be stirred up to this pleasant duty. When you once break through those wicked, cowardly habits—for I cannot help thinking them so in many of you—which lock your months and prevent your living Jesus praise, you will find it sweet to tell to your children and kinfolk the story of the Atoning Sacrifice. While blessing them, you will obtain a double blessing in your own souls, and if it should please the Holy Spirit to bless your teaching to the salvation of your fellow men, you will be happy, indeed.

Do not suppose that I am exhorting you to keep the feast when you come to the Lord's Supper. I do not refer to that emblematic feast at all. I refer to our *daily* lifelong fellowship with Jesus. "Christ our Sacrifice is slain for us, therefore let us keep the feast." The inference is of continuous force. When is Jesus slain? Is He not slain at this hour? Was not His sacrifice completed upon Calvary's bloody tree? Therefore let us keep the feast always, for the Lamb is always slain. Our keeping of the feast is not a matter for times and seasons—festivals and holidays—it is always our position. O you who go with your heads bowed down like bulrushes, and yet are the Lord's true people, I would gladly put my hand on your shoulders and say, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast."

Why should we lie in the dungeon when liberty is ours? "Alas," says a downcast one, "I have so many corruptions." I know you have, my dear Brother. We will talk about that directly, but "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast." "But I have so many troubles and I am so very poor." So were many of the Israelites, but when they had slain the Passover they kept the feast. So, notwithstanding all these things which make you sorrow, you must feast, for "our Passover is sacrificed."

"All my cares," says one. What business has a Believer with cares? Is it not written, "Cast your burden upon the Lord, He will sustain you. He will never suffer the righteous to be moved"? You cannot keep a feast while care, like a shrew, hovers above the table. But let us, like Abram, drive away the birds of prey, and keep the feast. "Ah, but I am thinking about the past, my old sins still haunt me." What? After Christ your Passover is slain? Surely the past is blotted out and forgiven. "Still," says one, "my mind is heavy, my harp is on the willows." Will not a sight of Calvary re-

lieve you? Jesus Christ was made a curse for you that you might not be regarded any longer as accursed. Will not this make you lift up the note of thanksgiving? Certainly it ought!

It should be always feast time with God's servants, since Christ their Passover is slain. "But I have nothing to rejoice in," says one, "except my religion." What more do you want? What was there brought on the table at that paschal supper by way of good cheer, except the paschal lamb? I grant you there was something else upon the table, but what was it? Bitter herbs. Surely those were not an addition to the *joy*? It was not sharp sauce such as we ordinarily use, but bitter, pungent herbs. These did not please the palate, yet they kept the feast upon the lamb, which was all they needed.

So you may bring the bitter herbs of your deep repentance that your sin made it necessary that the Lamb of God should die. But all the feast is in Him, and all the world can contribute nothing to that feast but bitter herbs. If you had all the world, and derived comfort from it for a time, in the end it would become bitter as wormwood. Bitter herbs all things beneath the sky must be—only Jesus is the true Feast. My Soul, rejoice in the Lord always, for you have always reason to triumph, since Jesus Christ is slain!

II. Side by side with the picture of the lifelong feast, we find A HOLY DUTY COMMENDED to us. "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven." "Let us keep the feast. Not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Leaven is used in Scripture, we believe in every case—there is only one case in which the question could possibly be raised—as the emblem of sin. This arises partly from its sourness.

We, being ourselves leavened with evil, find leaven somewhat palatable at the first, but God, who hates all evil, puts away the type in all its stages. Sin, which for awhile may seem pleasant, will soon be nauseous, even to the sinner. But the very least degree of sin is obnoxious to God. We cannot tell how much God hates sin. With the entire intensity of His Infinite Nature He loathes it. He cannot look upon iniquity—it is detestable to Him, the fire of His wrath will burn forever against it—because sin is infinitely loathsome to His pure and holy Nature.

He calls it leaven, then, because of its sourness. Leaven is, moreover, the offspring of a sort of corruption and tends towards further corruption. Sin is a corruption—it dissolves the very fabric of society. It dissolves the constitution of man. Wherever it gets into our nature it puts it out of order, disjoins it, destroys its excellence, and poisons its purity.

Leaven is also very spreading. No matter how great the measure of flour, the leaven will work its way. There is no saying, "To here shall you go, but no farther." A little leaven leavens the whole lump. Even thus it is with sin. When that leaven had place among angels, it brought a multitude of them down to Hell. One woman sinned, and the whole human race was leavened by her fault. One sin drops into the nature, and it becomes entirely depraved, corrupt through and through, by the leavening influence.

Now, according to the Apostle, if the leaven of evil is permitted in a Church, it will work its way through the whole of it. In the Christian Church a little false doctrine is sure to pave the way for greater departures from Truths of God, so that no one can predict the end and result of the first false teaching. You cannot say, "I will be so far unorthodox." You might as well break the dykes of Holland, and bid the sea be moderate in its encroachments.

The doctrines of the Gospel have such a close relation to one another that if you snap a link, you have broken the whole chain, and we may say of the system of Truth what is written concerning the Law, "He that offends in one point is guilty of all." The renunciation of one Truth almost necessarily leads to the giving up of another, and before a man is half aware of it himself, he has let go the Gospel. I greatly fear that the denial of the eternity of future punishment is but one wave of an incoming sea of infidelity. Deny the awful character of sin, and the substitutionary work of Christ will soon follow.

Indeed we have living proofs of this at this day and we shall see many more before long. The new teaching eats as does a canker. It speaks fair, but in its heart there is a deadly enmity to the Gospel itself, and the sooner it is seen to be so the better for the Church of God. The leaven of evil living, too, is equally obnoxious in the Church. Tolerated in one, it will soon be excused in another—and a lower tone of thought with regard to sin will rule the Church. The toleration of sin in the Church soon leads to the excusing of it, and that to the free indulgence of it, and to the bringing in of other sins yet more foul.

Sin is like the bale of goods which came from the east to this city in the olden time, which brought the pest in it. Probably it was but a small bale, but yet it contained in it the deaths of hundreds of the inhabitants of London. In those days one piece of rag carried the infection into a whole town. So, if you permit one sin or false doctrine in a Church knowingly and wittingly, none can tell the extent to which that evil may ultimately go. The Church, therefore, is to be purged of practical and doctrinal evil as diligently as possible. That sour and corrupting thing which God abhors must be purged out, and it is to be the business of the Christian minister, and of all his fellow helpers, to keep the Church free from it.

We will, however, view the text as relating to *ourselves*, and let me remark that the Apostle had in his mind's eye the custom of the Jews at the Passover. In consequence of the command that they should purge out the leaven at the Passover, the head of the household among the Jews in the olden times, especially when they grew more strict in their ritual, would go through the whole of the house on a certain day to search for every particle of leavened bread. It was generally done in the evening with a candle, and the servants and others would accompany the good man of the house to search for every crumb.

Clothes were shaken, cupboards were emptied, drawers were opened—and if a mouse ran across the room and might be supposed to carry a crumb of bread into its hole—they trembled lest a curse should rest on the home. So strict did they become that our Savior might have rebuked them as straining at a gnat while swallowing a camel. We, however, have

no need to fear excessive strictness in getting rid of *sin*. With as scrupulous a care as the Israelite purged out the leaven from his house we are to purge out all sin from ourselves, our conduct, and our conversation. Here is a task set before you, then, my Brethren.

Note well, we do not urge you to purge out sin in order that you may save yourselves, for Christ our Passover is slain, and our salvation is secured. But that being done, in order that we may keep the feast and unbrokenly possess the *joy* of salvation, we are to purge out the leaven of sin. We may suppose that the Jewish householder would very soon put away all the large loaves of leavened bread that remained in the house—just as you and I, when we were sorrowing for sin—gave up at once all those gross outward sins in which we indulged before.

Some of these have never tempted us again. Drunkenness, profanity, uncleanness—I have known men give up these sins at once, in a moment, and they appear to be delivered from their power from now on and forever. Then perhaps there were some stray crusts which the children had left. These were put away, also. So there may be certain minor sins in the judgment of the world which the Christian man, when converted, may not put away the first week. But when they are seen, he says, “I must have done with these! Christ, my Passover, has been offered. I cannot do this wickedness. I am a child of God, more is expected of me than of others.”

But the most trouble would be caused by the little *crumbs* of leaven. These might be hidden away in the cupboard, and perhaps it was a long time after the search began before the householder found these out. But when he did, he said, “Put them away, they must not remain.” And, Beloved, many a Christian man has not found out the sinfulness of some actions for years after his conversion. I am very conscious that certain matters which I thought very lightly of years ago would greatly trouble my conscience now. As I have obtained light upon certain sins, I have, through Grace, put them away. But I expect as long as I live to find something which, viewed in a brighter light, and from a higher standing, will be discovered to be sinful—and I desire Divine Grace to have done with it. We must not hesitate for a moment. We must not retain even a crumb of the evil leaven. We must earnestly desire to sweep it all out.

The whole house was searched. I have seen a picture in which the servant is represented as cleansing the cooking vessels in the kitchen, the housewife is searching garments and cups in the dining room and the master and his sons are opening cupboards, and chests, and diligently investigating. A Christian man may feel that he has got rid of all the leaven from his shop, he is upright and honest himself, and his system of business is just. Yet it may be there is leaven in his private house, for the children are uncorrected, the Sunday is disregarded, or the servants' souls are neglected.

Perhaps the home is right, and then there may be leaven in the bed-chamber. Your conversation with yourself and your God may be in a sad condition. Prayer may be restrained. Suppose you have purged out the leaven of hypocrisy and are sincere—are you also free from the leaven of anger? May you not still be slow to forgive? Are you clear of the leaven of pride, or of covetousness? Every part of our nature needs searching—the

heart, the judgment, the mind—all must be cleansed. Purge out the old leaven wherever it has penetrated. It must come away or else, though we are safe beneath the blood, we shall not know and enjoy our safety.

The feast cannot be kept while the old leaven is willfully left within us. I told you that the head of the household usually performed the search. Let your best powers of judgment be exercised upon yourself, my dear Brothers and Sisters. Too many exercise their understandings in criticizing others, but they do not judge themselves in the same way. Let your main and chief thought be, now that you are saved, to get rid of sin. Let the master powers of your soul be called into this purging work, and ask the Master himself to aid you. Does He not sit as a refiner to purify the sons of Levi? Search me, O God! Try me, and know my ways! Your eyes can see what mine cannot. May the great Purifier put forth from us every crumb of the old leaven of our natural corruption.

I said that a candle was used to throw a light into every corner of the house that no leaven might escape notice. Take you the candle of God's Word, the candle of His Holy Spirit. Do you say, "There is nothing wrong in me if I judge myself by my fellow men"? My Brothers and Sisters, it is a small thing to be able to say no more than this! To be approved of men is but a poor standard for a Christian. Does your own heart reproach you? Does the Word of God reproach you? To be measuring myself by my fellow men, and saying, "Compared with them I am generous to the poor, and diligent in God's service"—this is to be proud because you are taller than pigmies or fairer than Blackamoors.

Compare yourself with Paul, with John, with Brainerd or Rutherford—and even that is ill advice—for what were the best disciples compared with their Master? There must be no lower standard for us than the perfection of Christ. No attainment must ever satisfy us until we are conformed to His image who is the First-Born among many Brethren. You will tell me I am holding up a high standard. I am. But then you have a great Helper, and I will show you in a moment how you may be of good cheer concerning this business.

To purge out the old leaven many sweepings of the house will be wanted. One certainly will not suffice. You must search, and search, and search on, until you get to Heaven. The motto of your life must be, "Watch, watch, watch." For, mark you, you are sure to leave some leaven, and if you leave a little it will work and spread. Sin has evermore a swelling tendency, and until the Holy Spirit has cut up the last root of sin, evil will grow up again in the heart. At the scent of water it will bud and put forth once again its shoots. Here is work for all time, enough to keep us busy till we land in eternity.

It is hinted in the text that there are forms of evil which we must peculiarly watch against, and one is malice. Is a Christian man likely to be malicious? I trust in the strong sense of that term, we have done with malice, but, alas! I have known Believers who have had a very keen sense of right, and they have been commendable, who have too much indulged the spirit deprecated here. That is to say, they have been very severe, censorious, and angry—angry with people for not being perfect. Though not perfect themselves, and though they know that if they are better than others, the

Grace of God has made them so, yet they are bitter and harsh towards the imperfections of Christian people. They cherish feelings of prejudice, suspicion, and ill-will. They do not seek the improvement of the faulty, but their exposure and condemnation.

They hunt down sincere but faulty people, and denounce them—but never by any chance offer an excuse for them. In some Believers there is too much of the leaven of unkind talking. They speak to one another about the faults of their Brethren, and, in the process of gossiping, characters are injured and reputations marred. Now harsh judgments and evil speaking are to be put away from us as sour leaven.

If a man has injured me, I must forgive him. And if I find him to be faulty, I must love him till he gets better, and if I cannot make him better by ordinary love, I must love him more, even as Christ loved His Church and gave Himself for it, “that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” He did not love her because she was without spot or wrinkle, but to get the spots and wrinkles out of her, He loved her into holiness.

Take heed, also that every form of hypocrisy be purged out, for the Apostle tells us to eat the Passover with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Do let us leave off talking beyond our experience. Let us never pray beyond what we mean. Ask God, my Brothers and Sisters, to clean us from all unreality, that nothing may be in us but true metal. There is a strong temptation among Christian ministers, and Christian men of all sorts, to seem to be a little more than they are. God save us from it. The slightest taint of hypocrisy should be abhorred by the Christian man. All ill-will and all mere *seeming* should be detestable to the Christian, for where these are there can be little or no communion with Jesus. The fellowship of Heaven is not enjoyed where the leaven of Hell is endured.

III. Our last point shall be touched briefly. THE HAPPINESS OF THE BELIEVER ACTS UPON HIS HOLINESS, AND HIS HOLINESS UPON HIS HAPPINESS. First of all, the happiness acts upon the holiness. We have drawn a picture of the paschal feast. Set it before you again. If I know that I feed upon Christ day by day, who has been sacrificed for me, the happiness I feel leads me to say, “Yet it was dearly purchased, my sins slew my Savior, and therefore will I slay my sins.”

Every taste you get of redeeming love makes you feel that sin is a cruel and detestable thing, and therefore you will destroy it. Sitting, as you do, within the house, and knowing that you are all safe because the blood is on the lintel outside—what next? Why, you will say, “The first-born sons of Egypt are slain, and am *I* preserved? What then? Why I must be God’s first-born, and must belong to Him!” “You are not your own, but you are bought with a price,” is the voice of the angel as he passes by the house which he must not enter to destroy. Has Christ loved me and died for me? Then I am His, and if I am His I cannot live in sin! If I am redeemed, how can I continue a slave? If I belong to Jesus I cannot serve the devil, I must be rid of sin.

Then, further, if I feel that all is safe, my mind is calm, and I am able to care about the state of my *heart*. The Israelite was safe within his house, he needed not to keep watch and ward outside—the sprinkled blood was

his security—and therefore he had time and space to see to the interior of his abode. “Now,” said the Believer, “I have nothing to do with saving myself, for my salvation is finished. Therefore I will see to my growth in Grace.” He who has outdoor work done for him may well see to his indoor work, and earnestly turn his thoughts to the purging out of the old leaven.

The freedom you have from fear through the blood of Jesus gives you the peace of mind necessary for a thorough search after your sins. Moreover, the Christian man is encouraged to put away his leaven of sin because he has the foresight of a profitable exchange. The Israelite gave up leavened bread, but he soon had angels’ food in the place of it. So the Christian says, “I give up these sins. They were sweet to me once, but now they are sour, stinking, corrupt leaven. I shall receive nobler enjoyments—fellowship with Heaven shall be my portion. I may gladly part with leaven, for I am called to eat the bread of angels, no, the Bread of God!

The Christian, too, who knows that his sin is forgiven, feels that the God who could put away his load of sin will surely help to conquer his corruptions. When I see Calvary I believe everything to be possible. If Jesus can blot out sin, His Spirit can subdue it. The holy peace created in the soul by feeding upon Christ nerves the spirit for conflict with inbred sin. We will overcome it! We will drive out the Canaanites which defile our souls! We will be pure! We will be perfect—for greater is He that is with us than all they that are against us. So you see our happiness in many ways promotes our holiness.

I am quite sure you will not need me to enlarge upon the fact that holiness produces happiness. How quiet does the soul become when the man feels, “I have done that which was right, I have given up that which was evil.” I grant you that the deep peace of the Believer arises from the sprinkled blood, but it is enjoyed by purging out the leaven. You question yourself and say, “Can I believe in Christ if I am living in sin?” and you get back the comfortable sense that Jesus is yours when you can honestly feel that you have, by the Holy Spirit, renounced your old sins. Purging out the leaven clears your evidences, and so enables you to keep the feast.

You were safe enough through the blood, but now you find happiness in a sense of security, a happiness which would have been taken from you had you fallen into sin. My Brethren, how can we expect to enjoy communion with Jesus Christ while we indulge in sin? I am sure you will find that at the bottom our want of fellowship with Christ arises from our want of careful walking before the Lord. I read, sometimes, holy Rutherford’s letters, and say, “I wish I lived like this.” Now, if I do not do so, it is either Christ’s fault or mine. Can I say it is Christ’s fault? I dare not! He is as willing to reveal Himself to me as to any other of His servants. It is my fault, then.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, if you do not walk in the light as Christ is in the light, it is not because He is not willing that you should walk in His Light—it is because you keep at a distance from Him, and so walk in darkness. Do you believe that the sad faces among God’s servants are caused by their poverty? Some of the very poorest of saints have been the most joyful. Do you think they are caused by their sicknesses? Why, we have known persons confined to the bed of sickness twenty years who

have found a very Heaven below in their chamber of languishing! What is it that makes God's people look so sad? It is the old leaven.

"Let us keep the feast," says the Apostle, but it is useless to hope to do so while we keep the leaven. Perhaps there is one thing which we know to be our duty, but we have not attended to it. That one neglect will break up our festival. "He that knows his master's will, and does it not shall be beaten with many stripes." Are these stripes to be given in the next world? I do not believe it, it is in *this* world that erring *Believers* will be beaten, and very often depression of spirit, losses and bereavements happen to a Christian because he has knowingly violated his conscience by neglecting a duty or permitting a sin.

Jesus will not commune with neglecters of His will. Jesus will have no leaven where He is. If you tolerate that which is nauseous to Him, expect not a comfortable word from Him. If you walk contrary to Him He will walk contrary to you. Can two walk together unless they are agreed? I would with much affection press these considerations upon you, for I have pressed them upon my own heart. I fear we shall not enjoy the blessing we have had as a Church unless there is more jealousy for holiness among us. I am afraid some of us are barren of spiritual usefulness because we do not watch against sin.

O keep your conscience tender! Beware of getting it seared. It is like the pond in the winter—a very thin scale of ice is formed at first—but afterwards the whole surface becomes hard enough to bear half a town. Beware of the thin scale over your conscience! Keep your heart tender before God, ready to be moved by the faintest breath of His Spirit. Ask to be like sensitive plants, that you may shrivel up at the touch of sin—and only open out in the Presence of your Lord and Master. God grant it to you. God grant it, for Jesus' sake!

This last sentence, and I have done. There are some here who are not saved. Notice how salvation comes—not through purging out the leaven! No, *that* operation is to be seen to *afterwards*. Salvation comes because the Paschal Lamb is slain. The soul feeds on Jesus—His blood is sprinkled—and the soul is saved. Afterwards comes the purging out of sin. Dear Soul, if you would be saved, do not begin at the wrong end. Begin with the Savior's blood! Begin with Calvary's Cross! Go there as a poor sinner and look to Him! And then after that we will say, "Let us keep the feast," and we will diligently see to it, in His strength, that the leaven is put away. God bless you for Christ's sake. Amen.

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CHRIST OUR PASSOVER

NO. 54

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, DECEMBER 2, 1855
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”
1 Corinthians 5:7.***

THE more you read the Bible and the more you meditate upon it, the more you will be astonished with it. He who is but a casual reader of the Bible does not know the height, the depth, the length and breadth of the mighty meanings contained in its pages. There are certain times when I discover a new vein of thought and I put my hand to my head and say in astonishment, “Oh, it is wonderful! I never saw this before in the Scriptures.” You will find the Scriptures enlarge as you enter them—the more you study them, the less you will appear to know of them—for they widen out as we approach them. Especially will you find this the case with the typical parts of God’s Word. Most of the historical books were intended to be types either of dispensations, or experiences, or offices of Jesus Christ. Study the Bible with this as a key and you will not blame Herbert when he calls it, “not only the book of God, but the God of books.” One of the most interesting points of the Scriptures is their constant tendency to display Christ. And perhaps one of the most beautiful figures under which Jesus Christ is ever exhibited in Sacred Writ is the Passover Paschal Lamb. It is Christ of whom we are about to speak tonight!

Israel was in Egypt in extreme bondage. The severity of their slavery had continually increased till it was so oppressive that their incessant groans went up to Heaven. God, who avenges His own elect, though they cry day and night unto Him, at last determined that He would direct a fearful blow against Egypt’s king and Egypt’s nation and deliver His people. We can picture the anxieties and the anticipations of Israel, but we can scarcely sympathize with them, unless we, as Christians, have had the same deliverance from spiritual Egypt. Let us, Brothers and Sisters, go back to the day in our experience when we lived in the land of Egypt, working in the brick-kilns of sin, toiling to make ourselves better and finding it to be of no avail. Let us recall that memorable night, the beginning of months, the commencement of a new life in our spirit and the beginning of an altogether new era in our soul. The Word of God struck the blow at our sin. He gave us Jesus Christ, our Sacrifice! And in that night we went out of Egypt. Though we have passed through the wilderness since then and have fought the Amalekites, have trod on the fiery serpent, have been scorched by the heat and frozen by the snows, yet we have never, since that time, gone back to Egypt—although our

hearts may sometimes have desired the leeks, the onions and the flesh-pots of Egypt—we have never been brought into slavery since then! Come, let us keep the Passover this night and think of the night when the Lord delivered us out of Egypt. Let us behold our Savior Jesus as the Paschal Lamb on which we feed. Let us not only look at Him as such, but let us sit down, tonight, at His Table. Let us eat of His flesh and drink of His blood—His flesh is meat, indeed, and His blood is drink, indeed! In holy solemnity let our hearts approach that ancient supper. Let us go back to Egypt's darkness and by holy contemplation behold, instead of the destroying angel, the Angel of the Covenant at the head of the feast—"the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world."

I shall not have time, tonight, to enter into the whole history and mystery of the Passover. You will not understand me to be, tonight, preaching concerning *the whole of it*, but a few prominent points therein as a part of them. It would require a dozen sermons to do so—in fact a book as large as Caryl upon Job—if we could find a divine equally wordy and equally sensible. But we shall first of all look at the Lord Jesus Christ and show how He corresponds with the Paschal Lamb—and endeavor to bring you to the two points of having His blood sprinkled on you and having fed on Him.

I. First, then, JESUS CHRIST IS TYPIFIED HERE UNDER THE PASCHAL LAMB and should there be one of the seed of Abraham here who has never seen Christ to be the Messiah, I beg his special attention to that which I am to advance when I speak of the Lord Jesus as none other than the Lamb of God slain for the deliverance of His chosen people. Follow me with your Bibles and open, first, at the 12th chapter of Exodus.

We commence, first of all, with the victim—*the lamb*. How fine a picture of Christ. No other creature could so well have typified Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Being also the emblem of sacrifice, it most sweetly portrayed our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Search natural history through and through and you will find other emblems which set forth different characteristics of His nature and admirably display Him to our souls, yet there is none which seems so appropriate to the Person of our beloved Lord as that of the Lamb. A child would at once perceive the likeness between a lamb and Jesus Christ, so gentle and innocent, so mild and harmless, neither hurting others, nor seeming to have the power to resent an injury—

"A humble Man before His foes, a weary Man and full of woes."

What tortures the sheepish race have received from us! How are they, though innocent, continually slaughtered for our food! Their skin is dragged from their backs, their wool is shorn to give us a garment. And so the Lord Jesus Christ, our glorious Master, does give us His garments that we may be clothed with them. He is torn in sunder for us—His very blood is poured out for our sins—harmless and holy, a glorious Sacrifice for the sins of all His children. Thus the Paschal Lamb might well convey

to the pious Hebrew, the Person of a suffering, silent, patient, harmless Messiah.

Look further down. It was a lamb *without blemish*. A blemished lamb—if it had the smallest speck of disease, the least wound—would not have been allowed for a Passover. The priest would not have allowed it to be slaughtered, nor would God have accepted the sacrifice at his hands. It must be a lamb without blemish. And was not Jesus Christ even such from His birth? Unblemished, born of the pure virgin Mary, begotten of the Holy Spirit, without a taint of sin. His soul was pure and spotless as the driven Snow—white, clear, perfect. And His life was the same. In Him was no sin. He took our infirmities and bore our sorrows on the Cross. He was in all points tempted as we are, but there was that sweet exception, “yet without sin.” A lamb without blemish. You who have known the Lord, who have tasted of His Grace, who have held fellowship with Him—does not your heart acknowledge that He is a lamb without blemish? Can you find any fault with your Savior? Have you anything to lay to His charge? Has His truthfulness departed? Have His words been broken? Have His promises failed? Has He forgotten His engagements? And, in any respect, can you find in Him any blemish? Ah, no! He is the unblemished Lamb, the pure, the spotless, the immaculate—“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”—and in Him there is no sin.

Go on further down the Chapter. Your lamb shall be without blemish, “*a male of the first year*.” I need not stop to consider the reason why the male was chosen. We only note that it was to be a male of the first year. Then it was in its prime, then its strength was unexhausted, then its power was just ripened into maturity and perfection. God would not have an untimely fruit. God would not have that offered which had not come to maturity. And so our Lord Jesus Christ had just come to the ripeness of manhood when he was offered! At 33 years of age was He sacrificed for our sins. He was then hale and strong, although His body may have been emaciated by suffering and His face more marred than that of any other man—yet was He then in the perfection of Manhood. I think I see Him then. His goodly beard flowing down upon His breast. I see Him with His eyes full of genius, His form erect, His manner majestic, His energy entire, His whole frame in full development—a real Man, a magnificent Man—fairer than the sons of men, a lamb not only without blemish but with His powers fully brought out! Such was Jesus Christ—a Lamb of the first year—not a boy, not a lad, not a young man, but a full Man, that He might give His soul unto us. He did not give Himself to die for us when He was a youth, for He would not, then, have given all He was to be. He did not give Himself to die for us when he was in old age, for then would He have given Himself when he was in decay. But just in His maturity, in His very prime, then Jesus Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us! And, moreover, at the time of His death, Christ was full of life, for we are informed by one of the Evangelists that, “He cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost.” This is a sign that Jesus did not die through weak-

ness, nor through decay of nature. His soul was strong within Him! He was still the Lamb of the first year. Still was He mighty. He could, if He pleased, even on the Cross, have unlocked His hands from their iron bolts—and descending from the tree of infamy—have driven His astonished foes before Him like deer scattered by a lion! Yet did He meekly yield obedience unto death.

My Soul, can you not see your Jesus, here, the unblemished Lamb of the first year, strong and mighty? And, O my Heart! Does not the thought rise up—if Jesus consecrated Himself to you when He was thus in all His strength and vigor, should not I, in youth, dedicate myself to Him? And if I am in manhood, how am I doubly bound to give my strength to Him? And if I am in old age, still should I seek while the little remains to consecrate that little to Him! If He gave His all to me, which was much, should I not give my little all to Him? Should I not feel bound to consecrate myself entirely to His service, to lay body, soul and spirit, time, talents—all—upon His altar? And though I am not an unblemished lamb, yet I am happy that as the leavened cake was accepted with the sacrifice, though never burned with it—I, though a leavened cake—may be offered on the altar with my Lord and Savior, the Lord's burnt offering! And so, though impure and full of leaven, I may be accepted in the Beloved, an offering of a sweet savor, acceptable unto the Lord, my God. Here is Jesus, Beloved, a Lamb without blemish, a Lamb of the first year!

The subject now expands and the interest deepens. Let me have your very serious consideration to the next point which has much gratified me in its discovery and which will instruct you in the relation. In the 6th verse of the 12th Chapter of Exodus we are told that this lamb which should be offered at the Passover was to *be selected four days before its sacrifice and to be kept apart*. Beginning at the 3rd verse, we read, "In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house—and if the household is too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls, every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb." The 6th verse says, "And you shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month." For four days this lamb, chosen to be offered, was taken away from the rest of the flock and kept alone by itself. For two reasons—partly that by its constant bleating they might be put in remembrance of the solemn feast which was to be celebrated. And moreover, that during the four days they might be quite assured that it had no blemish, for during that time it was subject to constant inspection in order that they might be certain that it had no hurt or injury that would render it unacceptable to the Lord.

And now, Brothers and Sisters, a remarkable fact flashes before you—just as this lamb was separated four days, the ancient allegories used to say that Christ was separated four years! Four years after He left His father's house, He went into the wilderness and was tempted of the devil.

Four years after His Baptism, He was sacrificed for us. But there is another, better than that—about four days before His Crucifixion, Jesus Christ rode in triumph through the streets of Jerusalem! He was thus openly set apart as being distinct from mankind. He, on the donkey, rode up to the Temple, that all might see Him to be Judah's Lamb, chosen of God and ordained from the foundation of the world! And what is more remarkable, still, during those four days, you will see, if you turn to the Evangelists, at your leisure, that as much is recorded of what He did and said as through all the other parts of His life! During those four days He upbraided the fig tree and straightway it withered. It was then that He drove the buyers and sellers from the Temple. It was then that He rebuked the priests and elders by telling them the similitude of the two sons, one of whom said he would go and did not—and the other who said he would not go and did. It was then that He narrated the parable of the husbandmen who slew those who were sent to them. Afterwards He gave the parable of the marriage of the king's son. Then comes His parable concerning the man who went unto the feast, not having on a wedding garment. And then, also, the parable concerning the ten virgins, five of whom were wise and five of whom were foolish. Then comes the Chapter of very striking denunciations against the Pharisees—"Woe unto you, O you blind Pharisees! Cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter." And then, also, comes that long Chapter of prophecy concerning what should happen at the siege of Jerusalem and an account of the dissolution of the world—"learn a parable of the fig tree: when his branch is yet tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near." But I will not trouble you by telling you, here, that at the same time He gave them that splendid description of the Day of Judgment when the sheep shall be divided from the goats. In fact, the most splendid utterances of Jesus were recorded as having taken place within these four days! Just as the lamb separated from its fellows did bleat more than ever during the four days, so did Jesus during those four days speak more! And if you want to find a choice saying of Jesus, turn to the account of the last four days' ministry to find it. There you will find that Chapter, "Let not your hearts be troubled," there also His great prayer, "Father, I will." And so on. The greatest things He did, He did in the last four days, when He was set apart.

And there is one more thing to which I beg your particular attention. During those four days, I told you that the lamb was subject to the closest scrutiny, so, also, during those four days it is singular to relate that Jesus Christ was examined by all classes of persons. It was during those four days that the lawyer asked Him which was the greatest Commandment. And he said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might and you shall love your neighbor as yourself." It was then that the Herodians came and questioned Him about the tribute money. It was then that the Pharisees tempted Him. It was then, also, the Sadducees tried Him upon the sub-

ject of the Resurrection. He was tried by all classes and grades—Herodians, Pharisees, Sadducees, lawyers and the common people. It was during these four days that He was examined—and how did He come forth? An immaculate Lamb! The officers said, “never man spoke like this Man.” His foes found none who could even bear false witness against Him such as agreed together. And Pilate declared, “I find no fault in Him.” He would not have been fit for the Paschal Lamb had a single blemish have been discovered, but, “I find no fault in Him,” was the utterance of the great chief magistrate who thereby declared that the Lamb might be eaten at God’s Passover, the symbol and the means of the deliverance of God’s people! O Beloved, you have only to study the Scriptures to find out wondrous things in them! You have only to search deeply and you will stand amazed at their richness! You will find God’s Word to be a very precious Word. The more you live by it and study it, the more will it be endeared to your minds.

But the next thing we must mark is *the place where this lamb was to be*, which peculiarly sets forth that it must be Jesus Christ. The first Passover was held in Egypt, the second Passover was held in the wilderness, but we do not read that there were more than these two Passovers celebrated until the Israelites came to Canaan. And then, if you turn to a passage in Deuteronomy, the 16th Chapter you will find that God no longer allowed them to slay the Lamb in their own houses but appointed a place for its celebration. In the wilderness, they brought their offerings to the tabernacle where the lamb was slaughtered. But at its first appointment in Egypt, of course they had no special place to which they took the lamb to be sacrificed. Afterwards, we read in the 16th of Deuteronomy and the 5th verse—“You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates, which the Lord your God gives you. But at the place which the Lord your God shall choose to place His name in, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that you came forth out of Egypt.” It was in Jerusalem that men ought to worship, for salvation was of the Jews. There was God’s palace, there His altar smoked and there, only, might the Paschal Lamb be killed. So was our blessed Lord led to Jerusalem. The infuriated throng dragged Him along the city. In Jerusalem our Lamb was sacrificed for us. It was at the precise spot where God had ordained that it should be! Oh, If that mob who gathered round Him at Nazareth had been able to push Him headlong down the hill, then Christ could not have died at Jerusalem. But as He said, “a Prophet cannot perish out of Jerusalem,” so was it true that the King of all Prophets could not do otherwise—the prophecies concerning Him would not have been fulfilled. “You shall kill the lamb in the place the Lord your God shall appoint.” He was sacrificed in the very place! Thus, again you have an incidental proof that Jesus Christ was the Paschal Lamb for His people.

The next point is *the manner of his death*. I think the manner in which the lamb was to be offered so peculiarly sets forth the Crucifixion of Chr-

ist that no other kind of death could by any means have answered all the particulars set down here.

First, the lamb was to be slaughtered and its blood caught in a basin. Usually the priest stood at the altar. The Levites, or the people slaughtered the lamb and the blood was caught in a golden basin. Then, as soon as it was taken, the priest, standing by the altar on which the fat was burning, threw the blood on the fire or cast it at the foot of the altar. You may guess what a scene it was. Ten thousand lambs sacrificed and the blood poured out in a purple river. Next, the lamb was to be roasted, but it was not to have a bone of its body broken. Now I do say there is nothing but crucifixion which can answer all these three things. Crucifixion has in it the shedding of blood—the hands and feet were pierced. It has in it the idea of roasting, for roasting signifies a long torment. And as the lamb was, for a long time, before the fire, so Christ, in Crucifixion, was for a long time exposed to a broiling sun and all the other pains which Crucifixion engenders. Moreover not a bone was broken—which could not have been the case with any other punishment. Suppose it had been possible to put Christ to death in any other way. Sometimes the Romans put criminals to death by decapitation. But by a such death the neck is broken. Many martyrs were put to death by having a sword pierced through them. While that would have been a bloody death and not a bone broken, necessarily, the torment would not have been long enough to have been pictured by the roasting. So that, take whatever punishment you will—take hanging, which sometimes the Romans practiced in the form of strangling—that mode of punishment does not involve shedding of blood and consequently the requirements would not have been answered. And I do think any intelligent Jew, reading through this account of the Passover and then looking at the Crucifixion must be struck by the fact that the penalty and death of the Cross by which Christ suffered must have taken in all these three things. There was bloodshedding. The long continued suffering—the roasting of torture and then added to that, singularly enough, by God's Providence not a bone was broken! The body was taken down from the Cross intact. Some may say that burning might have answered the matter but there would not have been a shedding of blood in that case and the bones would have been virtually broken in the fire. Besides, the body would not have been preserved entire. Crucifixion was the only death which could answer all of these three requirements. And my faith receives great strength from the fact that I see my Savior not only as a fulfillment of the type, but the only one! My heart rejoices to look on Him whom I have pierced and see His blood, as the lamb's blood, sprinkled on my lintel and my doorpost and see His bones unbroken and to believe that not a bone of His spiritual body shall be broken hereafter. And I rejoice, also, to see Him roasted in the fire, because thereby I see that He satisfied God for that roasting which I ought to have suffered in the torment of Hell forever and ever.

Christian! I would that I had words to depict in better language—but, as it is, I give you the undigested thoughts which you may take home and live upon during the week. For you will find this Paschal Lamb to be an hourly feast, as well as supper—you may feed upon it continually, till you come to the mount of God where you shall see Him as He is!

II. HOW WE DERIVE BENEFIT FROM THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. Christ our Passover is slain for us. The Jew could not say that. He could say a lamb, but “*the Lamb*,” even, “Christ our Passover,” was not yet become a victim. And there are some of my Hearers within these walls, tonight, who cannot say, “Christ our Passover is slain for us.” But glory be to God, some of us can! There are not a few here who have laid their hands upon the glorious Scapegoat and now they can put their hands upon the Lamb, also, and they can say, “Yes. It is true. He is not only slain, but Christ our Passover is slain for us.” We derive benefit from the death of Christ in two modes—first, by having His blood sprinkled on us for our *redemption*. Secondly, by our eating His flesh for food, *regeneration* and *sanctification*. The first aspect in which a sinner views Jesus is that of a lamb slain, whose blood is sprinkled on the doorpost and on the lintel. Note the fact that the blood was never sprinkled on the threshold. It was sprinkled on the lintel, the top of the door, but never on the threshold, for woe unto him who tramples under foot the blood of the Son of God! Even the priest of Dagon trod not on the threshold of his god. Much less will the Christian trample under foot the blood of the Paschal Lamb. But His blood must be on our right hand to be our constant guard and on our left to be our continual support. We need to have Jesus Christ sprinkled on us. As I told you before, it is not alone the blood of Christ poured out on Calvary that saves a sinner. It is the blood of Christ sprinkled on the heart. Let us turn to the land of Zoan. Do you not think you behold the scene tonight! It is evening. The Egyptians are going home—little thinking of what is coming. But just as soon as the sun is set, a lamb is brought into every house. The Egyptian strangers passing by, say, “These Hebrews are about to keep a feast tonight,” and they retire to their houses utterly careless about it. The father of the Hebrew house takes his lamb. He examines it once more with anxious curiosity. He looks it over from head to foot, to see if it has a blemish. He finds none. “My son,” he says to one of them, “Bring here the basin.” It is held. He stabs the lamb and the blood flows into the basin. Do you not think you see the sire, as he commands his matronly wife to roast the lamb before the fire! “Take heed,” he says, “that not a bone is broken.” Do you see her intense anxiety as she puts it down to roast, lest a bone should be broken? Now, says the father, “bring a bunch of hyssop.” A child brings it. The father dips it into the blood. “Come here, my children, wife and all and see what I am about to do.” He takes the hyssop in his hands, dips it in the blood and sprinkles it across the lintel and the doorpost. His children say, “What mean you by this ordinance?” He answers, “This night the Lord God will pass through to smite the Egyptians and when He sees the blood upon

the lintel and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the Destroyer to come into your houses to smite you." The thing is done. The lamb is cooked. The guests are set down to it, the father of the family has supplicated a blessing. They are sitting down to feast upon it. And mark how the old man carefully divides joint from joint, lest a bone should be broken. And he is particular that the smallest child of the family should have some of it to eat, for so the Lord has commanded. Do you not think you see him as he tells them, "It is a solemn night—make haste—in another hour we shall all go out of Egypt." He looks at his hands, they are rough with labor. Clapping them, he cries, "I am not to be a slave any longer!"

His eldest son, perhaps, has been smarting under the lash and he says, "Son, you have had the task-master's lash upon you this afternoon. But it is the last time you shall feel it." He looks at them all, with tears in his eyes—"This is the night the Lord God will deliver you." Do you see them with their hats on their heads, with their loins girt and their staves in their hands? It is the dead of the night. Suddenly they hear a shriek! The father says, "Keep within doors, my children. You will know what it is in a moment." Now another shriek—another shriek—shriek succeeds shriek—they hear perpetual wailing and lamentation! "Remain within," he says, "the Angel of Death is flying abroad." A solemn silence is in the room and they can almost hear the wings of the angel flap in the air as he passes their blood-marked door. "Be calm," says the sire, "that blood will save you." The shrieking increases. Eat quickly, my children," he says again. And in a moment the Egyptians coming, say, "Get out of here! Get out of here! We care not for the jewels that you have borrowed. You have brought death into our houses." "Oh," says a mother, "Go! For God's sake, go! My eldest son lies dead!" "Go!" says a father "Go! And peace go with you. It were an ill day when your people came into Egypt and our king began to slay your first-born, for God is punishing us for our cruelty." Ah, see them leaving the land. The shrieks are still heard. The people are busy about their dead. As they go out, a son of Pharaoh is taken away unembalmed, to be buried in one of the pyramids. Presently they see one of their task-master's sons taken away. A happy night for them—when they escape! And do you see, my Hearers, a glorious parallel? They had to sprinkle the blood and also to eat the lamb. Ah, my Soul, have you ever had the blood sprinkled on you? Can you say that Jesus Christ is yours? It is not enough to say, "He loved the world and gave His Son," you must say, "He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*." There is another hour coming, dear Friends, when we shall all stand before God's bar. And then God will say, "Angel of Death, you once did smite Egypt's first-born. You know your prey. Unsheathe your sword." I behold the great gathering. You and I are standing among them. It is a solemn moment. All men stand in suspense. There is neither hum nor murmur. The very stars cease to shine lest the light should disturb the air by its motion! All is still. God says, "Have you sealed those that are

Mine?" "I have," says Gabriel, "they are sealed by blood, every one of them." Then He next says, "Sweep with your sword of slaughter! Sweep the Earth! And send the unclothed, the unpurchased, the unwashed ones to the pit of Hell." Oh, how shall we feel, Beloved, when for a moment we see that angel flap his wings? He is just about to fly. "But," will the doubt cross our minds, "perhaps he will come to me"? Oh, no! We shall stand and look the angel full in his face—

***"Bold shall I stand in that great day!
For who anything to my charge shall lay?
While through Your blood absolved I am
From sin's tremendous curse and shame."***

If we have the blood on us, we shall see the angel coming and we shall smile at him. We shall dare to come even to God's face and say—

"Great God! I'm clean! Through Jesus' blood, I'm clean!"

But, my Hearer, if your unwashed spirit shall stand before its Maker. If your guilty soul shall appear with all its black spots upon it, unsprinkled with the purple tide—how will you speak when you see the flash from the scabbard—the angel's sword swift for death and winged for destruction when it shall cleave you asunder? I think I see you standing now. The angel is sweeping away a thousand there. There is one of your pot companions. There one with whom you did dance and swear. There another, who after attending the same Chapel, like you, was a despiser of religion! Now Death comes nearer to you, just as when the reaper sweeps the field and the next ear trembles because its turn shall come next. I see a brother and a sister swept into the pit of Hell! Have I no blood upon me? Then, O rocks, it were kind of you to hide me! You have no benevolence in your arms. Mountains, let me find in your caverns some little shelter! But it is all in vain, for vengeance shall cleave the mountains and split the rocks open to find me out! Have I no blood? Have I no hope? Ah, no! He smites me. Eternal damnation is my horrible portion! The depth of the darkness of Egypt for you and the horrible torments of the pit of Hell from which none can escape! Ah, my dear Hearers, could I preach as I could wish, could I speak to you without my lips and with my heart, then would I bid you seek that sprinkled blood and urge you, by the love of your own soul—by everything that is sacred and eternal—to labor to get this blood of Jesus sprinkled on your souls. It is the blood sprinkled that saves a sinner!

But when the Christian gets the blood sprinkled, that is not all he needs. *He needs something to feed upon.* And, O sweet thought! Jesus Christ is not only a Savior for sinners, but He is food for them after they are saved! The Paschal Lamb by faith we eat. We live on it. You may tell, my Hearers, whether you have the blood sprinkled on the door by this—do you eat the Lamb? Suppose for a moment that one of the old Jews had said in his heart, "I do not see the use of this feasting. It is quite right to sprinkle the blood on the lintel or else the door will not be known. But what good is all this inside? We will have the lamb prepared

and we will not break his bones but we will not eat of it.” And suppose he went and stored the lamb away. What would have been the consequence? Why, the Angel of Death would have smitten Him as well as the rest, even if the blood had been upon him! And if, moreover, that old Jew had said, “There, we will have a little piece of it. But we will have something else to eat, we will have some unleavened bread. We will not turn the leaven out of our houses but we will have some leavened bread.” If they had not consumed the lamb but had reserved some of it, then the sword of the angel would have found the heart out as well as that of any other man! Oh, dear Hearer, you may think you have the blood sprinkled. You may think you are just. But if you do not live *on* Christ as well as *by* Christ, you will never be saved by the Paschal Lamb! “Ah,” say some, “we know nothing of this.” Of course you don’t. When Jesus Christ said, “except you eat My flesh and drink My blood, you have no life in you,” there were some that said, “this is a hard saying, who can bear it?” And many from that time went back—and walked no more with Him. They could not understand Him. But, Christian, do you not understand it? Is not Jesus Christ your daily food? And even with the bitter herbs, is He not sweet food? Some of you, my Friends, who are true Christians, live too much on your changing frames and feelings, on your experiences and evidences. Now, that is all wrong! That is just as if a worshipper had gone to the tabernacle and began eating one of the coats that were worn by the priest. When a man lives on Christ’s righteousness it is the same as eating Christ’s garment. When a man lives on his frames and feelings, that is as much as if the child of God should live on some tokens that he received in the sanctuary that never were meant for food, but only to comfort him a little. What the Christian lives on is *not* Christ’s righteousness, but CHRIST! He does not live on Christ’s pardon, but on Christ! And on Christ he lives daily! Oh, I do love Christ-preaching. It is not the Doctrine of Justification that does my heart good, it is Christ, the Justifier! It is not pardon that so much makes the Christian’s heart rejoice, as it is Christ the Pardoner. It is not election that I love half as much as my being chosen in Christ before worlds began! Yes, it is not Final Perseverance that I love as much as the thought that in Christ my life is hid and that since He gives unto His sheep, eternal life, they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of His hand! Take care, Christian, to eat the Paschal Lamb and nothing else. I tell you Man, if you eat that, alone, it will be like bread to you—your soul’s best food! If you live on anything else but the Savior, you are like one who seeks to live on some weed that grows in the desert, instead of eating the manna that comes down from Heaven! Jesus is the manna! *In* Jesus as well as *by* Jesus we live. Now, dear Friends, in coming to this Table, we will keep the Paschal Supper. Once more, by faith, we will eat the Lamb. By holy trust we will come to a crucified Savior and feed on His blood.

And now, in concluding, let me ask you, are you hoping to be saved, my Friends? One says, “Well, I don’t hardly know. I hope to be saved, but

I do not know how.” Do you think I tell you a fiction when I tell you that people are hoping to be saved by works? It is not so, it is a reality! In traveling through the country, I meet with all sorts of characters, but most frequently with self-righteous persons. How often do I meet with a man who thinks himself quite godly because he attends church once on a Sunday and who thinks himself quite righteous because he belongs to the Establishment. As a Churchman [Church of England member] said to me the other day, “I am a rigid Churchman.” “I am glad of that,” I said to him, “because then you are a Calvinist, if you hold the ‘Articles’.” He replied “I don’t know about the ‘Articles,’ I go more by the ‘Rubric’.” And so I thought he was more of a formalist than a Christian! There are many persons like that in the world. Another says, “I believe I shall be saved. I don’t owe anybody anything. I have never been a bankrupt. I pay everybody twenty shillings in the pound. I never get drunk. And if I wrong anybody at any time, I try to make up for it by giving a pound a year to such-and-such a Society. I am as religious as most people. And I believe I shall be saved.” That will not do! It is as if some old Jew had said, “We don’t want the blood on the lintel, we have got a mahogany lintel. We don’t want the blood on the doorpost, we have a mahogany doorpost.” Ah, whatever it was, the angel would have smitten it, if it had not had the blood upon it! You may be as righteous as you like—if you have not the blood sprinkled—all the goodness of your doorposts and lintels will be of no avail whatever.

“Yes,” says another, “I am not trusting exactly there. I believe it is my duty to be as good as I can. But then I think Jesus Christ’s mercy will make up the rest. I try to be as righteous as circumstances will allow and I believe that whatever deficiencies there may be, Christ will make them up.” That is as if a Jew had said, “Child, bring me the blood,” and then when that was brought, he had said, “bring me a pitcher of water.” And then he had taken it and mixed it together and sprinkled the doorpost with it. Why the angel would have smitten him as well as anyone else, for it is *blood, blood, blood, blood* that saves! It is not blood mixed with the water of our poor works. It is *blood, blood, blood, blood* and nothing else! And the only way of salvation is by blood! For, without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Have precious blood sprinkled upon you, my Hearers. Trust in precious blood! Let your hope be in a salvation sealed with an Atonement of precious blood and you are saved! But having no blood, or having blood mixed with anything else, you are damned as you are alive—for the angel shall slay you, however good and righteous you may be! Go home, then and think of this—“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

A MARVELOUS CHANGE NO. 2661

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1900.

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 7, 1882.*

***“Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”
1 Corinthians 6:9-11.***

THE Gospel is as holy as the Law. The Gospel is full of mercy to sinners, but it shows no mercy to sin. The Gospel speaks most tenderly to the ungodly, but it speaks most sternly to ungodliness. There is a great difference made, in the New Testament, between the sinner and the sin. And while the sinner is, in Infinite mercy, spared, encouraged to hope, and wooed by almighty love, sin is denounced as a dreadful thing, an abominable thing which God hates and must punish.

Ah, dear Friends, it is not from Sinai, alone, that we have need to shrink if we are lovers of sin, for, if we are resolved to keep on sinning, Calvary also condemns us and, at last, even from the lips of Jesus Christ, Himself, willful sinners, continuing in their sin, shall hear the awful sentence, “Depart from Me, you that work iniquity.” Let no man say, when we proclaim God’s message of mercy to the very chief of sinners, that, therefore, we think lightly of sin! No, it is because of the shedding of the precious blood of Him whom we call Master and Lord, without whose agonizing death not a single sin could ever have been put away, that we are able to freely preach the mercy of God to those who truly repent of their transgressions. But, at the same time, we never hesitate to declare in the plainest possible terms, that God will not spare the guilty ones who refuse to repent, for only through the blood of His dear Son will He have mercy upon the ungodly sons and daughters of men, who turn unto Him, with full purpose of heart, trusting in the great atoning Sacrifice of Jesus!

The highest standard of holiness is set forth under the Gospel. It does not come to cut down the requirements of the Law and to say, “You cannot keep the perfect Law of the Lord, but do the best you can and that will suffice.” There is nothing like that in the New Testament! It does not

come to men and say, in a tone of pity, "You are poor ignorant creatures who have unwittingly fallen into sin and, therefore, there is no guilt in your transgression of the Law of God." Nothing of the kind, for even when our Savior, on the Cross, said, concerning His mockers and murderers, "they know not what they do," He prayed, "Father, forgive them," thereby plainly declaring that they were sinners who needed to be forgiven, even though their transgression was a sin of ignorance!

That is the short preface to the discourse I am now to deliver, which will be divided into three parts, the first of which will show us that we have, here, *a solemn sentence*—a sentence shutting the guilty and unrepentant out of the Kingdom of God. Then, secondly, here is a *reminder to some of us*—"and such were some of you." And, then, thirdly, here is *a change spoken of*—"but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

I. Now, Beloved, first of all, here is A SOLEMN SENTENCE. "Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God?" Oh, While I speak of it, pray God, in Infinite mercy, to carry home the words I say to any who are guilty of either or all the sins in this black and shameful list!

"Be not deceived: neither fornicators shall inherit the Kingdom of God." That is the first set of sinners mentioned in this terrible catalogue—"fornicators"—men and women who have been guilty of unchastity with those who are unmarried. Not necessarily in the bonds of wedlock should we all be, but always in the bonds of purity. And those who sin against that which is pure, in their relations with one another, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Nothing could be more explicit than this Inspired declaration of the Apostle. If any persons live in lust and uncleanness, God will not permit them to defile His true Church on earth, or to profane His Temple above. It is quite possible that I may be speaking to some people upon whose ears this message grates very harshly—for all sorts of hearers come to this place—and they will be the first to say, "The preacher should not mention such a subject." My answer to that remark is, Then you should not commit such iniquity and give me cause to speak of it! As long as there are sinners of this character in the world, there must be servants of the Lord Jesus Christ faithful enough to pluck the velvet from their mouths and to speak with the utmost plainness about them and to them! Let there be no mistake concerning this matter—you cannot be Christians if you thus defile yourselves. You cannot be children of God and live in filthy sin. It must not—it cannot be—and God here, by the pen of the Apostle Paul, *excommunicates all who pretend to be members of His Church* and yet are guilty of the sin of fornication.

Strange to say, in the very next place stands idolatry, that is, the worshipping of any god other than the true and living Jehovah, the God of the whole earth. All through the Old Testament the Lord calls this sin of idolatry by the name of fornication, because it is the turning away of that love which ought to be fixed upon the one and only God, and giving it to

those that are not gods, and so defiling the heart and sinning against God. “Oh,” says one, there are no idolaters here!” I greatly fear that there are, for idolatry is not merely the worship of images made of stone, or wood, or gods of gold, or crucifixes, or pictures of the Virgin Mary—*though all that is idolatry*—but it is also the worship of that dear child you have at home, of whom you make an idol. Or it is the worship of the Queen’s image on gold and silver pieces by those who live only to amass worldly wealth. Or it may be even the worship of yourself! The Apostle tells us of a very low form of idolatry when he writes concerning those “whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” There are far too many of such idolaters as these still about, all around us, and our text declares that they “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.”

As to adulterers, whom the Apostle next mentions, I need not say much, but, alas, there are still many such sinners and they are found not only among the poor, but perhaps even more among those who can afford to pay for divorces, dispensations and indulgences to vice. Oh, horrible and terrible in this country, as well as in other lands, is the prevalence of this filthy sin! If there are any persons here who have made a profession of religion and yet who have fallen into this guilt and crime of adultery, let me read this solemn sentence of my text to you without mincing matters in the least, or toning down the severity of the Inspired language—you “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” Unless you hate and abhor this shameful sin—and flee from it, as from a poisonous serpent—you can never come into that Kingdom where Christ is—neither in the Kingdom of His Grace, nor in the Kingdom of His Glory can you ever have any inheritance, for, as Dr. Watts sings—

***“Pure are the joys above the sky,
And all the region peace!
No wanton lip nor envious eye
Can see or taste the bliss.
Those holy gates forever bar
Pollution, sin and shame—
None shall obtain admittance there
But followers of the Lamb.”***

I dare not explain to you what is meant by the next expression used by the Apostle—“nor effeminate”—but, alas, alas, there are still to be found all too many who are altogether given up to sinful practices, and who go from one form of vice to another, secretly ruining themselves both in body and in soul for time and for eternity! These are also among those who “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” So are those whom the Apostle next describes—“nor abusers of themselves with mankind.” Would God that this accursed vice had been swept off the face of the earth, as God did sweep it away when He rained brimstone and fire from Heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah and destroyed the guilty inhabitants of the cities of the plain!

Next to these great sinners, whom the Apostle mentions, come “thieves.” There are still far too many of them in the world—not merely

those who are brought before the magistrates for having broken into a house, or having robbed a person in the street. But those who steal little things—peculators, servants in the house who take what is not their own! And men who do dishonest things in trade, calling an article in their shop by a name that is not its proper description—and so cheating their customers and getting their living by their lies. These are also among those who “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” You do not like to hear me talk about such matters? Then do not continue to sin in this fashion. I shall cease to rebuke the sin when it has been abandoned, but, as long as such evils abound, it is my duty, as the servant of the living God, to declare plainly that the continuance in dishonest actions is not consistent with being in the Kingdom of God’s Grace and it will effectually close the gate of the Kingdom of His Glory. Dr. Watts was right when he wrote—

***“Not the malicious or profane,
The wanton or the proud,
Nor thieves, nor slanderers shall obtain
The Kingdom of our God.”***

Then, next, the Apostle says, “nor covetous.” It is a strange thing that hardly anybody ever admits that he is covetous. Such a person calls himself, “Mr. Prudent Thrifty.” Mr. Covetous tries to make us believe that he is only thrifty and prudent, both excellent qualities which are not to be condemned! But he is really greedy and grasping, which are quite different. He denies help to the poor and help to the work of God—all he cares for is himself, that he may be rich. It is very significant that the covetous are put in the same list with fornicators and adulterers. Oh, dear, how quickly Mr. Covetous would move out of the seat if he thought that there were any such people as those about! But, my dear Sir, you need not be so particular, or think so much of yourself, for, in the sight of God, you are in the same condition as they are and you, also, are among those who “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God” unless you repent of your sin!

“Nor drunkards,” says the Apostle. We know that in the Church at Corinth there were some who were so degraded that they were actually drunk at the Lord’s Table. We hope there are no professing Christians, nowadays, of so low a type as that, though we know that there are still some who have named the name of Christ who are rightly called by that terrible name, “drunkards.” And we also know that outside the nominal Church, there are multitudes to whom that title belongs. Drunkenness is one of the most debasing of sins—it lowers the whole tone of the person who is held in bondage by it. We sometimes talk of a man being “as drunk as a beast,” but whoever heard of a beast being drunk? Why, it is more beastly than anything a beast ever does! I do not believe that the devil himself is ever guilty of anything like that. I never heard even him charged with being drunk! It is a sin which has no sort of excuse—those who fall into it generally fall into other deadly vices. It is the devil’s backdoor to Hell and everything that is hellish, for he that once gives away his brains to drink is ready to be caught by Satan for anything.

Oh, but while the drunkard cannot have eternal life abiding in him while he is such, is it not a joy to think of the many drunkards who have been washed and saved? This night, there are sitting here, those who have done with their cups, who have left behind them their strong drink and who have renounced the haunts of their debauchery. They are washed and cleansed—and when they think of the contrast between where they used to spend their evenings, and where they now are, they give echo to the question—“Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?”

After the drunkards, the Apostle says, “nor revilers”—those who gossip and slander, pulling other people’s characters to pieces. Or those who revile the saints and the things of God, profane swearers, who constantly add oaths to anything they have to say, those who cannot let the godly man’s character alone. All such as these “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” And, alas, there are thousands and tens of thousands of them even in this so-called Christian country!

And then, to close the black list, the Apostle writes, “nor extortioners”—the men who demand usurious interest, those who prey upon the poor while they pretend that they are going to be their helpers. They have a certain sum of money to lend and they are willing to lend it out of pure benevolence. But, when any fall into their clutches, they pick their bones and suck their blood before they have done with them. Woe unto the men who grind the poor and rob another of anything that is justly his due! Of all these people, the Apostle truly says that they “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” No, not merely does the Apostle say it, but the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of His servant Paul! He whose word is faithful and true—He who knows what the Truth of God is, declares that all such persons as these whom the Apostle has been describing are not partakers of Divine Grace—they are not subjects of King Jesus and into His glorious Kingdom they can never come except they repent of their sins and turn unto the Lord with godly sorrow and genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

So much for that part of our subject. May God make these solemn and faithful words to be like arrows from the bow of a mighty man!

II. But secondly, in our text we also have A REMINDER TO SOME OF US—“and such were some of you.”

The Apostle does not say, “and such were all of you,” and I thank God that I have not to say that to you, my Hearers. Oh, what a mercy it is for any of us to have been kept from those terrible sins! Yet, with the Apostle, I can say, “and such were some of you.” Those vices and evils were so common in Corinth that it was a great glory to God that He had taken some of these people who had formerly committed them, and had made Christians of them! “Such were some of you.”

Now, will you, dear Friends, look at the first part of our text and, as you run your eyes down the black list, put your finger upon the points where you were guilty—and then say to yourself, “Yes, it is true, such was I, before the Lord saved me by His Grace. That, or that, or that was my grievous offense against Him.” “Such were some of you.” Then let me

ask you, my Brothers and Sisters, to consider why it is that God is pleased to save some of the worst of sinners so that, in the Church of Christ, it can always be said, "*such were some of you*"?

First, *it illustrates the great power of the Gospel*. If nobody were saved except the better sort of people, who have never openly offended, then the quibbler would say to us, "That is a very poor religion of yours! It is suitable for the moral, the sober and the chaste, but what good is it to a poor fallen world where there are so many real sinners of the blackest dye?" But the Lord seems to have said, "I will stretch out My hand and I will save some of the very chief of sinners, in order that, throughout all time, it may be known that My Gospel can effect the salvation of all sorts of sinners, even the most degraded. However depraved and fallen they may be, they cannot have gone beyond the reach of the Gospel of My Son." Is not that a glorious fact? Oh, when I think of some of you big sinners whom the Lord has saved under my ministry, I stand on this platform and, with the utmost confidence, cry to the guiltiest sinners who may be present—"Come along with me, whoever you may be! I have a Gospel that is just suited to you." I can say, "Come, you who are moral and refined, who have never gone into any gross sin, here is a Gospel just suitable for you!" But I am also glad to be able to add, "Come along, you who have raked the very kennels of Hell with your iniquities—here is that which can wash you and make you white as the newly-fallen snow!"

That, I believe, is one reason why the Lord saves these great sinners—to glorify His Gospel.

Next, He does it to magnify His mercy, for when, in great tenderness, He comes to look upon sin as a disease, then, the worse the disease, the more is His pity! I remember reading of one who was giving some relief to a dumb man and his companion said to him, "Why, he never asked anything of you!" "No," he answered, "but his dumb lips asked of me more eloquently than any man could have done by speaking." Look at the blind man. He cannot affect you with his eyes, for he has none, but it is the absence of his eyes that makes you stop and say to him, "Poor blind man, I am so sorry for you, here's a trifle to help you." The crafty beggars in the streets will often show their sham sores and imitation wounds in order to provoke your pity. But our great God, when He sees us really full of sin—leprous, foul, corrupted—then He says, "Poor Soul, I will have pity upon you." It is in this way that He looks upon these greatly-diseased ones and blesses some of them on purpose that the majesty of His mercy and the Omnipotence of His Grace may be plainly seen by the sons of men!

I am sure that He does it, also, to confound self-righteousness. I have heard this kind of remark again and again, "If God saves anybody, it ought to be those of us who always go to a place of worship and listen so attentively to the preacher." Ah, yes, you proud sinner! I know what you think, but I must remind you that there is no sin worse than pride, the one you are evidently full of! "Oh, but," someone says, "I have always been seeking and striving to be as good as I could, and yet I am not

saved. But over there is a poor fallen girl, just rescued from the streets, who has believed in Christ and is now rejoicing in Him.” I can easily explain why you are not saved—it is because you say that you see and, therefore, you prove that you are blind! You think you are righteous and that thought is, itself, the very essence of unrighteousness! I pray you notice how the Lord rebukes you and to learn, from His rebuke, where your sin lies. He does, as it were, smite your pride on the cheekbone, and He says, “Because you say that you do not need a Savior, you shall not have a Savior. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners unto repentance.” Come down off your lofty pinnacle, Mr. Pharisee—you who thank God that you are not as other men are! Stand side by side with the poor publican whom you have despised, and cry, as he does, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” And then see if God will not deal in mercy with you, also!

I am sure, too, that God saves some of these very black sinners on purpose *to encourage the preachers of His Gospel*. I will tell you a secret. We ministers are often a very faint-hearted set of men. And if we do not have a great many converts, we go crying to our Master, “Who has believed our report?” And, while we are doing it, in comes one who has been a drunkard, or an unchaste person, or a thief, and we hear what God has done for him by our poor feeble ministry—and we shake his hand. Then he cries, and we cry—and we do not know which is the bigger sinner of the two—he for his open iniquity, or we for our unbelief! I know that when I meet with such converts, I say, “Bless God for them! When I get into the pulpit again, I will give the people some more of that same Gospel, for I see that what it has done for them, it can do for others!” Oh, yes, they may empty the prisons if they like, and let all the criminals in them come to hear the Gospel! We have a Christ to preach who is more than a match for the very worst of them! And even if there should come one whose heart had been turned into thrice-hardened steel, this Gospel would be able to melt it and, behind it, there is the Christ who can take the hard heart away and give in its place the heart of flesh, full of tenderness and full of love to Himself and to saints and sinners, too! Oh, yes, God often encourages His servants by fetching out from among the ungodly some of these great black sinners, washing them whiter than snow in the precious blood of Jesus and bringing them into His Kingdom on earth, in anticipation of the time when they shall be received into His Kingdom above!

Further, by this means, He also *encourages other great sinners to come to Him*. I have known a man who said, “I fear that I cannot be saved, for I have been such a terribly great sinner.” But, one day he has met one of his old companions who used to swear, drink and lie. And finding him to be saved, he said to himself, “Oh, then, I also might be saved!” I once knew a poor fellow who was very much distressed in spirit because he thought there was no pardon that could ever come to him. But he went into a chapel one morning when a little Prayer Meeting was being held before the service, and there was a certain old sea captain praying with

such a tremendous voice that the man thought, "I must surely have seen and heard that man somewhere else."

When the prayer was ended and he saw the man's face, he said to himself, "Why, that is Captain So-and-So! Six months ago my very blood ran cold as I listened to his blasphemy! I never heard a man swear as he did and I never before heard a man pray as he now does!" And then he added, "God can save me, now that He has saved him, for I am sure that, great sinner as I have been, I never went his length in blaspheming my Maker."

There was good ground for that man's conclusion and many other people have argued in a similar fashion. It has frequently been the case that the big sinner has become a kind of decoy. He is caught first in the blessed Gospel net and then he allures others to come in with him! Very often those who had not the courage to go to Jesus, before, say, when they see how He welcomes some out-and-out profligate, "Well, as He has received him, why should He not also receive me?"

You know how Bunyan relates that when he was converted and began to preach, people said, "What? Is that tinker saved?" And they gathered together to hear what he had to say—and then he preached to them, Jesus the Savior, and there were more tinkers that got tinkered that day! No, not tinkered, but *made new creatures* in Christ Jesus! Christ finds it easier work to make us anew than to mend us—and that is what we really need to have done to us. If any of you are thinking of being mended tonight by signing the pledge, [This sermon was delivered at the service in the Tabernacle which was followed by a public meeting in connection with the Gospel Temperance Mission held there in September, 1882] well, I am glad to see old kettles repaired, but, for all that, I would rather that you were made new kettles altogether!

That is to say, I pray God to take you in hand and make you new creatures in Christ Jesus, for that is what we are aiming at in all these Gospel Temperance services—and we shall not be satisfied unless that great work is accomplished!

I want to tell you one more thing about the salvation of these great sinners. I believe that the Lord saves them in order *that He may win from them great love, intense zeal and much earnestness*. If a man, with a cut finger, calls on a doctor, the surgeon says, "Oh, yes, I see! Put this piece of plaster on and it will be all right in a day or two." And so it is. He had not much the matter with him, so there was not much to be said when his finger was healed. But here is a man who can hardly breath. He is on the very borders of the grave. He will be dead in a week unless something extraordinary happens to him. He has been to scores of doctors and they all say, "It is no use to give you any medicine, for nothing will ever cure you—you will soon die," But he hears of a physician who has been the means of healing other sick folk in just such a plight as his. He calls him in and the doctor says to him, "If you take this remedy, you will recover." And so he does. In a month's time, that man is walking about, breathing the fresh air, and he is soon going to work again. Will he talk about the

wonderful physician who cured him? Won't he talk about him? Why, there is no stopping him when once he begins on that topic! To every friend whom he meets, he says, "Do you see what a difference there is in me? You remember how my bones were almost sticking through my skin? It was as much as ever I could do to keep on breathing, but just look at me now, I have every hope of living on, perhaps for 20 or 30 more years!" Possibly a man who is suffering from neuralgia comes to see him, and he says, "I am not sure whether my doctor treats such a slight ailment as that—I almost wish you were in a consumption like mine was, for he would cure you as he healed me."

Is it not so with regard to the diseases of the body and gratitude to the man who cures them? Well, in like manner, when the Lord saves a great big sinner, oh, how that sinner will love Him and how he will talk about Him to other sinners! There is a common saying among game preservers, that an old poacher makes the best game warden. He is the man to catch all other poachers when they come, for he knows, from his own experience, all their ways. "Set a thief to catch a thief," is a similar proverbial expression which teaches the same lesson. A woman who has been brought up out of great sin, into the paths of virtue and honor, is the one who will rejoice in rescuing others from a life of sin and shame. If you find a man who has been permitted to know the depths of sin, he is the one who will delight to go and seek after those who are sinking in the terrible flood.

In the Providence of God I was never allowed to plunge into gross open sin, yet the Lord made me to feel myself to be the worst sinner who ever lived. I had such a vivid realization of my own guilt that I thought there never was another individual who had broken God's Law as I had—and when He pardoned me, I felt that there was no one who owed more to Him than I did. People say that I preached Calvinistic doctrine from the very first. I know I preached Free Grace and that I must and will proclaim until I die, for I should have been damned in Hell, years ago, if it had not been for the freest, richest and mightiest Grace that ever came from the heart of God! And, oh, I do love to tell you big black sinners that He can forgive your grossest sin and cleanse you from your worst wickedness—that He waits to do this for all who will come and put their trust in His dear Son! And that very trust He *gives them by the effectual working of His Spirit*. Salvation is all of Grace from first to last and, as it is all of Grace, the greater the sinner who is saved by it, the more glory to the Grace that saves him!

III. My time has gone, but I must say just a little about the third point, that is, THE MARVELOUS CHANGE.

Oh, that I knew how to preach upon this theme! I never feel my own weakness so much as when I stand here to plead with unconverted men to yield to the Savior! If any man thinks that he can preach, let him come and try it, if by preaching he means affecting the hearts of men and bringing them to God. This must be the work of the Holy Spirit and, whatever we may do, nothing comes of it until He works the great mira-

cle! We go back home and say, “Who has believed our report?” until the arm of the Lord is revealed and then men are saved.

Now, turning to this last part of our text—“and such were some of you: but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” I will endeavor briefly to set all these things before you as best I can. The Lord knows how much better I would do it if it were in my power to do it. But, after all, it is not my language which is the important matter—it is the power of the Truth of God I utter on which I rest. Nor yet even upon that, but on the wonder-working Spirit of God who can effectually apply that Truth of God to the heart, and make it anew by His Omnipotent Grace—

**“Come, Holy Spirit, (for, moved by You,
The Prophets wrote and spoke)
Unlock the Truth, Yourself the Key,
Unseal the sacred Book!
God, through Himself, we then shall know,
If You within us shine
And sound, with all Your saints below,
The depths of love Divine.”**

“And such were some of you.” Where are you—dear members of this church, or of other churches of whom this is true—“and such were some of you”? “But you are washed.” The High Churchman says that this means Baptism. Does it? I have seen some people washed by Baptism—I do not mean sprinkled, for I never could see how anyone could be washed in that way. But when we have immersed them, know this—that an unregenerate person, even after immersion is unregenerate still! And that a man who is not a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ before he is baptized, has need to be baptized again, for it is not really Scriptural Baptism to him—and it cannot be a means of blessing to him. It may be a piece of hypocrisy on his part and of no value to those who practice it. No, no! That is *not* the washing of which Paul writes! And Baptism, repeated ten thousand times, can do you no good whatever unless, first of all, you are washed in another fountain of which we often sing. Let us sing about it, now, all of us who know the verse—

**“There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.”**

[This verse was accordingly sung by the congregation, and then MR. SPURGEON resumed and concluded his sermon.] That is the washing of which the Apostle says, “but you are washed,” and after that washing comes the sanctifying, that is, the changing of the heart and the making of the whole nature holy! And that is the work of the Spirit of God, by the application of the Word of Christ.

And then follows the justification. Pardon washes away our sin. Justification makes us righteous in the sight of God and sanctification gives us true holiness. Justification gives us imputed holiness, so that we stand before God, first in the righteousness which Christ has worked out for us—and next in the righteousness which the Spirit of God has

worked in us. Oh, what a marvelous change is worked as the result of that one act of blessed washing!

Now, to close, let me say that if you would be saved, this is the one thing for you to do—believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not trust in anything else whatever, but rely alone upon Him. Trust in Christ to make you hate sin. Trust in Christ to enable you to overcome every bad habit. Trust in Christ to help you to do everything that is right. Trust in Christ to cause you to stand fast even till you get to Heaven. “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life”—not, “he shall be saved tomorrow, or ten years hence”—he is saved *now*, on the spot! If you have only trusted in Christ since last that clock ticked, you are forgiven, you are a child of God, you are accepted in the Beloved, you are saved! It is an instantaneous, an immediate, but a perfect work—this washing away of sin—and this giving to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The Lord grant it to each one of you, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-14.**

Verse 1. *Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?* In those days, the courts of law were utterly unjust. It was all a matter of who could bribe the most, for he would gain the suit. I think that we cannot say that it is quite like this at the present time in our law courts, neither can this verse be strictly a rule for the guidance of men in these days, except that, in the spirit of Paul’s words, *all lawsuits among Christians should be avoided if possible.*

2, 3. *Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know you not that we shall judge angels?* Sitting with Christ, at the last great day of judgment, we shall give our, “Amen,” to the condemnation of the fallen spirits.

3, 4. *How much more things that pertain to this life? If then you have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.* For they will be better judges than the best of worldly men! Do you set such people to judge your difficult matters? And if you do not, then why do you go to those who are even worse qualified to give a right decision?

5-11. *I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? No, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goes to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because you go to law one with another. Why do you not rather take wrong? Why do you not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? No, you do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor*

thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortionists shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And such were some of you. They were Corinthians and some of them had fallen into the same sad and shameful condition as the rest of the inhabitants of Corinth. Many of them had been fetched, by almighty Grace, out of the very depths of the grossest sin, so that Paul, after giving a list of the blackest sinners, could add, “and such were some of you.”

11, 12. *But you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.* There are some things that I may do. That is, I have the liberty to do them if I please. But I must also consider whether they are expedient, or whether they will damage others and do mischief to them. And, if so, it will be better for me not to do them because they are not expedient, even though they are lawful.

12, 13. *All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them.* So, on the one hand, do not make too much of abstaining from this or that, for these things, after all, are but small matters to glory in. But, on the other hand, let no man ever call himself a Christian while he is a slave to any evil habit. What does Paul say? “God shall destroy both it and them.” In the previous verse, he says, “I will not be brought under the power of any.” The immortal spirit under the power of materialism? No, that must never be!

13, 14. *Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God has both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power.* Our bodies belong to Him! Therefore, let us think highly of them and never do anything to injure them and, especially, let us take care never to let them become instruments of iniquity to the grieving of the blessed Spirit of God.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 550, 551.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY
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THE SAINT ONE WITH HIS SAVIOR NO. 961

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 20, 1870,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."
1 Corinthians 6:17.*

THE connection of our text is very terrible. When we are reading the sixteenth verse one seems to remember Sodom, its infamy, and the fire and brimstone that came down from Heaven upon it. But here in our text we enter into Jerusalem, the holy city, whose streets are of purity so rich and rare as to be comparable to gold clear as transparent glass. And there we seem to behold the Great White Throne of the thrice Holy, surrounded by the white robed bands of the immaculate. In looking at the text I call to mind John Bunyan's description of the way through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. It was an "exceedingly narrow" path, not readily kept. On the right hand the dreadful gulf, and on the left the fearful quagmire.

See in my text a road fit for angels, and for the angels' Master, and yet on either hand, in the sixteenth and eighteenth verses behold the fiends and devils howling for their prey! Happy is he who finds that path which the eagle's eye has not seen, that center of the King's highway of which it is written, "No lion shall be there, neither shall any ravenous beast go up thereon." How glorious is that "way of holiness"! Gaze on it—it is clear as the sapphire, bright as the brilliant crystal. Deep down in its depths your eyes may look, and in it there is nothing to obscure, it is as the holiness of God Himself, a purity so wonderful that conscious of our shortcomings we cry, "It is high, I cannot attain unto it."

The exceeding elevation of the Believer in being joined unto the Lord appears all the more marvelous when it is set, as in the text, in contrast with the dreadful impurity into which we *might* have fallen, and against which we are still solemnly warned, as if to remind us that our indwelling corruption would drag us down if Divine Grace did not prevent it. Brethren, sin is never seen to be so truly horrible as when we behold it in the light of Christian privilege. It is a terrible thing for a creature to rebel against its Creator, but for the adopted son of God to be disobedient to his ever loving Father, this is worse by far.

Sin is black if we see it in the dim twilight of spiritual conviction when our conscience is half awakened, but it grows blacker than Hell's murkiest midnight when we set it in contrast with the amazing brightness of the Divine favor which has shone upon us, His elect—redeemed, justified, and adopted people. That yonder professor should be so careless and so inconsistent is sad, but when I remind him that he is one of the redeemed I trust he will feel his lukewarmness to be monstrous. When man is chosen of God and washed in the Savior's blood, must it not seem to angels a prodigy of human depravity, a marvel of human corruption, that such a

one should for a moment forget the way of holiness and desire the paths of iniquity?

In ourselves how heinous is all transgression, seeing we have been the objects of such ceaseless, boundless, loving kindness! For us to follow afar off, to backslide, to grow indifferent is indescribable baseness, a violation of the sacred demands of gratitude. If the more frequent sins of Christians appear thus heinous in contrast with their great privileges, much more loathsome must be vices of the fouler kind, such as Paul here speaks of—sins not to be named among us, or even thought of without horror. God forbid that any of us who claim to be of the body of Christ should degrade ourselves by filthy lusts of the flesh.

Casting a veil over the matter forbidden, not that we may forget it altogether, but may turn our eyes away from beholding vanity, we shall now endeavor to conduct you to the elevated platform of the text itself. I see in it, first, a mysterious deep which I cannot fathom. And, therefore, in the second place, we will sail across it while we speak of a manifest Grace which glistens on its surface.

I. First, then, there is in the text A MYSTERIOUS DEEP. “He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” What does that joining to the Lord mean which is mentioned here? There is a joining to the Lord in election. We were chosen in Christ Jesus from before the foundation of the world, and by Sovereign Love we were predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ. There was a further joining to the Lord in Covenant, when Jesus became of old the Head of His Church. As Adam was the head of all that came of his loins, so is Christ the Head of a spiritual seed to whom the promise belongs by the Everlasting Covenant signed, sealed, and ordered in all things and sure.

Further, Christ was joined to us when He took upon Himself our Nature. When He came into this world and was made a Man, then He was truly joined to us. He left His Father, and was joined unto His bride, and they two became one flesh. “For both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them Brethren.” He was one with us in Nature, one in our sufferings, one in our life and death, one, too, in bearing our curse, taking upon Himself our sin. All this makes up a glorious joining unto the Lord—but it is not the doctrine taught here—for all that are joined to Christ in the Divine purpose are not yet made of one spirit with Him, for many of them are still living in their natural ignorance, little aware of the Grace ordained of old for them.

They are yet to be brought out from the house of bondage. Their election is to be followed by their calling. The Lord Jesus who is God’s Covenant is yet to be revealed to the eye of their faith, and a living union to Christ is yet to be created. This last work of Grace is not yet worked in the uncalled, and they are not in that sense joined to the Lord. A vital and spiritual union is meant in the text, a union which is matter of living *experience*, and is worked in us when we are born again, when we pass from darkness into Christ’s marvelous Light—when we rise from the death of sin to find the Lord Jesus to be our life.

From that moment we are “dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God.” From the moment of our regeneration, we who were once the branches of

the wild olive are grafted into the good olive. We who were cast out like withered branches to be burned, are grafted into the ever-living Vine, and become one with Jesus Christ our Lord. This is the union here spoken of, and he that is joined unto the Lord in that way by a work of the Holy Spirit radically and thoroughly changing him, and renewing him, and bringing him into oneness with Christ, is said to be the “one spirit.”

But what does that word, “one spirit” mean? Well, we must get at it by degrees. You may guess at its meaning from the fact that in other parts of Scripture the union between Christ and His people is described by that of a marriage union, and then it is said, “these two shall be one flesh.” But to take off the carnal edge of the metaphor, lest we fall into any grossness of thought, we are told that we in union with our Lord are one spirit. The union is a *spiritual* one. It is a great mystery, says the Apostle, when he speaks concerning Christ and His Church.

You get a glimmer, then, of what he means. There is a spiritual union, as real as when two are made one flesh. But it is not to be misread, and corruptly thought of as a carnal, material matter. It is a deep Truth of God belonging to the world of spirit. Try to get at it again. Remember that Christ and His people have one Spirit. The Holy Spirit who quickens us anointed Him. The Holy Spirit who illuminated us gave to Jesus Christ the unction with which He came to preach the reconciling Word to man. “The Spirit of the Lord,” says He, “is upon Me, for He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted.”

The Holy Spirit on Christ is the same Holy Spirit as upon us. The oil which ran down Aaron’s beard, and descended to the skirts of his garments, was the same holy anointing which was poured upon his reverend head. Yes, and glory be to God for the Truth—we have the same Spirit with the Lord Jesus Himself. The Apostle says, “There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which works all in all.” And again, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, whether we are bond or free. And have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” But we need not stay there, for we may add—we all have the same Holy Spirit as Jesus had. The foot is baptized into the same Spirit as the head. The ear not only has the same Spirit as the hand, but has the same Spirit as the glorious crowned and adored Head of the Church.

That is not all the meaning of the text, though it helps us to come near it. We have a greater mystery here. Some have read it, “we are of one spirit with Him,” that is to say, we come to think and feel as Jesus does, have common motives, aims, emotions, and desires. This is most true, and is the *practical* meaning of the text, but a more *spiritual* sense is under it. Let us, however, turn this over a moment. We who are joined unto the Lord are of one spirit with Him—the one Holy Spirit has worked us unto the same thing.

As Jesus is actuated by an intense desire for the glory of God, the Holy Spirit has worked us unto the same fervent longing. His meat and drink is also ours. Into His labors and His joys we enter. This meaning is high—O for Grace to reach it in our own characters! Yet the text says not that we are *of* one spirit, but we *are* one spirit. We not only have one spirit, and

are of one spirit, but we are one spirit. Now, what shall I say of this? I shall say nothing but that this is a matter to be understood only by the spiritual mind, and not to be readily, if at all, expounded in human words. It is not a Truth for which we have adequate expressions—letters, syllables, words fail us.

This much we can say though more is left unsaid—there is a union between Christ and His people most deep, most mysterious, most essential. If you would know it, ponder this sentence of our Lord's prayer, "I in them and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." Christ and His saints actually are one spirit. Ah, the depth! Your contemplation, if aided by the heavenly Interpreter, may assist you. As for me, I should but darken counsel by words without knowledge if I tried to open up what these words rather conceal than reveal.

Yet an illustration or two. We have known on earth friends who have become one spirit—intimacy and mutual admiration have ripened friendship into unity till the one seemed to be the complement of the other—and the mention of one suggested the other. They pursued one object with equal footsteps. They never differed, but appeared to have one soul in two bodies. The death of one almost necessarily involved the death of the other—the two were inseparable companions. Damon and Pythias lived over again in them. Jonathan and David seemed risen from the dead. Feebly, and but feebly, this reflects the image of our text.

So have we seen one spirit in another relationship, which is often used as the token of the union between Christ and His people, between the husband and the wife, of which we shall speak more particularly later, where there has been one love, one aim, one object. Like two stars, the wedded pair have shone with such blended rays as to have seemed more one than two. One name, one heart, one house, one interest, one love—they have also had one spirit. More fully, still, our text is illustrated by the branch and the stem. The branch in the vine is nothing if separated from the stem. Its sap is the very same sap that is in the stem—one life is in the stem and the branch—and they are both struggling for the same object, both seeking to produce and ripen the fruit.

They have no different aim, or even existence. The stem does not hoard for itself, nor the branch blossom for itself. The branch and stem are one vine. They are nothing separated from each other, their life one and their design one. See here again, as in a glass darkly, an amazing spiritual Truth. Yet more fully is this gracious union between us and our Lord brought out in the metaphor of the union of the member with the body. In that case there is, indeed, one spirit, not only in a vital but in an intellectual sense. If there is life in this finger, it is identically the same life that is in the head. But one spirit quickens all the parts of the body, whether comely or uncomely, whether base or honorable.

And so in the whole Church of God the life of Christ is the life of His people. The spirit of Christ is the spirit of His people. They are not two but one. The mystical union is so complete that even the marriage bond, of which we spoke just now, cannot fully come up to it—it is but an earthly symbol of a yet truer heavenly reality. We who are joined unto the Lord are one spirit. I say no more. What I have said may rather conduct you to

the door than open it. But there is One whose work it is to be the Revealer of secrets, ask Him and He shall reveal even this unto you.

II. May the Holy Spirit help us while considering the second head. On the very surface of the text, there is A MANIFEST GRACE. Our one spirit with Christ reveals itself practically in a manifest sympathy of spirit between us and our Lord, so that we, being one spirit, are seen to be actuated and impelled by the same influences. We are of one spirit with Jesus. That meaning I shall try and bring out. Union with Christ in these days, when religion wears her holiday garments, is a word with a pleasant sound, and because of its honorable esteem men would gladly possess it.

But alas, they know not what it is! They hang a cross at their necks, or embroider it on their garments, or stamp it on their books—and fancy that this gives them some degree of unity to the Crucified. But, Brothers and Sisters, this matter lies quite out of their reach. To be one spirit with Christ, much more is needed than to bear the Christian *name*. You may call yourself a Christian, or a Brother, or a Sister, or one of the Society of Jesus, and in so doing you may have selected what you think to be the most orthodox of terms by which to designate yourself and the congregation to which you belong—but union to the Lord stands not in name only.

There were those of old who called themselves Jews and were not—their taking the name did not give them the *nature* of Israelites. They that are joined unto the Lord may not always be known by the same name. They may be called Christians at Antioch and Jews at Philippi (Acts 16:20), but a right or a wrong name will not change the real *character*. Call a poppy a rose and you will not, thereby, give it perfume. Perhaps none in all the world are less joined to the Lord than some who *adore* the very name of Christian, and make an idol of the outward sign of the Cross. Neither is true union to Christ to be gained by mere outward profession. You may be baptized in water, but unless you are baptized into the Holy Spirit, you know not what union with Christ is. If in Baptism we are buried with Him, then it is well, indeed, but the sign in itself is nothing, for Simon Magus, though baptized, had no part nor lot in the matter.

We may sit at the Lord's Table with His people, yes, in the company of Apostles, and yet be sons of perdition! He may eat and drink in our streets, and yet may never know us. To eat the visible bread is not to be one with His mystical body. Union with Christ lies deeper than *name*, lies deeper than outward *signs* and seals of Church fellowship—and it even lies deeper than the performance of some apparently good actions and the use of religious words in conversation. We may do many things in His name, yes, and great things, too, for in His name many cast out devils and did many wonderful works and so were partakers of the powers of the world to come. And yet they were rejected by Him at the last as unknown of Him.

When judgment begins at the House of God small store will be set by mere visible union, for the branches in Christ after this fashion, not bearing fruit, will be cast forth, and withered, and burned in the fire. We must be rooted and built up in Him. He must be *formed* in us or it will little avail us to have been numbered with His disciples. The superficial, the nominal, and the outward will not suffice. He that is joined unto the Lord

must be one spirit—deep down in the very vitals of our being must this union with Jesus Christ most eminently reside, and in our hearts and minds must His Truth be found.

This is solemn teaching, and it ought, like the candle of the Lord, to search the secret parts of our nature. The carnal mind loves that which is outward, for it can readily comply with it, and that without Divine assistance. But the unregenerate heart kicks against that which is purely *spiritual*, for it cannot understand it, and here it is compelled to feel its own powerlessness, except to counterfeit with base imitations. My Brethren, this is a discerning Word, dividing between the joints and marrow, and discovering the thoughts and intents of the heart. You who are quickened with the incorruptible Seed, and discern spiritual things, come to the search, and see well to it that you are joined unto the Lord. Not in the *form* of godliness only, but in the *power* of it, also.

Let us give you, for your assistance, an illustration of what unity of spirit is as we see it among men, for here we may dimly see it as between the Lord and our souls. We will take a copy from that rare conjugal union which exists among those who realize the highest ideal of the married life. Sometimes we have seen a model marriage, founded in pure love and cemented in mutual esteem. There the husband acts as a tender head, and the wife, as a true spouse, realizes the model marriage relation, and sets forth what our oneness with the Lord ought to be. She delights in her husband, in his person, his character, his affection.

To her he is not only the chief and foremost of mankind, but in her eyes he is all in all, her heart's love belongs to him and to him only. She finds sweetest content and solace in his company, his fellowship, his fondness. He is her little world, her Paradise, her choice treasure. To please him she would gladly lay aside her own pleasure to find it doubled in gratifying him. She is glad to sink her individuality in his. She seeks no name for herself. His honor is reflected upon her, and she rejoices in it. She would defend his name with her dying breath—safe enough is he where she can speak for him. The domestic circle is her kingdom, and that she may there create happiness and comfort is her lifework, and his smiling gratitude is all the reward she seeks.

Even in her dress she thinks of him. Without constraint she consults his taste and thinks nothing beautiful which is obnoxious to his eye. A tear from his eye, because of any unkindness on her part, would grievously torment her. She asks not how her behavior may please a stranger, or how another's judgment may be satisfied with her behavior. Let her Beloved be content and she is glad. He has many objects in life, some of which she does not quite understand, but she believes in them all, and anything that she can do to promote them she delights to perform.

He lavishes love on her and she on him. Their object in life is common. There are points where their affections so intimately unite that none could tell which is first and which is second. To see their children growing up in health and strength, to see them holding posts of usefulness and honor is their mutual concern. In this and other matters they are fully one. Their wishes blend, their hearts are indivisible. By degrees they come very much to think the same thoughts. Intimate association creates conformity.

We have known this to become so complete that at the same moment the same utterance has leaped to both their lips. Happy woman and happy man! If Heaven is found on earth they have it! At last the two are so welded, so engrafted on one stem, that their old age presents a lovely attachment, a common sympathy by which its infirmities are greatly alleviated, and its burdens are transformed into fresh bonds of love. So happy a union of will, sentiment, thought, and heart exists between them that the two streams of their life have washed away the dividing bank and run on as one broad current of united existence till their common joy falls into the main ocean of felicity.

Such a sight, it may be, is not commonly seen, but it is inexpressibly beautiful, and is a fair type of what the Christian ought to be in his oneness with his Lord. For the Believer there should be no attractive beauty but in Christ, nothing that can charm him, stir the deeps of his soul, or move his nobler passions, but the glorious person of Emmanuel, the chief among ten thousand. He loved us and gave Himself for us—we also must love Him and give Him our whole selves. For us the one object of life is to please our Lord. We should not dare to sin, not because we are slavishly afraid of punishment, but because we would not grieve the Bridegroom of our souls. We must labor for His cause, not because of legal demands, but because we know no higher happiness under Heaven than to make Him honored and to let Him see in us, and through us, of the travail of His soul.

Our Lord has great ends and objects. We cannot understand them all, but to our utmost we desire to promote them by suffering or by service. Our prayer is, “Lord, show me what You would have me to do.” We would be tenderly sensitive to His desire, not surrendered to it only, but *delighting* in whatever He wills. We reckon it our honor to be permitted to help Him, however humbly, to work out any of His designs. As to the children of His Grace, both His and ours, regenerated by His Spirit and converted by our ministries, they are doubly dear to us, and their perfection we seek with Him. Our constant enquiry is, can we do anything for them? Can we call home the backsliding? Can we comfort the desolate? Can we help the poor and needy? Can we be of any service to the lambs of His flock?—

***“There’s not a lamb in all His flock
We would disdain to feed.”***

We would do anything by which we might show our love to Him, for our union of heart, and our union of purpose, our union of thought with Him, are all deep and true. Such a Christian grows to think as Christ thinks till the teachings of Jesus are plain to him. He never tries to tone down the Gospel as certain philosophic minds are ever doing, because they are not in union with the great Teacher’s heart. But he comes to see things from the Lord’s point of view, and knows his Master’s meaning as by a sacred instinct. Blessed consummation when our hearts at last are all wrapped up in Jesus, even as the bush at Horeb was all on fire with God.

Just as Jesus has set all His love on them, so they come to set all their love on Him, and they can say with the Apostle, “For me to live is Christ,” while the gain which they anticipate in death is the gain of being nearer to their Beloved, and forever beholding the glory of His face. I have given you an illustration, and have worked it out but poorly, but even had I worked

it out to perfection, it must necessarily fall short of the incomparable “one spirit” which dwells in our glorious Head and all His members. Go on till you sing with quaint old Francis Quarles—

***“Even like two little bank-dividing brooks,
That wash the pebbles with their wanton streams,
And having ranged and searched a thousand nooks,
Meet both at length in silver-breasted Thames,
Where in a greater current they conjoin.
So I my best Beloved’s am; so He is mine.
Even so we met. And after long pursuit,
Even so we joined, we both became entire.
No need for either to renew a suit,
For I was flax, and He was flames of fire.
Our firm united souls did more than twine,
So I my best Beloved’s am; so He is mine.”***

Where such union as that exists, what does it produce? Its fruits are precious. They who are thus one spirit with Christ live for the same end. He lived for God’s glory. “Know you not,” said He in His youth, “that I must be about My Father’s business?” In His riper years He said, “It is My meat and my drink to do the will of Him that sent Me.” He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit in that respect. For him the great, one, *only* thing is to glorify God. In such a case the soul sees everything in this one light, and asks concerning all, how will it affect the kingdom of God? Even in reading the newspaper one says, “Great events are transpiring in politics, how will these work for the glory of God?” The engineer considers the effect the war may have on the world, the politician thinks of the balance of power, the reformer meditates on its results as to human progress, but the man who is joined unto the Lord prays only, “Father, glorify Your name.”

To him the profit of his business is only profit so far as it will enable him to help the Master’s cause, and his honor is no honor unless he can raise out of it some matter for Jehovah’s praise. The glory of God, the glory of God, the glory of God—this was the one target towards which our Lord went onward in His life. Like a shot that crashes through everything until it reaches its mark, so must our spirits find no target but the glory of God! And if we are one spirit with Christ, it will be so. God’s glory, God’s glory will be first, last, midst, everywhere, everything. All for God, and God in all, will be our motto, as “hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come,” is our daily prayer.

Further, if we are joined to Christ, so as to be one spirit, we shall seek the same end for the same reason. He desired the glory of God not for His own glory, but because He loved God. He was one with the Father. He loved the Father, therefore would He see the Father glorified. Brethren, it is easy to seek the glory of God with a view to your own glory. Did you ever find yourself doing so, desiring that the children in your class should be converted, that in the school it might be said what a successful teacher is so-and-so? Oh, how have I sought to wring that black drop out of my spirit, when the desire to bring souls to Christ has been backed with the desire that I might have a good standing as a successful minister!

Into Christ’s thoughts so base an element never entered—He sank Himself in God. He knew His Father would give Him the reward, and for

the joy that was set before Him He endured the Cross, despising the shame—but Self-seeking never threw its alloy into the pure gold of His devotion to the Father. If we are one spirit with Christ, self will be swallowed up in God. Lord, do what You will with me, so long as You are glorified! If I can glorify You best in silence, then let me never speak again.

If it is most for Your glory that I should die, though my life appears to be useful to Your Church, yet let me end my days. If it will glorify You that I should be unsuccessful, that I should be in the world's judgment a disappointed man, perhaps a fool without brain enough to succeed, Lord, let me be a fool, or an idiot for You! Only glorify Yourself in me, and that is enough. This is true oneness of spirit with Jesus. Self is nothing. God is to be All in All. Comfort, esteem, joy, and even life will be as the small dust of the balance to a man filled with Christ's spirit.

Then we shall come, if we are one spirit with Christ, to aim at the glory of God by the same means. How did He aim at it? By the conversion of souls—not by being made a king, not by being called rabbi. He sought for the souls of little children, of peasant women, and of outcasts. If my mind is as Christ's mind, I shall seek God's glory by following after the waifs and strays of society—by bringing in backsliders, by seeking the lost sheep of the house of Israel—laboring by any means to save some.

How, my Brethren, are you bending your souls towards the conversion of sinners? It is a great mark of oneness of spirit with Christ when we have a great tenderness towards lost souls. Do you ever think of lost souls? Do you ever bring yourselves to the painful consideration of this huge city, so much larger than Jerusalem in our Savior's day, and, I was about to say, equally wicked? Do you never pour out floods of tears for it because it knows not its day, and is neglectful of the invitations of Grace? If you are one spirit with Christ you will weep with Him. You will burn with an ardent passion to gather this city's children beneath the wings of mercy.

You will pray for them, sigh for them, live for them, and persevere in labor for them. Your thought about a person will not merely be what trade you can do with him, or how much you may trust him in business, but, "How much good can I do him, and can I find an opportunity in any way of bringing him as a jewel to adorn my Savior's crown?" If our spirits were one with Christ's we should each one be missionaries of the Cross, bearing witness to His saving power.

Beloved, with such a spirit we should be content to use the same modes as our Lord. Christ's modes of winning souls were very simple, and He always adhered to them—teaching, preaching, living, suffering, and dying were His whole art. Some nowadays seem tired of Christ's plans, and hunt up more rapid methods. I do not believe that Jesus ever strained after effect by animal excitement. He did not strive and cry, and become fanatical, and try to excite poor ignorant people, who know not what they do, to say what they do not understand. He went to work by instructing the ignorant, enlightening their consciences and understandings, and gradually leading them to Himself.

When His spirit is ours we shall be better satisfied with that old-fashioned way of Gospel preaching which the critics nowadays are so fond

of sneering at. We shall feel this is the best way—this hard, plodding way that does not usually produce a great mass of converts all at once—this is best, for Jesus thought so. We shall pine for large harvests, but go on sowing the same Seed, and preaching His Gospel and no new one of our own. What was wisdom to Him will be wisdom to us.

Then shall we, if we are of one spirit with Jesus, go to work as He did, with the same emotions. If we had but six men thoroughly of one spirit with Jesus, London would soon be shaken from end to end. But where are they? God make all His servants such, and we shall hear a new sort of preaching to what is current at this hour. For when Jesus preached, it was tremendous preaching! True, it was pleasing, attractive, interesting, but was far more—it was full of deep heart-power, such as made men see His solemn earnestness—and such as overcame men's souls.

His soul, as it were, leaped upon them in all the majesty of love's Omnipotence. O that we felt as He did the weight of souls, the guilt of sin, the terror of the wrath to come, and the tenderness of Divine mercy! If these great principles actuated and moved our spirit as they moved His, we should rise to a higher standard, and our age would know it.

Let me add that if we are fully joined to our Lord, and of one spirit with Him, we shall have the same tastes as Jesus. What He loves will charm us, what He hates we shall loathe. We shall then come to have the same will with Him. As one said, "If God wills not as I will, yet at any rate we will be agreed, for I will will as He wills if He will but graciously enable me." If I cannot have things as I would like, I will like to have them as Jesus pleases. Oh, to have the two wills, the human and Divine perfectly coinciding—this is perfection! Brethren, if this unity between our spirit and Christ's spirit goes on we shall abide in Him, and He will abide in us.

Oh, to be our Beloved's and to know that He is ours! I cannot resist quoting another two verses from old Quarles, they so depict my ideal—

***"Nor time, nor place, nor chance, nor death can bow
My least desires unto the least remove;
He's firmly mine by oath. I His by vow;
He is mine by faith. And I am His by love;
He's mine by water. I am His by wine;
Thus I my best Beloved's am; thus He is mine.
He is my altar. I His holy place;
I am His guest. And He my living food;
I'm His by penitence. He mine by Grace;
I'm His by purchase. He is mine by blood
He's my supporting wall. And I His vine—
Thus I my best Beloved's am; thus He is mine."***

I have many things to say, but time fails me, and therefore let me just pour out a few thoughts. There would be produced in you and in me, if we were joined unto the Lord, great oneness of aim in our service of God. We have a dozen aims now, but if we were of one spirit with Jesus we should have but one object in life. A man dies, and they say, "Ah, he died a martyr to his science." Another dies, and they say, "He killed himself with attention to his business." When will men be thus said to die for Christ?

Men commonly say of their fellows, "He is a man of one idea, he lives for it. Wherever he is he must always ride his hobby." How I wish they would say the same of Christians! Wherever our Lord was, not impru-

dently, but with true wisdom, He was sure to pursue His life work. Where Jesus was there would the Gospel be heard or seen before long. If He sat to eat bread at a Pharisee's house nobody could suspect Him of being a Pharisee, or need to ask who He was. His speech before long betrayed Him, for the one object of His soul was uppermost. May it ever be so with us! May we be of one idea and that one idea to glorify God through the salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ!

This would give us, beside unity of purpose, great force, great fervor. We should feel this in private. Our prayers, if we had the spirit of Christ would be very different from what they are. This would be visible in public, also. Our public service of God would never be so sluggish and sleepy as it now is. With what ardor did the Savior burn! Would God that same fire dropped into my soul, and utterly consumed me as a living sacrifice. This would produce in each of us an abiding pertinacity. Defeated in one place we should try in another. It would be with us a determination never to be overcome in doing good. Like Jesus who sought the souls of men, not in a languid search, but over hill and dale till He went down into death's cold shade and traversed the sepulcher that He might deliver them, so we also in honor and dishonor, in evil report and good report, in poverty and wealth, in life and death, should still be seeking the glory of God and the salvation of the sons of men.

This same spirit would work in us a wonderful serenity of spirit. If our spirit were like Christ's spirit—altogether set on God's glory—we should not be disturbed and vexed so soon as we are with little, petty remarks of men, nor should we even be moved by great calamities. If any disaster happened to us we should only say, "How can I use this for God's glory?" If prosperity smiled on us, we should ask, "How can I make this glorify my Lord?" We should not be cast down by the one nor lifted up by the other. If men sneered at us we should say, "It is well that they think little of me, for now if God will bless my efforts they will think the more of God and know that the work was not done by *my* power."

If, on the other hand, we find men thinking highly of us, we should say, "How can I use the influence I thus obtain to advance the great cause of my Lord and Master?" When self is dead our sorrows are sweet. When self-seeking is gone, then serene is the calm lake of the soul, unruffled by the storms of ambition which continually toss with blustering breath the minds which seek themselves. I am persuaded, Brethren, your highest state, your happiest condition—will be when you are so joined with the Lord as to be one spirit.

Lastly, what does all this teach us by way of practical lesson? These three things—First, see here a rebuke for us. We have been joined to Christ, but have we been manifestly one spirit with Him? Angry—was that Christ's spirit? Worldly—was that Christ's spirit? Frivolous, verging upon impropriety—was that Christ's spirit? Proud, dictatorial, slothful, repining, or unbelieving—was that Christ's spirit? O Brothers and Sisters, if you can read that verse without a tear you are either better or worse men than I! You are worse perhaps, for you do not feel the penitence you should. Or you are better, and you have no need to confess the same faults which unhappily rise before my memory. The spirit of Jesus, we

have a measure of it I trust, but does not our own spirit adulterate it dreadfully!

The next practical word is one of hope. We want to have the same spirit as Christ. Well, Brethren, our hope is that we shall have it, for we are joined to the Lord, and he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Are you not joined to Jesus, my Brother, my Sister? I know what you say, "I sometimes fear I am not." Well, but what do you add to that? You add, "But I desire to be, and I do today renew my union with Him by another act of faith and confidence in Him. Dear Lord and Savior, You are my only Hope. I at this hour embrace Your Cross once more. I know You save sinners, I know that they who believe in You are saved, and therefore I am saved. Now, being persuaded of this, I love You. O that I could kiss Your feet where the nail prints are, and that my whole life could be a washing of those feet with my tears!"

Since, then, you are joined to Christ, you are one spirit, and though it is not yet fully seen, it will be before long. There are better times coming, there are deeper degrees of Grace for you yet, only persevere.

The last word will help you to persevere. Don't you see, my Brethren, the way to get more of the spirit of Christ? It is indicated in the text, it is by thinking more of your union with Him. To be nearer the Lord is the way to be more like He is. Do not let doubts and fears endanger your fellowship with Him. You may think, "I fear I have no right to say I am one with Christ." But that suspicion will not sanctify you. It will not help you to be holier to doubt your union to your Lord.

Men never grow in Grace by departing from the Savior by unbelief. The more you need Christ the closer cling to Him. The less you are like He is the tighter hold Him. Your hope lies there. "If my spirit is not yet subdued to Your spirit, my Savior, yet I cannot let You go, for that were to drive the physician away because I am still sick. That were to renounce my friend because I have great need of him. No, but closer to You will I cling by Your Holy Spirit from this day forth, that being joined to You, I may be of one spirit."

I feel I have feebly addressed you, but at the same time I know precious Truth has been set forth. May the Holy Spirit open it up to your hearts, and bless it to your souls, and He shall be magnified. But if you have no part nor lot in this matter, may that dreadful fact lead you at this hour to seek the Savior.

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“BOUGHT WITH A PRICE”

NO. 1004

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 6, 1871,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“You are not your own. For you are bought with a price:
therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”
1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.***

OUR beloved Brother, Thomas Cook, who has for so long a time served this Church as an honored deacon, has fallen asleep in Christ. We have laid his earthly remains in the tomb—his spirit rejoices before the Throne of God. This day we thank God for his useful life, and ask for Divine Grace to imitate it. Before he closed his eyes in death he left a text of Scripture for the pastors—“Christ is All, and in all.” And he left another for his fellow Church members, for all of you this day who are members of the body of Christ. And this is the legacy, which now, as a spiritual executor, I present to you—“You are not your own. For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

I have no doubt the intention of our departed brother was to promote God’s glory by speaking to us even after he was dead concerning our sanctification that we might be stirred up to a greater consecration to the Lord our Savior. You will notice that in this chapter the Apostle Paul has been dealing with sins of the flesh, with fornication and adultery. Now, it is at all times exceedingly difficult for the preacher either to speak or to write upon this subject. It demands the strictest care to keep the language guarded, so that while we are denouncing a detestable evil we do not, ourselves, promote it by a single expression that should be other than chaste and pure.

Observe how well the Apostle Paul succeeds—for he does not mask the sin—he tears the veil from it and lets us know what it is that he is aiming at. Yet there is no sentence which we could wish to alter. Here he is a model for all ministers, both in fidelity and prudence. Be sure, also, to note that the Apostle, when he is exposing sin, does not trifle with it, but like a mighty hunter before the Lord pursues it with all his might. His hatred to it is intense. He drags it forth to the light. He bids us mark its hideous deformity. He hunts it through all its territory, hotfoot, as we say. He never leaves it breathing time—argument after argument he hurls like javelins upon it.

He will by no means spare the filthy thing. He, who above all others speaks most positively of salvation by Grace, and is most clear upon the fact that salvation is *not* by the works of the Law, is at the same time most intensely earnest for the holiness of Christians and most zealously denounces those who would say, “Let us do evil, that good may come.” In this particular instance he sets the sin of fornication in the light of the Holy Spirit. He holds up, as it were, the seven-branched candlestick before it, and lets us see what a filthy thing it is.

He tells us that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and therefore ought not to be profaned. He declares that bodily unchastity is a sacrilegious desecration of our manhood, a violation of the sacred shrine wherein the Spirit takes up its dwelling place. And then, as if this were not enough, he seizes the sin and drags it to the foot of the Cross—and there nails it hand and foot—that it may die as a criminal. For these are His Words—"You are not your own. For you are bought with a price"—the price being the blood of Jesus. He finds no sharper weapon, no keener instrument of destruction than this.

The redemption worked on Calvary by the death of Jesus must be the death of this sin, and of all other sins, wherever the Spirit of God uses it as His sword of execution. Brothers and Sisters, it is no slight thing to be holy. A man must not say, "I have faith," and then fall into the sins of an unbeliever. After all, our outer life is the test of our inner life. And if the outer life is not purified, rest assured the heart is not changed. That faith which does not bring forth the fruit of holiness is the faith of devils. The devils believe and tremble. Let us never be content with a faith which can live in Hell, but rise to that which will save us—the faith of God's elect which purifies the soul—casting down the power of evil, and setting up the Throne of Jesus Christ, the throne of holiness within the spirit.

Noticing this as being the run of the chapter, we now come to the text itself, and in order to discuss it we must take it piece by piece, and I think we shall see in it at once three things very clearly. The first is a *blessed fact*, "You are," or as it should be rendered, "You *were* bought with a price." Then comes a *plain consequence* from that fact, a consequence of a double character, negative and positive—"You are not your own." "Your body and your spirit are God's." And out of that there springs inevitably a *natural conclusion*—"Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit."

I. Let us begin, then, first of all, with this BLESSED FACT—"You are bought with a price." Paul might, if his object were to prove that we are not our own, have said—"You did not make yourselves." Creation may well furnish motives for obedience to the great Lawgiver. He might also have said, "You do not preserve yourselves—it is God who keeps you in life—you would die if He withdrew His power." The preservation of Divine Providence might furnish abundant arguments for holiness. Surely He who feeds, nourishes, and upholds our life should have our service!

But Paul prefers, for reasons known only to himself, but which it would not be hard to guess, to plead the more tender theme, Redemption. He sounds that note, which if it does not thunder with that crash of power which marked the six days' labor of Omnipotence, yet has a soft, piercing, subduing tone in it. A tone, which, like the still small voice to which Elijah listened, has in it the Presence of God. The most potent plea for sanctity is not, "You were made," or, "You are nourished," but "You are *bought*."

This the Apostle selects as a convincing proof of our duty, and as a means to make that duty our delight. And truly, Beloved, it is so. If we have, indeed, experienced the power of Redemption we fully admit that it is so. Look back to the day when you were bought, when you were bond slaves to your sins, when you were under the just sentence of Divine Justice, when it was inevitable that God should punish your transgressions.

Remember how the Son of God became your Substitute? How He bared His back to the lash that should have fallen upon you, and laid His soul beneath the sword which should have quenched its fury in your blood?

You were redeemed then, redeemed from the punishment that was due to you, redeemed from the wrath of God, redeemed unto Christ to be His forever! You will notice the text says, "You were bought *with a price*." It is a common classical expression to signify that the purchase was expensive. Of course, the very expression, "You were bought," implies a price, but the words, "*with a price*" are added, as if to show that it was not for nothing that you were purchased. There was a something inestimably precious paid for you. And I need scarcely remind you that, "you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold," but, "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

Ah, those words slip over our tongue very glibly, but we may well chide ourselves that we can speak of Redemption with dry eyes. That the blood of Christ was shed to buy our souls from death and Hell is a wonder of compassion which fills angels with amazement! And it ought to overwhelm us with adoring love whenever we think of it—glance our eyes over the recording pages—or even utter the word "Redemption." What meant this purchasing us *with blood*? It signified pain. Have any of you lately been racked with pain? Have you suffered acutely? Ah, then at such times you know to some degree what the price was which the Savior paid.

His bodily pains were great. His hands and feet nailed to the wood, and the iron breaking through the most tender nerves. His soul pains were greater still. His heart was melted like wax—he was very heavy, his heart was broken with reproach—he was deserted of God, and left beneath the black thunder clouds of Divine wrath. His soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. It was *pain* that bought you.

We speak of the drops of blood, but we must not confine our thoughts to the crimson life-floods which distilled from the Savior's veins. We must think of the pangs which He endured, which were the equivalent for what we ought to have suffered—what we must have suffered had we endured the punishment of our guilt forever in the flames of Hell! But pain alone could not have redeemed us. It was by death that the Savior paid the ransom. Death is a word of horror to the ungodly. The righteous has *hope* in his death.

But as Christ's death was the Substitute for the death of the ungodly, He was made a curse for us, and the Presence of God was denied Him. His death was attended with unusual darkness. He cried, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" O think earnestly on this! The Ever-Living died to redeem us! The Only-Begotten bowed His head in agony, and was laid in the grave that we might be saved! You are bought, then, "with a price"—a price incalculable, stupendous, infinite—and this is the plea which the Apostle uses to urge upon us that we should "be holiness to the Lord." I desire upon this theme—which is a very simple and an everyday one, but which is, nevertheless, of the weightiest consideration—to remind you, dearly Beloved who profess to be followers of Christ, that this matter of your being "bought with a price" is *an indisputable fact to every Christian*.

To every person here present it either is a fact or not. I scarcely need to ask whether any of you are prepared to renounce your Redemption. And yet, professor of the faith of Christ, I shall put it to you now—are you willing to have the negative put upon this? Will you deny that you were "bought with a price?" Will you now confess that you were not redeemed on Calvary? You dare not, I am sure! You would sooner die than renounce your belief of it. Well, then, as certain as is your redemption, so certain is it that you "are not your own," but belong to God, and should glorify Him!

It is inevitable that if you are "bought with a price," you have ceased to be your own property, and belong to Him who bought you. Holiness, therefore, is necessary to all the redeemed. If you cast off your responsibility to be holy, you at the same time cast away the benefit of Redemption. Will you do this? As I am sure you could not renounce your salvation, and cast away your only hope, so I charge you by the living God be not so inconsistent as to say—"I am redeemed, and yet I will live as I wish."

As redeemed men, let the inevitable consequences follow from the fact, and be you evidently the servants of the Lord Jesus. Remember, too, that *this fact is the most important one in all your history*. That you were redeemed "with a price" is the greatest event in your biography! Even your birth—what was it unless a second birth had been yours? Might you not say—"Let the day perish in which I was born and the night in which it was said, there is a man child conceived"? Would it not have been to you the direst calamity to be born into the world if you had not been rescued from the wrath of which you were the heir?

You left your father's house, and it was an important step in life. Perhaps you crossed the great and wide sea. It may be you aspired to high office in the State and you obtained it. It is possible you have been sorely sick, or it may be you have sunk from affluence to poverty. Such events leave their impression upon the memory—men cannot forget these great changes in their lives. But they all shrivel into less than nothing compared with this fact that you were "bought with a price"! Your connection with Calvary is the most important thing about you. Oh, I do beseech you then, if it is so, PROVE IT!

And remember, the just and righteous proof is by your not being your own, but consecrated unto God. If it is the most important thing in the world to you, that you were "bought with a price," let it exercise the most prominent influence over your entire career. Be a man, be an Englishman, but be most of all Christ's man. A citizen, a friend, a philanthropist, a patriot—all these you may be—but be, most of all, a saint redeemed by blood! Recollect, again, that your being "bought with a price" *will be the most important fact in all your future existence*. What say they in Heaven when they sing? They would naturally select the noble topic and that which most engrosses their minds, and yet in the whole range of their memory, they find no theme so absorbing as this—"You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood."

Redeeming love is the theme of Heaven. When you reach the upper realms your most important memory will not be that you were wealthy or poor in this life—nor the fact that you sickened and died—but that you were "bought with a price." We do not know all that may occur in this world before the close of its history, but certainly it will be burnt up with

fire, and you, in yonder clouds with Christ may witness the awful conflagration. You will never forget it. There will be new heavens and new earth, and you, with Christ may see the new-born heavens, and earth, laughing in the bright sunlight of God's good pleasure.

You will never forget that joyous day. And you will be caught up to dwell with Jesus forever and ever. And there will come a time when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father and God shall be All in All. You will never forget the time of which the poet sings—

***"Then the end, beneath His rod
Man's last enemy shall fall.
Hallelujah, Christ in God,
God in Christ is All in All."***

All these divinely glorious events will impress themselves upon you, but not one of them will make an impression so lasting, so clear, so deep as this—that you were "bought with a price." High over all the mountain tops, Calvary—but a little mount in human estimation—shall rise. Stars shall the events of history be. But this event shall be the sun in whose presence all others hide their diminished heads! "You were slain"—the full chorus of Heaven shall roll it forth in thundering accents of grateful zeal. "You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood." The saints shall remember this first and foremost. And amidst the cycles of eternity this shall have the chief place in every glorified memory.

What then, Beloved? Shall it not have the chief place with you *now*? It has been the fact of your life up to now. It will be the fact of your entire eternal existence—let it saturate your soul, let it penetrate your spirit, let it subdue your faculties—let it take the reins of all your powers and guide you where it will. Let the Redeemer, He whose hands were pierced for you, sway the scepter of your spirit and rule over you this day and world without end. If I had the power to do it, how would I seek to refresh in your souls a sense of this fact that you are "bought with a price"? There in the midnight hour, amidst the olives of Gethsemane, kneels Immanuel, the Son of God! He groans! He pleads in prayer! He wrestles—see the beady drops stand on His brow! Drops of sweat, but not of such sweat as pours from men when they earn the bread of life, but the sweat of Him who is procuring *life itself* for us!

It is blood, it is crimson blood—great globs of it are falling to the ground. O Soul, your Savior speaks to you from Gethsemane at this hour, and He says—"Here I bought you with a price." Come, stand and view Him in the agony of the olive garden, and understand at what a cost He procured your deliverance! Track Him in all His path of shame and sorrow till you see Him on the Pavement. Mark how they bind His hands and fasten Him to the whipping-post. Look, they bring the scourges and the cruel Roman whips. They tear His flesh. The plowers make deep furrows on His blessed body, and the blood gushes forth in streams—while rivulets from His temples, where the crown of thorns has pierced them—join to swell the purple stream.

From beneath the scourges He speaks to you with accents soft and low, and He says, "My child, it is here I bought you with a price." But see Him on the Cross itself when the consummation of all has come—His hands and feet are fountains of blood—His soul is full of anguish even to heart-break. And there, before the soldier pierces with a spear His side, bowing

down He whispers to you and to me, "It was here I bought you with a price." O by Gethsemane, by Gabbatha, by Golgotha—by every sacred name collected with the passion of our Lord! By sponge and vinegar, and nail and spear, and everything that helped the pang and increased the anguish of His death—I plead with you, my Brothers and Sisters—to remember that you were "bought with a price," and "are not your own!"

I push you to this. You either *were* or *were not* so bought—if you were, it is the grand fact of your life. If you were, it is the greatest fact that ever will occur to you. Let it operate upon you, let it dominate your entire nature, let it govern your body, your soul, your spirit. And from this day let it be said of you not only that you are a man, a man of good morals and respectable conduct, but this—above all things—that you are a man filled with love to Him who bought you, a man who lives for Christ, and knows no other passion!

Would God that Redemption would become the paramount influence, the lord of our soul, and dictator of our being! Then were we, indeed, true to our obligations—short of this we are not what love and justice both demand.

II. Now let us pass on to the second point. Here is A PLAIN CONSEQUENCE arising from the blessed fact. You were "bought with a price." Then first it is clear as a negative, that, "You are not your own," and secondly, it is clear as a positive, that, "Your body and spirit are God's."

Take first the negative—if bought, you are not your own. No argument is needed for this, and indeed, it is so great a benefit in itself that none of us could find it in our hearts to object to it. It is a great privilege not to be one's own. A vessel is drifting on the Atlantic here and there, and its end no man knows. It is derelict, deserted by all its crew. It is the property of no man. It is the prey of every storm, and the sport of every wind. Rocks, quicksands, and shoals wait to destroy it. The ocean yearns to engulf it. It drifts onward to no man's land, and no man will mourn its shipwreck.

But mark well yonder boat in the Thames which its owner surveys with pleasure. In its attempt to reach the sea it may run ashore, or come into collision with other vessels. Or in a thousand ways suffer damage. But there is no fear, it will pass through the floating forest of "the Pool." It will thread the winding channel, and reach the Nore because its owner will secure a skillful and apt pilot.

How thankful you and I should be that we are not derelict today! We are not our own—not left on the wild waste of chance to be tossed to and fro by fortuitous circumstances. But there is a hand upon our helm. We have on board a Pilot who owns us, and will surely steer us into the Fair Havens of eternal rest. The sheep is on the mountain side and the winter is coming on. It may be buried in the snow. Perhaps the wolf may seize it, or by-and-by, when the summer crops have been eaten, there may be little fodder for it and it may starve. But the sheep's comfort, if it could think at all, would be this—it is not its own—it belongs to the shepherd, who will not willingly lose his property.

It bears the mark of its owner, and is the object of his care. O happy sheep of God's pasture! What a bliss it is to you that you are not your own! Does any man here think it would be a pleasure to be his own? Let me assure him that there is no ruler so tyrannical as self. He that is his

own master has a fool and a tyrant to be his lord. No man ever yet governed himself after the will of the flesh but what he, by degrees, found the yoke heavy and the burden crushing. Self is a fierce dictator, a terrible oppressor—imperious lusts are cruel slave drivers!

But Christ, who says we are not our own, would have us view that Truth of God in the light in which a loving wife would view it. She, too, is not her own. She gave herself away on a right memorable day of which she bears the golden token on her finger. She did not weep when she surrendered herself and became her husband's. Nor did they muffle the bells, or bid the organ play the "Death March"—it was a happy day for her. She remembers it at this moment with glowing joy. She is not her own, but she has not regretted the giving herself away—she would make the same surrender again to the selfsame beloved owner—if it had to be done.

That she is her husband's does not bespeak her slavery, but her happiness. She has found rest in her husband's house, and today, when the Christian confesses that he is not his own, he does not wish that he were. He is married to the Savior. He has given himself up—body, soul, and spirit—to the blessed Bridegroom of his heart. It was the marriage day of his true life when he became a Christian, and he looks back to it with joy and transport. Oh, it is a blissful thing not to be our own! So I shall not want arguments to prove that to which every gracious spirit gives a blissful consent.

Now, if it is true that we are not our own, and I hope it is true to many here present, then the inference from it is, "I have no right to injure myself in any way." My body is not my own, I have no right then, as a Christian man, to do anything with it that would defile it. The Apostle is mainly arguing against sins of the flesh and he says, "the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord. And the Lord for the body." We have no right to commit uncleanness, because our bodies are the members of Christ and not our own.

He would say the same of drunkenness, gluttony, idle sleep, and even of such excessive anxiety after wealth as injures health with carking care. We have no right to profane or injure the flesh and blood which are consecrated to God. Every limb of our frame belongs to God—it is His property. He has bought it "with a price." Any honest man will be more concerned about an injury done to another's property placed under his care than if it were his own. When the son of the Prophet was hewing wood with Elisha, you remember how he said, when the axe head flew off into the water, "Alas, Master, for it was borrowed."

It would be bad enough to lose my own axe, but if it is not my own, then I doubly deplore the accident. I know this would not operate upon thievish minds. There are some who, if it were another man's, and they had borrowed it, would have no further care about it—"Let the lender get it back, if he can." But we speak to honest men, and with them it is always a strong argument—your body is another's, do it no injury. As for our spirit, too, that is God's, and how careful we should be of it! I am asked, sometimes, to read an heretical book. Well, if I believed my reading it would help its refutation, and might be an assistance to others in keeping them out of error, I might do it as a hard matter of duty. But I shall not do it unless I see some good will come from it. I am not going to drag

my spirit through a ditch for the sake of having it washed afterwards—for it is not my own.

It may be that good medicine would restore me if I poisoned myself with putrid meat, but I am not going to try it—I dare not experiment on a mind which no longer belongs to me. There is a mother and a child, and the child has a book to play with, and a black lead pencil. It is making drawings and marks upon the book, and the mother takes no notice. It lays down one book and snatches another from the table, and at once the mother rises from her seat, and hurriedly takes the book away, saying—“No, my Dear, you must not mark that, for it is not ours.”

So with my mind, intellect, and spirit. If it belonged to me I might, or might not play tomfool with it, and go to hear Socinians, Ritualists, Universalists and such like preach. But as it is not my own, I will preserve it from such fooleries and the pure Word of God shall not be mingled with the errors of men. Here is the drift of the Apostle’s argument—I have no right to injure that which does not belong to me—and as I am not my own, I have no right to injure myself.

But, further, I have no right to let myself lie waste. The man who had a talent and went and dug in the earth and hid it, had not he a right to do so? Yes, of course, if it was his own talent, and his own napkin. If any of you have money and do not put it out to interest, if it is all your own, nobody complains. But this talent belonged to the man’s *master*, it was only entrusted to him as a steward—and he ought not to have let it rust in the ground. So I have no right to let my faculties run to waste since they do not belong to me. If I am a Christian I have no right to be idle. I saw the other day men using picks in the road in laying down new gas pipes. They had been resting, and just as I passed, the clock struck one, and the foreman gave a signal.

I think he said, “Blow up.” And straightway each man took his pick or his shovel, and they were all at it in earnest. Close to them stood a fellow with a pipe in his mouth, who did not join in the work, but stood in a free-and-easy posture. It did not make any difference to him whether it was one o’clock or six. Why not? Because he was his own—the other men were the master’s for the time being. He, as an independent gentlemen, might do as he liked, but those who were not their own fell to labor. If any of you idle professors can really prove that you belong to yourselves, I have nothing more to say to you. But if you profess to have a share in the redeeming sacrifice of Christ, I am ashamed of you if you do not go to work the very moment the signal is given. You have no right to waste what Jesus Christ has bought “with a price.”

Further than that, if we are not our own, but “are bought with a price,” we have no right to exercise any capricious government of ourselves. A man who is his own may say, “I shall go where I will, and do what I will.” But if I am not my own, but belong to God who has bought me, then I must submit to His government. His will must be my will, and His directions must be my Law. I desire to enter a certain garden, and I ask the gardener at the gate if I may come in. “You should be very welcome, Sir, indeed,” says he, “if it were mine, but my master has told me not to admit strangers here, and therefore I must refuse you.”

Sometimes the devil would come into the garden of our souls. We tell him that our flesh might consent, but the garden is not ours and we cannot give him space. Worldly ambition, covetousness, and so forth, might claim to walk through our soul, but we say, "No, it is not our own. We cannot, therefore, do what our old will would do, but we desire to be obedient to the will of our Father who is in Heaven." Your will be done, my God, in me, for so should it be done where all is Your own by purchase. Yet, again, if we are not our own, then we have no right to serve ourselves. The man who is living entirely for himself, whose object is his own ease, comfort, honor, or wealth—what knows he concerning Redemption by Christ?

If our aims rise no higher than our personal advantages, we are false to the fact that we "are bought with a price." We are treacherous to Him in whose Redemption we pretend to share. But time would fail me if I dwelt upon this, or, indeed, at any length upon the positive side of this blessed fact—I will therefore only say a word or two concerning it. Our body and our spirit are God's. And, Christian, this is certainly a very high honor to you. Your body will rise again from the dead at the second Resurrection. Because it is not an ordinary body, it belongs to God—your spirit is distinguished from the souls of other men. It is God's spirit, and He has set His mark upon it, and honored you in so doing.

You are God's, because a price has been paid for you. According to some, the allusion price here is to the dowry that was paid by a husband for his wife in ancient days. According to the rabbis there were three ways by which a woman became the wife of a man, and one of these was by the payment of a dowry. This was always held good in Jewish law. The woman was not her own from the moment when the husband had paid to her father or natural guardian the stipulated price for her.

Now, at this day, you and I rejoice that Jesus Christ has espoused us unto Himself in righteousness before ever the earth was. We rejoice in that language which He uses by the Prophet Hosea, "I will betroth you unto Me forever." But here is our comfort—the dowry money has been paid—Christ has redeemed us unto Himself, and Christ's we are, Christ's forever and ever. Remember that our Lord has paid all the price for us. There is no mortgage or lien upon us. We have, therefore, no right to give a portion of ourselves to Satan. And He has bought us entirely from head to foot, every power, every passion, and every faculty—all our time, all our goods—all that we call our own, all that makes up ourselves in the largest sense of that term. We are altogether God's.

Ah, it is very easy for people to say this, but how very difficult it is to feel it true and to act as such! I have no doubt there are many persons here who profess to be willing to give God all they have, who would not actually give Him five shillings. We can sing—

"Here, Lord, I give myself away,"

and yet if it comes to yielding only a *part* of ourselves, if it requires self-denial, or self-sacrifice, straightway there is a drawing back. Now, was the Cross a fiction? Was the death of Christ a fable? Were you only fancifully "bought with a price," and not in deed and in truth?

If Redemption is a fable, then return a fabled consecration. If your purchase is a fiction, then lead the fictitious lives that some of you lead with

regard to consecration to Christ. If it is only an idea, a pretty something that we read of in books, then let our belonging unto God be a mere idea and a piece of sentiment. But a *real* Redemption demands *real* holiness. A true price, most certainly paid, demands from us a practical surrendering of ourselves to the service of God. From this day forth, even forever, "you are not your own," you are the Lord's.

III. And now I must close, and oh, may God give power to His Word while I beg to speak upon the last point, namely, THE NATURAL CONCLUSION. "Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit." I am not clear that the last few words are in the original. A large number of the old manuscripts and versions, and some of the more important of them, finish the verse at the word "body." "Therefore glorify God in your body."

It was the body the Apostle was speaking about, and not the spirit, and there is no necessity for the last words—still we will not further raise the question, but take them as being the inspired Word of God. But still I must make the remark that according to the connection, the *force* of the Apostle's language falls upon the word, *body*. And perhaps it is so because we are so apt to forget the Truth of God that the body is redeemed and is the Lord's, and should be made to glorify God.

The Christian man's body should glorify God by its chastity. Pure as the lily should we be from every taint of uncleanness. The body should glorify God by temperance, also. In all things, in eating, drinking, sleeping—in everything that has to do with the flesh. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God," or as the Apostle puts it elsewhere, "whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." The Christian man can make every meal a sacrament, and his ordinary avocations the exercise of his spiritual priesthood.

The body ought to glorify God by its industry. A lazy servant is a bad Christian. A working man who is always looking for Saturday night—a man who never spends a drop of sweat except when the master is looking does not glorify God in his body. The best Christian is the man who is not afraid of hard work when it is due—who works not as an eye-servant or man pleaser—but in singleness of heart seeks to glorify God. Our bodies used to work hard enough for the devil—now that they belong to God we will make them work for Him. Your legs used to carry you to the theater. Be not too lazy to come out on a Thursday night to the House of God.

Your eyes have been often open upon iniquity—keep them open during the sermon—do not drop asleep! Your ears have been sharp enough to catch the word of a lascivious song—let them be quick to observe the Word of God. Those hands have often squandered your earnings in sinfulness—let them give freely to the cause of Christ. Your body was a willing horse when it was in the service of the devil—let it not be a sluggish hack now that it draws the chariot of Christ. Make the tongue speak His praises! Make the mouth sing of His Glory. Make the whole man bow in willing subservience to the will of Him who bought it!

As for your spirit, let that glorify God, too. Let your private meditations magnify God. Let your songs be to Him when no one hears you but Himself, and let your public zeal—let the purity of your conversation, let the earnestness of your life—let the universal holiness of your character glo-

rify God with your body and with your spirit. Beloved Christian Friends, I want to say these few things and have done. Because you are God's, you will be looked at more than others, therefore, glorify Him. You know it is not always the thing itself, but the ownership that causes curiosity. If you were to go to a cattle show and it were said, "such-and-such a bullock belongs to Her Majesty," it may be it is no better than another, but it would be of interest to thousands as belonging to royalty.

See here, then, such-and-such a man belongs to God! What manner of person ought he to be? If there is anyone in this world who will NOT be criticized, depend upon it, Christian, it is not the Christian! Sharp eyes will be upon him, and worldly men will find faults in him which they would not see if he were not a professor. For my part I am very glad of the lynx eyes of the worldlings. Let them watch if they will! I have heard of one who was a great caviler at Christian people, and after having annoyed a Church a long time, he was about to leave, and therefore, as a parting jest with the minister, he said, "I have no doubt you will be very glad to know that I am going a hundred miles away."

"No," said the pastor, "I shall be sorry to lose you." "Why? I never did you any good." "I don't know that, for I am sure that never one of my flock put half a foot through the hedge but what you began to yelp at him, and so you have been a famous sheepdog for me." I am glad the world observes us. It has a right to do so. If a man says, "I am God's," he sets himself up for public observation. You are lights in the world, and what are lights intended for but to be looked at?

A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Moreover, the world has a right to expect more from a Christian than from anybody else. He says he is "bought with a price." He says he is God's. He therefore claims more than others, and he ought to render more. Stand in fancy in one of the fights of the old civil war. The Royalists are fighting desperately and are winning apace, but I hear a cry from the other side that Cromwell's Ironsides are coming. Now we shall see some fighting! Oliver and his men are lions.

But, lo! I see that the fellows who come up hang fire, and are afraid to rush into the thick of the fight! Surely these are not Cromwell's Ironsides, and yonder captain is not old Noll? I do not believe it—it cannot be. Why, if they were what they profess to be, they would have broken the ranks of those perfumed cavaliers long ago, and have made them fly before them like chaff before the wind! And so when I hear men say, "Here is a body of Christians." What? Those are Christians? Those cowardly people who hardly dare speak a word for Jesus? Those covetous people who give a few cheese-parings to His cause? Those inconsistent people whom you would not know to be Christian professors if they did not label themselves?

What? Such beings followers of a crucified Savior? The world sneers at such pretensions! And well it may! With such a Leader let us follow bravely. Bought with such a price, and being owned by such a Master, let us glorify Him who condescends to call such poor creatures as we are His portion—whom He has set apart for Himself. And let us remember that by men who profess to be "bought with a price," the name of Christ is compromised if their behavior is unseemly. If we are not holy and gracious, ungodly men are sure to say, "That is one of your Believers in God. That is one of your Christians."

Do not let it be so! Every soldier in a regiment ought to feel that the renown of the whole army depends upon him, and he must fight as if the winning of the battle rested upon himself. This will cause every man to be a hero. Oh, that every Christian felt as if the honor of God and the Church rested upon him—for in a measure it certainly does! May we so seek God that when we come to die we may feel that we have lived for something. That although our hope has rested alone in what Jesus did, yet we have not made that an excuse for doing nothing ourselves. Though we shall have no good works in which to glory, yet may we bring forth fruit that shall be for the glory of our Lord.

I feel I so desire to glorify God—body, soul, and spirit while I breathe—that I would even do so on earth after I am dead. I would still urge my Brethren on in our Lord's cause. Old Zizka, the Hussite leader, when about to die, said to his soldiers—"Our enemies have always been afraid of my name in the time of battle. When I am dead take my skin and make a drum-head of it, and beat it whenever you go to battle. When the enemy hears the sound they will tremble, and you will remember that Zizka calls on his Brethren to fight valiantly."

Let us so live that when we die, we live on, like Abel, who being dead yet speaks. The only way to do this is to live in the power of the Immortal God and under the influence of His Holy Spirit—then out of our graves we shall speak to future generations. When Doctor Payson died he desired that his body should be placed in a coffin, and that his hearers should be invited to come and see it. Across his breast was placed a paper bearing these words, "Remember the words which I spoke unto you, being yet present with you."

May our lives be such that even if we are not public speakers, yet others may remember our example and so may hear what our lives spoke while we were yet on earth. Your bodies and your spirits are God's—oh, live to God, and glorify Him in the power of His Spirit as long as you have any breath below, that so when the breath is gone, your very bones, like those of Joseph, shall be a testimony. Even in the ashes of the saints their fires live on. In their hallowed memories they rise like a phoenix from their ashes.

The Lord make us more and more practically His own, and may His name be glorious, forever and ever. Amen, and amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Peter 1.

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REDEMPTION BY PRICE

NO. 1554

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 22, 1880,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“You are not your own: for you are bought with a price.”
1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.***

ATTACKS have often been made upon the central doctrine of the Gospel, namely, the doctrine of Redemption or Atonement, for it is well-known to be the crux of the Gospel. These onslaughts have, in many instances, been very craftily made. They have professed to be mere corrections of our phraseology, but were essentially assaults upon the Truth of God itself. We believe that in and through the blood of Jesus we have redemption and that we have been ransomed from destruction by the Mediator's death, the Lord Jesus having bought us by the suit and service which He rendered in our place and on our behalf.

When we speak very plainly upon this point, certain pretentious Divines, whose custom it is to sneer at the old theology, at once raise objections to what they are pleased to call, “the *mercantile* theory of Atonement.” With weak minds an ugly phrase stands for argument, but in this case there is really nothing horrible in the description, even if it is allowed all its force. There may have been, among us, certain persons who carried ideas of the shop and the counter into their notion of redemption, but we maintain that even these were nearer the Truth of God than those who reduce the ransom paid by the Lord Jesus to nothing and make His Redemption a meaningless figure of speech.

Within the idea of *purchase* lies hidden the essence of the Savior's work and, therefore, it is to be adhered to. He is coming again to complete the Redemption of the purchased possession and we shall not forego our hope to please the squeamish. Paul, at any rate, was not afraid of the mercantile theory, if men so please to call it, for he writes, “You are *bought*,” yes, to make it still more sure, he puts it, “bought with a *price*.” This is put very strongly and there is no planing it down. If it means anything, it must mean that a price was paid for us! Instead of our being forever captives under bondage and death, a *Ransom* has been found, according to that ancient saying, “Deliver him from going down to the Pit—I have found a ransom.”

The song of Heaven is no idle rhapsody. Listen how they chant the solemn hymn before the Throne of God and the Lamb, saying, “You are worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof: for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation.” Was it not said of Him while He was here below, “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many”? There was a *substitutionary* Sacrifice

presented on the behalf of His people by Jesus Christ, who thus redeemed His chosen from their lost estate. This was a matter of fact and an efficacious action, actually ransoming those who were redeemed.

We do not believe in a cloudy, phantom-like Atonement, which did something or nothing and was a mere exhibition without results. We believe that Jesus did actually redeem His people by a Ransom, which Ransom was His suffering and death in their place, by which the justice of God was satisfied and His Law was honored. If there were no other text in Scripture, the one which is now before us would abundantly justify us in using those very expressions which have been ridiculed as mercantile—"You are not your own: for you are bought with a price." Though we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, yet the transaction was, none the less, real and effective. An equivalent was given, a possession was secured.

The fact is, the objection is not merely to the mercantile expression—the objection is to the very idea of Substitution and a vicarious Sacrifice. The pretense is that mistaken words are criticized, but it is a mere pretense—the gun is aimed at Christ's bearing Divine Wrath in our place—this is the doctrine which they cannot endure! They will have to aim very often and burst their cannon before they will be able to destroy *our* belief in the truth of Substitution while we have the 53rd chapter of Isaiah remaining in the Bible and other passages of sacred Scripture to the same effect. Even if they could disprove the Doctrine of Vicarious Suffering and show that Substitution is an ignorant fancy, the best thing they could do would be to wring their hands in agony because they had blotted out the brightest star that ever shone amid the storm-wreck of a tempestuous conscience.

No Truth of God within the circle of theology is so eminently consolatory to souls burdened with sin as the great fact that Jesus Christ bore the sins of many and carried away, on His own shoulders, the transgressions of His people. Let others believe or disbelieve, I nail my colors to the Cross where Jesus, my Lord, paid His blood as a price for me! It is a high honor to our poor fallen race that man is the only redeemed creature in the universe! He, alone, has cost the Lord His life! Rebellious angels kept not their first estate—they are left to their doom and no price has ever been paid for them. Other angels, sustained by God's power, still keep their high position in His sacred courts, but they are not redeemed by *blood*. In them there is an exhibition of Divine wisdom, power and goodness, but there is no display of Free Grace and dying love.

Only man stands in this respect—nowhere else is the blood-mark—the blood-mark of the Son of God! We, alone, are the flock of God which He has redeemed with His own blood! Therefore *man* cost God more than the whole universe besides. The Lord could speak worlds into existence. He could mold ponderous orbs as one rolls clay between His palms, or create constellations as the smith strikes off sparks from the anvil—but to erect the new creation of *redeemed men*, God must endure the loss of His own Son—resign His Beloved to death! And in the Person of the Only-Begotten, He must ransom men by His own sufferings! I may not venture, now, to

describe the agonies of the Incarnate God, but all these were necessary to redeem man. The Lord has given more than Ethiopia or Seba for us, for He has given Himself!

Think of yourself, my dear Friend, (if, indeed, you have believed in Christ), as being a singularity in the realm of beings, a special wonder in the creation! You, alone, can say, "I know that my Redeemer lives." Neither in the earth nor in the stars, however they may be peopled, nor in yonder golden streets, are there *any* beings except men who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. We are the costliest of creatures! We are dearest to God, for He has spent most upon us and made us the choice objects of His heavenly expenditure. This work of Redemption is a very marvelous one, for the more one tries to study it, the more its many-sidedness appears.

In what respects and under what aspects have we been ransomed? Time would fail me to recount them all. We have been redeemed, we know, in reference to Divine Justice. We had violated God's Law and, therefore, there was a punishment to be exacted from us. This punishment the Lord Jesus has endured in our place. "The Lord has made to meet on Him the iniquities of us all." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed." We are justified, or reckoned as just through the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus! Our great Redeemer has done, for the honor of the Law, more than all of us put together could have done and this stands as a ransom for us—so that we may go free because He has suffered in our place whatever was due from us to the Law of God.

This is a blessed aspect of Redemption and one which we hope to always keep prominent in our thoughts and in our teaching. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree." May the Holy Spirit teach us to value this great Redemption! Furthermore, we are redeemed from the power of evil, even as the Holy Spirit says in the Epistle to Titus, "He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." This Redemption may be said to be not so much Redemption by price as by *power*, yet even in this, there are signs of price, for the Apostle says, "He gave Himself for us."

It is true that no price was paid to *Satan*—that is not to be imagined for an instant! We were never the devil's rightful possession and, therefore, he is compelled to let go of his captives neither for price or reward. We have been brought out from under the power of evil even as Israel was brought out from under the tyranny of Pharaoh. No redemption money was paid to the Egyptian king, but the Lord redeemed His people with a high hand and a stretched out arm—it was a case of redemption by *power* and yet that smear of blood made by the hyssop on the lintel and the two side posts still indicated that price went hand in hand with power and the blood of Atonement was needed as well as the rod of Omnipotence.

In our deliverance from evil it is not only by the power of the Holy Spirit that we are delivered, but He applies the blood as a cleansing power. The Lord Jesus is “made unto us sanctification and redemption.” Of those who conquer sin and Satan it is said, “they overcame by the blood of the Lamb.” Grace breaks the yoke from off the neck of the Believer, but the finger of delivering Grace is dipped in blood and leaves Redemption’s token wherever it comes. Do you see it? Know you not that you are not your own—the price paid in Gethsemane and Calvary has set you apart? Another phase of this Redemption which we do not often think of seems to me to be suggested by the text. There was a time, Brothers and Sisters, when we thought ourselves to be our own.

Now, says my text, “You are *not* your own.” “Because you are ‘bought with a price.’” Bought from whom? May I not fairly say that, in one sense, you were bought from yourselves? Where else is the force of the expression, “You are not your own.” Through the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus, a compensation has been given to *you* for yourselves, so that your rights to yourselves are now the property of your Lord Jesus! That independence and liberty which you once delighted in is now surrendered. You said, “Our lips are our own—who is Lord over us? Who is the Lord that we should obey His voice? As for us, we will be free and do according to our own wills!” But the matchless Ransom has been paid and all idea of self-will and self-indulgence are trespasses upon the enclosed possession of the Redeemer.

Our vested interest in ourselves, though it never was a true property at all, is once and for all surrendered to Him who has laid down His life for us! We have received at the Lord’s hands a thousand-fold for all that we hand over to Him—the price is so great, so altogether beyond all computation—that we gladly yield our unworthy selves to be the Lord’s forever and ever. I shall need you to remember this form of redemption and to that end I will set it first among the points to which I shall call your attention.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, let us try, at this time, to feel the force of the Truth of God that we are bought with a price and are not our own, for it must not remain a dead letter. It ought to affect our hearts and influence our lives. I shall try to set it forth to you in a series of contrasts which I may compare to the double glasses of a stereoscope—they will, I trust, aid you in seeing more clearly and feeling more forcibly. We can never be too much affected by this important practical Truth of God. O that the Spirit of God would press it home upon our hearts and consciences!

I. First, I see in the text COMPENSATION AND YET GAIN. Compensation is intended to make good a loss, but in our case the transfer of ourselves from self to Christ is a clear gain. Compensation, then, first—“You are not your own: for you are bought with a price.” You have surrendered, as Believers, your right and property in yourselves. Have you made a good bargain? Assuredly you have, for, first of all, you *live* and, had you retained your supposed right to yourself, you would have died! He that saves his life in such a sense, by keeping it to himself, shall lose it.

You were, in fact, already dead while you lived, because you were living in pleasure and finding that pleasure in yourself. But now the Lord has given you a new, high, noble, *Divine* life. Is not that a compensation, indeed, for giving up the groveling life of the flesh? He has given you, in addition to life, *peace*—you are now at rest in Jesus. As a Believer, you know that your sins are forgiven for Christ's name's sake, that the Father Himself loves you, that you are accepted in the Beloved and safe in Jesus' hands! You enjoy great peace—deep, lasting, ever-flowing. Is it not much better to have peace and to be Christ's than to be like the troubled sea that cannot rest and belong to yourself? One drop of sacred peace is an abundant recompense for the yielding up of yourself to Jesus.

In addition to peace, you have *joy*. Sometimes when it is at flood, your happiness is as much as you can bear—you know what it is to be carried off your feet by a whirlwind of intense delight when you are musing upon your Lord and His love to you and the price paid to win you. Oh, the joy, the unutterable blessedness which is the fruit of the Spirit! What delights grow on the bitter tree, the cross! No clusters of the vine can equal the fruit of Calvary's Cross! I am sure that whatever earthly joys you have given up, you are abundantly compensated for them all by the joy you find in the purchase price which Christ Jesus gave for you. And then you have a grand reversion—a hope which looks across the stream of death to a better land—a hope of immortality with Christ, of likeness to Him and association with Him and glory with Him forever!

Why, my Friend, if there had been a kingdom to renounce; if there had been a world of self-denials and 10,000 pleasant things to be given up, you might have been well content to be repaid by such a price! You have received for your little, the fullness which is in Christ who is All in All—yes, the polluting joys, the dangerous independence, the rebellious indulgences of sin at their best and all put together are not worthy to be compared with the matchless endowments which your Redeemer has bestowed upon you! Today you possess all that the blood of Jesus confers and effects and I cannot, in a few words, tell you the whole of that treasury of Grace! The price which Jesus paid means cleansing—"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."

Is it not better to be cleansed and to be the Lord's than to be filthy and be your own? The blood of Jesus brings us near to God, for we are "made near by the blood of Christ." Is it not better to be near to the Lord and belong to Jesus than to be in the far-off country with the swine and the husks and be your own? The blood has spoken peace—it "speaks better things than that of Abel." Is it not better to be God's and hear the blood cry, "Peace," than to be your own and to hear a terrible sound in your ears of judgment to come? The blood has given you entrance into the Most Holy Place, even into the very heart of God! And is it not better to be the Lord's beloved and to come close to Him and speak with Him as a man speaks with his friend than to be your own and to be shut out from God and from the Glory of His Presence? Until the blood is sprinkled, no man may dare to approach the thrice holy God, but that once done, we have access with boldness! Is not this a joy? If any complain that a Christian's

life is a life of self-denial as, indeed, sometimes it is, yet the compensations are incalculably rich, for in the blood of Jesus we have had given to us 10,000 times over and above all that we ever lost for Christ's sake.

So far *compensation*. But then we must not forget that the supposed loss is an actual gain! It is a fine business when a man is compensated for a loss and yet the loss, itself, becomes an advantage to him. Yet most emphatically this has been our case, for anything that we have lost for Christ's sake, we may truly count as clear gain. We have only lost that which dishonored, injured and enslaved us. Blessed loss! What were we without Christ? We were the slaves of self! But if set free from self, we are, indeed, set free from a worse than Egyptian bondage whose wage is death! It was inevitable that we must have some master or other, but all our former masters were tyrants. Now, Brothers and Sisters, we are set free from Satan and is not that a gain to be delivered from the Prince of the power of the air?

Once we served the world and it was our lord, but what gain it is to feel that we are no longer the servants of men because we are bought with a price. Instead of needing that anything should be given to us as a recompense for self-surrender, we can reply—We find our joy and our delight in being altogether Christ's and the very height of our ambition is that, by-and-by, we may live entirely according to the will of God! Oh, that this much-desired were fully come, for we shall never know perfect liberty until we reach that lofty degree and then we shall be ready to step into Glory. The Lord help us in it!

So much, then, on the first point—the Lord Jesus has, by His blood, given us compensation and yet there never was a loss, but an unspeakable gain.

II. Look at the text again and you will see in it HIGH VALUE AND YET LOWLINESS—"You are not your own: for you are bought with a price." Value is clearly here, for we are bought with an *immense* price. How great a store ought man to set by himself as before God, for he is a purchased possession. God thinks not lightly of man, but esteems him sufficiently, in Divine condescension, to buy him with the richest price conceivable! He lost the angels and would not pay a penny for them—but when man had fallen, He laid down His life to ransom him! You, my dear Friend, should have the very lowest view of yourself, but yet see how *God* has exalted you! "What is man, that You are mindful of him, O God? And the son of man, that You visit him?"

Yet He does visit him. He has visited him so as to take his nature into union with the Divine! More than that, He visited him so as to redeem him with pangs and unutterable anguish. If you want to know the value of yourself, see Christ upon the Cross and make a note of His wounds. You are not a thing to be trifled with. Do not reckon so cheaply of yourself as to stoop to become a mere money-grubber or earthworm! You are worth more than that! Do not fancy that you ever can truly be yourself while you are living for any human objective or any earthly aim—you are too precious to waste yourself on fading flowers.

In the first place, you are a being of God's making. In His own image, remember, He made you and nothing but sin could spoil you—and now you have been bought and, therefore, have become a costly thing—more costly than a mere creation. In the Lord's house you are not a vessel of dishonor, a broken crock to be flung on the dunghill and another obtained in your place—you are a vessel of honor fit for the Master's use since He has paid so dearly for you. "You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." There is a sanctity about a blood-bought man or woman of the highest degree—the Lord has purchased Him with His life!

A sanctity surrounds even these frail bodies, for the Apostle is speaking about them in the text now before us. Let me read what he says upon them—"What? Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God and you are not your own?" Never, therefore, give up your body to idleness, drunkenness, or any form of uncleanness. Paul speaks especially of fornication as a thing not to be thought of among the saints because the body has been valued by God at a great price and purchased accordingly. And it must not, therefore, be defiled by even an impure *conversation*. Though Paul, in another sense, called it a "vile body," yet it cannot be vile in all respects, for even now it is a sacred thing, the shrine of the eternal Spirit!

We ought to value the very dust of the departed saint. It little matters what becomes of a dead body, yet would I have it laid reverently in its last resting place and let its bones be undisturbed until the trumpet of the archangel shall sound, for every atom of a Believer's body has been redeemed with the blood of Jesus Christ, as well as His soul and spirit! Yes, his entire manhood has been purchased by Christ Jesus. I want you, then, to think of yourselves, you Believers, as precious things! The Lord says to each one of His own beloved, "Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable and I have loved you." You are "the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold." Use yourselves only for honorable purposes, for God puts honor upon you.

Now look at the other side of the picture. You are precious, but you must yet be lowly, for whatever value there is about you, you do not belong to yourself. "You are not your own." Though precious enough to have been bought with a price, yet none of the preciousness is *yours*. Believers, you are the goods and chattels of Christ—as you were once sold under sin, so are you now "bought with a price." We are done with slavery of men, I hope, though in a few countries it ignominiously lingers as a crime on which society has laid its ban. But the *blessed bondage* of belonging to Christ I pray that it may be extended all over the world! "I bear in my body," said Paul, "the marks of the Lord Jesus," as if he had been branded with Christ's name, as sheep and cattle often bear the mark of their owner.

I think he alluded to the scars which had been left by the scourges, or perhaps to the watermark of Baptism which he had received in his entire body—in which some of us greatly rejoice because it is the reminder of our

being dead with Christ and buried with Him. Never can the fact of our immersion into the sacred name be reversed! Only once and that to last forever, we are buried with Christ in Baptism unto death! Into His name have we been plunged, that we may be His forever and no more our own. A man cannot be proud of himself, however he knows his value, when He perceives that not a hair on his head or a finger of his hands belongs to himself.

In true Christian life not a pulse beats for ourselves, not a breath is breathed for ourselves, not a single part of the complex machinery of our body or of our mind or soul remains our own—we are to use all for Christ, for we are bought and sold properties—taken right away from ourselves and owned by Christ by an everlasting tenure as “a purchased possession.” I wish I could get into the mind of all here the thought which burdens my own heart, that we should esteem ourselves as blood-bought men, as being sacred things, as holy as the golden candlestick, or as the golden table of the showbread and yet think of ourselves as being the very least and lowest in the Lord’s house because we are not at all our own. Our honor lies in our Owner!

God forbid that we should glory in anything except that we belong to Christ! Paul cried, “Whose I am and whom I serve!” And this we, too, will say with hearty exultation! We will walk with holy boldness as the Lord’s own, but yet with deep humility as not our own.

III. Thoughtfully let us consider another contrast—“You are not your own: for you are bought with a price.” This brings before my mind SECURITY AND YET WATCHFULNESS. First, security. You will not be lost, for He who owns you is able to keep you. If you were to perish, who would be the loser? Why, He to whom you belong and “you are not your own,” you belong to Christ! My hope of being preserved to the end lies in this fact, that Jesus Christ paid far too much for me ever to let me go. Each Believer cost Him His heart’s blood! Stand in Gethsemane and hear His groans! Then draw near and mark His bloody sweat and tell me—will He lose a soul for whom He suffered like this?

Look at Him hanging on the tree, tortured, mocked, burdened with an awful load and then beclouded with the eclipse of His Father’s face! Do you think He suffered all that and yet will permit those for whom He endured it to be cast into Hell? He will be a greater loser than I shall if I perish, for He will lose what cost Him His life! Surely He will never do that. Here is your security—you are the Lord’s portion and He will not be robbed of His heritage! We are in a hand that bears the scar of the nail! We are hidden in the cleft of a rock—the Rock that was riven for us nearly 1,900 years ago! None can pluck us from the hand which redeemed us—its pressure is too warm with love and strong with might for that.

Now turn the picture over. Look at the other side of the medal. Here is reason for watchfulness. “You are not your own: for you are bought with a price.” Therefore take great care of yourselves and keep your hearts with all diligence, for you are a King’s treasure. If a thing is my own, I may do what I like with it, but if it is entrusted to my care, I must mind how I behave towards it or else I shall be an unfaithful steward. Come, come,

Friend, you may play with yourself if you like if you are your own, but if you belong to Jesus Christ, I charge you by the love you bear Him and by the dignity of His sacred Character and by His death—the price He gave for you—do not pollute or degrade yourself! You are not your own, therefore permit no damage to come to your Lord's estate lest He call you to account.

The prodigal away in the far country may live just as he likes if he is his own, for the citizens of that country and their swine care nothing about how he behaves. Poor wretch that he is, he may destroy himself if he wills—on his own head shall come the loss—nobody will grieve over a fool and a spendthrift. But you and I are not in that condition! We have been brought home and are our Father's own children and we must behave ourselves according to the law of His house and please Him in all things. We have no rights of property in ourselves, now that Christ has purchased us, and it is our solemn duty to act towards ourselves as husbandmen act towards a vineyard, the fruits of which are not to be eaten by themselves, but by their lord.

Let us preserve each cluster of the heart's vine for the King to whom it belongs and trim each walk and train each flower of the soul's garden according to His pleasure. See to it, then, that you waste not and spoil not the royal estate. You are safe in the Lord's hands, therefore rejoice! But mind you take the other side of the Truth and watch so as to keep your garments white by walking close to God, for "you are not your own: you are bought with a price."

IV. A fourth contrast, well worthy to be worked out in your private meditations, is CONSECRATION AND YET PERFECT LIBERTY. "You are not your own: for you are bought with a price"—there is consecration. You are, today, to dedicate yourself wholly and entirely to the Lord because you are not partly redeemed, but *wholly* redeemed. Do you make any provision for the flesh, dear Friend? Do you keep back any faculty you possess from Christ? Is not this a robbery of your Lord? How would you like to think of that particular reservation as being unredeemed? Would you be content to believe that no blood of Christ has ever fallen to redeem that part of you?

Which portion is it which is to be unconsecrated? Is it the body that you would pamper and indulge? What? Have you an unredeemed *body*, then? Are you satisfied that it should be eaten of the worm and never rise from the dust? Or do you give to Christ your loving heart, but reserve your thinking mind to yourself and say, "I will invent my own beliefs and not yield my judgment to the dicta of Revelation"? What? My Friend, have you, then, an unredeemed *intellect*? What is to become of it in that day when only those things shall be gathered into Heaven which have been bought with blood and owned by Christ? In that day when He makes up His jewels, He will not put another man's goods among them!

Do not keep back from Christ even your second-class powers. Withhold not your voice, but *sing* for Jesus, or *speak* for Him if you can! Write for Jesus, paint for Jesus, yes, make and mend garments for His sake! Do not keep back from Christ any minor power that you possess, but ask

God to enable you to consecrate the skill of your fingers to Him as well as the force of your arms, for even your least members are bought with a price. Your time is included in the purchase, for there is never a moment when you are unredeemed! Some people think, perhaps, that they are off duty now and then—let me ask them, “Are you ever off the roll of Redemption? Is there one St. Monday in the week in which you are an unredeemed man and may be your own or the devil’s? Suppose you die that day? What then?”

As this consecration holds good for all times, so in all manner of ways. You are consecrated to Christ to do whatever you can do to His Glory—to suffer whatever you can suffer as He lays it upon you and, above all, to be, as well as to do, and to suffer—to be forever the Lord’s! There is a great deal in actually being Christ’s, even when you are not actively engaged—when you are neither praying, nor singing, nor working, but, as it were, standing still—it is well to be as the sweet flowers in the garden which exhale the perfume of their innermost hearts in silent surrender to the passing gales. O that we may be full of Grace and may the wind of the Divine Spirit scatter abroad the sweetnesses of our inner life, even when we are scarcely conscious of it!

But then, there is with this, a perfect liberty. I believe that to be consecrated to Christ is when we come to the bottom of things, the sure way to give to all the faculties of our nature the fullest possible play. Vice is the indulgence of the passions. True. Therefore some think it joy, but if all the passions of a man of every sort were to be exercised in their right harmony and proportion, as they would have been had he remained in his first estate, then perfect virtue and not vice, would have been the result—and in that virtue manhood would have found a delightful liberty. The propensities of our nature as nature—not as *fallen* nature—will have their right indulgence when they acknowledge a complete subservience to the will and Law of God. Liberty to sin is slavery, liberty *from* sin is freedom!

There is no liberty to a man like that of being under Law to God. If we are encased within the compass of the Law, we are no more restricted than a bird which is imprisoned within the boundless expanse of air, or a fish which is shut in by the ocean! Obedience to Christ is our element! The element of a truly renewed man is holiness and, therefore, when you and I shall become perfectly consecrated to Christ, so as to live only for Him, we shall have reached that way of living which God designed us to follow wherein we shall be perfectly filled with happiness.

Do not think, therefore, that the more a Christian you become, the more you will feel of restriction and bond. Say, rather, that you will rejoice more in the freedom of such as good men, alone, can understand. The fact is that self-denial, itself, will become no self-denial, but a supreme joy when once the heart is perfectly loyal to its Lord!

V. To close, I will mention a fifth pair of contrasts—SUBMISSION AND EXPECTANCY. These are both suggested by my text. Submission—“You are not your own” and, therefore, God has a right to do whatever He wills with you. We cannot tell what He may do with us, yet, but if we must suffer pain week after week upon our bed, He has a right to lay us there and

chasten us in every limb. If the Lord says, "Go into your room and cough all the winter through and then melt away with decline," we must bow before His decree, remembering these words, "You are not your own." Or, if He says, "Come down from your position of comfort into hard work and poverty," again you must remember, "you are not your own."

Or if He says, "Migrate across the seas. Go to a new country, cut every tie and break the fondest connections," you must cheerfully obey, for, "you are not your own." If the call of duty should be, "Go, preach the Gospel among the heathen! Go and die among them—find a grave where malaria shortens life, or cruelty brings sudden death"—you must go without question, for, "you are not your own." Ours is not to raise questions or debates, for those can only be legitimate among persons who are their own—

***"Ours not to reason why:
Ours but to do and die,"***

for we are not our own! Submission, absolute submission, is the rightful position of the blood-bought!

Side by side with that comes expectancy. I could not do much for myself if I were my own, but if I am Christ's, I expect that *He* will do great things for me. Do you see those two boys? Neither can do much for himself, but one of them has great expectations. And why? Because he has a kind and wealthy father, of whom he expects great things. He says, "I am my father's son and he will take care of me." It is the same with us! Our great Owner's goodness and power have raised our expectations! Look at this body of mine—it must decay and become mere dust—but my Lord has bought it and you can be sure He did not purchase it to let it end in corruption! It is not my own, therefore I feel sure that He who owns it, will lift it up, again, in nobler form than it now wears and make it bright and glistening like His own, not liable to pain, or sickness, or decay.

I know He will! If this body were only mine, I should expect there would be an end of it when the gravedigger hides it in the earth. But if it is my Lord's, since He has paid so much for it, He *must* have some grand intention concerning it! He sees in this body the raw material out of which His Grace and power can make something that shall glorify Himself. Is there not a guarantee for great expectations in our belonging to Christ? We are not our own! Then these minds of ours—depend upon it He will enlarge them! He will increase our mental caliber and make His property more worthy of its Owner. You say, dear Brother, "I shall never be much of a man. I have but small capacity for learning." Well, what you have belongs to Christ and *He* will sanctify your talents and increase them and give you wisdom to use them for His honor!

You do not know what you may yet become. You will know more after you have been in Heaven five minutes than all the doctors of divinity on earth! For there you shall know even as you are known. You shall know Christ and see Him and rejoice in Him beyond all that you can now conceive. You are not your own, but He who owns you means to make something out of you—He bought you at too great a price to let you run to waste. As for your entire being, rest assured that He intends to reflect His

own Glory by means of it throughout eternity. I never knew Christ act unwisely, yet, and though sometimes it seems to me as though I could have forbidden the Cross and His Sacrifice—as though His death were too dear a price to redeem such insignificant beings as we are—yet He must have seen in our poor, fallen nature, in its very sin and misery, room for His Grace, room for His power and, therefore, the opportunity for a grand display of His power and love to the amazement of angels and principalities and powers throughout eternity!

At any rate, a piece of clay that lies in the pit, all its own, has no destiny before it until it has been purchased by the potter and beaten and prepared. And when it feels itself revolving on the wheel, it has just reason to believe that it will bear a useful part in time to come. It might say, if it could speak, “I am not my own lump of clay! I have been bought with a great price and, therefore, something is to be made of me! It does not yet appear what I shall be, but when he that fashions, has finished me, I shall, no doubt, be worthy of the hand that has worked this upon me.” Raise your expectations as high as you will—God means to do for you exceedingly above what you can ask or even think! According to the riches of His Glory in Christ Jesus He will show the greatness of His power in you that believe in Jesus Christ! Blessed are the men, then, of whom it is true, “You are not your own: for you are bought with a price.”

Now, I finish with this question—“Are you your own, dear Hearer?” I can imagine some sitting here saying, “Of course I am! I do not believe in surrendering myself to God.” Well, then, if you are your own, you will go to your own place and where your own place is read the Word of God and discover! There shall you find that those who know not God shall be driven from His Presence! If they are their own, they must be their own comforters and their own helpers, but they shall be driven far off from God forevermore! Are you anxious to be saved, my dear Hearer? Then the way of salvation is that you believe in Jesus Christ—and it is an essential part of that believing that you surrender yourself to Christ.

If He will save you, shall He have you to be His possession? If He will buy you, will you be His? If He will redeem you, will you confess that you are not your own? Many a man is unable to find peace because he wants to be independent and demands to have his own will and way. Surrender! That is a necessary exhortation to every revolted one who would be restored. Surrender! Surrender at discretion! God cannot deal with rebels while they carry their weapons in their hands. Down with your weapons! Cry to Him, “Lord, I am dying, starving, perishing! Wrath is upon me! Only let me live and be cleansed and I will be Yours forever, as Your Grace shall help me.”

He will accept you! He *does* accept you, now, if that is the utterance of your heart! And you, too, may go away and sing—

**“I am Yours and Yours alone,
This I gladly, fully own.”**

God grant it, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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REDEMPTION AND ITS CLAIMS

NO. 1163

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 8, 1874,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"You are bought with a price."
1 Corinthians 6:20.*

*"You are bought with a price."
1 Corinthians 7:23.*

THE same words are found in each place, though a different inference is drawn from them. "You are bought with a price." This morning's text was, "Without money and without price," [#1161] and to the best of my ability I tried to show how freely the blessings of the Gospel are bestowed upon the sons of men. But though they cost us nothing, they cost the Savior dearly. They are without price to us, but what a price He paid! Well did our poet put it in the remarkable verse which we sang—

*"There's never a gift His hand bestows
But cost His heart a groan."*

Out of that fact grow certain most weighty practical Truths of God and I have chosen it as the subject of this evening's discourse that I may urge them upon your minds. May the Holy Spirit work graciously through the Word which you will hear and cause you to live as those who are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

First, I shall have to say to you that *redemption is our chief blessing*—nothing better can be said of you than this, "You are bought with a price." Then I shall have to remind you that *redemption on God's part becomes His paramount claim upon us*. And thirdly, I shall have to show that *this claim is remarkably extensive*, and I shall urge you to admit it.

I. First, then, "YOU ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE." To every man of whom this may be said, it is the best news he ever heard! An angel sent from Heaven could not bring to any man or woman a more delightful message than this, "You are bought with a price, even with the precious blood of Christ." "You are Christ's," says the Apostle in the chapter we read to you (1 Corinthians 3), and he seemed as if his heart glowed as he said it. He even made it the climax of a remarkable burst of eloquence. "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

To be bought with a price is the grandest distinction of our manhood and lifts us above angels themselves! It puts great honor upon the saints, even as the Lord has said, "Since you are precious in My sight, you have been honorable and I have loved you." Redemption is a greater mercy than *creation*. It is no mean blessing to have been made and to have been made

a man rather than a dog or a toad, or a worm—to have been blest with intellect, with a mind that can soar into the unseen, a judgment which can weigh, a memory which can retain, an imagination which can create and color thoughts of every kind. It is no little matter to be capable of a mental capacity which widens the sphere of existence, beliefs which open up the past and make us see the far-gone ages and hopes which relieve the darkness of the present with lamps borrowed from the future.

It is a great thing to be a man and not a bird—a man with a soul which will never fall by the fowler's gun. It is a great thing to be an *immortal* man, to be a creature that shall live on forever, into whom God has dropped a spark of undying flame. It is a grand thing to have a spirit within us and not to be dumb driven cattle. But for all that, although man is highly elevated in the scale of being, and stands even at the very top of being as respects this world, having dominion over all the fowls of the air and the fish of the sea, and whatever passes through the paths of the sea—yet if you, O created man, are not *redeemed*, everything about you will only be turned into dust, so that it were better for you that a millstone had been tied about your neck, that you had been thrown into the depths of the sea, or even better for you that you had never been born, if you are not redeemed! “Bought with a price” makes existence life! To be unredeemed would make existence an endless death.

Providence, also, is a short word, calling before our minds a great mass of mercies. But Providence is second in its blessedness to redemption. I would remind you of the inestimable blessings which the Providence of God has brought to many here present. It is no small thing to be in good health, no little thing to have your reason preserved. It is no minor blessing to have bread to eat and raiment to put on—and not to be distressed as many of the poorest of our Brethren are as to where they shall lay their heads—and where they shall find tomorrow's food. Some of us are surrounded with many comforts, and ought, every time we look at the bed on which we sleep at night, and the room in which we spend our days, sing unto God who has favored us so much—

**“Not more than others we deserve,
But God has given us more.”**

Look around you! Some of you have not only the necessities, but the *luxuries* of life. You are exceedingly favored in these things. But, oh, if you are not redeemed, what will it matter though you were clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and fared sumptuously each day, like Dives, and then should lift up your eyes in the flames of Hell? What would it matter, though you had the comeliness and majestic appearance of an Absalom, and yet over you a pious father would have to say, “Would God I had died for you! O Absalom, my son, my son!” What would it be to you to have been possessor of the world and to have called the seas your own, if you had no part or lot in the redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ and were never saved from wrath through Him? Redemption demands a louder note of gratitude than creation! Sweet as Providence must ever be to the Believer, yet redemption, *redemption* is the best wine kept unto the last—the

last and best work of Heaven—the mirror in which the brightest attributes of Jehovah are most clearly reflected.

This is the headstone of the corner, crowning the great temple of Divine Grace. “God so loved the world”—not as to make it fair and beautiful—that is not enough! “God so loved the world”—not so as to sustain it and give it day and night, and summer and winter—*that* is not enough! But the line that will fathom the depths of Divine Love is this—He “so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.” Remember, dear Friends, that redemption is that which gives effect to all the other great blessings of God!

I say, “great blessings,” for I refer to *spiritual* blessings—all these need redemption to complete their design. For instance, election, the wellhead of Divine Grace, needs the conduit pipe of *redemption* to bring its streams down to sinners. We are chosen of God, but unto *obedience*, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. The saints are chosen in Him—without Him of what good would election be? Where, also, would be our calling? Vain would it be to be called if there were no feast of dying love for us to be called *to* and no fountain filled with blood to which we might come at the call! Redemption is the fullness of all the blessings of God! They are like Gideon’s fleece and redemption bedews them! It is the key of Heaven, the channel of Grace, the door of Hope. It constitutes our song in the house of our pilgrimage and will be the theme of our eternal music above.

I would not fail to remind you, also, that redemption, at this moment, is the foundation of all the real peace that any man possesses. If you have any peace of mind worth having, you have found it at the foot of the Cross. If the tempest of your fears concerning the wrath of God has been quieted—there is only one voice which could have stilled its boisterous noise—it is the voice of Jesus. There is no peace apart from the blood of Jesus, unless it is that delusive peace which, like the solemn stillness which precedes the hurricane, is only the forerunner of destruction! All the peace you have is through *redemption* and all the security you have comes by the same way. You hope to be saved at the last. Your trust is that you shall die triumphantly and rise rejoicingly—but it is all through the blood of Jesus! Where were all the saints if it were not for redeeming Grace and dying love? Notwithstanding their professions, they are, without Christ, as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Piety has no root where redemption is unknown. Past experience and present enjoyment would melt away like the coating of morning’s frost before the rising sun were it not that we are sealed by the precious blood of Christ! The Lord knows them that are His and will keep them securely to the end.

But, oh, Beloved, there is one more Truth of God never to be forgotten! It is through Redeeming Grace that we expect to enter Heaven! In a few short weeks, or months, or, perhaps, years, you and I, who believe in Jesus, will be in Glory! We shall have done with these workdays here and shall have entered into the endless Sabbath! We shall be—

“Where congregations never break up,

And worship has no end.

Our head shall soon wear the immortal crown and our hands shall bear the harp from which we will draw the richest music of praise! But our *only* hope to enter there is through the *blood*—and our only song shall be, “We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” O you morning stars that sang together when a new-made world first revolved around the sun! O you wondering spirits who have often admired the Wisdom and the Justice of God in dealing with the sinful race of men, lift high your notes and sing yet sweeter songs concerning redemption! And let your wonder never cease that God should become Man and, as Man, should suffer, bleed, and die that He might redeem His people—that of them it might be said they were “bought with a price”!

II. I have thus assured you all that redemption is our best blessing. I trust you will not rest without it. Now, I want to dwell upon the next point, namely, that therefore REDEMPTION IS THE LORD’S PARAMOUNT CLAIM UPON US. Paul does not say, “You are not your own, for God made you.” That is true of all things that are—cattle, the trees, the dust of the earth as well as regenerated man. He does not say, “You are not your own for God created you.” That would be true of the devil and his angels, and of the whole race of rebellious men.

Neither does he say, “You are not your own for God preserves you.” That would be most true, for God, who keeps the breath in our nostrils, ought to have our praise. But that also would be true of *all* creatures, even of the most wicked. But there is a special point here, “You are not your own—you are *bought*,” not merely made and preserved, but *bought* and, “bought with a price.” You who are children of God, you were bought as the devils never were, for Jesus never died to save them! “He took not up angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham.” You are bought as the ungodly were not, for they remain the slaves of Satan and are not redeemed from their vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers. They have rejected the purchase price—they remain unredeemed from their slavery to sin.

But you have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot! And therefore Christ lays His pierced hand upon you and says, “You are Mine.” Your King sets the broad arrow on you and marks you tonight as royal property. There was one possession which Jacob had which he greatly valued and which he gave to his darling son, Joseph, “because,” he said, “I took it out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.” You, also, are the possession which Christ values beyond everything, because He has delivered you out of the hand of sin and Satan by His own sufferings and death—and because of this He has the highest conceivable right of property in you. He is not merely your Creator and Preserver, but He is your Redeemer and, therefore, if all the world should refuse Him homage, and all men should revolt from Him, and even if the angels should desert His standard, yet *you* must not, for you are bought with a price. Other claims

are forcible, but this claim is overwhelming. Other bands are strong, but these cords of love are invincible. The love of Christ constrains us.

Now let us look at this claim. Think, Beloved, what you were bought *from*. You were a slave and you have been redeemed! You were a slave to *sin*. Remember that. Perhaps there was a time when you could rap out an oath as well as anybody and when the pleasures of this world and the lusts thereof were sweet morsels under your tongue. How did you come to be saved from bad habits and filthy passions? You are bought with a price! You are the Lord's freeman! You have broken those chains, but not by *your* power. You have been bought with a price, for "you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ." *There* is a redemption from sin!

Then you have been redeemed from the *punishment* of sin. You had begun to feel that. You were full of doubts and fears and dreadful apprehensions of God's wrath. You felt as if Hell had begun in you. It is not so now, the blood of redemption has spoken peace and you are no more afraid. Well do I remember when the flames of Hell burned in *my* soul, as far as they could in this human life, yes, they dried up my spirit and parched up my heart, so that my soul chose strangling rather than life! It was such a wretched thing to live.

But it is not so now, blessed be God! We are redeemed from remorse and despair, and set free from the horrible sense of guilt! In a little time we should have been in Hell—but since we have believed we never shall come into the place of torment—for sin is forgiven and the sense of sin is removed. We can say in the words of our text of last Sunday night, "Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that has risen again, who sits at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." We are redeemed from sin, from remorse, and from Hell itself! And now, at this moment, we are redeemed from the avenging justice of God. Jesus Christ has borne our sins in His own body on the tree, and by the merit of His death has forever rendered compensation to the injured honor of Divine Justice. He has magnified the Law and made it honorable so that the Law, itself, can ask no more of a sinner for whom Christ has died, for Christ has paid to the Law all that Justice could demand.

Oh, think of that! Rejoice, Beloved, that you are redeemed from sin, and death, and Hell and the claims of unbending Justice—and surely you will feel that there is a claim upon you that you should be the Lord's. Reflect most lovingly upon that dear Friend who bought you out of iron bondage, who it was that redeemed you! You have not been redeemed by an angel. Dear would the angelic name have been had it been so! But angels were powerless in this grand affair. Who stooped to pick you up, O insect of a day? Who stooped to save you? Who but He who bears earth's huge pillars up and spreads the heavens abroad? The Son of God, Omnipotent, Eternal and Infinite, has fallen in love with the fallen sons of man—and for them has donned the garment of human flesh and in that flesh has suf-

ferred to the death—and died a most shameful death upon the gallows of Calvary!

Oh, tell it everywhere that Jesus Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever, has redeemed us! And after that, who will say that we do not belong to Him? Then think of the price He paid. The text does not tell us about it, and surely the reason for its silence is to be found in the fact that words cannot express the mighty sum. “You are bought. You are bought with a price.” Sometimes it is best, when you cannot say what you would, to say nothing at all. The famous painter, when he drew the picture of Agamemnon at the sacrifice of his daughter, felt that he could not depict the sorrow of the father’s countenance and therefore he wisely put a veil over it, and represented him as hiding his face from the fearful sight.

So the Apostle seems to have felt, “I cannot tell you all that Jesus suffered so I will leave it. You are bought with a price.” Now, turn that over lovingly. Muse on it devoutly till your hearts burn like coals of juniper! “A price!” The price was God born at Bethlehem as a man and then living 30 years and more in poverty and contumely, suffering in Gethsemane till sweat of blood fell on the ground—falsely accused, ridiculed, spit upon, buffeted, mocked, scourged, nailed to the Cross, left there to die—while, in His soul, the great millstone of Jehovah’s Wrath crushed His spirit as in an olive-press till His heart was broken and His spirit melted within Him like wax.

Only God knows the sufferings of the Son of God—well does the Greek liturgy pour forth that mysterious plea, “By Your unknown sufferings, good Lord, deliver us,” for unknown they were. O you saints were, indeed, bought with a price, and I charge you, by the agony and bloody sweat, by the Cross and passion, acknowledge the fact that you belong to Jesus! Confess that He bought you with an incalculable price! You are His and would not wish to question that Divine purchase which is the groundwork of your hope. You must not, *cannot* dispute the sacred claims which Jesus has upon you—rather should you cry, “O Son of David, we are Yours and all that we have.”

There is yet this further consideration, that the purchase price of every child of God has been fully paid. I have seen lands which have belonged to men who were reputed to be rich, but there was a heavy mortgage upon them so that, though they called them theirs, they were scarcely so. But there is no mortgage on the saints! There is no debt to be demanded in future ages either of us or of our Redeemer. “It is finished,” said the Savior, and finished it is. He has bought you and He has paid for you. Are you not His? There is not one single good work of yours needed to complete the merit, or a single pang of suffering required from you to perfect the Atonement. You are perfect in Christ Jesus.

Well, then, if the price is paid so fully, are we not completely and fully the Lord’s? I will say this one thing very solemnly to you, and then leave the point. Beloved, if you are ready to confess that you were bought with a price, you must be equally ready to acknowledge that you cannot be your

own, but belong to Him who bought you. Mark you, if the first is not true, then the second does not press. But if the first is true, namely, that Christ redeemed you, then the second is just as true, namely, that you are His and must live as His, or otherwise you are defrauding Him. If you are prepared to give up your redemption, you may also throw away your allegiance to Christ. But if you are not willing to give up redemption by the blood—and I trust you are not, for that is to give up *everything*—then you must also agree to this, that you are not your own, or any other man's, but belong wholly to Christ.

And for that cause you are bound to render Him your whole self, spirit, soul and body. It is only your reasonable service, for every reasonable man expects to have what he has paid for. If Jesus has paid dearly for your soul and if it is confessed that it is His, then let Him have it and be not so base as to rob Christ of the reward of His heart's blood! "Will a man rob God?" Will you rob your Redeemer? Will you steal from Him the purchase of His agonies and deprive Him of that which it cost Him His life to buy? The claim is strong, but only gracious hearts will feel it. O blessed Spirit, cause us to feel it deeply, now, and evermore to *act* under its constraining power!

III. This brings me to the third point, which is, as I have proved the Redeemer's claim—to show THE EXTENT OF IT—the claim of redemption is comprehensive. If you will kindly read the context of my first text you will see that it includes the body and the soul, "Glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God's." There the Apostle speaks, first, of the body. Young man, read that passage when you get home, will you? I cannot read it now, but if you profess to be a Christian, remember that this body of yours is holy and it will rise again from the dead. I charge you, by the blood of Christ, never defile this body either by drunkenness or by lust.

If it were the body of a common man, I would say to you, for your own sake, avoid these evils. But if you are a Christian I have a stronger argument, for your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Mark how strongly the Apostle puts it and try to feel the force of his words. You young men who come to London amidst its vices, read this passage and shun everything that is akin to lewdness, or leads to unchastity—for your bodies were bought with your Lord's lifeblood—and they are not yours to trifle with. Shun the strange woman, her company, her wine, her glances, her house, her songs and her resorts. Your bodies are not yours to injure by self-indulgence of any sort. Keep them pure and chaste for that heavenly Bridegroom who has bought them with His blood.

And then your *soul* is bought, too. I was obliged to mention the body because it is mentioned here and it is so necessary it should be kept pure. But keep the soul pure, too. Christ has not bought these eyes that they should read novels, such as are published nowadays, calculated to lead me into vanity and vice. Christ has not bought this brain of mine that I may revel in the perusal of works of blasphemy and filthiness. He has not given me a mind that I may drag it through the mire with the hope of washing it clean, again, as some seem to do who imagine it to be the right

thing to be always defiling themselves with skepticism and heresy that they may afterwards come to some minister to help them out of the dirt, or some wise friend to scrub the filth off. There will be enough of dust in going along the *best* roads—there is no need to go and roll in every dirt heap which foolish atheists and proud skeptics choose to put in the way. Do not defile your mind—it belongs to God—it is bought with the blood of Jesus.

Your whole manhood belongs to God if you are a Christian. Every faculty, every natural power, every talent, every possibility of your being, every capacity of your spirit—all were *bought*. It would be an awful thing for you if there were any part of you left out of the inventory. That would be a cursed part of the fabric of your being! But it is *all* bought with blood, if you are, indeed, a redeemed man or woman. Therefore keep the whole for Jesus, for it belongs to Him. The Apostle draws from the fact that we are bought with a price in my first text, the inference, “You are not your own.” It is clear as the sun at noon that if you are bought you are not your own.

Now, if I am not my own, what does that negative declaration imply? It means, first, that I may not claim the right to do as I like. I am not my own. If I were my own I might do what I pleased. But I am not my own. I am not to do what I please, but what Christ pleases. I am to please my Lord and Master in *everything*. My question in life is not how shall I get the most happiness to *myself*, but how can I bring the most honor to Him? I am not my own—then I am not to follow my own passions. If I were my own I might fling the bridle on my neck and go where I want and no longer restrain my passions. But since I am not my own, I must not. I cannot live after the flesh. Unless I am false to Him that bought me, I dare not obey the bidding of my corruptions.

Neither, if I am not my own, may I follow my own tastes if in any way I should so bring grief to the people of God or dishonor to the name of Christ. I think, dear Brothers and Sisters, that one of the best tests of a Christian is that he will not only do no wrong, but he will not do that which might lead others to do wrong. Many things are lawful to us which are not expedient. And often the Christian will say to himself, “Such a thing I think I might do if I were Alexander Selkirk on a desert island and nobody saw me. But insomuch as there are others who will take occasion to go beyond this act of mine—and weak ones who will be scandalized by what I do—God forbid I should make my Brother or Sister to offend, for I am not my own. If I were my own master and had not my Lord and His cause to consider, I might do a thousand things. But I will deny myself many lawful things for His sake and the sake of His Church, for I am not my own. I will deny myself even *allowable* things that I may manifest that I do not belong to myself, but to Him.”

I am not my own. Then I must not trust my own reasonings. If I were my own teacher, then, of course, I should learn my lessons from my own book. But I have a Rabbi, even Jesus, and I am resolved with meekness to learn of Him. I thought I was wise, once, but now I have become a little

child, and I love to sit at Jesus' feet to learn of Him, for I have surrendered my reason to Him. I believe what He teaches me because He says so. His *ipse dixit* stands to me instead of argument, for what He says must be true. I am not my own and so I must not seek my own ends. I must not live in this world that I may get rich, or that I may be famous. I may trade and get riches, but it must be that I may use them for Him. I have a family to be kept. Yes, I must give my family to Christ, and then work to keep Christ's family—and so shall I be working for Christ.

It is not my business to support myself, for the Lord is my Shepherd, but the Lord supports me through my own exertions and therefore do I, even in common labor, serve Him. "Having food and raiment," I shall be content. And I shall live to do good to the poor, and to the Church of God, and to my fellow men. When He sends me riches I shall take my alabaster box and break it, and pour it on His head, and never count my treasures so well used as when I give them up to Him. If, like Joseph of Arimathea, the Believer possessed a new tomb, where man never lay, prepared for himself—he would count it best used if his Lord deigned to use it for *His* burial. Gladly would he lend his chamber for Jesus to keep the Passover, or his animal that his Lord might ride into Jerusalem—for the saint holds all things ready at his Master's beck and call. His life is consecration. He has vowed unto the Lord, "I will work for Him. I will suffer for Him. I will write for Him, I will live for Him—I will even die for Him—by some means or other I will show that I am not my own, or anything that I have."

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, I would not like to have an unconsecrated hair on my head, or an unconsecrated hour of the day, or an unconsecrated faculty! Every mental power which God has given to a man ought to be used for God's cause. No faculty which is essentially natural to us may be excused from bowing its neck to the yoke of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes when I have said a humorous thing in preaching I have not asked you to excuse me, for if God has given me humor I mean to use it in His cause. Many a man has been caught, his ear arrested and his attention won by a quaint remark. If anyone can prove it is a wickedness, and not a natural faculty, I will abandon it. But it is a faculty of nature and it ought to be consecrated and used for the cause of Christ! Whatever you can do, if it is a right thing to do, and God has made it a characteristic of your being, do it for Jesus! If you cannot speak like Mr. Moody, sing like Mr. Sankey—but somehow or other help to promote the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, for you are not your own, "You are bought with a price."

In my second text the Apostle brings forth another inference. Read the seventh chapter at the 23rd verse—"You are bought with a price; be not you the servants of men." By which he means this—As you are not to live for yourself, so you are not to make yourself the slave of other men and give your powers up to any but to the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not even follow good men slavishly. Do not say, "I am of Paul. I am of Apollos. I am of Calvin. I am of Wesley." Did Calvin redeem you? Did Wesley die for you? Who is Calvin and who is Wesley but ministers by whom you believed as the Lord gave unto you? Do not so surrender yourself to any leadership

that you rather follow the *man* than his Master. I will follow anybody if he goes Christ's way, but I will follow nobody, by the Grace of God, if he does not go in that direction.

Do not pin your faith to anybody's sleeve. Keep close to the Lord Jesus Christ. You are bought with a price—do not be the servants of men. Do not give yourselves up to party spirit. It is a pity when a man cares only for politics—when the one grand thing he lives for is to return a Liberal to Parliament, or to get in a Radical, or to lift a Tory to the top of the poll. To live for a political party is unworthy of a man who professes to be a Christian! The most advanced politics beneath the sun are *nothing* compared with living for the bleeding Savior and spending one's self for the promotion of the immortal principles of the Cross. We are not to give ourselves up to any scientific speculation, educational effort, or to any philanthropic enterprise so as to divert our minds from the grand old cause of Jesus and our God!

A story is told of one of the early saints—I think it was Jerome—that he dreamed that he died and went to the gates of Heaven, and they said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am Jerome, a student of Scripture." And they said to him, "No, you are not. You are one Jerome, a student of Cicero," for he had been much more accustomed to the study of Cicero and the great Latin writers than to the reading of the Scriptures. He dreamed, therefore, he was not permitted to enter Heaven. And upon waking from his dream he put aside his classic books to make the Word of God the main study of his life. Alas, there are a great many people in the world who do not live for Christ! They are living for something else. The main thing with them is often a trifle light as air—a pursuit of the most infinite value.

I heard once a great Divine saying to another great Divine that he had spent a most important day on Snowdon—he considered it one of the most successful days of his life. Being in their line, myself, I wondered what great revival services had been held on Snowdon, among the Welshmen. The eminent ecclesiastic said he had been many years on the watch, but had never, till that day, been able to satisfy himself! I wondered if he had been in prayer, watching for the conversion of the Welsh people. He said he found three different kinds of them and was now sure they were quite distinct. Did he mean three kinds of religious inquirers whose cases he had, at last, been able to understand?

Not he! He had been speaking of three species of beetles which he had met with after a day's searching. The minister of Christ had much joy over three beetles, but probably cared little for repenting sinners. And I am afraid there are many who spend their time in trifles as small as that and, perhaps, far less innocent. Everything is a trifle to a man who is a Christian except the glorifying of Christ. "Felix has driveled into an ambassador," said good old William Carey, when they told him that his son Felix had been made ambassador from the British court to the court of Burmah. He had been a poor missionary, before, and now they had made him

a great ambassador. But his father said, "He has driveled into an ambassador."

If a man who lives for Jesus and preaches the Gospel could suddenly be transformed into the Emperor of Germany, it would be a frightful come-down for him! To live for Jesus is the highest style of man! God grant we may realize that—for we are bought with a price. If we do not belong to man, it follows that we ought not to follow the fashions of the world. Some people must be in fashion, cost what it may—out of the fashion they feel they might as well be out of the world. It is almost death to them if they cannot dress and act after the manner of *society*. Therefore they run into extravagance, pride, show and folly. The pride of life eats them up. When fashions go wrong it should be the Christian's fashion to go against the fashion. Let no man be your master! If you have masters according to the flesh, serve them with all faithfulness, as becomes you, giving unto them diligent service—but as to any master over your *spirit*, allow no one to be so—consciences were made for God alone! Bow not down your heart and conscience before man, but be free, for, "you are bought with a price."

To close. We are, then, it seems, wholly Christ's. Christ, then, my Brothers and Sisters, if we are as we should be, is Lord of our time. We may not say, "I have an hour of my own to waste." It is Christ's time. He is Lord of our *household*. We do not claim to be paramount there, but we say, "Lord, these are Your children. Help us to bring them up for You. Our household is Yours, Lord, grant that by family prayer and by holy example we may make our family to be 'Holiness to the Lord.'" You will go out to business and say, "This business is not mine. It is my Master's." You will not trade in any dishonest way if you do that. It will be *holy* trading. The farmer goes to the field and says, "This is the Redeemer's field, and what profit I shall make from it is His profit." If he feels in that way his actions will be kind, generous, right and God-fearing.

I would that every young man felt, "If I have talents they are God's talents, to be used for Him." Young men will join clubs and societies, and become most energetic members. But when they join *Churches*, very often we get the distinguished honor of having their names on the book to encumber the Church roll, and not much more. That is not right if they belong to Jesus. Christian people ought, in all they do, to be looking out for opportunities of serving Christ. I have heard of a Jew, who, going forth to trade and having a choice between two towns, asked, "Where is the synagogue?" and when he had found there was a synagogue in one town and not in the other, he gave the preference to that in which he could worship with his brethren. It ought to be so with the Christian! But often Christian men forget even to inquire about such matters.

They make money and go and live out of London, and where do they select their residence? They say, "Here is a beautiful view, and a respectable neighborhood." But there is no place of worship where they can take their children and where they can go, themselves—does that always influence them? I fear not. They look to other matters first. I have known them go to

places where they could not *possibly* get any good—and they have not even tried to *do* any. I like to hear a Christian man say, “There is a destitute village. Now, if I live *there* I may build a little place of worship and so I may do good.” This is an object worth aiming at—and if the wealthy Christians of England, when they remove from large centers of population—would always set to work to try and spread the Gospel round about where they live, they would be like seed sown in the ground or like salt scattered among society to preserve the land.

Our first aim in life should be to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. I am afraid I am rapping some of you a little hard, or perhaps you will call it treading on your corns. You should not have corns, you know, and then I could not tread upon them. If you are *not* doing right and anything I say comes close to stepping on your corns, it should! Dear Brother, try to mend. Find not fault with the preacher because he finds out *your* faults. Go and amend. There came into this house some years ago a dear Brother, an earnest Christian young man. I was preaching some such sermon as this and he felt that he had not been living for Christ. He went back to the city where he lived and he began to preach in the streets. He continued to preach and God blessed him, and he developed into an earnest and talented servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose name is very dear to you all. One of the best days’ work I ever did was to be the means of calling him out to such a service! Is there not some young man of that kind here, tonight?

May there not be here present a Christian woman, with ability, and talent, and education who ought to be teaching young women, and doing good, and bringing them to the Savior? My dear Sister, you are not your own—you are not your own. If you were, I think you would be quite right in taking your ease on Sunday and making yourself comfortable in the week. But you are not your own. You are not your own. The blood of Jesus has bought every particle of you. Will you not devote yourself to Him? Will you not pray to make your consecration more practical than it has been up to now, from this time forth? The sacred blood mark is on every part of your spirit and your body—do not try to hide it. Give up all to Jesus that while you live, and when you die, you may fight a good fight and finish your course, and have it said to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

O you who know nothing about being bought with a price, you will be lost unless you do know it! If Christ has not bought you, Hell will receive you, and despair will be your portion! May God grant you to know the power of redemption through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Corinthians 3.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—658, 663, 660.**

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“THE TIME IS SHORT”

NO. 2861

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1903.**

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

***“The time is short.”
1 Corinthians 7:29.***

THE text does not say that *time* is short. That would have been a true statement, but compared with eternity, time, at the very longest, is but as a pin's point. But note what the text does say—“*The time is short.*” It is the time of our life, the space of our opportunity, the little while we shall be upon the present stage of action that is short. It is narrow and contracted, as the original implies. “Behold,” said the Psalmist, “You have made my days as a handbreadth and my age is as nothing before You.” Brief is the season we have allotted to us, Brothers and Sisters, in which we can serve the Lord our God.

This is a Truth of God which everybody believes, knows and confesses. It is trite as a proverb on every tongue, yet how few of us act as if we believed it! We are conscious of the precariousness of other people's lives, but, somehow or other, we persuade ourselves that our own time is not quite as limited as theirs. We think we have “ample time and verge enough,” but we wonder that our neighbors can be so careless and prodigal of days and years, for we observe the wrinkles on their brows, we detect the gray hairs on their heads and perceive the signs of death in their bearing and we doubt not they will soon have to render in their account. “All men think all men mortal but themselves,” is a “night thought” that may well startle us as we rest from the business and the bustle, or the waste and wantonness of each succeeding day. Why do you hide from yourselves the waning of your own life-work, the weakening of your own strength, the weaving of your own shrouds? As a creature, you are frail—as an inhabitant of the world, you are exposed to casualties. As a man, there is an appointed time for you on earth. You must be swept away by the receding tide—you must go with the rest of your generation.

Ask an angel what he thinks of the life of a mortal and he will tell you that he remembers when the first man was made—and since then the earth has been always changing its tenants. Perhaps he is baffled to recall the races that have come and gone in countless succession. For a little while they floated on the surface, then they sank beneath the stream. At first they struggled on through centuries, but, after that, they failed,

any one of them, to attain a tenth of that pristine age. “Short-lived!” says the angel, “they seem to me as leaves upon a tree, as insects on the earth, as flies in the air. Like the grass that flourishes in the meadows, scarcely have I gazed upon them before they are cut down, withered and gone.” Oh, if you never meet with an angel to interrogate him, talk familiarly with one of the trees of an ancient forest! Ask what it has seen and, though it cannot speak in articulate tones, you can lend it a tongue and it will tell you that hundreds of years have passed and history has accumulated, from the time when it was an acorn, till now. It covers a wide space with its far-spreading foliage. Yes, the oak and elm can tell us that man is but an infant of today!

Would you rather take counsel of your fellow creatures? Then ask the old man what he thinks of life. He will tell you that when he was a boy, he thought he had a vast length of time before him. So heavily did the days hang on his hands that he played the hours away and was glad when birthdays told of the years that were gone. It was his strong desire and his panting ambition to break loose from the moorings of childhood and launch out into the great wide sea of turmoil and enterprise! But now he looks back on these 70 years that have been gradually accumulating, as a dream. Through all the fitful stages of life’s journey, present time is always perplexing—it must be past before it is understood! It seems to him only as yesterday when he left his father’s roof to be an apprentice. He remembers it distinctly and fondly tells you of some quaint things that happened in those olden times. How short a while since the bells rang out his marriage peal and now his children have reached their manhood—and his children’s children climb upon his knee and call him “Grandfather.” Yet he remembers when, as it were but yesterday, he was himself a little child and his grandfather clasped him to his bosom! My venerable Friends, you will bear witness that I do not exaggerate when I speak thus—my language is only the feeble expression of a forcible experience. You can realize more vividly than I can paint the sensation of looking back over the entire span of threescore years and ten! To the stripling, this appears a very long period, while to you it merely seems as a watch in the night.

And yet, perhaps there are among you, some hoary veterans, some elderly matrons who need to be reminded that “the time is short.” Present health and activity may tempt you to forget that nature, in your case, stands upon the verge of her confines. What if your frame is strong? What if the bloom still lingers on your checks? You have nearly reached the goal, the allotted term that mortals cannot pass. I have seen fine days, in autumn, when the air was soft as in balmy spring, but they gave no promise of another summer. I knew the season was too far advanced for winter to delay its approach much longer. So, you, my aged Friend, can be sure that the hour of your departure is drawing near. Should five, or even 10 more years be granted to you, how quickly they must pass when 70 by-gone years have so rapidly fled! The remnant of your days

will surely cover little space when the whole compass of your life has stretched over so small an area. Be frugal of minutes, now, though you may have been, at one time, prodigal of years! At the end of life you have no time to parley and postpone—to resolve and yet to trifle with resolutions—to waste and squander golden opportunities. “The time is short”!

But to estimate this Truth aright, we may well turn from the cycles that angels have witnessed, the centuries that trees have flourished and the seasons that have come and gone in the memory of our grandparents to consider “the years of the right hand of the Most High.” Enquire at the mouth of the Lord. Take counsel of the eternal God. Remember how it is written, “A thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.” “One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” “He sits upon the circle of the earth and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers”—insects of an hour compared with Him. Like the grass, we spring up, and like the grass we are mowed down! Compared with the lifetime of the Eternal, what is our life? No, there is no comparison! It is almost too insignificant for contrast. “My days are like a shadow that declines, and I am withered like grass. But You, O Lord, shall endure forever; and Your remembrance unto all generations.” I wish I had the power to impress this Truth on every heart. As I have not, I shall try to point the moral it suggests and pray that the Spirit of God may seal the instruction upon every heart.

“The time is short,” so, first, *it warns*. Next, *it suggests*. Then, *it inspires* and, lastly, *it alarms*.

I. First, IT WARNS. If you knew the sterling worth of time, you would shrink from the smallest waste of so precious a thing. Fools say that time is long, but only fools talk like that. They say that “time is made for slaves.” He alone is a free man who knows how to use his time properly—and he is a slave, indeed, who finds it slavery to pursue his calling with a good conscience and serve his God with diligence, fidelity and zeal. Knowing that “the time is short,” you and I have not an hour to squander upon unprofitable amusements. There are some diversions which afford a respite from the incessant strain of labor and anxiety and are profitable to strengthen the mind and brace up the nerves. These are not only allowable, they are fit and proper. But while recreation is both necessary and expedient to keep the mental and physical powers in working order, we can give no countenance to such dissipation as tends rather to enervate than to invigorate the constitution. Popular taste displays its own perverseness in seeking to extract pleasure from folly and vice. Fashion lends its sanction to many a pastime that ill becomes any wise, rational, intelligent person. But the Christian, in his relaxations, must seek healthy impulse and avoid baneful stimulant. “The time is short.” *We cannot afford to lose it in senseless talk, idle gossip, or domestic scandals.*

Nor can we afford to plan a round of empty frivolities to while away an afternoon or an evening, as the manner of some is. Our time is too precious to be frittered away in formal calls and punctilious visits. Well

might Cotton Mather complain of the intrusion of a certain person who had called to see him, as people will call on ministers, as though their time was of no importance. “I would sooner have given that man a handful of money,” he said, “than that he should have thus wasted my time.” You count it a little thing to trespass on our minutes, but in so doing you may spoil our hours! Whether you think so, or not, it is often distracting to us to be troubled with trivial things in the midst of our sacred engagements. We may be called from an absorbing study. We may be rudely interrupted when our knees are bent and our heart is being lifted up to God in intercession. We may have our minds drawn from the weightiest matters to listen to the most frivolous observations. It is said of Henry Martyn that he never wasted an hour. I wish it could be said of us that we wasted neither an hour of our own time, nor an hour of other people’s time! Brothers and Sisters, the time is too short to make a desire for a friendly visit an excuse for frothy conversation. It requires no stretch of imagination to picture to ourselves two men who are both Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, “called to be saints,” and accounted faithful, meeting in a room and greeting each other as friends. They will surely have something choice to talk about. All Heaven is full of God’s Glory and the earth is full of His riches. There is range enough for thought, for speech, for profitable converse!

But listen awhile. One observes that the weather is very cold. “Yes,” says the other, “the frost is still very sharp.” There they stick—they have nothing further to say till, presently, one of them remarks, “It will be rather slippery travelling tonight,” to which comes the reply, “I daresay many horses will fall down.” And are these the men of whom Peter testifies that they are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ from their vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers? Are these the men who have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit? Is this frivolity becoming to the heirs of Heaven? Yet thus, often is precious time squandered and the faculty of speech abused! There is an ancient prophecy which I would love to see fulfilled in modern history. In “David’s Psalm of Praise,” (only one Psalm, the 145th, is so entitled), he says, “All Your works shall praise You, O Lord; and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your Kingdom, and talk of Your power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His Kingdom.” By such converse as that, Beloved, you might “redeem the time” in these evil days!

But you are afraid of being charged with cant, or with pushing your religion a little too far. Brothers and Sisters, it is high time we had a little more of such cant and that we did push religion a little farther than has been our habit! Golden opportunities are lost and profitable interchange of holy thought is lamentably neglected in these days! In days of yore, “they that feared the Lord spoke often, one to another, and the Lord listened and heard it.” Not much of this now prevails among professing Christians. Little enough is said that is worth men’s hearing, much less

worth God’s hearing—and if He did hear it, instead of putting it down in “a Book of Remembrance” and saying, “They shall be Mine,” surely, in His Infinite Mercy, He would forbear to record the vain thoughts and empty words which could only be a stigma upon their characters! By the brevity of time, then, and by the rapidity of its flight, I admonish you to refrain from all abuses of the tongue. Invest each hour in some profitable manner that, when past, it may not be lost. Let your lips be a fountain from which all streams that flow shall savor of Grace and goodness.

The time, moreover, *is much too short for indecision and vacillation*. Your resolving and retracting, your planning and scheming, your sleeping and dreaming, your starting up from slumber only to sink down into a drowsier state than before are a mockery of life and a willful murder of time! Of how many of you is it true that if you ever did entertain a noble purpose, you never found a convenient season to carry it out? On the verge of conversion, sometimes, you have halted till your convictions have grown cold. Ten or 20 years ago, you listened to the appeal, “My son, give Me your heart,” and you answered, “I will.” But, to this day you have never fulfilled your word! “Go work in My vineyard,” said the Master. “I go, Lord,” was your prompt reply—yet you have never gone! Today, as before, you stand idling. Some of you, indeed, were in a more hopeful condition 30 or 40 years ago than you are at present! What account can you give of yourselves? What has become of those intervening years? The Infinite Mercy of God has kept you out of Hell, but there is no guarantee that His long-suffering will shield you from destruction another instant. O Sirs, “the time is short,” the business urgent, the crisis imminent! ‘Tis madness to be halting between two opinions! If God is God, serve Him—and if not, take the alternative and serve Baal! Let your mind be made up, one way or the other, without another moment’s delay. How long do you waver between two opinions?

And you Christian people with your grand illusive projects, how they melt away! Some of you would have done a great deal that is useful by now if you had not dreamed of doing so much that is imposing. Oh, what wonderful plans for evangelizing London, for converting the whole Continent of Europe to Christ float in the brain, or evaporate in a speech—and nothing is done! We are like a certain Czar of Russia, of olden times, who always wanted to take a second step before he took the first. We are always projecting some wonderful scheme that proves too wonderful to ever be carried out! So we dream of what ought to be and should be—of what might be and as we hope may be! Such “dreams are the children of an idle brain.” The dreamers grow listless and nothing is done. In the name of the eternal God, I beseech you, if you love Him, get to work for Him! Better slay a single enemy than dream of slaughtering an army! Better that you sow a single grain of corn or plant a single blade of grass, than dream about fertilizing the Sahara, or reclaiming from the mighty sea untold acres of fertile land! Do something, Brothers and Sisters, do something! It is high time to awake out of sleep, for “the time is short.”

This thought may serve to warn us against another folly—*that of speculating upon the points of controversial theology*. You know how the schoolmen used to debate and wrangle about how many angels could stand on the point of a needle—and with many other propositions, no less absurd, did they weary themselves. Strange, indeed, was the ingenuity of men taxed to find subjects for discussion in the dark days of those dull doctors of learning. There is something of that spirit abroad even now. Ministers will devote whole sermons to the discussion of some crotchet or quibble that does not signify the turn of a hair to anybody in the universe! I have generally noticed that the less important the point is, the more savagely will some persons defend it—as if the world might go to rack and ruin—and all the sinners in it go blindfold to Hell and the work of salvation must stand still to have this point discussed! One Brother who occasionally meets me, can never be five minutes in my company, but what he attacks me upon the question of free agency and predestination. I told him the last time I saw him that I would have it out with him one of these days, but I must defer it till after the Day of Judgment, for I was too busy to talk about it just now. And I feel like that about a great many questions!

There are Brothers who can fully explain the Book of Revelation, though I generally find that they exclaim one against the other, till they declaim each other off the face of the earth! I would sooner be able to proclaim the Cross of Christ and explain the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, than to decipher the imagery of Ezekiel, or the symbols of the Apocalypse. Blessed is he who can expound the mysteries. I have no doubt about his blessedness, but I am perfectly satisfied with another blessedness, namely, if I can bring sinners to Jesus and teach the saints some practical Truths which may guide them in daily life. It seems to me that the time is much too short to go up in a balloon with speculations, or to go down into the mines of profound thought to bring up some odds and ends and scraps of singular knowledge. We want to save souls and to conduct them to that Heaven where God’s Presence makes eternal day! This seems to me to be the pressing demand upon us now that “the time is short” and, “the night comes when no man can work.”

Let this also admonish us, Brothers and Sisters, *to singleness of purpose*. We must have only one aim. Had we plenty of time, we might try two or three schemes at once, though even then we should most probably fail for lack of concentrating our energies. But as we have very little time, we had better economize it by attending to one thing. The man who devotes all his thought and strength to the accomplishment of one reasonable objective is generally successful. My Soul, bend yourself down and lay yourself out for the Glory of God! Be this the one aim of your entire being! Form your friendships and order your occupations so as to fulfill this first and highest duty of life. Be it your one sole motive to live for His honor and, if necessary, even to die to promote His renown among the sons of men! “Present your bodies a living sacrifice.” Attune your

souls to the great Hallelujah—“While I live will I bless the Lord. I will sing praises unto my God while I have my being. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise you the Lord.”

O Brothers and Sisters, this sublime enthusiasm will work wonders! You dissipate your strength and fritter away your opportunities by dividing your attention. You say that you want to be a Christian—meanwhile, your heart is set upon getting riches, you seek to store your mind with the learning and wisdom of the world, you wish to gain repute as a good talker in company and a convivial guest at the social board. Ambition prompts you to seek fame among your fellows. Very well, I shall not denounce any one of these things, but I would use every persuasive to induce you who are Believers in Christ to renounce the world! If Christ has bought you with His blood and redeemed you from this present evil world, He has a claim on you as His servant and it is at your peril that you take up with any pursuits that are inconsistent with a full surrender of yourself to Him. You belong to Him, so live wholly to Him! The reason why the majority of Christians never attain to any eminence in the Divine life is because they let the floods of their life run away in a dozen little, trickling rivulets, whereas, if they cooped them up into one channel and sent that one stream rolling on to the Glory of God, there would be such a force and power about their character, their thoughts, their efforts and their actions that they would really “live while they lived.”

II. “The time is short. THIS SUGGESTS.

Do you know what reflection this fact suggested to me? “Surely, then,” I thought, “I have some opportunity to follow out the work of faith, the patience of hope and the labor of love, though not the opportunity I once had.” Then, picturing to myself an ideal of a short life all used, nothing wasted, all consecrated, nothing profaned, I seemed to see a boy giving his young heart to Christ. I saw the lad believing in Jesus while yet beneath his father’s roof and under his mother’s care. No sooner saved than he began at once to serve God after a boy’s way. And still increasing in intelligence and energy as a stripling and afterwards as a young man, from the first he devoted himself, with all the intensity of his being, to his Lord’s service. So diligent and persevering was he that he lost no time. So jealously did he watch his own heart and so far was he from falling into sin, that there were no dreary intervals spent in wandering and backsliding, and retracing his steps in repenting of the evil, in getting lukewarm and then rekindling former ardor. With my mind’s eye, I followed that young man living a holy life through a succession of years, getting up to the highest possible platform of spirituality and staying there, and all the while blessed with such abundance of the Graces and gifts of the Spirit of God as should make him bring forth much fruit to the Glory of the Father, do much for the honor of Jesus, prove a great blessing to the Church, bear a rich testimony to the world and spread saving benefits to the souls of men.

This was my ideal of a vessel “meet for the Master’s use.” I lingered lovingly upon it. The child became a man. His life was brief. It was soon over. Our days on earth are as a shadow but happily they may be radiant and leave a trail of light behind them. Might not even God, Himself, look down, with a measure of admiration, from His eternal dwelling place on the career I have sketched? The slender threads of fleeting moments are worked up to the goodly fabric of a complete biography. Endowed with one talent, this and that endowment sparse—the gift so prized as to be economized, so looked after that it is never squandered, so usefully employed that its judicious expenditure can never be vainly regretted—so profitably invested that the faithful steward welcomes the advent of his Lord, ready and anxious to give in his account! This is as I would wish to be!

Some of you, who are unconverted can never hope to receive the greeting that awaits such a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. You have lost your golden opportunity. You have wasted your substance in riotous living. But are there not children here to whom this is possible? And youths who might convert my daydream into a narrative? Oh for men and women with the ambition and one enterprise to glorify the Lord! Ardently do I desire that God should be glorified in me and that not in a small measure. I have prayed and I do pray Him to make the most He can make of me, to do it anyway He wills. What, if to this end, I must be cast into the furnace of action and suffer for His sake? What if my honor should be trampled in the dust and my name become a hissing and a by-word, and a reproach among the sons of men while the witness of my integrity is on high? Here am I, O Lord, to do anything, to bear anything that You shall bid! Only get as much Glory to Your own name as can be got out of such a poor creature as I am! Who will join me in this petition? Vows made in our own strength are vain, but I solemnly charge each Christian young man to foster this aspiration. In the name of Him who has redeemed you with His blood, gird up the loins of your mind and survey the course you have to run. Prepare for the good fight of faith in which you are to engage. Live to the utmost possible consecration of your entire manhood in its triple nature—spirit, soul, and body. Yield yourself up unreservedly to the Lord Jesus Christ! Do not stop to parley. “The time is short,” therefore, “whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave where you go.”

III. “The time is short.” THIS INSPIRES US.

It ought to fire us with zeal for immediate action. The sun hastens on, the sands run down. “Now is the accepted time.” Let those who love the Lord be prompt. The time to do the deeds that you must do, or leave them undone, flies swiftly past. Say not, “I will do this, by-and-by.” Do it at once! Other duties await you. Brief is the space allotted you for all. Are your children converted? Pray with them tonight. Let not tomorrow come without putting your arms about their necks and kneeling down with

them devoutly—and praying fervently that God would save their souls. It is the King’s business and it demands haste! “The time is short” for others as well as for yourself. A dear Brother told me, a week or two ago, that a man who frequently worked for him, brought in goods when they were finished. And he thought that the next time the man came in, he would speak to him about his soul. When he came, however, business absorbed the employer’s attention and the man went his way. He felt, he did not know exactly why, pricked in his conscience, and resolved that on the next occasion, he would enquire as to his eternal interests. But he was too late.

Instead of coming again, a messenger brought tidings that he was dead. Startled by the news, our Brother could find no comfort in regrets, though he bewailed as one who could not forgive himself a hundred wasted opportunities in the presence of one keen self-reproach. Oh, that an inspiration would constrain you to serve the Lord now! Every time the clock ticks, it seems to say, “now.” The time is so short that the matter is urgent. Do not wait, young man, to preach Jesus till you have had more instruction—begin at once! You who mean to do something for the poor of London when you have hoarded up more money, spend your money *now*—do it at once! You who mean to leave a large sum to charities when you die, defer it not—be your own executors. Lay out the capital at once! Get some joy and comfort out of it yourselves. Now is the time to carry a good purpose into good effect. Before you were saved, the message to you was, “Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart.” After you are saved, the message to you is, “Today, obey His voice and serve the Lord your God with all your heart, and mind, and soul, and strength.” “The time is short,” so make the most of it!

“The time is short.” I want to ring this sentence louder and louder in your ears, that it may *inspire you to pray for immediate conversions*. I have met with many who are hoping to get converted some day, but not now. Is not such procrastination perilous? Dare any of you run the risk of willfully abiding in unbelief another hour? Can you brook the thought of remaining, month after month in jeopardy of your soul? Is it safe to tempt the Lord and provoke the anger of the Most High? O Sirs, while you flatter yourselves with pleasing prospects, you are beguiling your hearts with a reckless presumption! We want you to be converted and no time can be more suitable than this present time. Forsake your sin immediately! Do not turn back to dally with it a little longer. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and lay hold on the promise of eternal life without any further delay! You may never see another morrow, or the desire that whets your appetite now may fail you then. This is our prayer, that you may, this very hour, be brought into the fold of Christ!

Then seeing that “the time is short,” *let us bear with patience the ills that vex us*. Are we very poor? “The time is short.” Does the bitter cold pierce through our scanty garments? “The time is short.” Is consumption beginning to prey on our trembling frame? “The time is short.” Are we

unkindly treated by our kinsfolk? Do our comrades revile and our neighbors mock us? “The time is short.” Have we to bear evil treatment from an ungenerous world? “The time is short.” Do cruel taunts try our tempers? “The time is short.” We are travelling at express speed and shall soon be beyond the reach of all the incidents and happenings that disturb and distract us. As we travel home to our Father’s House, the distance diminishes and we begin to see the city of the blessed, “the home over there.” It is needless to murmur or repine! Why trouble yourselves about what you will do a month or two from now? You may not be here! You may be in Heaven. Your eyes will have beheld “the King in His beauty,” you will have seen “the land that is very far off.”—

***“The way may be rough, but it cannot be long,
So smooth it with hope, and cheer it with song.”***

Worldly-mindedness ill becomes us who have confessed that we are “strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” “The time is short” in which we can hold any possessions in this terrestrial sphere. Then let us not love anything here below too fondly. We brought nothing into the world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. Survey your broad acres, but remember that you will not long be able to walk across them. Look on your plenteous crops, but before long another shall reap the profit of those fields. Count your gold and silver, but know that wealth, greedily as it is sought, will not give you present immunity from sickness and sorrow—neither will it secure your welfare when called to quit your frail tenement. Trust in the living God! Love the Lord and let eternal things absorb your thoughts and engage your affections. “The time is short”—it remains that both they that have wives be as though they had none. And they that weep, as though they wept not. And they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not. And they that use this world, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passes away.”

Are these gloomy reflections? No, dear Brothers and Sisters, the fact that “the time is short” *should inspire us, who are of the household of faith, with the most joyous expectations!* Do you really believe in the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Do you really believe that your head is to wear a crown of life that fades not away? Do you really believe that these feet of yours, all shod with silver sandals, will stand upon that street of pure gold? Do you really believe that these hands shall pluck celestial fruit from trees whose leaves can never wither and that you shall lie down in the spice-beds in the gardens of the blessed? Do you believe that these eyes shall see the King in that day when He comes in His Glory and that these bones shall rise again from the grave and your bodies shall be endowed with an incorruptible existence? “Yes,” you say, “we do believe it and believe it intensely, too.” Well, then, I would that you realized it as so very near that you were expectant of its fulfillment! Who would cry and fret about the passing troubles of a day when he saw the heavens open, beheld the beckoning hand and heard the voice that called him hence? Oh, that the glory might come

streaming into your soul till you forget the darkness of the way! Oh, that the breeze from these goodly mountains would fan you! Oh, that the spray from that mighty ocean would refresh you! Oh, that the music of those bells of Heaven in yonder turrets would enliven you! Then would you speed your way towards the rest that remains for the people of God, inspired with sacred ardor and dauntless courage! But the ungodly are not so. It is to them I must address the last word, "The time is short."

IV. THIS ALARMS US. And well it may on their account. Let me toll a knell. It is a dismal knell I have to toll for the unconverted man to whom life has been a joy, for he has prospered in the world. You have succeeded in the enterprise on which you set your heart. You have bought the estate that you longed to secure. It is certainly a fine place, but you have only got it for two or three years! Would I have taken it for that term? No, I would not have taken it on a 999 years' lease. Freeholds for me! Did I say two or three years? No, there is not a man beneath the sun who can guarantee that you will hold it for three weeks! "The time is short." Drive down the broad avenue, walk round the park—look into the old feudal mansion, but, "the time is short," very short, and your tenure very limited. You have gained your objective, you are possessed of real property—what next? Why, make your will! The thing is urgent. "The time is short." But what have you not done?

You have not believed in Christ! You have not embraced the Gospel. You have not found salvation, you have not laid hold on eternal life—you have not a hope to solace you when your strength fails and you pant for breath! How few the opportunities that remain! Some of you have attended my ministry all the while I have been in London. I wonder how much longer you will hear me and yet remain unsaved? Your turn to die will come at length. You ail a little, but your trifling indisposition does not yield to treatment. The symptoms grow serious, the disease is dangerous, your death is imminent. Pain unnerves you. Terror distracts you. Your family and your friends look at you with helpless pity. The doctor has just left you in dismay. Send for the priest, or fetch the parson—but what can they do for you unless you believe in Jesus? 'Tis over, the last struggle!

Then picture yourself to yourself—a lost spirit asking for a drop of water to cool your tongue! That will be your portion, Sinner, unless you repent! Think, Sirs—there is but a step between you and death—a short step between you and Hell unless you believe in Jesus! Do you still imagine that there is time enough and to spare? I beseech you, do not cherish so vain a thought! It may be that you suspect me of exaggerating, but that I cannot do in such a case as this. Time is rushing on, swiftly but silently. While I speak, the minutes pass, the hour is soon gone, the day is almost spent. I charge you, then, by the ever-blessed Spirit, listen now to the warning—escape from sin! Get out of that broad road which leads to destruction! Believe in Jesus! Lay hold on eternal life! May the Spirit of God awaken you! May these words be blessed to you! They

would be put more forcibly if I knew how. With all the fervor of my soul, I entreat you, for I know your everlasting interests are in imminent jeopardy! God grant that you may not linger longer, lest haply you linger too long and perish in your lingering! “The time is short.”

In a little while there will be a great concourse of people in the streets. I think I hear someone enquiring, “What are all these people waiting for?” “Do you not know? He is to be buried today.” “And who is that?” “It is Spurgeon.” “What? The man that preached at the Tabernacle?” “Yes. He is to be buried today.” That will happen very soon and when you see my coffin carried to the silent grave, I would like every one of you, whether converted or not, to be constrained to say, “He did earnestly urge us, in plain and simple language, not to put off the consideration of eternal things. He did entreat us to look to Christ. Now he is gone, our blood is not at his door if we perish.”

God grant that you may not have to bear the bitter reproach of your own conscience! But, as I feel that “the time is short,” I will stir you up as long as I am in this Tabernacle! And I do pray the Lord to bless the word every time I preach it from this platform. Oh, that some souls may be saved, that Jesus Christ may be glorified, Satan defeated and Heaven filled with saved ones!—

***“Tis not for man to trifle! Life is brief
And sin is here!
Our age is but the falling of a leaf,
A dropping tear.
We have no time to sport away the hours
All must be earnest in a world like ours.
Not many lives, but only one, have we—
Frail, fleeting man!
How saved should that one life ever be—
That narrow span!
Day after day filled up with blessed toil,
Hour after hour still bringing in new spoil.”***

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS

NO. 481

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 23, 1862,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“But this I say, Brethren, the time is short: it remains, that both they that have wives be as though they had none. And they that weep, as though they wept not. And they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not. And they that buy, as though they possessed not. And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passes away.”
1 Corinthians 7:29-31.

Holy Scripture seldom gives a special rule for each particular case, but it rather instructs us by general principles applicable to all cases. To meet every distinct moral emergency which could possibly arise, and solve every separate problem of action would require rather a library than a volume. To men who are taught of the Spirit of God, general principles are far more valuable than special precepts, and I am half persuaded that it is so with all persons. For it is less difficult to apply a general principle to a peculiar case than it is to find out exactly what the particular case may be, and what special rule is applicable to it.

In writing to the Church at Corinth the Apostle had to answer several questions with regard to marriage. Whether, for instance, it was not better in those persecuting times, when men often had to flee suddenly from their houses, that they should remain unmarried. Whether, again, supposing a person became a Christian after marriage, it was lawful for him to separate from the person with whom he was unequally yoked. And several other questions as to fitting action in certain extraordinary positions.

To these the Apostle answers with an, “I suppose,” or again, “Howbeit, for this speak I, not the Lord,” as if he felt himself quite out of his element in attempting to meet every case. But soon he lands on sure ground in the verses before us, and seems to say, “Whatever may be the answers which I ought to give to these special questions, of this one thing I am quite sure—I say positively and without any doubt that the time is short, and therefore, it remains, whether you are married or not, whether you weep, or whether you rejoice, whether you buy or whether you sell—that you should act in all these things as knowing their temporary and unsubstantial character.”

Dear Brethren, the important lesson which we endeavor to teach this morning is just this—that because time is so short, and the things of this world so frail and fleeting, it becomes us always to look at the things which are seen in their true character. We are never to build substantial hopes on unsubstantial comforts, nor seek for solid joy from unreal things. In order that I may make this matter very plain, and may be the

more likely to enlist your attention and to secure the friendship of your memories in future years, I intend this morning to *take you to a play*.

Strange thing for me to do, who has never crossed the threshold of a theater on any occasion, good or bad! Yet this morning I shall seat you in front of the stage, and I shall *put the worldling side by side with you while the five acts are performed*. I shall next invite you to attend *in the character of a Christian, to look through the whole and discern its emptiness*. Then, in the third place, I shall *point you to the curtain which is quite sure to drop upon the scene*. And then we will walk out of this theater of unreal show, this fashion of this world which passes away, and *see what there is to do in this world which is real, practical, and lasting*.

Do not suppose that the idea of taking you to a theater this morning is original on my part. It is in my text. "The fashion of this world passes away"—the word translated "fashion" is borrowed from the changing scenes of the drama—where the splendid pageantry vanishes as the scene changes. Nor will you think Holy Scripture too severe in its comparison, when I remind you that one of the world's own poets has said—

**"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players."**

Nor will the most precise among you complain of the levity of a metaphor which is sanctioned by Apostolic use. But I trust you will all cheerfully listen, while in simple words I tell the story which the bard of the sanctuary has sung in flowing verse—

**"This life's a dream, an empty show;
But the bright world to which I go,
Has joys substantial and sincere—
When shall I wake and find me there?"**

I. WE WILL WITNESS "THE FASHION OF THIS WORLD" AS IT PASSES BEFORE US, LISTENING TO THE WORLTLING'S COMMENT.

The *first act* introduces *those that have wives*. It opens with *a wedding*. The bride and bridegroom advance to the altar in bridal attire. The bells are ringing. Crowds are cheering at the door, while overflowing mirth is supreme within. In another scene we observe domestic happiness and prosperity, a loving husband and a happy wife. Yet, further on in the performance, rosy children are climbing the father's knee. The little prattlers are lisping their mother's name.

"Now," says our companion as he gazes with rapture, "This is real and enduring, I know it is. This will satisfy me. I crave for nothing more than this. *Home* is a word as sweet as Heaven, and a healthy happy race of children is as fine a possession as even angels can desire. On this rock will I build all my hope. Secure me this portion and I cheerfully renounce the dreamy joys of religion." We whisper in his ear that all this is but a changing scene and will by-and-by pass away, for time is short, and wife, and children are dying creatures.

The man laughs at us and says, "Fanatics and enthusiasts may seek *eternal* joys, but these are enough for me." He believes that if there is anything permanent in the universe, it is marrying and being given in marriage, educating and bringing up a family, and seeing them all comfortably settled. He is right in valuing the blessing, but wrong in making it his *all*. Will he see his error before the curtain falls? Or will he continue to found

the hopes of an immortal spirit upon dying joys? See the green mounds in the cemetery, and the headstone, with "Here he lies."

Alas for you, poor deluded worldling, where is your soul now? Does it console you that the dust of your offspring shall mingle with your ashes? Where have you now a home? What family have you now to care for? The first act is over. Take a breath and say, "This also is vanity." The tenor of the drama changes, alas, how soon! Household joys are linked with household sorrows. *They that weep* are now before us in the second act. The cloudy and dark days have come. There are parents wringing their hands. A beloved child has died and they are following its corpse to the tomb. Soon, the merchant has suffered a tremendous loss. He puts his hand to his aching head and mourns, for he knows not what will be the end of his troubles. The wife is smitten by the hand of death. She lies on her bed, blanched with sickness, and weak with pain.

There is a weeping husband at her side, and then there is another funeral, and in the dim distance I see the black horses again and again. The woes of men are frequent, and sorrow's visits are not, like those of angels, few and far between. Our man of the world, who is much moved at this second act, foreseeing his own sorrows in it, weeps until he fairly sobs out his feelings, clutches us with earnestness and cries, "Surely this is awfully real. You cannot call this a fleeting sorrow or a light affliction! I will wring my hands forever. The delight of my eyes has been taken from me. I have lost all my joys now. My Beloved in whom I trusted has withered like a leaf in autumn before my face. Now shall I despair. I shall never look up again!"

"I have lost my fortune," says the afflicted merchant, "and distress overwhelms me. This world is indeed a wilderness to me. All its flowers are withered. I would not give a snap of my finger to live now, for everything worth living for is gone!" Sympathizing deeply with our friend, we nevertheless venture to tell him that these trials to the Christian, because they are so short and produce such lasting good, are not killing sorrows. "Ah," says he, "you men of faith may talk in that way, but I cannot. I tell you these are real things." Like an English sailor, who, seeing a play, sprung upon the stage to help a lady in distress, believing that the whole was real, so do such men weep and sigh, as if they were to mourn forever, because some earthly good has been removed.

Oh that they knew that the depths of sorrow were never yet explored by a mortal mourner! Oh that they would escape from those lower deeps where immortal spirits weep and wail amidst an emphasis of misery! The sorrows of time are trifles, indeed, when compared with the pains of everlasting punishment. And on the other hand *we* reckon that they are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. They are but light afflictions, which are but for a moment, a mere pin's prick to the man of faith. Happy is the man whose eyes are opened to see that heirs of Heaven sorrow not as those who are without hope. A real joy of heavenly origin is ever with Believers, and it is but the shadow of sorrow which falls upon them. Then let the curtain drop—let us enter into an eternal state and what and where are these temporary griefs?

But the *third act* comes on and presents us with a view of *those who rejoice*. It may be that the first-born son has come of age, and there are great festivities. They are eating and drinking in the servants' hall, and in the master's banquet chamber. There are high notes of joy and many compliments, and the smiling sire is as glad as man can be. Or is it the daughter's wedding and kind friends implore a thousand blessings on her head and the father smiles and shares the joy? Or is it a gain in business, a fortunate speculation? Or the profits of industry have come flowing in, slowly perhaps, but still surely, and the man is full of rejoicing. He has a house, and home, and friends, and reputation, and honor, and he is, in the eyes of all who know him, happy.

Those who do not know him think he has no cares, that he can have no sorrows, that his life must be one perpetual feast, and that surely there can be no spot in his sun, no winter in his year, no ebb to follow his floods. Our friend by our side is smiling at this sunny picture. "There," says he, "is not that real? Why, there must be something in that! What more do you want? Only let me get the same and I will leave you the joys of faith and Heaven and immortality, to yourselves. These are the things for me—only let me laugh and make merry—and you may pray as you will. Fill high the bowl for me. Put the roast and the viands on the table, and let me eat and drink, for tomorrow I die."

If we gently hint to our friend that all this passes away like a vision of the night, and that we have learned to look on it as though it were not, he laughs us to scorn and accounts us mad, when he is most mad himself. As for ourselves, so far from resting upon the softest couch that earth can give us, we spurn its vain delights—

***"There's nothing round this spacious earth
That suits my large desire.
To boundless joy and solid mirth
My nobler thoughts aspire.
Where pleasure rolls its living flood,
From sin and dross refined,
Still springing from the Throne of God,
And fit to cheer the mind."***

But the *fourth act* of the drama is before us and *they that buy* demand our attention. The merchant is neither a mourner nor a man of mirth. In the eyes of certain Mammonites he is attending to the one thing necessary, the most substantial of all concerns. Here feast your eyes, you hard, practical, earth-scrappers. There are his money bags. Hear how they thump on the table! There are the rolls of bonds, the banker's books, the title-deeds of estates, mortgages, securities, and the solid investment in his country's own console. He has made a good thing of life, and still he adheres to business, as he should do. And, like a painstaking man, he is accumulating still, and piling up his heap, meanwhile adding field to field and estate to estate, till soon he will possess a whole county.

He has just now been buying a large and very fine house, where he intends to spend the remainder of his days, for he is about to retire from business. The lawyer is busy making out the transfer. The sum of money is waiting to be paid, and the whole thing is as good as settled. "Ah, now," says our friend, who is looking on at the play, "you are not going to tell me

that *this* is all a shadow? It is not. There is something very solid and real here, at least, something that will perfectly satisfy me.” We tell him we dare say there is something that will satisfy *him* but *our* desires are of a larger span and nothing but the infinite can fill them.

Alas for the man who can find satisfaction in earthly things! It will be only for a time. For when he comes to lie upon his dying bed, he will find his buying and his money poor things to stuff a dying pillow. He will find that his gains and his acquisitions bring but little comfort to an aching heart, and no peace to a conscience exercised with the fear of the wrath to come. “Ah, ah,” he cries and sneers sarcastically, putting us aside as only fit for bedlam, “Let me trade and make a fortune and that is enough for me! With that I shall be well content!” Alas, poor fool, the snow melts not sooner than the joy of wealth, and the smoke of the chimney is as solid as the comfort of riches.

But we must not miss the *fifth act*. See the rich man, our friend whom lately we saw married, whom we then saw in trouble, afterwards rejoicing, and then prospering in business—he has entered upon a green old age. He has retired and *has now come to use the world*. You will notice that in my text this is the last act of the drama. The world says he has been a wise man and has done well, for all men will praise you when you do well for yourself. Now he keeps a liberal table, a fine garden, excellent horses and many servants. He has all the comforts, in fact, that wealth can command—and as you look around his noble park, as you gaze at his avenue of fine old trees—or stay a day or two at the family mansion, and notice all its luxuries, you hear your friend saying, “Yes, there is something very real here. What do you think of this?”

When we hint that the gray hairs of the owner of all these riches betoken that his time is short, and that if this is all he has, he is a very poor man, for he will soon have to leave it—and that his regrets in leaving will make his death more pitiable than that of a pauper—our friend replies, “Ah, ah, you are always talking in this way. I tell you this is not a play. I believe it is all real and substantial, and I am not, by any talking of yours, to be made to think that it is unsubstantial and will soon be gone.” O World, you have fine actors, to cheat men so well, or else mortal man is an easy fool, taken in your net like the fishes of the sea. The whole matter is most palpably a mere show, but yet men give their souls to win it.

Why, O sons of men, are you thus beside yourselves? “Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfies not?” Dear Friends, I have put before your mind’s eye a fair picture of that which men who live by sight, and not by faith, regard as being the chief end of man, and the real object of his being. It is to be married. To pass through the trials and joys of life with decency. To trade and grow rich, and at last to use the comforts of this world without abuse—a very comfortable and quiet picture, by no means the representation we should have to present before you of the profligate, the profane, the dissolute, or the debauched.

There is nothing here but what is proper and right, and yet everything is improper and everything becomes wrong at once if these are thought to

be the substantial things for which an immortal spirit is to spend its fires, and for which an undying soul is to exhaust its powers.

II. Let us now take the CHRISTIAN VIEW OF THIS DRAMA. “Life is real, life is earnest”—it is real thus far to the Christian, it is real for work and activity for God. It is real in the solemn responsibility which it brings. It is real in the gratitude which we owe to God for the comforts which He is pleased to bestow. It is real to us so far as we can see God in it, and can turn everything to God’s glory. The unreality of this world to a Christian is found in the fact that *time is short*. This is the wand which torches the substance and makes it, before the eye of wisdom, dissolve into a shade. Time is short!

When the Apostle declares that *they that have wives* should be as though they had none, he does not teach us to despise the marriage state, but not to seek our Heaven in it. Nor let it hinder our serving the Lord. It is supposed that there are some things which a man without a wife and family can do—those things the man with a wife and family *should* do. It is supposed that a man without a wife can give his time to the cause of God—the man with a wife should do the same and he will not find it difficult to do so, if God has blessed him with one who will second all his holy endeavors. It is supposed that a man without a wife has no care—a man with a wife should have none—for he should cast all his cares on God who cares for him.

“He that cares not for his own house is worse than a heathen man and a publican.” And yet the Apostle says, in the verse following my text, “But I would have you without carefulness.” For we should learn to live by faith. The man who has a large family and many things to exercise his mind, should, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, live as quietly and comfortably as though he had none, depending and resting by simple faith upon the Providence and goodness of God. Then, again, it is supposed that an unmarried man will find it easier to die, for there will be none of that sorrow at leaving his beloved family—the man with a wife and family *should*, by faith, find it just as easy, since the promise runs, “Leave your fatherless children, and let your widows trust in Me.”

Full of the same faithful tenderness and affection which another husband would exhibit and even excelling in love and kindness, yet the Christian should look up to the Divine Lord who is the Husband of the widow, and with confidence leave his offspring and bid them trust in his God. May God the Holy Spirit teach us how to walk in our households, loving always and yet remembering that all our kindred shall pass away.

Again, there is the second act—*weeping*. Every Christian man must weep—but the Apostle says that our sorrows are to be regarded by us, because time is short, *as though they were no sorrows at all*. A man who knows that his trials will not last long can be cheerful under them. If he sees a Father’s hand in the midst of every adversity, and believes that when he is tried he shall come forth like gold from the furnace. If he knows with the Psalmist that, “weeping may endure for the night but joy comes in the morning,” why then grief has lost its weight, and sorrow has lost its sting! And while the man weeps, he rejoices, seeing the rainbow of the Covenant painted on the cloud.

Happy man, who, under bereavement, under crosses and losses, can still cast his burden upon God and can say, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines. The labor of the olive shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat. The flock shall be cut off from the fold and there shall be no herd in the stalls—yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation!" The Christian man is bound to live above his sorrows. He weeps, for, "Jesus wept." He may mourn, for the faithful have been mourners often, but he must not so mourn and weep as to be eaten up with grief. Over the tops of the rolling waves he must see the haven of peace and rejoice evermore.

So is it in the third part. The Christian has his *rejoicings* and he is not forbidden to be happy. Indeed, he is *commanded to rejoice*. And the things of this life he may freely enjoy with the double zest of the mercy itself, and of the God who gave it to him. But still, Believer, in all your joys, *remember to hold them with a loose hand*. Never so hold your joys as if they were all in all to you. Though it is wife, or child, or property, or health, or wealth, or fame—still ever stand ready to surrender all into your Father's hands, feeling that these, after all, are not your joys—you have better springs to drink from than those which earth's summers can dry up—and that you have rivers of pleasure deeper and broader than any which earth's winter shall be able to freeze.

Stand steadfast in this, that, as earth cannot cast you down to despair, so it cannot lift you up so as to make you forget your God. Learn in these things to rejoice as though you had them not, and let this be your solace, that your name is written in Heaven. So, too, in the matter of *buying and possessing*. It is not wrong for a Christian to trade and to trade well. I cannot see any reason why a Christian should be a fool. In fact, those who are fools in business are very often a great dishonor to the Christian religion, for a fool is very often first cousin, if not father, to a knave. But, still, while we buy and sell it should always be thus—"This is not my real trade. This is not the way in which I really get rich, for my treasure is beyond the skies, where moth devours not, and where rust cannot consume."

Handle these things, Brethren, knowing that they take to themselves wings and fly away. Look at them as transient objects which are to be used and sanctified in the passing—not your own—but lent to you for a time. To be repaid at last, with interest, in the day when the Master says, "Give an account of your stewardship, for you may be no longer a steward." A man may be as rich as Croesus, and his wealth will never hurt him if he does not hold it with a tight hand. And a man may be as happy as happiness can make him here, and yet it will not hurt him if he learns to keep it under his feet. But oh, when one's rejoicings or possessions get the upper hand of us, there is as dreadful a drowning in a sea of pleasure as in a sea of misery. Keep before your mind the words of our sweet singer—

***"To You we owe our wealth and friends,
And health and safe abode.
Thanks to Your name for meaner things,
But they are not my God.
What empty things are all the skies,
And this inferior clod!"***

***There's nothing here deserves my joys,
There's nothing like my God."***

The last scene *is the using of the things of this life*. The creatures of God are given us to be used. John the Baptist may be an ascetic, but the Son of Man is come eating and drinking. The Christian man knows that the mercies which God has given him are to be used, but while he uses them *he must use them as though he did not use them*. That is a high philosophy which I fear not many of us have learned, the philosophy of the Apostle when he said, "I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound." That man is the full grown and true Christian whom circumstances cannot alter! He trusts in God when he is penniless, and he trusts in his God just the same when he is rich.

He rests on God when he can enjoy nothing, and he rests on Him just the same when he can enjoy everything. He learned to build on the Rock of Ages when he had no comfort, and he builds on the Rock of Ages now, when he has every comfort! This, I take it, is where the Apostle would have us brought. To the true Christian, the things of this world are only real so far as they involve responsibility. But, seeing that time is short, he looks on life as men look upon a play. He sees a monarch strut, and he says, "Ah, he is to pull off his robes behind the stage!" He sees a peasant or a beggar, and he smiles and thinks of the time when the king and the peasant shall be equal, and the servant and his lord shall stand before one tribunal to give an account of the things done in the body.

Send your souls longing after real and unchanging joys, for these splendid, gaudy, shifting scenes mock the beholder and delude his hopes. Gorgeous as the colors of the bubble and quite as frail, farewell you worthless things, our spirit leaves you for eternal mansions in the skies!

III. And now, dear Friends, I want your attention a few minutes while I point you to THE CURTAIN WHICH IS SOON TO DROP UPON ALL THESE THINGS, it bears this short message, "TIME IS SHORT." It is very difficult to keep men in mind of the fact that they are mortal. We confess that we are mortal, but we profess by our actions that we are immortal. Said a man of eighty-two concerning another of seventy, when he wanted to buy his land and could not get it at the price he wished—"Never mind, So-and-So is an old man, he will soon be dead and then I'll buy it." Though he was ten or twelve years older than the other, yet the other must, of course, soon die, while he, in his own thoughts, must live for many a year.

How short time is! Do we not, dear Friends, get more and more that impression? I am but young compared with very many of you, yet the impression constantly grows upon my mind. Why, it seems but the day before yesterday when I plucked the first early primrose of spring, while the flowers were breaking up from under the earth, and the buds were ready to burst from the sheath! It was only as yesterday that we were walking in the fields and were remarking that the corn was just beginning to be tinged with the golden hue of harvest! Only a few Sabbaths ago I was talking to you of Ruth in the harvest fields and of the heavily laden wagon that was pressed down with sheaves.

And now the leaves are almost all gone. But few remain upon the trees. These frosty nights and strong winds have swept the giants of the forest till their limbs are bare and the hoar frosts plate them with silver. Then, before we shall have time to burn the winter's log, we shall see the snow flakes drop and the yellow crocus heralding another spring! At what a rate we whirl along! Childhood seems to travel in a wagon, but manhood at express speed. As we grow older I am told that the speed increases till the gray-headed old man looks back upon all his life as being but a day. And I suppose, if we could live to be a hundred and thirty we should feel the same, till, like Jacob, we should say, "Few and evil have been the days of your servant!"

And, if we could live as long as Methuselah, I doubt not our life would appear shorter still! How time flies, not only by the measurement of the seasons but by *ourselves*! A few days ago I trudged with my satchel on my back to school, or joined in boyish sport. How lately was it when the boy became a youth, and must be doing something and was teaching other boys as he had been taught in his day? It was but yesterday I came to Park Street to address some few of you, and yet how time has fled since then, till now some nine years of our ministry have passed. No weaver's shuttle, no arrow from a bow, no swift post, no meteor seems to fly at a rate so wonderful as does our life!

We heard of one the other day who had seen Wesley preach, and so we find ourselves side-by-side with the last century, and those old people have known some others in their youth who told them of the yet older time! And you find that going through the history of some ten or twelve persons you are carried back to the days of William the Conqueror, and you see our country taken by the Normans and then you fly back to ancient British times as with a thought. You no longer say, "How long the nation has existed!" for it is as a sleep.

You stand by some old cliff and see a deposit of shells, and as you remember that it may have taken a million years to have formed that bed, you think—"What is man? And what is time? It is not here but gone!" We have only to think of what time is to conclude at once that time is not! It is but a little interlude in the midst of the vast eternity—a narrow neck of land jutting out into the great, dread, and unfathomable sea of everlastingness!

But while time is thus short, *its end is absolutely sure*. That curtain yonder must soon fall! *It must fall*. It is inevitable. I cannot prevent my death by the most regular habits of life. The most skillful physician cannot preserve my life for me. A host of angels, should they swear to make me immortal, could not! When the time comes die I must! And, as my death is inevitable, so it may be *very near*. Let each man remember that! How soon it, may be we cannot tell! Every Sunday there are some in this house who are dead before the next Sunday. I am not now venturing a guess. It is a matter of fact, a matter of fact, too, that comes under my own cognizance very frequently. According to our population and the gradual number of deaths, there must be some out of this congregation here this morning who will have gone the way of all flesh before next Sunday!

There was one—I look at her seat now and a Brother sitting near by looks there with sorrow!—who was with us one Sunday, and we soon heard that she had gone to enjoy the Eternal Sunday! At a Church meeting last week, no less than three of our sisters were reported as having fallen asleep in Jesus within a week. Ah, how near is death to us! Perhaps he now stands looking over your shoulder, young man. God holds back his hand but the dart of death is close to your heart and soon—ah, how soon!—may you be taken to the place appointed for all living!

Go, you strong man, and remember that you are a mass of feebleness! Go, you young man, and remember that death reaps green corn! Go, you old man, and expect the sickle! And go, you rich man, and remember that you shall soon leave everything that you have—and then where are you if you have no treasure in Heaven—if you have not laid up in store for immortality?

And I must add here that, to those who have no God, death, while inevitable and very near, *will be most awful and terrible!* There was a dreadful story told in the papers this last week. At the seaport town of Garliestown one day last week, certain workmen were busy preparing a better berth for a vessel which seems to have taken the ground a little too soon. Suddenly someone raised a cry that the ship was listing over. and while some four men were able to escape, one poor fellow was unable to do so. The ship fell upon his lower extremities and loins. Now this was thought, perhaps, to be no great danger, for they could take away the sludge and extricate him.

So they began to shore the ship, and willing hands brought ropes and blocks and wedges and earnest strength. But they soon discovered that the thing was impossible from the nature of the bottom of the river and from the position of the cargo, which, I suppose, they could not speedily remove. The man was jammed under the bulwarks, and must remain fixed there without hope. There was just one awful hour before the coming tide would reach the spot. Well might a solemn hush succeed the frantic labors of the townsmen as death was seen riding on the advancing flood. The poor creature had to lie there that hour as the tide came gently in. A minister stood by his side praying with him. Let us trust that his soul found peace with God!

But O the terror of his position! Well might he say, “Cover my head, that I may not see the water.” Steadily the cold un pitying waters flowed on until a corpse was hidden where an hour or so before a strong man labored. This is a graphic picture of the position of every ungodly man! He does not know it, but the waves of time are coming up about him now, and *we* cannot help him to escape. The load of his sins is on his loins—he cannot deliver himself. The great waters of God’s wrath must swallow him up quickly. O, Sinner, would that I could save you! Alas, it is not in my power! But there *is* an arm that can deliver you. There is one who can lift the burden off you and say to you, “Be free!” Believe in Him and you shall never die!

Trust in His power, and rest yourself on His Love, and you shall escape as a bird out of the snare of the fowler. And when death comes it shall be no death to you, but a peaceful migration from the land of shadows to the

world of substance. God help us to be wise, that we may remember our latter end! I would say a few more words to the sinner. I cannot think, O Worldling, why you should love this world so much when it is so soon to vanish! In the old Greek cities they had a king every year and, because it was so poor a thing to be a king for only one year, and then to be a common man again, all the citizens dreaded to be kings. How can you long to be rich, when you are only to be rich for so short a time?

When the sailor is just about to furl his sail because he is near the port, he will not fret himself with some little inconvenience in the ship. And why are you so sore vexed with all these little trials, when you are so near the eternal haven? When men buy property on a short lease, they will not give much for it, for they are only to have it for a brief term. Why do you spend your *soul* to buy this *world*? What will it profit you, if you gain it, if your soul is lost? When men have a house and they are soon to leave it, they will not lay out much in repairing it. Why, then, care you so much for your body? Why mind you so much *this* life? The bell is even now trembling to toll for you, and the grave is yawning that it may swallow you up!

Oh Man! Oh Man! I would that you were wise! You are to live forever, forever, forever, either—

***“In flames that no abatement know,
Though briny tears forever flow,”***

or else in joy beyond degree! Which shall it be with you, Man? If you die as you are, O Sinner, remember, there remains nothing for you but a fearful looking for judgment and of fiery indignation! I pray you by the love of God, to consider your ways. Thus says the Lord unto you this day by my lips, as truly as He spoke to Hezekiah by the Prophet of old, “Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.”

How will you stand, Sinner, in the day when the Lord comes to make inquisition for sin and to avenge their iniquity upon the heads of the unpardoned? Fly, Sinner! God help you by His Grace to fly now to yonder open door, where Jesus waits to receive you, and to put away your sin. Whosoever believes on Him is not condemned. Like Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so the Son of Man is lifted up that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

IV. Come, come, you wise men, rise and leave this theater, we have seen enough of it. “The fashion of this world passes away.” And for you, and for me, happy shall it be when it shall have passed away forever. But is there nothing real? Can I do nothing real here? Is there nothing I can do that shall last forever? Yes, the *soul* is lasting. Then let me see to my own soul. Let me make my calling and election sure, for I shall have been of all fools the most mad, if I shall have trifled with these things and yet have neglected my soul.

The Roman emperor, Claudius, once invaded Great Britain but his performance only consisted of gathering pebbles and shells from the sea coast. This shall be my triumph, this my only reward, if here in this world I live only to gather wealth. At the last I shall be as though I gathered pebbles, for these things shall be of no value to me if my soul shall perish.

O Lord, by Your rich Grace set me upon a sure foundation and make me right before Your face.

Yes, there are some real things besides my own soul. There are *other men's souls*. What am I doing for them? Am I teaching, am I preaching, or, if I am not doing this, am I helping others to preach? Am I doing my best to add to the kingdom of Christ by the ingathering of immortals? Have I a sphere in the Ragged School or in tract distributing, or am I helping in some way or other to do good? For, if not, my life is a play—I am doing nothing real. I am only hurrying here and there, and when it comes to the last I shall have been as a workmen that has neglected his own work to play with children in the streets!

Dig up your buried talents, O Idlers. Work while it is called today, O you who are given to slumber. Yes, there is something real—*there is Christ's Church*. The Church that is to shine like the stars in Heaven forever, the Bride of the Lamb—what am I doing for her? Do I seek the good of Jerusalem? As a member of the Church, do I contribute to its strength? Do I give of my substance to her efforts, and of my talents to her doings? Do I cast myself wholly into the arms of Christ and work for Him! Yes, there is something real—*Jesus is so*. Am I glorifying Him here on earth? When I see Him in His poor people, do I feed Him? When He shivers at my door in the garb of poverty, do I clothe Him?

When I know that He has need, do I visit Him? If so, I am doing real things. If I devote my life to God, to Christ, to His Church, to the souls of men, and if my own soul is saved, then I am living. But if not, I am dead while I live. "*Let us live while we live!*" Alas, how many are dying while they live, driveling while they live! Oh, the scores of pounds we spend on ourselves. The hundreds we give to our own comfort! And where is that? It is gone like smoke! But that which is given to God lasts and endures. It is treasured up in God's bank. That which is given to the poor and needy is made—though unrighteous mammon—to be treasured up in Heaven!

But I know many practical persons will say, "Yes, this is a very pretty speech for a young minister. But these ministers do not understand business. They cannot be expected to understand temporal matters." I would to God you understood them half so well, for our understanding in this matter we know is sound. And when you shall come to see these things in the light of eternity streaming between the curtains of your dying bed, you will understand, then, that there was nothing worth living for but God and Christ and His Church. And you will give your verdict, then, with mine to this—that truly to live must be Christ, or else to die never can be gain! God add His blessing and may some be led to trust in Jesus, by His Grace, this morning!

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“THE FASHION OF THIS WORLD”

NO. 3032

**A SERMON
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**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 12, 1869.**

***“The fashion of this world passes away.”*
*1 Corinthians 7:31.***

IN this Epistle, Paul deals with many matters of conscience and explains them for the benefit of the troubled ones in the Church at Corinth. In the chapter out of which our text is taken, he writes wisely concerning the important question of marriage. And he recommends that during the time of persecution it is well to abstain from marriage, though he does not forbid it even under the pressure of those trying circumstances. Then, after he has spent a considerable time in looking at the subject from various standpoints, he says, “It remains that they that have wives, be as though they had none.” He seemed to think that the whole matter of marriage was too small for him to take into any very serious consideration, seeing that the time was so short in which such questions could need to be discussed at all, “for,” he said, “the fashion of this world passes away.”

The Greek word used in this verse has, by some expositors, been read as though the Apostle referred to mathematical figures, as when the boy at school, working out the propositions in Euclid, draws upon his slate, circles, triangles and squares—and then almost immediately rubs the whole out and begins another set of figures. In that sense, the whole scheme or fashion of this world is only like the markings on a slate, or the chalk drawings on a blackboard—something not intended to last, but to be done away with almost immediately. So there is no need to be troubled about the things of this world, except so far as they have reference to the world to come, for the whole scheme, plan and fashion of this world passes away.

But an interpretation which is far more likely to be correct is that the Apostle meant, “The whole theatrical performance of this world’s pageant passes away. The whole of its various acts, shows and manifestations passes away.” If that is the meaning, Paul seems to be of the mind of the world’s great poet, that—

***“All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.”***

So he says, “The whole play passes away. The whole performance which is now upon the stage will soon be changed and all will be gone.” Just as men put on mimic robes and one is arrayed as a monarch and another appears as a slave. Just as one is dressed in scarlet and fine linen and

another comes on the scene in the rags of a beggar but, as soon as the play is over, they all take off the clothes appertaining to their various parts and go to their homes in quite different garb. And so, all the pomp and glory of this world will soon have passed away and men will go to their own eternal dwelling place, the fashion of this world having passed away forever. It is to that thought that I wish to call your earnest attention just now. May the Holy Spirit teach us what He intended the Apostle to convey to our minds concerning the transitory character of all worldly things!

I. First, then, let us ask, WHAT IS THE FASHION OF THIS WORLD THAT PASSES AWAY?

I answer, first, it is *the whole world, itself, and all humanity dwelling upon it*. All that we see around us is passing away. Although, to some minds, this visible creation looks as if it might last forever, there are signs of decrepitude and decay which the thoughtful can easily discern. The very granite crumbles, the sea breaks its bounds, even the sun's lamp, at times, grows dull! All things bear signs that this world is but as the traveler's tent that is pitched tonight, only to be struck tomorrow morning. The day is coming, whether we wish it or not, when “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The earth, also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” As once by a deluge of water, so the second time by a deluge of fire, the whole fashion of this world shall surely pass away—“all these things shall be dissolved.” We talk about the everlasting hills and speak of the sea as the hoary ocean, but there is nothing except God that is really worthy of veneration because of age. We read of His Son, in whom He has manifested Himself, that “His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow,” to indicate the great antiquity of Christ—but all human beings are but things of an hour—and they and the world they inhabit shall soon have departed!

Vain man, who looks on this world as a thing that is lasting, should at least look upon himself as fleeting! Generations have followed each other till the whole earth resembles a beach when the tide is down, where ten thousand worms have each one cast up his little separate hillock and then gone from sight. What is there to remind us of past generations but their graves? Even their works have decayed before the time when all men's works are to be consumed. Since we have been our own little while in the world, how many have passed away! The funeral bell is almost always tolling—the sexton never ceases from his work. Every time the clock ticks, a soul takes its flight into the unknown land. While we have been sitting here, the great processes of decay, dissolution and death have been going on—and although we may not have noticed it, we ourselves have been passing onwards by an inevitable march towards the confines of the spirit world! We are in a dying world and none of us will be able to escape from the influences that are, in due time, to bear us away from this world which is itself passing away! So, Brothers and Sisters, if the Apostle meant nothing more than this, there is enough in the remembrance that this world and all who are upon it are passing away, to calm

our minds and to remind ourselves of the instability of mortal things—and of the necessity of securing something more substantial and enduring!—

***“The time is short ere all that live
Shall hence depart, their God to meet!
And each a strict account must give,
At Jesus’ awful Judgment Seat.
The time is short, oh, who can tell
How short his time below may be?
Today on earth his soul may dwell,
But tomorrow in eternity.”***

But, secondly, “the fashion of this world passes away” *in reference to all its honors and dignities*. All that was ever emblazoned on the roll of fame and thought to be written there forever, shall surely be blotted out. They who now wear royal crowns shall not always be crowned. Those who are now decorated with glittering satin and jewels shall not be always so adorned. Come to the graveyard and see how much is left of any of the Caesars! Look into the vault of Alexander and see how little is the greatest of the great! The monarch cannot be distinguished from his slave—and men cannot maintain their various ranks and degrees of dignity in the grave. Death, that great Radical and Communist, that awful leveler, is continually smiting down the mighty and with his dread axe he fells the haughty cedar of Lebanon as easily as he does the rush by the riverside. But there are those who will be kings when these kings of earth are no more regarded as royal, and there are those who will be peers of the heavenly reality when earthly peers have lost their patents of nobility. There are kings and priests whom the world knows not of who shall yet come forth from their obscurity—in the day when the King of kings shall be revealed, they shall also be revealed—but meanwhile, the fashion of this world, so far as its pomp and greatness are concerned, passes away.

Then, dear Friends, let us remember, in the third place, that *the civil fashion of this world* will certainly pass away too. It is necessary for good government that there should be judges, dignitaries, magistrates and so forth, and men think much of the power of governing their fellow creatures, and talk proudly about constitutions that are to last all down the ages, and establishments that will withstand the attacks of the years that are yet to come—but they make a great mistake. All these must pass away! The magistrate on the bench must be made equal with the prisoner at the bar. The great man must slumber in the dust with the beggar who was splashed by the mud from his horses’ hoofs as he rode along in his pride!

Remember, too—and this is a solemn reflection that ought to press heavily upon every ungodly heart—that the association of the righteous and the wicked, which is part of the fashion of this world today, is passing away. Many of you are, at the present moment, being kindly cared for by Divine Providence more for the sake of your godly relatives than for your own sakes, for you are ungodly and, therefore, God cannot regard you in the same light as He does His own believing children. You are nestling under the same roof with your father, who is a saint of God—yet, if

you died as you now are, you would be lost forever. You are, at this moment, sitting in the same pew with one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ, but you are, yourself, Christless and hopeless. This congregation, as I look upon it, seems to me like a heap of corn upon the threshing floor, but there is much chaff mingled with it! I see here a great field of precious grain springing up, but the tares are mixed with the wheat. That is according to the fashion of this world—it must inevitably be so in the present state of things.

Even in the professing Church, itself, this is the fashion today, for the great dragnet has taken in its meshes, fish of every kind—some good and some bad. But this shall not be the fashion for long, for this present fashion passes away and, then the net shall be drawn to shore and they shall gather the good into vessels, but they shall cast the bad away. The great reaping time shall come, by-and-by, and then the tares shall be bound in bundles to be burned—while the wheat shall be gathered into the garner—

***“East and West, and South and North,
Speeds each glorious angel forth,
Gathering in with glittering wing
Zion’s saints to Zion’s King.
Man nor angel knows that day,
Heaven and earth shall pass away.
Still shall stand the Savior’s word,
Deathless as its deathless Lord.”***

Think of this, you who are living now in close relationship to Christian people! How will you bear to be separated from them when this present fashion passes away? O husbands of gracious wives, children of godly parents, ungodly parents of converted children, think of the time when this fashion shall be ended and the separating day shall come—and you are driven forth to the blackness of darkness forever, while your loved ones are walking with Christ forever in the home of the blessed in Glory!

Mark, too, fourthly, *that the busy fashion of this world* will also pass away. You are engaged in your shops most properly. You are toiling in your various callings, or pursuing your several professions. One is a lawyer and another is a doctor, but all this occupation passes away. There is a land in which there shall be no toiling for daily bread and no need to cast ourselves wearily upon our bed after too long and too trying a day of toil. There is a time coming when that extra ten pounds which seems so important now, or that extra ten thousand pounds, or that extra million pounds added to ones estate shall be thought to be of no more value than a single hair! When men come to die, how their business dwarfs to nothing! It casts a long shadow right across the pathway of life—but when they lie upon their last bed and gaze into eternity, they see things in a different light and estimate them at their real value! O Sirs, you who are pursuing earthly gain as though it were something substantial, are like the fools who hunt the will-o’-the-wisp and plunge after it in the morass to their own destruction! Can you carry your gold with you into the world where you are going? If you could hang it on the cerements that are to be wrapped about you in the tomb, how much richer would your

dead body be for all its golden decorations? What can your old buy for you beyond a thicker slab of stone to lie upon your corpse while the poor sleep under a lighter load in a field where the wild flowers grow?

Believe me, there is nothing here that is worthy of your pursuit! If you give your soul up to anything earthly, whether it is the wealth, or the honors, or the pleasures of this world, you might as well hunt after the *mirage* of the desert or try to collect the mists of the morning or to store up for yourselves the clouds of the sky—for all these things are passing away! It is difficult, sometimes, to realize that we are citizens of that country where worldly wealth has lost all value because of the infinitely more precious wealth, there, that is the common property of all the saints. It is difficult, sometimes, to realize what that land must be where we are to rest forever and yet serve God day and night in His Temple. But when we are indulged by the Holy Spirit with a faith's view of that better country and are permitted, for a little while, to think of the time when we shall gather our weary souls in these seas of heavenly rest and not a wave of trouble shall roll across our peaceful breast—then are we glad that the fashion of this poor weary world is so soon to pass away! But alas, the thought of death and the natural clinging that we all have to life, make us, sometimes, wish that this world would last forever and that its fashion were no so transient as it is! Yet, wish as you may, you sons of men cannot make the fashion of this world remain—it will soon be gone—every jot of it! So may you all have a portion that will last!

Once more, *even this world's religious fashions will pass away*. The time is coming when the Pharisee will no more stand and say, “God, I thank You that I am not as other men are—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess.” Self-righteousness is a fashion that will not outlast the trial hour of death. The time is coming when men will no longer be able to put their trust in priests, or to imagine that occult influences can flow from human hands into their souls! The foolish fashion of Ritualism and ceremonialism will certainly pass away! It ought never to have existed, for it is a delusion and a snare, but it will pass away when He comes who abhors it with all His soul. This world's religion is sometimes that of mere formal orthodoxy—the mental acceptance of a certain creed, the laying hold of certain dogmas and fighting for the outward forms of them. All this is common enough in the religion with which many men are satisfied—but it will all pass away! In that day when nothing but genuine heart-work will endure the tests that will then be applied and when only the real regenerating work of the Holy Spirit will pass current with the Most High, all mere head-knowledge and notional religion will have melted and flowed away. Your unopened family Bibles with their great gilded clasps, your brass-bound prayer books and hymn-books, your mere formal family prayers read out in so orderly a tone, with no heart in the performance—all will pass away like the foam upon the waters! What cares God for all that you have to say if you say it not from your heart?

What value does He set upon a round of ceremonies if true soul-worship is absent from them?

All mere outward godliness and fictitious religion will pass away—and how naked and ashamed will the worldly professor be when God shall strip him of his tawdry robes! How foul will they look who thought themselves clean! How horrible will be the leprosy upon the brows of those who imagined that all was well because they covered their filthy sores from the sight of man! How desperate will be their doom who dreamed of going to Heaven, yet who have never trusted in Christ’s great atoning Sacrifice! May none of us have anything to do with this world’s fashion which will pass away, but may we all have that righteousness which will ensure to us the life everlasting!—

**“We’ve no abiding city here!
This may distress the worldling’s mind,
But should not cost the saint a tear,
Who hopes a better rest to find.
We’ve no abiding city here!
Sad truth, were this to be our home,
But let this thought our spirits cheer—
We seek a city yet to come.
We’ve no abiding city here!
Then let us live as pilgrims do.
Let not the world our rest appear,
But let us haste from all below.”**

This will suffice concerning the fashion of this world which passes away.

II. Now, just for a few minutes I am going to try to show you by way of contrast to what I have been saying, that **THERE IS A FASHION THAT WILL NOT PASS AWAY.**

There are some things that will remain. And among them is, first, *the life within the Believer which God’s Holy Spirit has implanted.* Do you know what it is, dear Friends, to be born-again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which lives and abides forever? He who has a mere notional religion that springs from his own free will, will find that sooner or later it will die. But that incorruptible Seed of the Holy Spirit which constitutes us the living children of the last Adam, who was made a quickening Spirit, shall never die! That life came not from mortal man, neither can the teeth of Time fret it, nor the arrow’s of Death kill it. This is one of the things that passes not away.

And, as the inner life of the Believer thus endures, so, thank God, *the outward truth also passes not away.* There is not a single Truth of God that is revealed in this blessed Book that shall ever become a lie. There is not one promise there that shall ever be revoked. What God has revealed in His Word is not for yesterday nor for today, alone, but for tomorrow, and until the world’s end and throughout eternity! I know that there are those who would like to see a new Bible, or a revised version of it. I mean a revised version of the original Scriptures to suit their depraved taste! They would gladly have what they call “new developments” and “fresh light” worthy of this “advanced” generation! But, beloved Friends, there is nothing new in theology but that which is false—only the old is true—

for the Truth of God must be old, as old as God Himself! So let us rejoice that whatever may happen, and although the fashion of this world shall surely pass away, there is not a single text between the covers of this Book that shall ever lose an atom of its Divine Truth and force. Oh, no! The old Book is not effete and the Revelation it has brought to us will never grow stale! The promises well up with as rich consolation to us today as they did to the first of the martyr-band! The solemn oaths and Covenant of God stand as firm and fast today as when He first gave them to our fathers! So let us cling to the Holy Word and to the doctrines of God’s Grace, for these are among the things that are to abide forever!—

**“Engraved as in eternal brass
The mighty promise shines,
Nor can the powers of darkness erase
Those everlasting lines!
He that can dash whole worlds to death,
And make them when He please—
He speaks and that almighty breath
Fulfils His great decrees!
His very Word of Grace is strong
As that which built the skies.
The voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises!”**

Yet again, as the life within, and the Truth revealed, so the *fruit of the inner life, wherein we are led by the Holy Spirit and the Word, shall remain*. They who build a worldwide empire will lose all that they have labored to gain. Men may pile up a city of marble only to see it become a heap of dust. But if you give a cup of cold water, in the name of Christ, to one who belongs to Him, you shall not lose your reward! Every holy thought, every devout purpose, every thankful hymn, every earnest prayer, every true-hearted sermon, every good work that is done for God in the power of the Holy Spirit lives beyond the possibility of death! The saints depart from earth in due season, but why? “That they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.” Their works are still present before the mind of God and He accepts them. Not all that even Christians do shall abide, for “the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” Many a man—and many a good man, too, shall lose much of what he did—much of his preaching, much of his teaching, much of his so-called praying and alms-giving shall prove to be but wood, hay and stubble which shall be burned, though he, himself, being on the Rock, a believer in Christ, shall be “saved yet so as by fire.” But happy is that man who so completely lives unto God and is so fully guided by the Holy Spirit and by the revealed Truth of God that he spends himself and is wholly spent in his Master’s service—and so builds upon the one foundation, which is Jesus Christ, not wood, hay, and stubble, but gold, silver and precious stones which shall be found to his own joy and to God’s Glory in the great testing time that is surely coming!

Further, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, it is a very sweet reflection that among the things that shall never pass away are such as these—the love that was fixed upon us before the day-star knew its place

or planets ran their round. The love that bought us upon Calvary’s Cross. The love that has prepared a place for us that where Jesus is, there we, also, may be, to be like He and with Him forever—that love shall never pass away! So too, the power of God which brought us up out of Egypt and is leading us through the wilderness. The power that has fought our battles and has kept us safely to this day—that power shall never pass away! Then, too, the fullness of God upon which we have lived and from which we have been drinking such deep draughts to satisfy our great necessities—that fullness shall never pass away! There will come a time when everything of a spiritual kind which we have rejoiced in here, instead of passing away, shall be brighter than ever to our sight, nearer to us and better understood! Our true daylight draws near. It is twilight with us now, but not the twilight of the evening—it is the twilight of the dawn! Our pathway lies upward—we have already ascended somewhat, but we have to go far higher yet. Up the ladder that Jacob saw, we pursue our joyful way and there shall be no descent for us! There shall be no falling from the elevation to which Divine Grace lifts us, “for the path of the just is as the shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day.”

We shall soon see the King in His beauty and the land that is very far off. We may begin to put off our old week-day garments, for the heavenly Sabbath bells will soon ring out their welcome call. Let us shake ourselves from the dust, for our beautiful array is ready and we shall soon sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Eagerly anticipate—all of you who love the Lord Jesus Christ—eagerly anticipate your better portion! You daughters of sickness, you shall soon have done with all pains and pangs forever! You children of poverty, you shall soon have done with your anxieties and griefs concerning your many needs. You toil-worn workers in the vineyard of Christ and you who are oppressed with many cares, you shall be Marthas no longer, but you shall sit at Jesus’ feet forever! As for you who have been mourning, and sighing, and crying—your weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning! Put off your sackcloth, for God shall gird you with the garment of praise. Forget the drought of the wilderness for You shall soon be in the Paradise of God and at His right hand where there are pleasures forevermore—

***“O Paradise eternal!
What bliss to enter thee
And once within your portals,
Secure forever be!
They all around shall love us,
And we return their love;
One band of happy spirits,
One family above!
There God shall be our portion,
And we His jewels be—
And gracing His bright mansions,
His smile reflect and see.
O Paradise eternal,
What joys in you are known!*”**

***God of mercy guide us,
Till all is felt our own!”***

The gist of all I wanted to say is just this. Brothers and Sisters, let us hold very loosely everything here, but let us get a very firm grip of everything that is to be hereafter! Let the visible begin, even now, to melt away and let the invisible take its true substantial form. If God has been prospering some of you—and He has been very gracious and kind to some of His people in temporal matters, set not your hearts on any of those things. Your garden, your house, your children, your gold—all the prosperity that God gives you—accept it, rejoice in it, use it as you ought, but do not abuse it—these things are not your God! You have no abiding city here, but you seek one to come and, oh, do give a grip as of steel to the things that are eternal! Never endure a doubt that Christ is really yours! If you have one doubt, may the Holy Spirit cast it out and give you the full assurance of faith! Never tolerate the question, “Is Christ mine?” If it must be raised, and it must, sometimes, never be content till you have settled it! With your face in the dust and your hands in the prints of your Savior’s pierced feet, come now to Him again—cling to Him anew—make Him your All-in-All. And so, when the shadows thicken and the world grows dim, may the light stream full upon your eyes and your soul stretch her wings and soar away to her eternal rest!

The Lord bless you all, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
JOHN 9:1-38.**

Verse 1, 2. *And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?* Christ’s disciples were often inquisitive even when their Master was bent upon giving proofs of His practical benevolence. Fools may sometimes ask questions which wise men may not think it proper to answer, but on this occasion our Savior gave an answer to the enquiry which His disciples had put to Him.

3, 4. *Jesus answered, Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day: the night comes when no man can work.* Think of our Lord being under the necessity of working—“I must work.” Men say that, “Must is for the king,” but here is the King of kings declaring that work is by the most urgent necessity laid upon Him—so will not you, beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, come under this Divine necessity? Will not you feel that you, also, must be doing all you can for your Divine Lord and Master?

5. *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.* While Christ was here on earth, He was the great Light-Giver—and He is still the great Light-Giver! And now that His visible Presence has been withdrawn from the world, His people are to be “the light of the world” by reflecting the light they have received from Him! In such works as you will be unable to perform after death, you are now to give light to the sons of men.

6-9. *When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went His way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing. The neighbors, therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is He. Others said, He is like he. But he said, I am he—"There is no mistake about this! I know that I am that man!"*

10, 11. *Therefore said they unto him, How were your eyes opened? He answered and said. In his own quick, clear, intelligent way, for he was a man who evidently had twice as many eyes in his brain as other people had, even while he had none with which he could see! "He answered and said"—*

11-14. *A man that is called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam and wash. And I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is He? He said, I know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforesaid was blind. And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. You may be sure that the Pharisees would be in high dudgeon because Christ did that for, according to their stupid superstition, to make clay with spittle was a kind of brick-making which must not be done on the Sabbath—and they would, for that reason, condemn Christ as a breaker of the Sabbath!*

15. *Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed and do see. Now that he has to deal with Pharisees, he will not waste a word upon them. The more often he tells the story, the shorter it becomes. That is not the usual rule with stories—they generally grow like snowballs as they roll along until, at last, you would hardly recognize the original story, so much has been added to it as it has been told again and again! But this honest, straightforward man cuts the story down to the barest details and yet tells it well.*

16, 17. *Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This Man is not of God because He keeps not the Sabbath. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They said unto the blind man again, What do you say of Him, that He has opened your eyes? He said, He is a Prophet. He felt that he could safely go as far as that, for Jesus could not have worked such a miracle as that if He had not been a Prophet sent by God.*

18-21. *But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How, then, does he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. But by what means he now sees, we know not; or who has opened his eyes, we know not. He is of age, ask him: he shall speak for himself. These parents, though in humble life, were evidently like their son, sharp*

and shrewd. So they referred the question to the one who knew how to answer it.

22-24. *These words spoke his parents because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already that if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, he is of age, ask him. Then again they called the man that was blind and said unto him. They wanted to see if they could catch him in his talk, so they said to him, in a very pious fashion—*

24. *Give God the praise: we know that this Man is a sinner. Dear me, what wonderful “knowledge” those Pharisees had!*

25. *He answered and said, Whether He is a sinner or not, I know not. One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. There was no driving him out of that stronghold! That which is a matter of our own personal experience is a thing about which we may well feel positively certain. I wish we had more Christian people firmly established in their faith because it is a matter of deep, heart-felt, personal experience with them. I like to meet a man who can say, “I am willing to yield to opponents upon certain points concerning which I am not quite sure. But the fact of the efficacy of the Gospel of God’s Grace, the power of the precious blood of Jesus to cleanse the heart and conscience, the Divine operation of the Holy Spirit within the soul—all these are Truths of God which I cannot and will not yield! Like this man, I can say, ‘One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.’”*

26, 27. *Then said they to him again, What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and you did not hear: Why would you hear it again? Will you, also, be His disciples? He carried the war into the enemy’s camp, as well he might!*

28. *Then they reviled him. That is an unprincipled lawyer’s rule—When you cannot answer the plaintiff’s argument, abuse him! This was the last resort of those who knew that they had a bad case, or no case at all—“Then they reviled him.”*

28-31. *And said, You are His disciple, but we are Moses’ disciples. We know that God spoke unto Moses: as for this Fellow, we know not from where He came. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvelous thing that you know not from where He came and yet He has opened my eyes. Now we know that God hears not sinners. The man meant, God does not open blind eyes by the hands of sinners. He does not work miracles to bear witness to the agency of ungodly men.*

31-33. *But if any man is a worshipper of God and does His will, him He hears. Since the world began it was not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, He could do nothing. Bravo! You who used to be blind—what an irresistible thing truth is, whoever handles it! These Pharisees, keen of intellect, well instructed in the letter of the Law of God, yet crafty up to their eyes in self-conceit, are like chaff driven before the wind when a plain-speaking man does but handle the Truth of the living God. Never be afraid or ashamed to spread the Gospel of Christ, my Brothers and Sisters! No—*

“Speak His Word, though kings should hear,

Nor yield to sinful shame.”

A beggar with the Truth of God is mightier than priests and princes with a lie!

34. *They answered and said unto him.* What could they say to him? Nothing but more reviling and abuse!

34. *You were altogether born in sins, and do you teach us? And they cast him out.* That is the last argument of all. “We cannot answer him, so let us turn him out!”

35. *Jesus heard that they had cast him out and when He had found him.* Oh, how He rejoices in finding those that are cast out by the world, or by the self-righteous! “When He had found him.”

35, 36. *He said unto him, Do you believe on the Son of God? He answered and said.* Note the humility of the man’s tone, how changed it is from that sharpness, that sourness to which he had been driven by his enemies. “He answered and said.”

36. *Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?* He is a lamb before Christ though he was a lion before the Pharisees! That is the true Christian character—gentle, tender, humble, meek in the Presence of the God of Mercy—but with no trembling, no giving way in the presence of the adversaries of Christ and His Truth!

37, 38. *And Jesus said unto him, You have both seen Him and it is He that talks with you. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him.* He was no Unitarian! “He worshipped Him.” And you, Beloved, cannot help worshipping Him who has opened your eyes spiritually! It is those who are still blind who will not worship Him. But once let us feel the touch of His light-giving finger. Once let us know that He has shed His eternal light into the darkness of our souls and we shall not be satisfied with the mere verbal avowal of our faith—we shall add to it our reverent adoration as this man did when he first said, “Lord, I believe”—and then “worshipped Him.”

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

“WITHOUT CAREFULNESS” NO. 1692

**DELIVERED AT THE THURSDAY EVENING LECTURE,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“I would have you without carefulness.”
1 Corinthians 7:32.***

AT the time when Paul wrote these words he was giving judgment as to whether it was expedient for Christians in those days to marry. The question was whether they were likely to be better Christians married or unmarried. This was a question of much delicacy and Paul answered it with remarkable discretion and fidelity. And, in so doing, he laid down a great general principle which is of much more value to the Church, today, than Paul's private opinion about the matter of marriage or non-marriage. Paul tells us that concerning virgins, he had no commandment of the Lord, but gave his judgment as one that had obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful—he did not speak, in this case, as under Divine Inspiration, but as an experienced and consecrated man giving his judgment for the good of others—and for the benefit of the great work so dear to him.

In that capacity, Paul's words are, by no means, to be despised. I had far rather follow the uninspired advice of Paul than that of any other man. In mental clearness none ever excelled that consecrated man. But he spoke under Inspiration, beyond all question, when he gave this as his reason for desiring that they would remain unmarried—“I would have you without carefulness,” or as the Revised Version reads it, “I would have you to be free from cares.” This is the mind of the Holy Spirit as well as the mind of the Apostle Paul. This is a text, not for Paul's time, alone, but for our time and for all time.

The general principle in our text I will endeavor to open up before you. We who have believed are the servants of Christ and are no longer at our own disposal. We are not our own, for we are bought with a price. If you look back in the chapter, at the 23rd verse, you find a statement to that effect. Hence our business in life is to serve Him who has redeemed us. This one occupation should entirely absorb and engross us. Everything, therefore, which helps us better serve the Lord Jesus is a good thing—and everything which hampers and hinders us in the main business of our life, though it may be good enough for others, is bad for us. The chief work of the Christian is to glorify God and, to this chief work everything must be subordinated. If a thing is lawful to me, and yet, while lawful, it hinders me in the service of God, it is not expedient and, therefore, I am to renounce it.

No man ever succeeds in anything who does not give himself wholly to it—it matters not what it is—concentration is essential to perfection in any pursuit. He who would be eminent in any one direction must forego a great many other things which are perfectly allowable. These he must re-

nounce for the sake of his one objective. He will not succeed unless he sacrifices all other things for the one chief thing. So must it be with the Christian. The rule of his life is to be, “This I will not do, this I will not enjoy, this I will not allow for myself because I could not serve God as well with it, and my business is to keep myself in the best possible form for doing my Master’s work.” We are to labor as much as we can for our Lord and all other results of life must be to us as chaff to the wheat.

It is with us, Paul tells us, as with a soldier. A soldier is a man who must not open shop, or become a banker or a farmer. He must not think of settling quietly in the town where, for a while, he is billeted. Why not? The reason is clear—even if there is no war at the present time, yet no man that wars, entangles himself with the things of this life if he would please him who has called him to be a soldier. Soldiering requires the man to be altogether a soldier and it cannot afford to let him be a tradesman or a farmer—he must not hamper himself with that which would hold him to the spot and prevent his hastening to the field. The nation requires that its army be ready for any and every emergency, so that when the trumpet blows, the regiment marches, the troopship steams across the sea, and the foe is promptly confronted. It is necessary that the soldier keep himself in marching condition and the less luggage he has to carry, the better.

So it is with the Christian—he is to aim at a condition best adapted for his holy warfare. He is not to be satisfied when he has said to himself, “Is this right, or is this wrong?” He is to go further. I hope that many of us have long passed beyond that stage, for we have a judgment and discernment which tell us at once what is right and what is wrong—we now ask a still higher question—“Will this help me to glorify God, or will it not?” This is the enquiry of the higher life and a godly man is careful in the answering of it. The best thing is bad if it hinders our vocation. Though the garment were made of silk, bespangled with jewels and made with golden thread, yet must we, as racers, lay it aside if it would entangle us in our running.

Though the burden were a bag of pearls and every pearl were a king’s ransom, yet if we are to run—and none can win but those that run—we must leave that bag of pearls in another’s keeping, for our business is with the crown before us! We must lay aside every weight and the vesture of sin which does so easily entangle us, that we may run with patience the race that is set before us. At this time the Apostle says to us—“I would have you without carefulness as to *earthly* things,” and this because he would have us *full* of carefulness as to *heavenly* things! He wants us to be free from cares, that all our thought, anxiety, meditation, suggestiveness, inventiveness and burden-bearing may go towards the service of our Divine Lord. We have only a certain measure of mind and he wants all of it for the Lord Jesus, that we may walk worthy of our high calling.

But towards other things, he says, “I would have you without carefulness.” How are we to be without carefulness? This must be the work of the Holy Spirit, for He is the Comforter and the Helper of our infirmities, But as far as we are to work with Him, the question needs a careful reply. How are we to be without carefulness?

I. I answer—we may hopefully attempt this in the power of God, first, **BY AVOIDING THOSE STATES WHICH INVOLVE CAREFULNESS.** Mark well, it is not given to many to select their place in life. More or less it may be committed to us to turn to the right or to the left on certain occasions, but men and women are thrown into certain conditions in which it may be their duty to abide in their calling, though it may surround them with special difficulties. That calling may be one which, ordinarily, involves a vast amount of care and anxious thought and yet they cannot get out of it. They ought not to leap the hedge which the Lord has placed along their way, for if they do, they may fall into a ditch on the other side, muddy their garments, and so make matters worse. By crying to God for help and trusting in His sure Word, they will be able to bear the burden which God has put upon them and, it is their wisdom to do so.

Yet there *are* points in which we are allowed a choice about the state in which we would place ourselves and here our text comes in as a rule of action. Paul, in the case before us, is talking about the marriage of Christians and he bids Christians, in the first place, not to marry, for, he says, “I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried cares for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But he that is married cares for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.”

Now, observe the condition of affairs which led Paul to give this advice. Times of great persecution were present. Christians were continually being dragged into court or set before the lions in the amphitheatre, or shut up in prison, or put to cruel deaths—in such circumstances few would desire to have families about them. The Christian man who had no wife or child could flee in a moment if it were right to flee. Or, when he stood before the bar of Nero, he had not to think within himself, “If I die, I leave a wife and fatherless children.” When the single man put on his hat, he housed all his family, and thus he could move this way or that way to preach the Gospel, or to escape from persecution—and his moving was no great affair such as would be involved in transporting a family from land to land.

Paul wished the Church to be like an army which is not encumbered with baggage. The circumstances of the time demanded that they should be unencumbered, like troops upon forced marches. Paul, himself, carried all his property in a little bit of canvas—it consisted of half a dozen needles and a reel of thread, with which he made tents wherever he went. He was thus without carefulness. In those hard and desperate times, it was the best possible thing that a man could do, or a woman, to remain single—they were thus in the best condition for flight, or suffering, or service, or death. It was not a time in which they could settle down and engage in trade or agriculture and Paul, therefore, gives, as a recommendation, that they had better not *then* be married.

If we get into such times, again, we will give the same advice, but we are not certain that we should speak thus, to-day, as a general rule. The circumstances are decidedly different and we are to follow the great principle rather than the particular instance. I have known Brothers who, I

am sure, had a great deal more care before they were married than ever they had afterwards. Poor things that they were, they needed somebody to look after them! I have known cases in which women have had great care and burden in their single state, but have found rest in the house of a husband and, it has been upon the whole, the best for them in the truest sense. They served God better and were freer from carefulness in the married state. That is the rule to judge by.

But numbers of you never judge at all in this way! Many men and women rush into marriage when they know that it must involve them in all sorts of care and trouble—and deprive them of the possibility of doing anything in the Master’s service. It is not for me to offer advice, for it is useless. I am often asked for advice, but I generally find that people have made up their minds long before they come to their minister! They only want him to sanction what they have already settled and, therefore, I very seldom give any advice. Still, I shall lay down the general principle which every Christian man and woman must accept—“I would have you to be free from cares,” You are to put this to the front, that you are not your own, you are bought with a price.

And about this matter of marriage, as well as everything else, you are to consult the will of your Lord and Master, and you are to put this as the question, “Shall I glorify God better married or unmarried? May I hope that I shall not so greatly increase my carefulness as to distract myself from serving my Lord? There is something to be said on each side, but may I hope that the balance may be struck so that I shall really be the better servant of Christ in the marriage state? If so, I may enter upon it, but if not, I am not to gratify myself at my Savior’s expense. I may not marry if I should, then, cease to be as good a servant of Christ as I am now.” None of you are too good servants of Christ—I have never met with any that were! We cannot afford to lose anything which we already have, for we are not even, now, all that we ought to be. No, we must give ourselves whole-heartedly to Christ and remember the admonition of the text, “I would have you without carefulness.”

We have got over that somewhat difficult part of our road which is concerned with marriage. We come to another which is very plain, but needs to be spoken of, namely, the matter of increased worldly business. Some forget this advice of the Apostle altogether. Regarding it as a check upon enterprise, such persons take up a number of businesses and, consequently, increase their cares indefinitely! Now, if you can serve God better by having a dozen shops, have a dozen. But I have known persons whom God blessed in one shop and they lost the blessing when they felt they needed to open two or three. In a moderate business, they obtained a livelihood and all that they could need—and they were able to get out to the House of God and to have spare hours for the service of God in the Sunday school, in preaching, or other forms of Christian service. Thus they were in an enviable position for usefulness and ought to have been pillars in the house of the Lord.

But they were not content with so favored a state! Nothing would do for them but they must have shop number two, three, four and then, of

course, they were too busy to go out on week evenings, to lectures, classes, or Prayer Meetings. When invited to take their part in the Lord's work, they replied—“You see, I cannot get out. You must excuse me, I am so tired.” Just so. Of course you must look after business, now that you are so immersed in it, but how did you come to get into such a state of bondage that you cannot get out to the worship or service of God? Is not your excessive toil your own fault? If you have brought yourself into such a condition that you cannot give to God His due, is it an excuse for your not being able to do it? The disability is entirely of your own creation—how can it excuse you?

If this were the time, I could mention persons who were members of this Church whose departure from the way of righteousness was owing to a grasping spirit—and that grasping spirit has, in certain cases, led to a foolish rush after riches which has ended in poverty and discredit! They had as much as they could have managed, but they wanted more, and more, and more—and to get more they ventured upon ways and methods which were questionable. By-and-by, the means of Grace were neglected because they must attend to business. Very soon, for the same reason, they could not get up on Sunday morning, they were so tired—they did not get the shop shut till twelve—and then there was clearing up till half-past one, so they could not get out on a Sunday morning.

Worse than that, after a while they just looked over the ledger a little on Sunday afternoon. Soon the very vitals of godliness were gone and, not long after that, the name to live went, also—for the power of godliness had entirely departed from them. “I would have you without carefulness” and, therefore, to the most enterprising Brother, I would say—Brother, do not fill your pocket at the expense of your soul! Do what is best for the best part of yourself and that best part of yourself is the soul which deals with God and eternity! God can prosper you and make you exceedingly happy with a more manageable business and He can make you miserable if you willfully increase your cares. The Lord Jesus said, “A man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.”

Therefore, as I would have you without carefulness, look well, my dear Friend, before you launch out into that new business, or take that off-hand farm, or enter upon that speculative operation. Do not wade into risks so deep that you will be drowned in anxiety! Remember how Napoleon tried to do too much, and did it, and did for himself. Men of large capacity may rule an empire and yet serve the Lord admirably, but the most of us had better be satisfied with a smaller sphere. At any rate, let us not heap up such a load of our own that we shall not be able to bear the burden which our Master would have us carry for His love's sake.

Do not look so cross, good Friend, or I shall think that my advice is more necessary to you than it is pleasing! The day may come when this warning will be better understood by you than at this moment. Some Christian men need to have a touch on the elbow about public engagements. For my part, I believe that everything which concerns a man concerns a Christian, and that God never wished His servants to leave the government of this realm to all the place-hunters and unprincipled self-

seekers who look for a seat in Parliament. Christian men ought to see to it that right is promoted and justice done. To abandon Law-making to the worst of men would be infamous! So with everything which concerns the public welfare, I believe that we are to turn the scale for truth and righteousness, and are not to let the devil have his way and give robbery and oppression the run of all the parishes in England.

But there is a limit to a man's acceptance of public office and let that limit be watched carefully by all the Lord's children. Let the rule be—first our God and then our fellow men. What if I am a patriot, yet first of all the New Jerusalem is the place of my citizenship! I am a pilgrim and a stranger—and even though I seek the good of these aliens among whom I dwell, I must still keep my eye upon my own native country, towards which I am speeding. A man must not be doing 20 things in public life and neglecting the calls of the Lord Christ. If he does this, he will have care upon care, and will weary and trouble himself with things of no profit—and he will not care for the things of God as he should. Brothers and Sisters, “I would have you without carefulness”—you are the servants of God—do not make yourselves the slaves of men!

Here I wish to say another word to some whose occupations prevent their attendance at the House of God. I am not going to censure or judge any, but I will say this—whenever I hear of a young man who has an occupation with a moderate salary, who is able to get out to worship and has the whole Lord's-Day to himself, so that he can help in the Sunday school and, perhaps, in some week-evening engagements—if I hear that he is offered twice as much money in a place where he must be shut out from worship and service, I hope he will look long before he makes the bargain. If part of the Sabbath must go and all week-night privileges must go, I would, in most cases, say, “My Brother, forego the temporal advantage for the sake of the spiritual.” There may be exceptions to rules and I lay down nothing as a hard-and-fast rule, but still, let this be the general guide in such matters—“I would have you without carefulness.”

If it is so that he who has less, has less care, let me have less! He who has a moderate income, with small responsibility, is a richer man than he who has twice as much, with twice as much responsibility—and only half as much opportunity of serving his God. For you, Christians, the best place you can have is where you can do most for Jesus—and the worst place you can have is where you are denied Christian privileges. No amount of salary can make up to you the disadvantage of being kept from the assemblies of the saints, or can make up to your soul the loss sustained by excessive labor in the house of bondage. “I would have you without carefulness.”

This bears very hard upon all those forms of speculation of which some men are so fond. A man says, “I believe that I can get rich in a hurry by a certain venture.” Do not touch it! You will have no end of care and it may bring absolute poverty upon you. You have heard of the man who hurried to be rich and was not innocent. I am afraid that few are long innocent who hasten to be rich! They clutch at everything on a sudden and they are apt to include in that clutch a few things which do not belong to them!

What devouring care must prey upon those whose trade is as risky as a throw of the dice? When business is mere gambling, it ceases to be legitimate! Let speculators take heed of those dangers which necessarily attend all games of chance. I believe that every form of gambling, though it may take a business shape, tends more, or less, to harden the heart.

As for the naked form of play which risks upon the roll of a ball, it is murder to all the finer feelings of the heart! Nobody but gamblers could have cast the dice, all blood bespattered, at the foot of the Cross of our Redeemer! Gambling brings men into a state of heart worse than almost any other form of sin. When a man is willing to risk practically his all on the mere toss of a halfpenny whether goods shall go up or down, he is usually a bad man. And if he is not, he will be so before long, for that kind of thing does serious mischief to the most tender tissues of the heart. If any Christian man attempts it, what a state of mind will he soon know! Can he pray? Can he meditate? Can he commune with the Lord Jesus? Can he be without carefulness? Where can his trust be? Where his faith in God? When he has practically committed his fortunes to the devil, how can he confide in his God?

Gambling and prayer can never go together except in the case of the reprobate—I suppose they are profane enough to unite the two—but therein they blaspheme Heaven most detestably! Brothers and Sisters, abstain from those things which inevitably create undue excitement, anxiety and suspense. I speak as unto wise men—judge you what I say—I would have you without carefulness and, therefore, I would have you avoid those states which involve it.

I. Secondly, BY KEEPING AWAY FROM THOSE OBJECTS OF PURSUIT WHICH WOULD NATURALLY FOSTER IT, I would have you without carefulness. When a man makes the gaining of riches the first thing in life, he cannot be without carefulness. Where his treasure is, there will his heart be, also. There is the carefulness to get, the carefulness to hold, the carefulness to place out at interest, the carefulness to collect dues and so forth. Yes, and this may be the case, even, with poor people who may be as full of greedy care as the millionaire! Thrift is commendable, but covetousness is detestable. Men not only lay by for a rainy day, which is well—but when they make saving the main object of their lean and hungry lives—God's Glory and man's needs are, alike, forgotten.

Now, if you live for anything but God—especially if you live to hoard up with the determination that somehow or other you will be immensely rich—you must be *full* of carefulness. It cannot be helped. Suppose that you are of a nobler spirit and you live with the view of gaining honor among men—you will, with equal certainty, be full of cares. I hope you will not say, "I must be honored. I must have my neighbors think well of me and I will make a slave, or a fool, or a hypocrite of myself to please them." This resolve is detestable and if you go into that line you will not be without carefulness, I can tell you—and with all your carefulness you will never succeed. To please everybody is as impossible as to make ice and bake bread at the same moment in one oven. Give up the wretched attempt!

Be a man and be not a mere man-pleaser. How blessedly easy I feel in my work for God! But I owe that ease to the fact that I have no one to please but my Lord. When I preach, the last thing that ever occurs to me is to ask myself whether any of you will like it or not. It is no wish of mine to give offense, but it has never occurred to me to think whether you will be offended or not. I do not think you would respect me if I made my preaching an occasion for seeking to please *you*. If it pleases *God*, it will please you, if you are right—and if you are wrong and it does not please you—well, it never *ought* to please you!

This enables a preacher to give all his mind to his subject. The opposite feeling would distract him and make him live the life of a toad under a harrow. Go into life in just that kind of spirit—do everything to please your fellow man *if* it will do him real good. Never be ungenerous, nor unkind, nor uncourteous, but never live to please the world. No slave is so slavish as the wretch who draws his breath from other people’s nostrils and can only live if he is approved by his neighbors. Scorn such servitude! I would have you without carefulness and you cannot be without carefulness if you only seek to please men. Many persons are so ambitious to be respectable that they never will be without carefulness—they have a pound coming in but they spend a guinea to be respectable—and so they cannot be without carefulness. I charge you do not care about being what is known in the world as “respectable.” Be Christians, whether people respect you or not!

That littleness which stamps out everything that is good or brave in order to put a man into the fashion is to be the object of our supreme contempt! Do right. Serve God. Live for Heaven. Care little about man’s esteem. Abhor the pride of life. Live above the world, or you will be eaten up with carefulness—it cannot be helped. Some persons have a favorite objective in life—not God, but an earthly thing—and these cannot be without carefulness. Dear mother, love your children by all manner of means, but if that little one has become an idol, I am sure you cannot be without carefulness! I have known mothers kill their children because they did not want them to die. That is to say, they never let the wind blow on them—they kept them in a box, screened the blessed air of Heaven from them—and so brought them up that they became weak and sickly, thanks to their mothers’ indulgent care. Lots of children have suffered a martyrdom from too much nursing! Excessive carefulness has created cause for care.

If it is not a child, if it is anything else that becomes the pet and hobby of life, you will soon find that you have plenty of care about it—a horse, a dog, a flower, a painting may entangle men and women in nets of care. I have seen it and lamented it. The more objects you set your heart upon, the more thorns there are to tear your peace of mind into shreds. I know people who dread every puff of wind and every shower of rain because a yacht might be tossed about, or a garden-party spoiled—such trifles may sensible people be troubled about! “What are we to do, then?” asks one. Why, live for God! Live wholly for God! Put everything else into its true place. Children, business, every favorite pursuit—leave them in the hands of God—for until you do this, you will be cankered with carefulness of one

kind or another and be incapacitated for the joyful service of the Lord your God!

Thus have I given you two helpful rules—first, avoid the states which involve carefulness. And secondly, avoid the pursuits which involve carefulness. May the Spirit of God help you to carry them out.

III. But now, thirdly, and better still, I would have you without carefulness BY EXERCISING A CHILD-LIKE FAITH IN THE EVER-BLESSED GOD. He sends you troubles and trials, but be without carefulness, first, by never trying to anticipate them. Never meet them half-way. “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Oh, the strength it gives a man when he learns to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread”! It would be a poor prayer if a man should cry, “Lord, give me a guarantee of my bread for six months.” No, no! The Lord never taught us to ask for that! That forestalling of the demands of the future finds no petition written for it. Our Lord would have us cultivate the feeling that whatever the necessity of the day, whatever the requirement of the day, whatever the trial of the day, we shall take it to God as it comes and He will, then and there, meet the case. Commit your way unto the Lord and then be without carefulness.

I will now tell you something still better. If you can manage to live by the five minutes, that is better than living by the day. I am not, tonight, at 20 minutes past eight o’clock, allowed to fret myself about what is likely to happen at ten! I have Grace at this time for the present moment, but not for 10 o’clock. Why, therefore, should I hurry towards a trouble for which I am not yet prepared? Leave 10 o’clock worries till 10 o’clock comes! The hour that brings the trial will bring the strength! The hour that tests you, will find God ready at your hand to help you! Live by the day—yes, live by the hour.

The next thing is, if you would be without carefulness, be quite content with the Lord’s will. Suppose you do not prosper in business as you would like? Be content not to do so. Do your best and leave your prospering in the hands of God. Suppose that after consulting a physician you find that your complaint is not removed? Duly follow all right and wise prescriptions and directions—and then leave your health with God. With regard to those you love, when you have prayed for their restoration and they are not restored, then still say, “Not as I will, but as You will.” If you cannot suit your purse to your wishes, bring your wishes to your purse! Higher still, if God does not give you all your desires, do the other thing—submit all your desires to God! When your desires and God’s decrees agree, all will be well! Whether God gives you your wish, or you give up your wish, will make no notable difference. You will be equally happy so long as your will is God’s will and God’s will is your will.

And I believe—and I speak experimentally—that when you are racked with pain, if God teaches you to submit, (and it is often a hard lesson), you can suffer in every limb and yet *sing* in your inmost soul! This is the way to live without carefulness—first, not to meet trouble before it comes and, next, when it does come—to be content, saying, “It is the Lord: let Him do what seems good to Him.” The next thing is to be quite sure about the love of God. He cannot make a mistake and He cannot fail His people.

If the worst thing, as it seems to us, should happen, it must be the right thing because God has sent it! Be sure, also, that when our needs come, God's supplies will come, too. The Lord is bound by His own promise to provide for all the real necessities of those who trust in Him. Oh, that we did thoroughly know God and did fully believe in Him! Then would our peace be as a river, and our joy like that of birds when the sun is rising. Then should we sing—

***"I have no cares,
O blessed Lord,
For all my cares are Thine!
I live in triumph, too, for You
Have made Your triumphs mine!"***

Another sweet thing would help us to be without care and that is to believe fully in the power of prayer—and in the fact that God does actually answer it. God will grant His children's desires and answer their prayers! We constantly meet with instances in which God does most manifestly come to the help of those that walk before Him aright. I personally met this week with a notable case. A dear Sister is left a widow, with three children. She wonders what she shall do for the morning's bread. There is none in the house. She thinks to herself that she formerly kept shop and that she has a few goods left, a little stained and soiled, but still saleable at a price. She goes into her room and prays God, in her agony of soul, to direct her to a customer. To her delight a person asks her whether she kept shop, once, at such-and-such a road.

Yes, she is the individual. Such goods as she used to buy at the shop, this stranger cannot get anywhere else, and she much needs them. Could she tell her where she could get the like? Yes, these are the very goods that she had hoped to sell and, though a little soiled and stained, the enquirer is glad to have them! The very person who wants them has come to buy them before she has crossed the threshold to seek a customer and she is amazed at the goodness of the Lord! This honest woman is told that it was a mere coincidence—she says that she knows nothing about coincidences, but she blesses the Lord that her needs were supplied for the time—and she means to trust Him for the future! I did not attempt to alter her resolution to rely, in the future, upon God in time of trouble—on the contrary, I cheered her in it, for I would have her without carefulness.

When my grandfather was a young man, before my days, he had a great family and a small income. He had a cow that he kept for his children and he went to fetch it up from the meadow. But when it was near the house, it was taken with "the staggers," and died. My grandmother said, "There, James, what shall we do, now, through the winter without the cow?" He replied, "My dear, God has provided for us and He always will, though I do not know how." And with a heavy heart he went to pray and lay his trouble before the Lord. I have heard the dear old man tell how that morning brought a post-letter, with nine pence to pay—and Grandmother said, "Troubles never come alone. Here is nine pence to pay for this letter. Shall we take it in?" But when she did take it in, it brought 20 pounds from a society in London, to which the good man had never applied! He could not make out how they knew of him at all! But the *Lord*

knew and led them to send the money on the day of Grandfather’s greatest need!

These stories are a few out of many that are in my wallet—instances which I have gathered in my pilgrimage. I have seen enough, in my own lifetime, to fill a volume concerning the goodness of the Lord in answer to His children’s prayers. When you are as sure that God answers prayer as I am sure of it, then you will realize the meaning of the text, “I would have you without carefulness.” Some people of my acquaintance are full of carefulness. I know a maiden lady who possesses what many poor people would think to be wealth. She has a fixed, regular and ample income, but she will not spend it because she must first save a certain sum. At first her ambition was to have enough in hand to bury her. Why, she has enough already to bury 20 of her, but she keeps on nipping and scraping, still, and whenever you meet her she talks of how little she eats, and how dear everything is!

She might live in plenty and have something for the cause of God, but instead of that, she has always an awful story about her expenses. I believe that if she were made into the Empress of China, she would be afraid that there would not be enough tea grown in China for her to drink! She is of such a spirit that she is a burden to herself and a plague to all who are about her! When you once give way to grumbling and grasping, then you are careful, and careful, and careful till you become good-for-nothing in the service of God. Do, I pray you, Brothers and Sisters, try to get rid of this disease, for your fretful carefulness will make you a misery to yourself and to your friends! It will destroy your power to do good and it will cut off your communion with God!

If you do not trust God, God will not walk with you. I do not care to have a man of my acquaintance who does not believe in me. I cannot bear him if he is always mistrusting me. And so it is with God—He will not commune with you or smile upon you if you will not trust Him—but if you will leave everything with Him and believe that your heavenly Father knows best, you shall have many a kind word from His lips, and you shall find what a good, gracious, loving Father He is. Why, you and I ought to be as happy as the birds of the air and as merry as crickets on the hearth! Just think what a God we have, who will take care of us both in this life and in the life to come! All things are ours—the gifts of God—the purchase of a Savior’s love!

Even our troubles are the best troubles in the world! Our cross is a heavy one, but it is the best cross for us. Each man has the cross which best fits him. You could not carry mine and I could not carry yours half as well as my own. Despite your peculiar trials, you are a happy and a favored man, and God has dealt infinitely better with you than you ever deserved or could have expected! Praise Him, then, and bless His name! Get out of the fidgets, Brother, if you can. Get out of the worries, my dear Sister. You are a good, dear housewife, and your husband says if he could get a little of the Mary *into* you, and a little of the Martha *out* of you, you would be a perfect wife! Is not this a practical suggestion? Let us see whether we cannot, each one, be improved by trying to be without care-

fulness. Let us, each one, give all our thought and care to this one object—How can I please God? How can I avoid sin? How can I be holy? How can I win sinners to Christ? How can I comfort my fellow Christians? How, in a word, can I live as Christ would have lived?

You never find Jesus worrying. If He weeps, it is for the souls of men. If He suffers, it is to redeem men from going down to the Pit. And if He dies of a broken heart, it is a broken heart about the sins of others. As for Himself, what a delicious carelessness of holy confidence there was about Him! He went on board ship and He knew that a storm would come, a storm that would try the poor little boat, but He lay down and slept! The disciples are all in a worry. They cry, “Master, we perish!” And where was their Master? Asleep! You have often thought of the sleep of the Savior and almost deemed Him negligent. Now, think of the grand confidence of the Savior in being able to sleep in a storm! If His disciples had been asleep, too, it would have been the best thing they could have done, for they could not manage the winds or the waves. If they had possessed the moral dignity which ennobled their Lord and had been able to go down into the back part of the boat and to go to sleep with Him, they would have woke up in the morning in a calm.

The best thing you, my dear Brothers and Sisters, can do in a great trouble may be to remember that text, “He gives His beloved sleep.” Pray over your difficulty and then go to sleep—and wake up and find it all over—for the Lord has worked a great deliverance for you. I knew one, well, who was always in trouble about how he should die. Dear good man, he refused to be comforted, but was often troubled about the horrors of the departing hour—until one night he went to bed, shut his eyes on earth—and opened them in Glory! He never knew that he was away from earth till he knew that he was in Heaven, for he died in his sleep! And so it turned out that he had been worrying himself about nothing! Leave everything with God. If I can trust my *soul* with Him, I am sure I can trust my body with Him! If I can trust my eternal condition with Him, can’t I trust Him with a matter of a five-pound note?

What? Rest on Christ for Glory, and not rest on Christ for bread! Come, come! The Lord get you out of that low, unbelieving state! I am nearly at the close and so I press upon you my text. Like Paul, “I would have you without carefulness.” May you be so, through the power of the gracious God who taught the Apostle Peter to say in the Spirit, “Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” Amen.

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THE BATTLE OF LIFE

NO. 3511

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

“Who ever goes to war at his own expense?”
1 Corinthians 9:7.

THIS question occurs in the course of an argument. The Apostle was proving that the minister who gives all his time to the preaching of the Word is entitled to a maintenance from those people among whom he labors. He gives divers illustrations, among them this—that the soldier who devotes himself to the service of his country is not expected to find his own equipment and his own rations, but he is provided for by his country. And so should it be, he teaches us, in the Church of God. The minister set apart to labor wholly in spiritual things should have temporal supplies provided him. That is a topic, however, on which it would be superfluous for me to enlarge. Your convictions are so sound and your practice so consistent, that you do not need to be exhorted, much less to be expostulated with on that matter!

But the same question may be asked when we have other morals to point. Is it ever expected that men who go on a warfare should pay their own charges? There is a warfare in which all of us are engaged. What is life but a great battle, lasting from our earliest days until we sheathe the sword in death? This battle we hope to win and yet, if we succeed, it will be a distinct and definite response to the challenge before us, “Who ever goes to war at his own expense?” We may be quite sure that if ever we attempt the warfare of life at our own expense we shall soon find ourselves failing—and it will end in a miserable defeat! Going at once to the subject, we have here—

I. AN INSPIRING METAPHOR.

When life is represented as a warfare, some peaceful minds may feel a little alarmed at the pictures. Yet there are other minds with enough of gallantry in their constitutions to feel their blood pulsing stronger at the thought that life is to be one continued contest! I do but borrow a reflection from the secular press when I say that it were ill for us if the love of peace, fostered among us as a nation, should degenerate into a fear of

danger, a reluctance to bear hardships, or an indifference to the accomplishment of exploits. Coward spirits we may always expect to find, who conjure up gloomy anticipations, and who prophesy horrible disasters. The untrod path and the unaccustomed climate are dreadful bugbears. But is this the instinct of an Englishman? How else should he contemplate difficulties but as problems to be solved—capital out of which fame or fortune is to be won? And as for the British soldier, is he to be looked upon as a hothouse plant who shrinks from exposure? Far rather would I respect him as a representative individual, the type of his race, always ready for any emergency! In the days of the old Gallic wars, when we had to fight with Napoleon in Egypt, there were just as many knotty points and critical situations to be grappled with—and certainly at headquarters, the War Department was not more efficiently managed than it is now. Yet British soldiers pressed forward, then, to the conflict nor did they pant for fortune! What they did seek was a career with some opportunity of distinguishing themselves.

Moreover, those who stayed at home scanned the dispatches with eager interest and full often lamented that they had not the chance given them of going forth to the fight. Well may the patriot ask, Has Anglo-Saxon courage all fled?—if at every call to fresh deeds of heroism we listen to the crowing of those whose nature it is to look black and utter dark omens. Our children's children may read how the haughty insolence of Theodore of Abyssinia was humbled, but I hope they will never hear the screeching of the ravens who warned us of the mountain fastnesses in which he was lodged! The Ashantee War is behind us, now, and I suppose those who were once afraid of its perils are now amazed at its prowess! Yes, and that is how I would have Christians feel with regard to spiritual conflicts. Difficulties? Well, they are things to be deciphered! Dangers? They are things to be met and encountered! Impossibilities? They are to be scouted as a nightmare, a delirious dream! The Christian wakes to find impossibility impossible! With a history behind him and a destiny before him, he can say, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigns!" Things that are impossible with man are possible with God. I like my text all the better because it implies a hostile engagement and speaks of warfare. For me the battlefield has no charms. With host encountering host, and carnage left behind, I have no sympathy—but *spiritually* my soul seems enamored by the idea—I buckle on my armor at the very thought that life is to be a conflict and a strife in which it behoves me to get the mastery!

Do I not address many young men just commencing spiritual life? If you have thought of life at all, I hope you have thought that it is wise to

begin the battle of life early. We have all so little time to live—and the first years of life are so evidently the best years we shall ever have, that it is a pity to waste them! Oh, how much more some of us might have done if we had begun earlier! Had the very flush of our boyhood been consecrated and the strength of our youth spent in our Master's service, what work we might have accomplished! Now, young men, as a comrade a little farther on the road than you, I take you to the brow of the hill for a moment—and point out to you the pathway we have to pursue—and as I point it out, I tell you that you will have to fight along every inch of the road if you are, at the end, to win the crown which I hope your ambition pants after! Are you ready for the conflict? Then let us talk awhile about it, for as we shall always have to be on the alert, it is well for us to study the map and to acquaint ourselves with the tactics we must practice.

Be sure, then, my Friend, that if you and I are ever to be conquerors at the last, we shall have to fight with that trinity of enemies—*the world, the flesh and the devil.* There is the world. Do you resolve to do the right and to love the true? Depend upon it, you will get no assistance from this world! Of its maxims, nine out of ten are false, and the other one selfish! And even that which is selfish has a lie at the bottom of it. As for its customs—well, live where you may, the customs of the world are not such as a citizen of Heaven can endorse. Go into what company you please, and you will find that there is much of the prevailing habit that is no friend to Divine Grace, and no friend to virtue. In the upper circles, with much pretence, there is little reality, but there is a lack of sound honesty. Among the lower classes, go where you will, if you firmly resolve to be a Christian, to follow closely the footsteps of your Lord, you will have to breast the current! The most of men are going down the hill. You will be like the solitary traveler when you are threading your way upwards. Do you enlist for Christ tonight? Then know that you enlist against the whole world! You will henceforth be an alien to your mother's children and a stranger to your own household unless, happily, that household should have been converted too! Young man, the young men in the shop will be against you! Alas, for the wickedness of the young men of London! Young woman, you will find in the workroom, yes, perhaps you will find even in your father's house, influences at work to impede, if not to thrust you back! Man of business, when you meet others on exchange, if perchance the conversation should turn upon religion, you will find it far from profitable and far from genial! You will be like a speckled bird—and all the birds round about you will be against you. As a marked man, your motives will be mistrusted, your character impugned, your piety burlesqued! If you resolve to win the crown of immortality, you will only do it as

by the skin of your teeth! It matters not where you are cast, this is sure to be your lot, unless, as here and there is the case, you may be a timid and shielded one, too weak for conflict and, therefore, God keeps you in retirement. And yet as for the world, I think we could easily overcome that were it not for a worse enemy.

Soldier of Christ, you have to struggle *with yourself*. My own experience is a daily struggle with myself. I wish I could find in me something friendly to Grace, but up to now I have searched my nature through and have found everything in rebellion against God! At one time there comes the torpor of sloth, when one ought to be active every moment, having so much to do for God and for the souls of men—and so little time to do it. At another time there comes the quickness of passion. When we should be calm and cool, and play the Christian, bearing with patience, there come the unadvised word and the rash expression! Soon we are troubled with conceit, the devilish whisper—I can call it no less—“How well you have done! How well have you played your part!” This pride is the arch-enemy of our souls! Then will come foul and faithless distrust, suggesting that God does not regard the affairs of men and will not interpose on our behalf. Fresh forms of evil are generated in our own breasts and this chameleon heart of ours, which never seems of one color but for a single moment, which is this and that by turns, and nothing long, challenges us on all occasions—and against it we shall have to struggle perpetually! Unless we deny ourselves and lay violent hands upon the impulses of our nature, we shall never come to the place where the crowns are distributed to the conquerors!

And then another foe comes up, though not the closest, the strongest of the three—*the devil*! If you have ever stood foot to foot with him, as some of us have, you will remember well that black day, for even he who beats Apollyon concludes the battle wounded in his own hands and in feet. Oh, that stern enemy! He knows how to attack us in our sore points. He discerns our weaknesses and he is at no loss for cunning devices. He understands how one moment to fawn upon us and flatter us, and how the next moment to cast his fiery darts, telling us that we are castaways and shall never see the face of God with acceptance! He can quote Scripture for his purpose. He can hurl threats at the heads of the saints which were only meant for sinners, and he can tear promises out of the saints' hands and cast them in the mire just when they are ready to feed upon them as fair fruits of Paradise! Believe me, it is no small thing to have had to fight with Apollyon, the Prince of Hell. Do you see, then, young soldier, what is before you? There is a triple host of foes, and

you must overcome them all or else there shall never be given to you the white stone and the crown of everlasting life!

Think not that this is an engagement to be quickly terminated. Unlike the laconic dispatch of the ancient Roman, "*Veni, vidi, vici*," "I came, saw, and conquered," this is a continuous fight! Should you fight your way to Heaven, not today, nor tomorrow—even if you win it with a deadly skirmish or a brilliant dash like a knight at a tournament—you cannot come back a conqueror! In sober truth, every man and every woman who enlists for Christ will have to wrestle till their bones shall sleep in the tomb! There shall be no pause nor cessation for you from this day until the laurel is upon your brow. If you are defeated one day, you must overcome the next—if a conqueror today, you must fight tomorrow. Like the old knights who slept in their armor, you must be prepared for reprisals—always watchful, always expecting temptation and ready to resist it—never saying, "It is enough," for he who says, "It is finished," until he breathes his last, has not yet truly begun! We must have our swords drawn, even to the very last. I have sometimes thought that could we enter Heaven by one sharp, quick, terrible encounter, such as the martyrs faced at the stake, we might endure it heroically. But day after day of protracted martyrdom, and year after year of the wear and tear of pilgrimage and soldier life is the more bitter trial of patience! I do but tell you in order that you may be convinced that it is *not in our power to fight this warfare at our own charge*, that if we have to endure in our own strength and with our own resources, it is most certain that disaster will befall us and defeat will humble us! To fight, and fight on, is our vocation. But if thus you fight, you may hope to conquer, for others have done so before you. On the summit of the palace do you not see those robed in white, who walk in light, with faces bright, and sparkling over with joy? Can you not hear their song? They have overcome, and they tell you—

***"To him that overcomes,
A crown of life shall be.
He with his Lord and Master
Shall reign eternally."***

They have overcome! Then why should not you? Jesus Christ, who is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, has passed through the sternest part of the battle and He has overcome—a Type and Representative of all those who bear their cross, and who shall overcome as He has done!

Do I see some young man, eager, earnest, all aglow, ready for the crown? Let me remind you *that you may be defeated*. Though it is well for you to begin life with a resolute determination to fight through the battle, still I would have you remember that you may be led captive by your foe! There is a most instructive little book, issued by the Religious Tract So-

ciety, called *The Mirage of Life*, which I think all young men should read. It gives historical pictures of the different ways in which men have sought to be great, wherein the result of the greatness attained has proved to be a mirage, mocking the man, as the mirage in the desert mocks the traveler when it promises him water and he finds none. That book contains the history of such men as Beckford, a man worth £200,000 a year, who spent the former part of his life in building Fonthill Abbey, with an enormous tower, enriching the place with all the treasures that he could gather from every country! He made the grounds so splendid that crowned heads longed to look within, but, it is said, were refused! And at the end of his life you find him almost penniless—the house upon which he had spent all his time and money, a dilapidated ruin, the tower fallen to the ground, and the name of Beckford forgotten! You have a sketch of William Pitt, the heaven-born minister. One of the greatest of statesmen, who could make war or peace at his will, and after years of the most brilliant success he dies with a broken heart through grief. The high ambition of men of art such as Haydon, is introduced to your notice. This great painter, after blazing with wondrous fame in his art, took his life because he found himself a disappointed and forgotten man! As I read a series of such cases, each one seemed sadder than the other, and it was enough to make a man sit down and weep to think that our mortal race should be doomed to follow such phantoms and to be mocked by such delusions! As I read them all I could not help feeling how necessary it was to say to young men, especially just as they are beginning life, and to young women, too—yes, and the lesson is profitable for all of us—Take care how you run in the race, lest after running till you think you have won the prize, you find that in truth you have lost it! We must take care how we live, for this is the only lifetime we shall have in which to settle the life that lasts forever! Make bankruptcy in your secular business—why, you can start again—but once make bankruptcy in soul affairs, and there is no second life in which to start your career afresh! Are you a defeated soldier of life? Ah, then, you can never begin again, or turn the defeat into a victory. If you go down to your grave a captive of sin, the iron bands will be about you forever! There is no retrieving your position. The priceless blessing of freedom is beyond your reach. You may lament, you cannot attain it. See then, our life is a battle! We must constantly fight! Haply we may win, or haply we may be defeated. I now proceed to mark a second point with—

II. A KINDLY HINT.

Like a cool breath fanning our cheeks when too hot with ambition, this enquiry greets us, “Who ever goes to war at his own expense?” So,

then, there will be expenses in this life battle. It is not to be won without pain and cost. Let us just glance at some of these expenses. You will soon see how they mount up. If any man shall get up to Heaven, what a demand for courage he will have to meet! How many enemies he must face! How much ridicule he must endure! How frequently must he be misrepresented and maligned! How often must he be discreet enough to be silent, and then, bold enough to speak and avow his convictions and his purpose!

If a man shall get to Heaven, what an expense of *patience* he will have! How he must bear and forbear! How he must put up with one sharp difficulty and another, making light of fatigue and fasting, restless days and sleepless nights— unflinching in fiery temptation, unabashed amidst cold contempt!

If any man will get to Heaven, what an amount of *perseverance* he will require to hold on and to hold out! What hours of prayer, what wrestling with God for a blessing, what striving with himself to overcome sinful propensities! What an expense of watchfulness he will have! How he must guard the avenues of his being! How he must track his actions to the springs of motives and keep his thoughts pure from guile! There can be little ease and not much slumber for a man who would get the eternal crown! What fresh supplies of zeal he will need, for we shall not drift into Heaven without a conflict or a care. We must cut, and hack and hew with intense energy, for the Savior says, “The kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by storm.” What *strength* he will require, for he has to deal with potent foes! And oh, what *wisdom* he will need, for he has to stand against the craftiness of evil creatures and to overcome one who is wiser than the ancients, even *Satan*, the arch-tempter!

It is possible that the difficulties of an expedition may be intensely aggravated by a lack of knowledge as to the country to be invaded. Under such circumstances it is hard to anticipate the contingencies that may arise. In the battle of life this is the rub. Who knows what lies next before him? How can we forestall the surprises that may await us? “Boast not yourself of tomorrow, for you know not what a day may bring forth.” If I were aware of the temptations that would befall me a year from now, I think I could guard myself against them. But I do not even know what pinch or peril may befall me before the *hour* has passed! You cannot tell the provocations that may occur before you close your eyes in slumber tonight. You may have a trial or a temptation such as never crossed your path before. Therefore I beseech you to consider the greatness of the expenses of this warfare. You have to pass through an experience which no man before you has proved. All the path of life is new to you, unmapped,

untrod, unanticipated. Yet all you lack of clear statistics is made up for in dire prognostics. No doubt the climate is baneful and will subject you to fever or heat. Our British soldiers, rank and file, must press forward though they are landed on a blazing beach, across which they have to march—nor will it ever do for them to be dismayed by steep mountains, dismal swamps, or savage tribes. Bent on victory, they brave the incidents of the campaign before they sight the adversaries they attack—while their heads and hearts are full of honor, promotion, stars, stripes and Victoria crosses! But in our eventful battle of life, the checks and bars to progress, the dangers and temptations that we shall all have to meet with in our natural constitution and our secular calling, the unnavigable currents and the impassable barriers that thwart us before we grapple with the main enterprise to enter Heaven are more than I can describe in one sermon! No marvel to me that Mr. Pliable should say, as he turned back, “You may have the brave country yourselves for me.” The Slough of Despond, as a first part, put him into a dudgeon and he said, “I do not like it. I will have no more of it.”

Apart from Divine Strength, Pliable was a wise man, wise in his generation to shrink from the adventure, for it is a hard journey to the skies. They spoke the truth who said that there were giants to fight with, dragons to be slain, mountains to be crossed and black rivers to be forded. It is so, and I pray you count the cost. There is no “royal road” to Heaven, except that the King’s highway leads there. There is no easy road skillfully leveled or scientifically paved. The labor is too exhaustive, the obstructions are too numerous, the difficulties are too serious—unless God, Himself, comes to our help! I wittingly put these dilemmas before you that I may compel you to say, “Who can go this warfare at his own expense?” And now, in the third place, let us look at our text as—

III. A GRACIOUS REMINDER.

Does any man at any time go a warfare at his own expense? I think not. Young man! Young woman! I have told you of difficulties and of dangers. I trust your bold spirit taught by God has, thereby, been fired to greater ardor. Now I have something to say to you which has cheered me, and cheered your sires before me, and made them strong, even in their weakness. It is this. You see you cannot do this warfare in your own strength. Is not that clear to you? Then, I pray you, do not try it! Do not for a moment contemplate it! If you do, you will rue it. Your fall will be your first warning! The second time it will warn you more bitterly. If you continue in your own strength, you will, perhaps, have a warning too late! But you may rely on God to help you. The text implies it. If, by faith, you yield yourself to Christ, whoever you may be, with a desire and in-

tent to live henceforth as a follower of Jesus, God will help you, and that right early! Though a warfare is before you, you are not to go at your own expense.

Shall I tell you how God will help you? Certainly *you may reckon upon His watchful Providence*. You little know how easy the Almighty can make a path which otherwise would have been difficult and dangerous. Follow God's leading and you shall never lack for His comfort. I have lived long enough to see many people carve for themselves very eagerly, and cut their fingers very severely! I have seen others who albeit they were great losers for a time by doing right, have had to bless God year after year for the abundant recompense they received afterwards! No man shall be a loser in the long run by loving and serving God! If you are willing and obedient, trusting yourself with Christ, you shall find those awful wheels of Providence revolve for your welfare. The beasts of the field shall be in league with you, and the stones of the field shall be at peace with you. All things shall work together for good to them that love God. Now I am not pretending that piety will procure wealth, or that if you espouse Christ's cause you shall grow rich. I should not wonder if you did. You are none the less likely to prosper in business for being a Christian. I am not going to predict that you shall be without sickness, much less without temptation, for, "whom the Lord loves, He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." But I am sure of this, that if you put your trust in God and do right, no temporal circumstances shall ever happen to you which shall not be for your eternal good! This is forestalling much more than any transient benefit. In the short space you are to live here you may reckon upon the gigantic wheels of Providence as your helpers. The angels of God shall be swift to defend you. Your eyes shall not see them, but your heart shall wax confident. You shall perceive that by some means you have been rescued from a place of drought and led into a fruitful land!

More than this—as you fight this warfare, looking to God to bear your expenses, *you shall have the Lord Jesus Christ to help you*. Promise not yourself that you will be able to maintain henceforth a perfect life. Sin will harass you. Old corruptions, even when they are driven out from the throne (for sin shall not reign over you), will yet struggle at the foot thereof! But Jesus Christ will be your Helper. He will always be present to revive you with His precious blood, to sprinkle your hearts from an evil conscience, to wash your bodies with pure water. Have you ever admired that picture of Christ, with the basin and the towel washing His disciples' feet? This is what He will always do for you at every eventide when you have defiled yourself through inadvertence or infirmity. Look into the face

of the Crucified! Perhaps you have sometimes wished that He were now visible and accessible to you in body. That sympathizing One who has suffered so much for you! You have said, "Oh, that I might go and tell Him my griefs, and get His help!" He is alive! He is here! He is not far from anyone that seeks Him! Whoever trusts shall surely find Christ to be his very present help in time of trouble. Believe this and you shall prove it true!

And he that is a soldier of the Cross shall have *the Divine Power of God, the Blessed Spirit, to help him*. I have sometimes thought, when some strong passion has been raging within my soul—How can I ever overcome it? The will was good, but the flesh was weak. But as soon as the Spirit of God has moved on me, the flesh has given way. The Holy Spirit can give the man that is prone to idleness such an intense apprehension of the value of time that he shall be more industrious than the naturally active man. I believe that if any of you who are subject to a bad temper will lay this besetting sin before God in prayer—and ask the Holy Spirit's help—you shall not only be able to curb it, but you will acquire a sweeter and gentler spirit than some of those whose temperament is naturally even, with no propensity to fitful change or sudden storm! Do not tell me that there is anything in human nature too difficult for the Lord to overcome, for there is not! Whatever may be your temptation, you need not account it an effectual hindrance to your being a Christian. What if it is beyond your own power to grapple with it? When the Eternal arm comes to the rescue. When the right hand of Jehovah is made bare. When the Holy Spirit puts forth His irresistible power, He can smite through the loins of our kingly sins and cut the Rahabs and dragons of our iniquities in pieces! Rest in the might of Jehovah, the God of Israel! He that broke Egypt in pieces with His plagues can vanquish our sins with His judgments or with His Grace—and He can bring the new nature—like the children of Israel, up out of bondage into joyous liberty! Go to the blood, and you shall conquer sin! Go to the Eternal Spirit and your worst corruptions shall be overthrown! "Who ever goes to war at his own expense?" As the soldier draws from his paymaster, so let every Christian draw from his God and Savior! Conduct your warfare trusting in the blessed God! My last words shall be to those who are beginning the great battle of life. Let me urge upon them these—

IV. CAUTIONS AND COUNSELS.

Behold *the wisdom of meekness*. I heard some time ago of a minister preaching on the dignity of self-reliance! And I thought to myself, Surely that is the dignity of a fool! The dignity of self-reliance? Taken in a certain sense, there is some kind of truth about it, or at least the folly of

asking counsel of your neighbor in every strait is sufficiently obvious. But he that relies on his own wits will soon pander to expediency and grovel in the mire! His actions will admit of no better defense than excuses and apologies. No, Sirs, “but let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” A better subject, and one that no preacher need be ashamed of if the Master should come before the sermon is done, is the dignity of *reliance upon God*, and the wisdom of diffidence of oneself! Begin life, young man, young woman, by finding out that the capital you thought you had is much less than it looked like before you counted it. Begin life, young Christians, by understanding that all in your nature that glitters is not gold and that your strength is perfect weakness! Begin by being emptied—and you will soon be filled! “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Begin by being poor. If you begin with lowliness, you will not need to be humiliated—

**“He that is down need fear no fall,
He that is low no pride.
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.”**

He will win the battle who knows how to begin on the low ground and to fight uphill by Divine Strength. Learn the wisdom, not of self-reliance, but of meekness, for he that trusts in his own heart is a fool!

Be thoroughly alive to *the importance of prayer*. If all our charges in the war of life are to be paid us by the Paymaster, let us go to the Treasury! Among the strangest of human sins is a distaste for prayer. I open my eyes with wonder at myself whenever I find myself slow to pray! Why, if your children want anything of you, they are not slow to speak! They need not be exhorted to ask for this or that—they speak at once! And here is the soul-enriching exercise of prayer. Is it not strange that you and I should be slack in it? Did you ever stand in a market and see the people coming in from the country with their goods? How diligent they are in their business! How eager to take home as much money as they can! How their eyes glitter! How sharp they are! But here is Heaven’s market—God’s wares are *given away to them who will ask for them!* Yet we seem indifferent, as though we did not care to be enriched! We even leave the Mercy Seat of God unvisited! Oh, young people, do understand the value of prayer! And you aged people, do continue in prayer and supplication, for if we are to win this battle of our life, it can only be by taking in our invoice to the Great Paymaster and asking Him to discharge the expenses of this war.

Consider, too, the *necessity of holiness*. If, in my life’s warfare, I am entirely dependent upon God, let me not grieve Him. Let me seek so to

walk with Him that I may expect to have Him with me. Oh, let our consecration be unreserved and complete!

And in all these we must prove *the power of faith*. If we have never begun to trust in Jesus, let us begin now. Oh, may the Eternal Spirit breathe faith into our souls! The beginning of true spiritual life is here—trusting what Christ has worked for us, relying upon His sufferings on our behalf. The continuation of spiritual life is here—trusting, still, in what Christ has done and is doing. The consummation of spiritual life on earth is still the same—trusting still, trusting always—always repairing to Christ for the supply of all our needs—going to Him with our blots to have them removed, with our failings to have them forgiven, with our needs and requirements to have them provided for, with our good works and our prayers to have them rendered acceptable, and with ourselves that we may still be preserved in Him!

Sharpen your swords, soldiers of the Cross, and be ready for the fray, but as you march to the battle, let it be with heads bowed down in adoration before Him who alone can cover your heads in the day of battle! And when you lift up those heads in the front of the foe, let this be your song, “The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song! The Lord has become my salvation!” And when the fight waxes hot, if your head grows weary, think of “Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself,” and still fight on until you win the day! And then as the fight draws to a close and your sun is going down, and you can count your scars, and are ready to enter into your rest, be this your prayer—“I have gone astray like a lost sheep, but seek Your servant, for I do not forget Your commandments.” And be this your last words on earth, “Into Your hands I commit my spirit, for You have redeemed me, O Lord God of my salvation.” So shall this be your eternal song in Heaven above, “Unto Him who has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

—Adapted from the *C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

PREACH THE GOSPEL

NO. 34

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 5, 1855,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel.”
1 Corinthians 9:16***

THE greatest man of Apostolic times was the Apostle Paul. He was always great in everything. If you consider him as a sinner, he was *exceedingly* sinful. If you regard him as a persecutor, he was *exceedingly* mad against the Christians and persecuted them even unto strange cities. If you take him as a convert, his conversion was the most notable one of which we read, worked by miraculous power and by the direct voice of Jesus speaking from Heaven—“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” If we take him simply as a Christian, he was an extraordinary one, loving his Master more than others and seeking more than others to exemplify the Grace of God in his life. But if you take him as an Apostle and as a preacher of the Word, he stands out pre-eminently as the prince of preachers and a preacher to kings—for he preached before Agrippa, he preached before Nero Caesar—he stood before emperors and kings for Christ’s name’s sake. It was the characteristic of Paul that whatever he did, he did with all his heart. He was one of the men who could not allow one half of his frame to be exercised, while the other half was indolent. When he set to work, the whole of his energies—every nerve, every sinew—were strained in the work to be done, be it bad work or be it good. Paul, therefore, could speak from experience concerning his ministry because he was the chief of ministers. There is no nonsense in what he speaks. It is all from the depth of his soul. And we may be sure that when he wrote this, he wrote it with a strong unpalsied hand—“Though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me, yes, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.” Now, these words of Paul, I trust, are applicable to many ministers in the present day—to all those who are especially called—who are directed by the inward impulse of the Holy Spirit to occupy the position of Gospel ministers. In trying to consider this verse, we shall have three inquiries this morning—First, *What is it to preach the Gospel?* Secondly, *Why is it that a minister has nothing to glorify of.* And thirdly, *What is that necessity and that woe, of which it is written, “Necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel?”*

I. The first enquiry is, WHAT IS IT TO PREACH THE GOSPEL? There are a variety of opinions concerning this question and possibly among my own audience—though I believe we are very uniform in our doctrinal sentiments—there might be found two or three very ready answers to this question—What is it to preach the Gospel? I shall therefore attempt to answer it, myself, according to my own judgment, if God will help me. And if it does not happen to be the correct answer, you are at liberty to supply a better to yourselves at home.

1. The first answer I shall give to the question is this—*To preach the Gospel is to state every Doctrine contained in God's Word and to give every Truth its proper prominence.* Men may preach a part of the Gospel. They may only preach one single Doctrine of it. And I would not say that a man did not preach the Gospel at all if he did but maintain the Doctrine of Justification by Faith—"By Grace are you saved through faith." I would put him down for a Gospel minister, but not for one who preached the whole Gospel. No man can be said to preach the whole Gospel of God if he leaves out, knowingly and intentionally one single Truth of the blessed God! This remark of mine must be a very cutting one and ought to strike into the consciences of many who make it almost a matter of principle to keep back certain Truths from the people because they are afraid of them. In conversation a week or two ago with an eminent professor, he said to me, "Sir, we know that we ought not to preach the Doctrine of Election because it is not calculated to convert sinners!" "But," I said to him, "who is the man that dares to find fault with the Truth of God? You admit, with me, that it is a Truth of God, and yet you say it must not be preached? I dare not have said that thing. I would reckon it supreme arrogance to have ventured to say that a Doctrine ought not to be preached when the all-wise God has seen fit to reveal it! Besides, is the whole Gospel intended to convert sinners? There are some Truths which God blesses to the conversion of sinners. But are there not other portions which were intended for the comfort of the saint? And ought not these to be a subject of Gospel ministry as well as the others? And shall I look at one and disregard the other? No—if God says, 'Comfort you, comfort you, My people,' if Election comforts God's people, then must I preach it." But I am not quite so sure that, after all, that Doctrine is not calculated to convert sinners! The great Jonathan Edwards tells us that in the greatest excitement of one of his revivals he preached the Sovereignty of God in the salvation or condemnation of man. He showed that God was infinitely just if He sent men to Hell! That He was infinitely merciful if He saved any. And that it was all of His own Free Grace—and he said, "I found no Doctrine caused more thought—nothing entered more deeply into the heart than the proclamation of that Truth." The same might be said of other Doctrines. There are certain Truths in God's Word which are condemned to silence. They, indeed, are not to be uttered, because, according to the theories of certain persons looking at these Doctrines, they are

not calculated to promote certain ends. But is it for me to judge God's Truth? Am I to put His words in the scale and say, "This is good and that is evil"? Am I to take God's Bible and sever it and say, "This is husk and this is wheat"? Am I to cast away any one Truth and say, "I dare not preach it"? No—God forbid! Whatever is written in God's Word is written for our instruction—and the whole of it is profitable—either for reproof, or for consolation, or for edification in righteousness. No Truth of God's Word ought to be withheld, but every portion of it preached in its own proper order!

Some men purposely confine themselves to four or five topics continually. Should you step into their chapel you would naturally expect to hear them preaching, either from this, "Not of the will of the flesh, but of the will of God," or else, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." You know that the moment you step in, you are sure to hear nothing but Election and high Doctrine that day! Such men also err quite as much as others, if they give too great prominence to one Truth to the neglect of the others. Whatever is here to be preached, all in whatever name you please—write it high, write it low—the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible, is the standard of the true Christian! Alas, alas, many make an iron ring of their doctrines and he who dares to step beyond that narrow circle is not reckoned orthodox. God bless heretics, then! God send us more of them! Many make theology into a kind of tread wheel consisting of five doctrines which are everlastingly rotated. For they never go on to anything else. There ought to be every Truth preached. And if God has written in His Word that, "he that believes not is condemned already," *that* is as much to be preached as the Truth that "there is no condemnation to them that are in Jesus Christ." If I find it written, "O Israel, you have destroyed yourself"—that man's condemnation is his own fault—I am to preach that as well as the next clause, "In Me is your help found." We ought, each of us who are entrusted with the ministry to seek to preach all Truth. I know it may be impossible to tell you all of it. That high hill of Truth has mists upon its summit. No mortal eye can see its pinnacle. Nor has the foot of man ever trod it. But yet let us paint the mist if we cannot paint the summit. Let us depict the difficulty, itself, if we cannot unravel it! Let us not hide anything—if the mountain of Truth is cloudy at the top—let us say, "Clouds and darkness are around Him." Let us not deny it. And let us not think of cutting down the mountain to our own standard because we cannot see its summit or cannot reach its pinnacle. He who would preach the Gospel must preach all the Gospel. He who would have it said he is a faithful minister must not keep back any part of Revelation!

2. Again—am I asked what it is to preach the Gospel? I answer *to preach the Gospel is to exalt Jesus Christ*. Perhaps this is the best answer that I could give. I am very sorry to see very often how little the Gospel is understood, even by some of the best Christians. Some time ago there

was a young woman under great distress of soul. She came to a very pious Christian man who said, “My dear girl, you must go home and pray.” Well, I thought within myself, that is not the Bible way at all. It never says, “Go home and pray.” The poor girl went home. She did pray and she still continued in distress. He said, “You must wait, you must read the Scriptures and study them.” That is not the Bible way! That is not exalting Christ. I find a great many preachers are preaching that kind of Doctrine. They tell a poor convicted sinner, “You must go home and pray and read the Scriptures. You must attend the ministry.” And so on. Works, works, works—instead of, “By Grace are you saved through faith,” If a penitent should come and ask me, “What must I do to be saved?” I would say, “Christ must save you—believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.” I would neither direct to prayer, nor reading of the Scriptures nor attending God’s House—but simply direct to faith—the naked faith on God’s Gospel! Not that I despise prayer—that must come *after* faith. Not that I speak a word against the searching of the Scriptures—that is an Infallible mark of God’s children. Not that I find fault with attendance on God’s Word—God forbid! I love to see people there. But none of those things are the way of salvation. It is nowhere written—“He that attends Chapel shall be saved,” or, “he that reads the Bible shall be saved.” Nor do I read—“He that prays and is baptized shall be saved.” But, “he who *believes*”—he who has a naked faith on the “Man. Christ Jesus”—on His Godhead, on His Manhood, is delivered from sin. To preach that faith, alone, saves is to preach God’s Truth! Nor will I for one moment concede to any man, the name of a Gospel minister if he preaches anything as the plan of salvation except faith in Jesus Christ. Faith, faith, nothing but faith in His name. But we are, most of us, very much muddled in our ideas. We get so much work stored into our brain, such an idea of merit and of doing worked into our hearts, that it is almost impossible for us to preach Justification by Faith clearly and fully. And when we do, our people won’t receive it. We tell them, “Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” But they have a notion that faith is something so wonderful, so mysterious, that it is quite impossible that without *doing* something else, they can ever get it. Now, that faith which unites to the Lamb is an instantaneous gift of God and he who believes on the Lord Jesus is that moment saved, without anything else whatever!

Ah, my Friends, do we not need more exalting Christ in our preaching and more exalting Christ in our living? Poor Mary said, “They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him.” And she might say so, nowadays, if she could rise from the grave. Oh, to have a Christ-exalting ministry! Oh, to have preaching that magnifies Christ in His Person, that extols His Divinity, that loves His Humanity! To have preaching that shows Him as Prophet, Priest and King to His people! To have preaching whereby the Spirit manifests the Son of God unto His child-

ren—to have preaching that says, “Look unto Him and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” Calvary preaching, Calvary theology, Calvary books, Calvary sermons! These are the things we need and in proportion as we have Calvary exalted and Christ magnified, the Gospel is preached in our midst!

3. The third answer to the question is—to *preach the Gospel is to give every class of character his due*. “You are only to preach to God’s dear people if you go into that pulpit,” said a deacon once to a minister. Said the minister, “Have you marked them all on the back, that I may know them?” What is the good of this large Chapel if I am only to preach to God’s dear people? They are few enough. God’s dear people might be held in the vestry. We have many more here besides God’s dear people and how am I to be sure, if I am told to preach only to God’s dear people, that somebody else won’t take it to himself? At another time someone might say, “Now, be sure you preach to sinners. If you do not preach to sinners, this morning, you won’t preach the Gospel. We shall only hear you once. And we shall be sure you are not right if you do not happen to preach to sinners this particular morning, in this particular sermon.” What nonsense, my Friends! There are times when the children must be fed and there are times when the sinner must be warned. There are different times for different objectives. If a man is preaching to God’s saints—if it so happens that little is said to sinners—is he to be blamed for it? At another time when he is not comforting the saints, he should direct his attention specially to the ungodly! I heard a good remark from an intelligent friend of mine the other day. A person was finding fault with “Dr. Hawker’s Morning and Evening Portions” because they were not calculated to convert sinners. He said to the gentleman, “Did you ever read ‘Grote’s History of Greece?’” “Yes.” “Well, that is a shocking book, is it not? For it is not calculated to convert sinners.” “Yes, but,” said the other, “‘Grote’s History of Greece’ was never meant to convert sinners.” “No,” said my friend, “and if you had read the preface to ‘Dr. Hawker’s Morning and Evening Portion,’ you would see that it was never meant to convert sinners but to feed God’s people! And if it answers its end the man has been wise though he has not aimed at some other end.” Every class of person is to have his due. He who preaches solely to saints at all times does not preach the Gospel. He who preaches solely and only to the sinner and never to the saint does not preach the whole of the Gospel. We have amalgamation here. We have the saint who is full of assurance and strong. We have the saint who is weak and low in faith. We have the young convert. We have the man halting between two opinions. We have the moral man. We have the sinner. We have the reprobate. We have the outcast. Let each have a word. Let each have a portion of meat in due season. Not at every season, but in *due* season. He who omits one class of character does not know how to preach the entire Gospel. What? Am I to be put into the pulpit and to be told that I am to confine myself only to

certain Truths to comfort God's saints? I will not have it so! God gives men hearts to love their fellow creatures and are they to have no development for that heart? If I love the ungodly, am I to have no means of speaking to them? May I not tell them of judgment to come, of righteousness and of their sin? God forbid I should so stultify my nature and so brutalize myself as to have a tearless eye when I consider the loss of my fellow creatures. Must I stand and say, "You are dead, I have nothing to say to you"? Must I preach, in effect, if not in words, that most damnable heresy that if men are to be saved they will be saved—that if they are not to be saved they will not be saved? So, then, they must sit still and do nothing whatever? And that it matters not whether they live in sin or in righteousness—some strong fate has bound them down with adamant chains? And their destiny is so certain that they may live on in sin? I believe their destiny is certain—that as Elect, they will be saved and if not Elect, they are damned forever! But I do not believe the heresy that follows as an inference that therefore men are irresponsible and may sit still! That is a heresy against which I have always protested as being a doctrine of the devil and not of God at all!

We believe in destiny—we believe in Predestination. We believe in Election and non-election—but, notwithstanding that, we believe that we must preach to men, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, but believe not on Him and you are damned."

4. I had thought of giving one more answer to this question but time fails me. The answer would have been something like this—that to preach the Gospel is not to preach certain truths *about* the Gospel, not to preach *about* the people, but to preach *to* the people. To preach the Gospel is not to talk about what the Gospel is, but to *preach* it into the heart, not by your own might, but by the influence of the Holy Spirit—not to stand and talk as if we were speaking to the angel Gabriel and telling him certain things, but to speak as man to man and pour our heart into our fellow's heart. This I take it, is to preach the Gospel and not to mumble some dry manuscript over on Sunday morning or Sunday evening. To preach the Gospel is not to send a curate to do your duty for you. It is not to put on your fine gown and then stand and give out some lofty speculation. To preach the Gospel is not, with the hands of a bishop, to turn over some beautiful specimen of prayer and then to go down again and leave it to some humbler person to speak. No. To preach the Gospel is to proclaim with trumpet tongue and flaming zeal the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus so that men may hear and understanding, may turn to God with full purpose of heart! This is to preach the Gospel.

II. The second question is—How IS IT THAT MINISTERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO GLORY? "For though I preach the Gospel I have nothing to glorify in." There are some weeds that will grow anywhere. And one of them is Pride. Pride will grow on a rock as well as in a garden. Pride will grow in the heart of a shoe-black as well as in the heart of an alderman.

Pride will grow in the heart of a servant girl and equally as well in the heart of her mistress. And pride will grow in the pulpit. It is a weed that is dreadfully rampant. It needs cutting down every week or else we would stand up to our knees in it! This pulpit is a shocking bad soil for pride. It grows terribly. And I scarcely know whether you ever find a preacher of the Gospel who will not confess that he has the greatest temptation to pride. I suppose that even those ministers of whom nothing is said but that they are very good people and who have a City Church, with some six people attending it, have a temptation to pride. But whether that is so or not, I am quite sure wherever there is a large assembly and wherever a great deal of noise and stir is made concerning any man there is a great danger of pride. And, mark you, the more proud a man is, the greater will be his fall at last. If people will hold a minister up in their hands and not keep hold of him, but let him go, what a fall he will have, poor fellow, when it is all over! It has been so with many. Many men have been held up by the arms of men, they have been held up by the arms of *praise* but not of *prayer*. These arms have become weak—and down they have fallen! I say there is temptation to pride in the pulpit. But there is no ground for it in the pulpit. There is no soil for pride to grow on. But it will grow without any. “I have nothing to glorify of.” But, notwithstanding, there often comes in some reason why we should glory, not real, but apparent only to ourselves!

1. Now, how is it that a true minister feels he has “nothing to glorify of.” First, *because he is very conscious of his own imperfections*. I think no man will ever form a more just opinion of himself than he who is called constantly and incessantly to preach. Some man once thought he could preach and on being allowed to enter the pulpit he found his words did not come quite so freely as he expected. In the utmost trepidation and fear, he leaned over the front of the pulpit and said, “My Friends, if you would come up here it would take the conceit out of you all.” I verily believe it *would* out of a great many, could they once try themselves whether they could preach. It would take their critical conceit out of them and make them think that after all it was not such easy work! He who preaches best, feels that he preaches worst. He who has set up some lofty model in his own mind of what eloquence should be and what earnest appeal ought to be, will know how much he falls below it. He, best of all, can reprove himself when he knows his own deficiency. I do not believe when a man does a thing well, that therefore he will glory in it. On the other hand, I think that he will be the best judge of his own imperfections and will see them most clearly. *He* knows what he ought to be—other men do not. They stare and gaze and think it is wonderful, when he thinks it is wonderfully absurd and retires wondering why he has not done better! Every true minister will feel that he is deficient. He will compare himself with such men as Whitefield, with such preachers as those of Puritan times and he will say, “What am I? Like a dwarf beside a giant,

an anthill by the side of the mountain.” When he retires to rest on Sunday night, he will toss from side to side on his bed because he feels that he has missed the mark, that he has not had that earnestness, that solemnity, that death-like intenseness of purpose which became his position. He will accuse himself of not having dwelt enough on this point, or for having shunned the other, or not having been explicit enough on some certain subject, or expanded another too much. He will see his own faults, for God always chastises His own children at nighttime when they have done something wrong. We need not others to reprove us. God, Himself, takes us in hand. The most highly honored before God will often feel himself dishonored in his own esteem.

2. Again—another means of causing us to cease from all glory is the fact that God reminds us that all our gifts are borrowed. And strikingly have I, this morning, been reminded of that great Truth—that *all our gifts are borrowed*—by reading in a newspaper to the following effect—

“Last week, the quiet neighborhood of New Town was much disturbed by an occurrence which has thrown a gloom over the entire neighborhood. A gentleman of considerable attainment who has won an honorable degree at the university, has for some months been deranged. He had kept an academy for young gentlemen, but his insanity had obliged him to desist from his occupation and he has for some time lived alone in a house in the neighborhood. The landlord obtained a warrant of ejectment. And it being found necessary to handcuff him, he was, by sad mismanagement compelled to remain on the steps, exposed to the gaze of a great crowd, until at last a vehicle arrived which conveyed him to the asylum. One of his pupils (says the paper) is Mr. Spurgeon.”

The man from whom I learned whatever of human learning I have, has now become a raving lunatic in the Asylum! When I saw that, I felt I could bend my knees with humble gratitude and thank my God that not yet had my reason reeled—not yet had those powers departed! Oh, how thankful we ought to be that our talents are preserved to us and that our mind is not gone! Nothing came nearer and closer to me than that. There was one who had taken all pains with me—a man of genius and of ability. And yet there he is! How fallen! How fallen! How speedily does human nature come from its high estate and sink below the level of the brutes! Bless God my Friends, for your talents! Thank Him for your reason! Thank Him for your intellect! Simple as it may be, it is enough for you, but if you lost it, you would soon mark the difference. Take heed to yourself lest in anything you say, “This is Babylon that I have built.” Remember, both trowel and mortar must come from Him. The life, the voice, the talent, the imagination, the eloquence—all are the gifts of God! And he who has the greatest gifts must feel that unto God belongs the shield of the mighty, for He has given might to His people and strength to His servants!

3. One more answer to this question. Another means whereby God preserves His ministers from glorying is this—*He makes them feel their constant dependence upon the Holy Spirit.* Some do not feel it, I confess. Some will venture to preach without the Spirit of God, or without entreating Him. But I think that no man who is really commissioned from on high will ever venture to do so. He will feel that he needs the Spirit. Once, while preaching in Scotland, the Spirit of God was pleased to desert Me—I could not speak as usually I have done. I was obliged to tell the people that the chariot wheels were taken off. And that the chariot dragged very heavily along. I have felt the benefit of that ever since. It humbled me bitterly, for I could have crept into a nutshell and I would have hidden myself in any obscure corner of the earth. I felt as if I should speak no more in the name of the Lord and then the thought came, “Oh, you are an ungrateful creature—has not God spoken by you hundreds of times? And this once, when He would not do so, will you upbraid Him for it? No, rather thank Him, that a hundred times He has stood by you—and, if once He has forsaken you, admire His goodness, that thus He would keep you humble.” Some may imagine that lack of study brought me into that condition, but I can honestly affirm that it was not so. I think that I am bound to give myself unto reading and not tempt the Spirit by unthought-of effusions. Usually, I deem it a duty to seek a sermon of my Master and implore Him to impress it on my mind. But on that occasion, I think I had even prepared more carefully than I ordinarily do, so that unpreparedness was not the reason. The simple fact was this—“The wind blows where it wishes.” And winds do not always blow hurricanes. Sometimes the winds themselves are still. And, therefore, if I rest on the Spirit, I cannot expect I should always feel His power alike.

What could I do without the Celestial influence, for to that I owe everything? By this thought, God humbles His servants. God will teach us how much we need it. He will not let us think we are doing anything ourselves. “No,” He says, “you shall have none of the glory. I will take you down. Are you thinking ‘I am doing this’? I will show you what you are without Me.” Out goes Samson. He attacks the Philistines. He fancies he can slay them. But they are on him. His eyes are out. His glory is gone because he trusted not in his God, but rested in himself!

Every minister will be made to feel his dependence upon the Spirit. And then will he, with emphasis, say, as Paul did, “If I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glorify of.”

III. Now comes the third question, with which we are to finish—WHAT IS THAT NECESSITY WHICH IS LAID UPON US TO PREACH THE GOSPEL?

1. First, *a very great part of that necessity springs from the call, itself*—If a man is truly called of God to the ministry, I will defy him to withhold himself from it! A man who has really within him the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit calling him to preach cannot help it. He must preach. As fire

within the bones, so will that influence be until it blazes forth. Friends may check him, foes criticize him, despisers sneer at him—the man is indomitable. He must preach if he has the call of Heaven. All earth might forsake him. But he would preach to the barren mountaintops! If he has the call of Heaven—if he has no congregation—he would preach to the rippling waterfalls and let the brooks hear his voice. He could not be silent. He would become a voice crying in the wilderness, “Prepare you the way of the Lord.” I no more believe it possible to stop ministers than to stop the stars of Heaven. I think it no more possible to make a man cease from preaching, if he is really called, than to stop some mighty waterfall by seeking, with an infant’s cup, to drink its waters! The man has been moved of Heaven, who shall stop him? He has been touched of God, who shall impede him? With an eagle’s wings he must fly—who shall chain him to the earth? With seraph’s voice he must speak, who shall stop his lips? Is not His Word like a fire within me? Must I not speak, if God has placed it there? And when a man does speak as the Spirit gives him utterance, he will feel a holy joy akin to Heaven. And when it is over, he wishes to be at his work again and longs to be once more preaching. I do not think young men are called of God to any great work who preach once a week and think they have done their duty. I think if God has called a man, He will impel him to be more or less constantly at it and he will feel that he must preach among the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ!

2. But another thing will make us preach—we shall feel that woe is unto us if we preach not the Gospel. And that is *the sad destitution of this poor fallen world*. Oh, Minister of the Gospel! Stand for one moment and think of your poor fellow creatures! See them like a stream, rushing to eternity—ten thousand fly to their endless home each solemn moment fly! See the termination of that stream, that tremendous waterfall which dashes streams of souls into the pit of Hell? Oh, Minister, think of the fact that men are being damned each hour by thousands and that each time your pulse beats, another soul lifts up its eyes in Hell, being in torments! Think how men are speeding on their way to destruction, how “the love of many waxes cold” and “iniquity does abound.” I say, is there not a necessity laid upon you? Is it not woe unto you if you preach not the Gospel? Take your walk one evening through the streets of London when the dusk has gathered and darkness veils the people. Mark you not yon profligate hurrying on to her accursed work? See you not thousands and tens of thousands annually ruined? Up from the hospital and the asylum there comes a voice, “Woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel.” Go to that huge place built around with massive walls, enter the dungeons and see the thieves who have for years spent their lives in sin. Wend your way, sometimes, to that sad square of Newgate and see the murderer hanged. A voice shall come from each house of correction, from each prison, from each gallows, saying, “Woe is unto you if you preach

not the Gospel.” Go to the thousand deathbeds and mark how men are perishing in ignorance, not knowing the ways of God! See their terror as they approach their Judge never having known what it was to be saved, not even knowing the way. And as you see them quivering before their Maker, hear a voice, “Minister, woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel.” Or take another course. Travel round this great metropolis and stop at the door of some place where there is heard the tinkling of bells, chanting and music—where the whore of Babylon has her sway and lies are preached for the Truths of God! And when you come home and think of Popery and Puseyism, let a voice come to you, “Minister woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel.” Or step into the hall of the infidel where he blasphemes your Maker’s name. Or sit in the theater where plays, libidinous and loose, are acted and from all these haunts of vice there comes the voice, “Minister, woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel.” And take your last solemn walk down to the chambers of the lost. Let the abyss of Hell be visited and stand and hear—

***“The sullen groans, the hollow moans,
And shrieks of tortured ghosts.”***

Put your ear at Hell’s gate and for a little while listen to the commingled screams and shrieks of agony and feel the despair that shall never end. And as you come from that sad place with that doleful music still frightening you, you will hear the voice, “Minister! Minister! Woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel.”

Only let us have these things before our eyes and we must preach. *Stop preaching? Stop preaching?* Let the sun stop shining and we will preach in darkness! Let the waves stop their ebb and flow and still our voice shall preach the Gospel! Let the world stop its revolutions, let the planets stay their motion—we will still preach the Gospel. Until the fiery center of this earth shall burst through the thick ribs of her brazen mountains we shall still preach the Gospel! By God’s Grace, till the universal conflagration shall dissolve the earth and matter shall be swept away, these lips, or the lips of some others called of God shall still thunder forth the voice of Jehovah. We cannot help it. “Necessity is laid upon us, yes woe is unto us if we preach not the Gospel.”

Now, my dear Hearers, one word with you. There are some persons in this audience who are verily guilty in the sight of God because they do *not* preach the Gospel. I cannot think how, out of the fifteen hundred or two thousand persons now present within the reach of my voice, there are none who are qualified to preach the Gospel besides myself. I have not so bad an opinion of you as to conceive myself to be superior in intellect to one half of you—or even in the power of preaching God’s Word. And even supposing I should be, I cannot believe that I have such a congregation that there are not among you many who have gifts and talents that qualify you to preach the Word. Among the Scotch Baptists it is the custom to call upon all the Brothers to exhort on the Sabbath morning.

They have no regular minister to preach on that occasion but every man preaches who likes to get up and speak. That is all very well, only, I fear, many unqualified Brothers would be the greatest speakers, since it is a known fact that men who have little to say will often keep on the longest. And if I were chairman, I should say, "Brother, it is written, 'Speak to edification.' I am sure you would not edify yourself and your wife. You had better go and try that, first, and if you cannot succeed, don't waste our precious time."

But still I say I cannot conceive but what there are some here this morning who are flowers "wasting their sweetness in the desert air, gems of purest ray serene," lying in the dark caverns of ocean's oblivion. This is a very serious question. If there is any talent in the Church at Park Street, let it be developed! If there are any preachers in my congregation let them preach! Many ministers make it a point to check young men in this respect. Here is my hand, such as it is, to help anyone of you if you think you can tell to sinners what a dear Savior you have found. I would like to find scores of preachers among you—would to God that all the Lord's servants were Prophets! There are some here who ought to be Prophets, only they are half afraid—well, we must devise some scheme of getting rid of their bashfulness. I cannot bear to think that while the devil sets all his servants to work, there should be one servant of Jesus Christ asleep! Young man, go home and examine yourself. See what your abilities are and if you find that you have ability, then try in some poor humble room to tell to a dozen poor people what they must do to be saved. You need not aspire to become absolutely and solely dependent upon the ministry, but if it should please God, even desire it. He that desires a bishopric desires a good thing!

At any rate seek in some way to be preaching the Gospel of God. I have preached this sermon especially because I want to commence a movement from this place which shall reach others. I want to find some in my Church, if it is possible, who will preach the Gospel. And mark you, if you have talent and power, woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel.

But oh, my Friends, if it is woe unto us if we preach *not* the Gospel, what is the woe unto *you* if you hear and receive not the Gospel? May God give us both to escape from that woe! May the Gospel of God be unto us the savor of life unto life and not of death unto death!

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

“BY ALL MEANS, SAVE SOME”

NO. 1170

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 26, 1874,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“That I might, by all means, save some.”
1 Corinthians 9:22.*

THE Apostle speaks very broadly and talks about saving men. Some of our extremely orthodox Brothers would say at once, “You save men? How can man do that? The expression is inaccurate in the extreme. Is not salvation of the Lord from first to last? How can you, Paul, dare to speak of saving some?” Yet Peter spoke very much like this when he said, “Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Indeed, the expression is a little more bold, if anything, and if Peter were alive now he would be called to account. When Paul wrote to Timothy, he said to him, “Take heed unto yourself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this you shall both save yourself and them that hear you.” This is another instance of language used in a popular sense by a man who had not the fear of critics before his eyes.

The Apostle did not intend to insinuate that *he* could save anybody by his own power and no one thought that he could. He used expressions without guarding them because he was writing to people who mixed candor with their knowledge of doctrine and would not willfully misunderstand him. He did not write for those who must have all the creed in every sermon and require all statements of the Truth of God to be cut into one shape. The doctrine that salvation is of God, alone, and is the work of the Holy Spirit was dear to him as life, itself, and having often proclaimed it, he was not afraid of being misunderstood.

Our testimony, also, has, for many years, been clear upon this point, and therefore we shall venture to be as accurately inaccurate as was the Apostle—and to speak of saving souls and winning souls after the manner of ordinary speech. The expression used gives great prominence to *instrumentality* and this is the use and habit of Scripture. There is not much danger, just now, of exaggerating the power of instrumentality and looking to men instead of their Master. The danger seems to lie in the opposite direction—in the habit of depreciating both an organized Church and a recognized ministry. We have frequently heard it said of certain revivals that no particular person was engaged in them, neither evangelist nor minister had a hand in the work. This is thought to be a recommendation but, indeed, it is not.

I fear that many hopeful beginnings have come to a sudden collapse because faithful and holy ministers have been despised and a slur has been cast upon ordinary instrumentalities. Men talk thus under the notion that they are honoring God, but they are off the track altogether—for God still owns and blesses His chosen ministers and is honored thereby. And as He still works by them He would not have us speak disparagingly

of them. The topic of this morning is this—it has pleased God to save souls by His people and, therefore, He places in them a sacred longing to save some by all means. He might, if He had pleased, have called all His chosen to Himself by a Voice out of the excellent Glory, just as He called Saul, the Persecutor.

Or He might have commissioned angels to fly throughout the length and breadth of the world and carry the message of mercy. But in His inscrutable wisdom He has been pleased to bring men to Himself by *men*. The Atonement is complete and the Spirit’s power is fully given—all that is needed is that men be led to *believe* for the salvation of their souls—and this part of salvation is accomplished by the Holy Spirit through the ministries of men! Those who have, themselves, been quickened, are sent to prophesy upon the dry bones. In order that this Divine arrangement may be carried out, the Lord has implanted in the hearts of all genuine Believers a passion for the salvation of souls. In some this is more lively than in others, but it ought to be a leading feature in the character of every Christian.

I shall speak upon this sacred instinct and deal with it thus—First, *why is it implanted in us?* Secondly, *how does it exercise itself?* Thirdly, *why is it not more largely manifested?* And fourthly, *how can it be quickened and made more practically efficient?*

I. WHY IS THIS PASSION FOR SAVING OTHERS IMPLANTED IN THE BREASTS OF THE SAVED? For three reasons, I think, among many others. Namely, for God’s Glory, for the good of the Church, and for the profiting of the individual. It is implanted there, first, *for God’s Glory*. It is greatly to the Glory of God that He should use humble instruments for the accomplishment of His grand purposes. When Quintin Matsys had executed a certain wonderful well-cover in iron, it was the more notable as a work of art because he had been deprived of the proper tools while he was executing it, for I think he had little more than his hammer with which to perform that wonderful feat in metal.

Now, when we look at God’s work of Divine Grace in the world, it glorifies Him the more when we reflect that He has achieved it by instruments which, in themselves, would rather hinder than promote His work. No man among us can help God! It is true He *uses* us, but He could do better without us than with us! By the direct Word of power He could do, in a moment, that which, through the weakness of the instrument, now takes months and years—yet He knows best how to glorify His own name. He puts a longing to save others into our souls, that He may get Glory by using us, even *us* who have little fitness for such work except this passion which He has implanted in our breasts. He graciously uses even our weak points and makes our very infirmities to illustrate the Glory of His Grace—blessing our poorest sermons, prospering our most feeble efforts—and driving us to see results even from our stray words.

The Lord glorifies Himself by making our feebleness to be the vehicle of His power—and to this end He makes us pant for a work far out of our reach—and sets our hearts a-longing to “save some.” It brings Glory to God, also, that He should take sinful men such as we are and make us partakers of His Nature—He does this by giving us fellowship in His heart

of compassion—communion in His overflowing love. He kindles in our breasts the same fire of love which glows in His own bosom. In our own little way we look down upon the prodigal sons and see them a great way off, and have compassion on them, and would gladly fall on their necks and kiss them. The Lord loves men, however, after a *holy* fashion. He desires their sanctification and their salvation by that means. And when we desire the good of our fellow men by means of their conversion, we are walking side by side with God. Every real philanthropist is a copy of the Lord Jesus, for though it is too low a term to apply to His infinite excellence, yet, truly, the Son of God is the grandest of all philanthropists!

Now, that God should, by the power of His matchless Grace, produce in such cold hearts as ours a burning passion for the salvation of others is a singular proof of His Omnipotent power in the world of the mind. To change sinful men so that they pant after the increase of holiness! To render stubborn wills eager for the spread of obedience and to make wandering hearts earnest for the establishment of the abiding kingdom of the Redeemer—this is a mighty feat of the Divine Grace of God! That a perfect angel should cleave the air to perform His message is a simple enough matter—but that a Saul of Tarsus, who foamed at the mouth with enmity to Christ—should live and die for the winning of souls to Jesus is a memorable illustration of the Grace of God!

In this way the Lord gets great Glory over the archenemy, the Prince of the power of the air, for He can say to Satan, “I have defeated you, not by the sword of Michael, but by the tongues of men. I have conquered you, O you enemy, not with thunderbolts, but with the earnest words and prayers and tears of these, My humble servants. O My adversary, I have pitted against you feeble men and women, into whom I have put the love of souls, and these have torn away from you province after province of your dominions! These have snapped the fetters of the bandaged ones. These have burst open the prison doors of those who were your captives.” How illustriously is this Truth of God seen when the Lord seizes the ring-leaders of Satan’s army and transforms them into captains of His own host! Then is the enemy smitten in the house of his former friends!

Satan desired to sift Peter as wheat, but Peter sifted him in return on the day of Pentecost! Satan made Peter deny his Master, but when restored, Peter loved his Lord all the more—and all the more earnestly did he proclaim his Master’s name and Gospel! The fury of the foe recoils on himself! Love conquers and where sin abounded Grace does much more abound! As for Saul, who persecuted the saints, did not he become the Apostle of Christ to the Gentiles, laboring more than any other for the good cause? Beloved, the ultimate triumph of the Cross will be the more admirable because of the manner of its achievement! Good will conquer evil—not by the assistance of governments and the arms of potentates, not by the prestige of bishops and popes and all their pompous array—but by hearts that burn, souls that glow, eyes that weep and knees that bend in wrestling prayer! These are the artillery of God! By using such weapons as these He not only foils His foes, but triumphs over them—confounding the mighty by the weak, the wise by the simple—and the things which are by the things which are not!

Next, the passion for saving souls is implanted for *the Church's good*—and that in a thousand ways, of which I can only mention a few. First there can be no doubt that the passion for winning souls expends the Church's energy in a healthy manner. I have observed that Churches which do not care for the outlying population speedily suffer from disunion and strife. There is a certain quantity of steam generated in the community—and if we do not let it off in the right way, it will work in the wrong way—or blow up altogether and do infinite mischief. Men's minds are sure to work and their tongues to move—and if they are not employed for good purposes they will assuredly do mischief! You cannot unite a Church so completely as by calling out all its forces for accomplishing the Redeemer's grand object. Talents unused are sure to rust and this kind of rust is a deadly poison to peace—a bitter irritant which eats into the heart of the Church. We will, therefore, by all means, save some, lest by some other means we become disunited in heart.

This passion for saving souls not only employs, but also draws forth the strength of the Church. It awakens her latent energies and arouses her noblest faculties. With so Divine a prize before her, she girds up her robes for the race—and with her eyes upon her Lord, presses forward to the goal. Many a commonplace man has been rendered great by being thoroughly absorbed by a noble pursuit—and what can be nobler than turning men from the road which leads to Hell? Perhaps some of those ignoble souls who have lived and died like dumb, driven cattle, might have reached the majesty of great fires if a supreme intent had fired them with heroic zeal and developed their concealed endowments. Happy is the man whose task is honorable, if he does but honorably fulfill it. Lo, God has given to His Church the work of conquering the world, the plucking of brands from the burning, the feeding of His sheep and lambs! And this it is which trains the Church to deeds of daring and to nobility of soul.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, this common passion for souls knits us together! How often do I feel a fresh bond of union with my beloved Brethren and fellow workers when I find that I was the means of the conviction of a sinner, whom one of them comforted and led to the Savior? And thus we have a joint possession in the convert! Sometimes I have been blest of God to the salvation of my hearer, but that hearer was first brought here by yonder friend—and so we become sharers in the joy! Communion in service and success welds the saints together and is one of the best securities for mutual love. And, moreover, when new converts are brought into the Church, the fact that they are brought in by instrumentality tends to make their fusion with the Church an easy matter.

It is in this case much the same as with our families. If God had been pleased to create each of us as individual men and women and drop us down somewhere on the earth. And if were left to find our way to somebody's house and unite with his family, I daresay we should have had to wander long before we should have been welcomed! But now we come as little ones to those who rejoice to see us! And they sing, “Welcome, welcome, little stranger!” We become, at once, parts of the family because we have parents and brothers and sisters—and these make no debate about

our introduction and consider it no trouble to receive us—though I fear we have never duly rewarded them for their pains.

So is it in the Church—if God had converted all men one by one, by His Spirit, without instrumentality, they would have been separate grains of sand, hard to unite into a building and there would have been much difficulty in forming them into one body. But now we are *born* into the Church, and the pastor and others look upon those converted under their instrumentality as their own children whom they love in the Lord. And the Church, having shared in the common service by which they are converted, feels, “These belong to us, these are our *reward*.” And so they are taken cordially into the Christian family. This is no small benefit, for it is at once the joy and the strength of the Church to be made one by vital forces, by holy sympathies and fellowships.

We have spiritual fathers among us whom we love in the Lord and spiritual children whose welfare is our deepest concern. We have Brothers and Sisters to whom we have been helpful, or who have been helpful to us, whom we cannot but commune with in heart. As a common desire to defend their country welds all the regiments of an army into one, so the common desire to save souls makes all true Believers akin to each other! But this passion is most of all for *the good of the individual possessing it*. I will not try, this morning, to sum up, in the short time allotted to me, the immense benefits which come to a man through his laboring for the conversion of others, but I will venture this assertion—no man or woman in the Church of God is in a healthy state if he or she is not laboring to save some.

Those who are laid aside by suffering are taking their part in the economy of the household of Christ. But with that exception, he that does not work, neither shall he eat. He that does not water others is not watered himself. And he who cares not for the souls of others may well stand in jeopardy about his own. To long for the conversion of others makes us Godlike! Do we desire man’s welfare? God does! Would we gladly snatch them from the burning? God is daily performing this deed of Divine Grace! Can we say that we have no pleasure in the death of him that dies? Jehovah has declared the like with an oath! Do we weep over sinners? Did not Jehovah’s Son weep over them? Do we lay out ourselves for their conversion? Did He not die that they might live?

You are made Godlike when this passion glows within your spirit. This is a vent for your love to God as well as your love to men. Loving the Creator, we pity His fallen creatures and feel a benevolent love towards the work of His hands. If we love God, we feel as He does, that judgment is strange work and we cannot bear that those whom He has created should be cast away forever. Loving God makes us sorrow that all men do not love Him, too. It frets us that the world lies in the Wicked One, at enmity to its own Creator, at war with Him who, alone, can bless it. O Beloved, you do not love the Lord at all unless you love the souls of others!

Trying to bring others to Christ does us good by renewing in us our old feelings and reviving our first love. When I see an inquirer penitent for sin, I remember the time when I felt as he is feeling. And when I hear the seeker for the first time say, “I do believe in Jesus,” I remember the birth-

day of my own soul, when the bells of my heart rang out their merriest peals because Jesus Christ had come to dwell within me! Soul-winning keeps the heart lively and preserves our warm youth to us! It is a mighty refresher to decaying love. If you feel the chill of skepticism stealing over you and begin to doubt the Gospel's power, go to work among the poor and ignorant, or comfort souls in distress. And when you see the brightness of their countenances as they obtain joy and peace in believing, your skepticism will fly like chaff before the wind!

You must believe in the cause when you see the result! You cannot help believing when the evidence is before your eyes! Work for Jesus keeps us strong in faith and intense in love to Him. Does not this holy instinct draw forth all the faculties of a man? One strong passion will frequently bring the whole man into play, like a skillful minstrel whose hand brings music from every chord. If we love others, we shall, like Paul, become wise to attract them, wise to persuade them, wise to convince them, wise to encourage them. We shall learn the use of means which had lain rusted and discover in ourselves talents which otherwise had been hidden in the ground if the strong desire to save men had not cleared away the soil!

And I will add here that love to souls will, in the end, bring to everyone who follows it up, the highest joy beneath the stars. What is that? It is the joy of knowing that you have been made the spiritual parent of others! I have tasted of this stream full often, by God's Grace, and it is Heaven below! The joy of being saved one's self has a measure of selfishness about it, but to know that your fellow men are saved by your efforts brings a joy pure, disinterested and heavenly—of which we may drink the deepest draughts without injury to our spirits. Yield yourselves, Brothers and Sisters, to the Divine appetite for doing good! Be possessed with it and eaten up by it—and the best results must follow! Let this be, from now on, your aim, “That I may, by all means, save some.”

II. How DOES THIS PASSION EXERCISE ITSELF? Differently in different persons, and at different periods. At first it shows itself by *tender anxiety*. The moment a man is saved he begins to be anxious about his wife, his child, or his dearest relative. And that anxiety leads him, at once, to pray for them. As soon as the newly opened eye has enjoyed the sweet light of the Sun of Righteousness it looks lovingly round on those who were its companions in darkness—and then gazes up into Heaven with a tearful prayer that they, also, may receive their sight. Hungry ones, while they are eating the first mouthful at the banquet of Free Grace, groan and say, “Oh, that my poor starving children could be here to feed on the Savior's love with me.”

Compassion is natural to the new-born nature—as common humanity makes us pity the suffering—so renewed humanity makes us pity the sinful. This, I say, happens at the very dawn of the new life. Further on in the heavenly pilgrimage this passion manifests itself in the *intense joy* exhibited when news reaches us of the conversion of others. I have often seen, at Church meetings and missionary meetings, a hearty and holy joy spread throughout an audience when some new convert, or returned missionary, or successful minister, has given details of the wonders of Saving Grace. Many a poor girl who could do but little for the Savior has, never-

theless, shown what she would have done if she could, by the tears of joy which have streamed down her cheeks when she has heard that sinners have been led to Jesus. This is one of the ways in which those who can personally do little can share in the joy of the most useful, yes, can have fellowship with Jesus Himself!

The hallowed instinct of soul-winning also shows itself in *private efforts, sacrifices, prayers and agonies* for the spread of the Gospel. Well do I remember when I first knew the Lord, how restless I felt till I could do *something* for others. I did not know that I could speak to an assembly and I was very timid as to conversing upon religious subjects. And therefore I wrote little notes to different persons setting forth the way of salvation. I dropped these written letters with printed tracts into the post, or slipped them under the doors of houses, or dropped them into areas—praying that those who read them might be aroused as to their sins and moved to flee from the wrath to come. My heart would have burst if it could not have found some vent!

I wish that all professors kept up their first zeal and were diligent in doing little things as well as greater things for Jesus, for often the lesser agencies turn out to be as effectual as those which operate upon a larger area. I hope that all of you young people who have been lately added to the Church are trying some mode of doing good, suitable for your capacity and position, that, by all means, you may save some! A word may often bless those whom a sermon fails to reach. And a personal letter may do far more than a printed book. As we grow older and are more qualified, we shall take our share in the more *public agencies* of the Church. We shall speak for Jesus before the few who meet at the cottage Prayer Meeting. We shall pray *with*, as well as *for* our families, or we shall enlist in the Sunday school, or take a tract district. Ultimately the Lord may call us to plead His cause before hundreds or thousands—and so beginning with little our latter end, by His Grace, shall greatly increase.

There is one point in which zeal for the salvation of others will show itself in all who possess it, namely, in *adapting ourselves to the condition and capacity of others for their good*. Notice this in Paul. He became all things to all men, if by any means he might save some. He became a Jew to the Jews. When he met with them he did not rail at their ceremonies, but endeavored to bring out their spiritual meaning. He did not preach against Judaism, but showed them Jesus as the Fulfillment of its types. When he met with a heathen he did not revile his gods, but taught him the true God and salvation by His Son. He did not carry about with him one sermon for all places, but adapted his speech to his audience.

What a very wonderful address that was which Paul delivered to the council of philosophers upon Mars' Hill. It is most courteous throughout and it is a pity that our translation somewhat destroys that quality, for it is eminently conspicuous in the original. The Apostle began by saying, “You men of Athens, I perceive that you are, on all points, very God-fearing.” He did not say, “Too superstitious,” as our version has it! That would have needlessly provoked them at the outset. He went on to say, “For as I passed through the city and observed your sacred things, I found

an altar bearing the inscription, ‘To an unknown God.’ What, therefore, you worship without knowing it, that I announce unto you.”

He did not say, “Whom you ignorantly worship.” He was far too prudent to use such an expression! They were a collection of thoughtful men, of cultured minds—and he aimed at winning them by courteously declaring to them the Gospel. It was most skillful on his part to refer to that inscription upon the altar and equally so to quote from one of their own poets. If he had been addressing Jews, he would neither have quoted from a Greek poet nor referred to a heathen altar—his intense love for his hearers taught him to merge his own peculiarities in order to secure their attention.

In the same manner we also sink ourselves and instead of demanding that others submit to us, we cheerfully submit to them in all unessential matters, that we may gain their favorable consideration of the claims of Jesus. Mark you, there was never a man more stern for principle than Paul. In things where it was necessary to take his stand he was firm as a rock. But in merely personal and external matters he was the servant of all. Adaptation was his *forte*. Beloved, if you have to talk to children, be children—do not expect them to be men. Think *their* thoughts, feel *their* feelings and put truth into their words. You will never get at their hearts till your heart is in sympathy with their childhood. If you have to comfort the aged, enter, also, into their infirmities and do not speak to them as if they were still in the full vigor of life. Study persons of all ages and be as they are—that they may be led to be Believers—as you are.

Are you called to labor among the educated? Then choose out excellent words and present them apples of gold in baskets of silver. Do you work among the illiterate? Let your words be as goads—speak their mother tongue, use great plainness of speech so that you may be understood—for what good is it to speak to them in an unknown tongue? Are you cast among people with strange prejudices? Do not unnecessarily spar with them, but take them as you find them. Are you seeking the conversion of a person of slender understanding? Do not inflict upon him the deeper mysteries, but show him the plain man’s pathway to Heaven in words which he who runs may read! Are you talking with a friend who is of a sorrowful spirit? Tell him of your own depressions. Enter into his griefs and so raise him up as you were raised. Like the good Samaritan, go where the wounded man lies and do not expect him to come to you.

A real passion for winning souls reveals the many sides of our manhood and uses each one as a reflector of the Divine light of Truth. There is a door to each man’s heart and we have to find it and enter it with the right key, which is to be found somewhere or other in the Word of God. All men are not to be reached in the same way, or by the same arguments—and as we are, by all means, to save some, we must be wise to win souls—wise with wisdom from above. We desire to see them conquered for Christ, but no warrior always uses the same strategy—there is, for one, open assault, for another a siege—for a third an ambush, for a fourth a long campaign.

On the sea there are great rams which run down the enemy, torpedoes under water, gunboats and steam frigates. One ship is broken up by a single blow. Another needs a broadside. A third must have a shot between

wind and water. A fourth must be driven on shore. Even thus must we adapt ourselves and use the Sacred Force entrusted to us with grave consideration and solemn judgment, looking ever to the Lord for guidance and for power. All the real power is in the Lord's hands! We must put ourselves fully at the disposal of the Divine Worker, that He may work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure—so shall we, by all means, save some.

III. WHY IS NOT THIS PASSION MORE LARGELY DEVELOPED AMONG CHRISTIANS? The preacher needs not answer that question—each of his hearers may do that for himself. Why is it that we do not yearn more over the perishing souls of men? Is it not that we have but very little Grace? We are dwarfish Christians with little faith, little love, little care for the Glory of God—and therefore with little concern for perishing sinners. We are spiritually naked and poor. We are spiritually miserable when we might be rich and increased in goods if we had but more *faith*. That is the secret of the matter and is the fountain of all the mischief.

But if we must come to particulars, do you not think that men are careless about the souls of others because they have fallen into *one-sided views of Gospel doctrines* and have turned the Doctrines of Grace into a couch for idleness to rest upon? “God will save His own,” they say. Yes, but His own do not talk in that fashion. They are not like Cain, who said, “Am I my brother's keeper?” Unquestionably the Lord will see that His own elect are called in due season, but He will do this by the preaching or teaching of the Word. Predestination is not a legitimate reason for inaction! Men do not consider it so in other matters, why, then, in religion? Except the Lord prospers us in business all our efforts are in vain—and yet we do not say—“I shall have as many pounds in my pocket as God intends I shall have, and therefore I need not work or trade.”

No, men save their fatalism to play the fool only with *spiritual* things! In all other things they are not such idiots as to suffer predestination to paralyze their minds! But here, since idleness needs an excuse for itself, they dare to abuse this sacred Truth of God to cripple their consciences! In some professors downright *worldliness* prevents their seeking the conversion of others. They are too fond of gain to care for saving souls, too busy about their farms to sow the seed of the Kingdom, too much occupied with their shops to hold up the Cross before the sinner's eyes, too full of worldly care to care for the salvation of the lost! Covetousness eats up the very soul of many. They have far more business than they can manage without injury to their spiritual health—and yet they are eager after more. Prayer Meetings are neglected, the class in the school is given up, efforts for the poor and ignorant are never made—and all because they are so taken up with the world and its cares. This age is peculiarly tempted in that direction and it needs strong piety to be able to love the souls of men practically.

With some I fear that the cause of indifference is *lack of faith*. They do not believe that God will bless their efforts and, therefore, they make none. They have a vivid recollection of far-gone times when they tried to be useful and failed. So, instead of past failure being made a reason for double exertion in the present, to make up for lost time, they have given

up labor for the Lord as a bad case and do not attempt anything more. It is to be feared that with many Church members the reason for the absence of this passion is that they love ease and are worm-eaten with *indolence*. They say, “Soul, take your ease! Eat, drink, and be merry. Why trouble yourself about others?” “Send the multitude away,” said the disciples. They did not want to be worried with them.

True, the people were very hungry and weary and it was a painful thing to see them fainting. But it was easier to forget their needs than to relieve them! London is perishing—millions are dying in their sins! The *world* still lies in the Wicked One and Sloth calls Forgetfulness to her aid to ignore the whole matter! Such people do not want to be made uncomfortable—neither do they wish to spend and be spent for the glory of Christ. The secret of it all is that the great majority of Christians are *out of sympathy with God* and out of communion with Christ. Is not this an evil? O eyes that never wept over dying men, do you expect to see the King in His beauty? O hearts that never throbbed with anxiety for those that are going down to the Pit—do you hope to leap for joy at the Master’s coming? O lips that never speak for Jesus, how will you answer to the searching questions of the Last Great Day?

I beseech you, Christian people, if you have grown indifferent to the conversion of those around you, search out the secret reason! Find what is the worm at the root of your piety—and in the name of Christ seek to be delivered from it!

IV. How CAN THIS PASSION BE MORE FULLY AROUSED? First, it can be done by our *obtaining a higher life*. The better man shall do the better deed—the stronger in Divine Grace, the stronger to save some. I do not believe in a man’s trying to pump himself up beyond his level. The man must be up and then all that comes out of the man will have risen. If love to God glows in your soul, it must show itself in your concern for others. Make the tree good and the fruit will be good. It will not do for you to begin a more earnest career by stimulating yourself to a hectic zeal which will come and go like the flush on the consumptive’s cheek—the life within must be *permanently* strengthened—and then the pulsing of the heart and the motion of the whole man will be more vigorous.

More Divine Grace is our greatest need. This being granted, it will greatly help us to care for the conversion of sinners if we are *fully cognizant of their misery and degradation*. How differently one feels after seeing with ones own eyes the poverty, filth and vice of this city. I wish some of you respectable people who have never seen any part of London except the broad thoroughfares, would take a stroll down the courts which open into the narrow side streets. I would like you to go down courts such as Queen Victoria never saw, and alleys far from green. Ladies, you may leave some of that finery at home. And Gentlemen, you may put away your pocket handkerchiefs and your purses, unless you would like to empty them out among the wretched beings you will meet.

There are sights to be seen close to our own homes which might well make our hearts bleed and harrow up our spirits. When you have seen them, you will begin to feel aright towards the sinful. We sit at home comfortably at our fires in the winter time and think the weather is not so very

cold. But if we go out and see the poor shivering in their rags, or find them cowering over their empty grates, we begin to think that cold is a greater evil than we dreamed! We come here, to this place of worship, and while we are listening to the Word we forget the destitution of those who hear it not. Why, at this very moment around the doors of the gin palaces and public houses of London there are thousands standing waiting till the blessed hour of one—when they can obtain the cheering draught which their souls thirst after! The assemblies now tarrying for the god Bacchus can be counted by the thousands!

What have these men been doing with the Sabbath hours up till now? Reading the Sunday newspaper, lying in bed, or loafing about their little gardens in their shirt sleeves. That is the occupation of hundreds of thousands this day all around us and at our doors! Have we done our best to bring them to the House of Prayer? Hundreds of thousands near by have never heard the Gospel in their lives—and never think of entering places where it is preached! Of course, if they had lived in Calcutta we should have thought about them! Because they are living in London close to us shall we neglect them?

One of the best things that could be done for us all would be to go round to houses in the worst parts of the city for one week with a city Missionary. Then we might see for ourselves what is to be seen! Then would sin and poverty become palpable and stand out in grim reality! Your fellow countrymen, men born of women who are of the same flesh and blood as yourselves—are living in daily neglect of your dear Savior, living in jeopardy of their immortal souls—if you did but realize this it would quicken you, by all means, to save some! Brethren, the strongest argument I have ever seen for the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment is an argument which is often used against it. They say, "If the eternity of future punishment is true, we wonder that believers in it can rest in their beds, or eat their meals—for the truth is so horrible that it ought to stir them to incessant efforts to deliver others from going into this boundless misery."

It is true and spoken of by a Prophet, and that is one reason why I believe the doctrine, because it has a tendency, if anything has, to move us to compassion and rouse us to action. If the advocate of other views is prepared to teach me a doctrine which will make me think more lightly of sin and make me feel more easy about the damnation of my fellow men, I do not want his doctrine, for I am too careless now, and have a dread of being more so! If, with the most terrible argument for incessant sorrow for the ruin of the souls of my hearers, I cannot be as tender as I would, what should I be if I could lay the flattering unction to my soul that, after all, it was of smaller consequence than I had thought whether they were damned or saved? Ah, dear Friends, can you bear to think of it, that all around you there are men and women who will, in a few years, suffer the terrible wrath of God and be banished forever from His Presence? If you could but realize Hell and its horrors, you might be stirred, by all means, to save some.

Many other things might move us, but certainly this last ought to do it. A sense of *our own solemn obligations* to the Grace of God should arouse

all our energies. If we are what we profess to be—saved men redeemed by the heart’s blood of the Son of God—do we not owe something to Christ for this? Shall we be easy till we have found many jewels for His crown? Can we be content while so many myriads are ignorant of Him, or opposed to Him? If you love Him, what will you do for Him? Show Him a proof of your love—and the best proof you can give is your own personal holiness and persevering effort to gather in His redeemed. Brother, Sister, do something for Jesus! Do not talk about it—do it!

Words are leaves—*actions* are fruits. Do something for Jesus! Do something for Jesus, today! Before the sun goes down think of some one action which may tend to the conversion of some one person—and do it with all your might! Let the object of the effort be your child, your servant, your brother, your friend—but make the effort today! Having done it today, do it tomorrow and every day—and doing it in one way, do it another way! And doing it in one state of heart, do it in another! Let your joy enchant, let your sorrow arouse, let your hope attract! Let your changeful moods help you to attack sinners from different quarters, as your varying circumstances bring you into contact with differing persons.

Be always awake! Turn yourself about like a gun on a swivel to reach persons who are found in any direction—so that some may fall wounded by the Gospel’s power. By all means, save some! God grant it may be so! And, oh, that some might be saved this morning by simply believing in Christ Jesus, for that is the way of salvation! Jesus puts away sin wherever there is a simple trust in Him! May seekers exercise that trust now and live forever. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
Isaiah 6; 1 Corinthians 9.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—176, 353, 358.**

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***“I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”
1 Corinthians 9:22.***

IT is a grand thing to see a man thoroughly possessed with one master passion. Such a man is sure to be strong and if the master principle is excellent, he is sure to be excellent, too. The man of one objective is a man, indeed. Lives with many aims are like water trickling through innumerable streams, none of which is wide enough or deep enough to float the merest cockleshell of a boat. But a life with one objective is like a mighty river flowing between its banks, bearing to the ocean a multitude of ships and spreading fertility on either side. Give me a man not only with a great objective in his soul, but thoroughly possessed by it—his powers all concentrated and he on fire with vehement zeal for his supreme objective—and you have put before me one of the greatest sources of power which the world can produce!

Give me a man engrossed with holy love as to his heart and filled with some masterly celestial thought as to his brain and such a man will be known wherever his lot may be cast and I will venture to prophesy that his name will be remembered long after the place of his sepulcher shall be forgotten. Such a man was Paul. I am not about to set him upon a pedestal, that you may look at him and wonder, much less that you may kneel down and worship him as a saint. I mention Paul because what he was, we ought, every one of us to be. And though we cannot share in his office, not being Apostles and though we cannot share in his talents or in his inspiration, yet we ought to be possessed by the same spirit which actuated him and, let me also add, we ought to be possessed by it in the same degree!

Do you object to that? I ask you what was there in Paul, by the Grace of God, which may not be in you? And what had Jesus done for Paul more than for you? He was divinely changed and so have you been if you have passed from darkness into marvelous light! He had much forgiven and so have you, also, been freely pardoned. He was redeemed by the blood of the Son of God and so have you been—at least you profess to have been. He was filled with the Spirit of God and so are you if you are truly such as your Christian profession makes you out to be. Owing, then, your salvation to Christ, being debtors to the precious blood of Jesus and being quickened by the Holy Spirit, I ask you why there should not be the same fruit from the same sowing?

Why not the same effect from the same cause? Do not tell me that the Apostle was an exception and cannot be set up as a rule or model for common folk, for I shall have to tell you that we must be such as Paul was

if we hope to be where Paul is. Paul did not think that he had attained, neither was already perfect. Shall we think him to be so? Shall we think him to be so as to regard him to be matchless and so be content to fall short of what he was? No! Let it be our incessant prayer, as Believers in Christ, that we may be followers of Paul so far as he followed Christ! And where he failed to set his feet in his Lord's footprints, may we even outstrip him and be more zealous, more devoted to Christ than even the Apostle of the Gentiles! O that the Holy Spirit would bring us to be like our Lord Jesus Himself!

At this time I shall have to speak to you upon *Paul's great objective* in life. He tells us it was to "save some." We will then look into Paul's heart and show you a few of *the great reasons which made him think it so important that at least some should be saved*. Then, thirdly, we will indicate *certain of the means which the Apostle used to that end*. We will speak with this end in view—that *you*, my dear Hearers, may seek to "save some." That you may seek this because of potent reasons which you cannot withstand and that you may seek it with wise methods such as shall, in the end, succeed.

I. First, then, Brothers and Sisters, WHAT WAS PAUL'S GREAT OBJECTIVE IN HIS DAILY LIFE AND MINISTRY? He says it was to save some. There are ministers of Christ present, at this hour, together with City Missionaries, Bible-Women, Sunday school teachers and other workers in my Master's vineyard. And I make bold to enquire of each one of them—is this your objective in all your Christian service? Do you, above all things, aim at saving souls? I am afraid that some have forgotten this grand objective. But, dear Friends, anything short of this is unworthy to be the great end of a Christian's life!

I fear there are some who preach with the view of *amusing* men and as long as people can be gathered in crowds and their ears can be tickled and they can retire pleased with what they have heard, the orator is content and folds his hands and goes back self-satisfied. But Paul did not lay himself out to please the public and collect the crowd! If he did not save them, he felt that it was of no use to interest them. Unless the Truth of God had pierced their hearts, affected their lives and made new men of them, Paul would have gone home crying, "Who has believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

It seems to be the opinion of a large party in the present day that the objective of Christian effort should be to *educate* men. I grant you that education is, in itself, an exceedingly valuable thing, so valuable that I am sure the whole Christian Church rejoices greatly that at last we have a national system of education which only needs to be carefully carried out and every child in this land will have the keys of knowledge in his hand. Whatever price others may set upon ignorance, we are promoters of knowledge—and the more it can be spread, the better shall we be pleased. But if the Church of God thinks that it is sent into the world merely to train the mental faculties, it has made a very serious mistake, for the objective of Christianity is *not* to educate men for their secular callings, or

even to train them in the politer arts or the more elegant professions, or to enable them to enjoy the beauties of Nature or the charms of poetry.

Jesus Christ came not into the world for any of these things, but He came to seek and to save that which was lost! And on the same errand has He sent His Church—and she is a traitor to the Master who sent her if she is beguiled by the beauties of taste and art to forget that to preach Christ and Him Crucified is the *only* objective for which she exists among the sons of men! The business of the Church is salvation! The minister is to use all means to save some! He is no minister of Christ if this is not the one desire of his heart. Missionaries sink far below their level when they are content to civilize—their first objective is to *save*. The same is true of the Sunday school teacher and of all other workers among children—if they have merely taught the child to read, to repeat hymns and so forth, they have not yet touched their true vocation. We must have the children *saved*! At this nail we must drive and the hammer must come down upon this head always—if by all means I may save some—for we have done nothing unless some are saved!

Paul does not even say that he tried to *moralize* men. The best promoter of morality is the Gospel. When a man is saved, he becomes moral—he becomes more—he becomes holy. But to aim *first* at morality is altogether to miss the mark! If we did attain it—and we shall not—yet we should not have attained that for which we were sent into the world! Dr. Chalmers' experience is a very valuable one to those who think that the Christian ministry ought to preach up mere morality, for he says that in his first parish he preached morality and saw no good whatever arising out of his exhortations. But, as soon as he began to preach Christ Crucified, then there was a buzz and a stir and much opposition—but Grace prevailed!

He who wishes for perfumes must grow the flowers. He who desires to promote morality must have men saved. He who wants motion in a corpse should first seek life for it and he who desires to see a rightly ordered life should first desire an inward renewal by the Holy Spirit. We are not to be satisfied when we have taught men their duties towards their neighbors, or even their duties towards God—this would suffice for Moses, but not for Christ! The Law came by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ. We teach men what they ought to be, but we do far more—by the power of the Gospel applied by the Holy Spirit, we make them what they ought to be by the power of God's Spirit. We put not before the blind the things that they ought to *see*, but we open their eyes in the name of Jesus! We tell not the captive how free he ought to be, but we open the door and take away his fetters! We are not content to tell men what they must be, but we show them how this character can be *attained* and how Jesus Christ freely presents all that is essential to eternal life to all those who come and put their trust in Him.

Now observe, Brothers and Sisters, if I, or you, or any of us, or all of us, shall have spent our lives merely in amusing men, or educating men, or moralizing men—when we shall come to give an account at the Last Great Day, we shall be in a very sorry condition and we shall have but a very

sorry record to render. For of what use will it be to a man to be educated when he comes to be *damned*? Of what service will it be to him to have been amused when the trumpet sounds and Heaven and earth are shaking and the Pit opens wide her jaws of fire and swallows up the unsaved soul? Of what use, even, to have moralized a man if he is still on the left hand of the Judge and if, "Depart, you cursed," shall be his portion? Blood red with the murder of men's souls will be the skirts of professing Christians unless the drift and end and aim of *all* their work has been to "save some."

Oh, I beseech you, especially you, dear Friends, who are working in Sunday and Ragged Schools and elsewhere, do not think that you have done *anything* unless the children's souls are saved! Settle it that this is the top and bottom of the business and throw your whole strength in the name of Christ and by the power of the Eternal Spirit into this one objective—if by any means you may save some and bring some to Jesus that they may be delivered from the wrath to come! What did Paul mean by saying that he desired to *save* some? What is it to be saved? Paul meant by that nothing less than *that some should be born again*—for no man is saved until he is made a new creature in Christ Jesus! The old nature cannot be saved—it is dead and corrupt. The best thing that can be done with it is to let it be crucified and buried in the sepulcher of Christ.

There must be a new nature implanted in us by the power of the Holy Spirit or we cannot be saved. We must be as much new creations as if we had never been—we must come a second time as fresh from the hand of the Eternal God as if we had been molded today by Divine wisdom as Adam was in Paradise! The Great Teacher's words are, "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound thereof, but you cannot tell where it comes nor where it goes; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." "Except a man is born again from above he cannot see the kingdom of God." This, then, Paul meant, that men must be new creatures in Christ Jesus and we must never rest till we see such a change worked upon them! This must be the objective of our teaching and of our praying, indeed, the objective of our *lives*, that "some" may be regenerated.

He meant, in addition to that, *that some might be cleansed from their past iniquity through the merit of the atoning Sacrifice of the Son of God*. No man can be saved from his sin except by the Atonement. Under the Jewish Law it was written, "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them." That curse has never been reversed and the only way to escape from it is this—Jesus Christ was made a curse for us, as it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree." Now, he who believes in Jesus, who puts his hand upon the head of Jesus of Nazareth, the Scapegoat of His people, has lost his sins! His faith is sure evidence that his iniquities were of old laid upon the head of the great Substitute. The Lord Jesus Christ was punished in our place and we are no longer obnoxious to the wrath of God. Behold, the sin-atoning Sacrifice is slain and offered on the Altar and the Lord has ac-

cepted it—and is so well pleased that He has declared that whoever believes in Jesus is fully and eternally forgiven!

Now, we long to see men thus forgiven. We pine to bring the prodigal's head to the Father's bosom, the wandering sheep to the Good Shepherd's shoulder, the lost piece of money into the owner's hands and until this is done, nothing is done! I mean, Brothers and Sisters, nothing *spiritually*, nothing *eternally*, nothing that is worthy of the agony of a Christian's life, nothing that can be looked upon as deserving of an immortal spirit's spending all its fires upon it. O Lord, our soul yearns to see Jesus rewarded by the salvation of the blood-bought. Aid us to lead souls to Him!

Once more. When the Apostle wished that he might save some he meant that being regenerated and being pardoned, *they might also be purified and made holy*, for a man is not saved while he lives in sin. Let a man say what he will, he cannot be saved from sin while he is the slave of it! How is a drunk saved from drunkenness while he still riots as before? How can you say that the swearer is saved from blasphemy while he is still profane? Words must be used in their true meaning. The great objective of the Christian's work should be that some might be saved from their sins—purified and made white—and made examples of integrity, chastity, honesty and righteousness as the fruit of the Spirit of God. And where this is not the case we have labored in vain and spent our strength for nothing.

Now, I declare before you all that I have, in this house of prayer, never sought anything but the conversion of souls. And I call Heaven and earth to witness—and your consciences, too—that I have never labored for anything except the bringing of you to Christ that I might present you, at last, unto God accepted in the Beloved! I have not sought to gratify depraved appetites either by novelty of doctrine or ceremony, but I have kept to the simplicity of the Gospel. I have kept back no part of God's Word from you, but I have endeavored to give you the whole counsel of God. I have sought out no fineries of speech, but have spoken plainly and right straight at your hearts and consciences. And if you are not saved, I mourn and lament before God that up to this day, though I have preached hundreds of times to you, yet I have preached in vain!

If you have not closed in with Christ. If you have not been washed in the fountain filled with blood, you are waste pieces of soil from which no harvest has yet come. You tell me, perhaps, that you have been kept from a great many sins; that you have learned a great many Truths of God by coming here. So far so good! But can I afford to live for this, merely to teach you certain Truths or keep you back from open sins? How could this content me if I knew all the while that you were still unsaved and must, therefore, after death, be cast into the flames of Hell? No, Beloved, before the Lord I count nothing to be worthy of your pastor's life, soul and energy but the winning of you to Christ! Nothing but your salvation can ever make me feel that my heart's desire is granted!

I ask every worker here to see to this, that he or she never turns aside from shooting at this target and at the center of this target, too, namely,

that we may win souls for Christ and see them born to God and washed in the fountain filled with blood! Let the workers' hearts ache and yearn—and their voices cry till their throats are hoarse—but let them judge that they have accomplished *nothing* whatever until, at least, in some cases, men are really saved! As the fisherman longs to take fish in his net. As the hunter pants to bear home his spoil. As the mother pines to clasp her lost child to her bosom, so do we faint for the salvation of souls! And we must have them, or we are ready to die. Save them, O Lord, save them for Christ's sake!

But now we must leave that point for another.

II. THE APOSTLE HAD GREAT REASONS FOR SELECTING SUCH AN OBJECTIVE IN LIFE. Were he here I think he would tell you that his reasons were something of this kind. To save souls! *If they are not saved, our God is greatly dishonored!* Did you ever think over the amount of dishonor that is done to the Lord our God in London in any one hour of the day? Take, if you will, this prayer hour, when we are gathered here ostensibly to pray. If the thoughts of this great assembly could all be read, how many of them would be dishonoring to the Most High? But outside of every house of prayer, outside of every place of worship of every kind, think of the thousands and tens of thousands, the *hundreds* of thousands, who have all this day neglected the very semblance of the worship of the God who has made them and who keeps them in being!

Think of how many times the door of the gin-palace has swung on its hinges during this holy hour! Think how many times God's name has been blasphemed at the drinking bar! There are worse things than these, if worse can be, but I shall not lift the veil. Transfer your thoughts to an hour or so later, when the veil of darkness has descended. Shame will not permit us even to think of how God's name is dishonored in the persons of those whose first father was made after the image of God, but who pollute themselves to be the slaves of Satan and the prey of bestial lusts! Alas! Alas for this city! It is full of abominations of which the Apostle said, "It is a shame, even, to speak of those things which were done of them in secret."

Christian men and women, nothing can sweep away the social evil but the Gospel! Vices are like vipers and only the voice of Jesus can drive them out of the land! The Gospel is the great besom with which to cleanse the filthiness of this city but nothing else will avail. Will you not, for God's sake, whose name is every day profaned, seek to save some? If you will enlarge your thoughts and take in all the great cities of the Continent—yes, further still—take all the idolaters of China and India, the worshippers of the false prophet and the Antichrist, what a mass of provocation have we here! What a smoke in Jehovah's nose must this false worship be! How He must often put His hand to the hilt of His sword as though He would say, "Ah! I will ease Myself of My adversaries." But He bears it patiently. Let us not become indifferent to His longsuffering, but day and night let us cry unto Him and daily let us labor for Him if by any means we may save some for His Glory's sake.

Think, dear Friends, also, of *the extreme misery of this, our human race*. It would be a very dreadful thing, tonight, if you could get any idea of the aggregate of the misery of London at the present moment in the hospitals and the workhouses. Now, I would not say half a word against poverty—wherever it comes, it is a bitter ill—but you will mark as you notice carefully, that while a few are poor because of unavoidable circumstances, a very large mass of the poverty of London is the sheer and clear result of profuseness, lack of forethought, idleness and, worst of all, drunkenness. Ah, that *drunkenness*! That is the master evil! If drink could be gotten rid of, we might be sure of conquering the very devil himself! The drunkenness created by the infernal liquor dens which plague the whole of this huge city is appalling!

No, I did not speak in haste, or let slip a hasty word. Many of the liquor dens are nothing less than *infernal*—in some respects they are worse, for Hell has its uses as the Divine protest against sin—but as for the gin palace there is nothing to be said in its favor. The vices of the age cause three-fourths of all the poverty! If you could look at the homes tonight, the wretched homes where women will tremble at the sound of their husband's foot as he comes home, where little children will crouch down with fear upon their little heap of straw because the human brute who calls himself, "a man," will come reeling home from the place where he has been indulging his appetites—if you could look at such a sight and remember that it will be seen 10,000 times over tonight, I think you would say, "God help us, by all means, to save some." Since the great axe to lay at the root of the deadly upas tree is the Gospel of Christ, may God help us to hold that axe there and to work constantly with it till the huge trunk of the poison tree begins to rock to and fro and we get it down and London is saved—and the world is saved from the wretchedness and the misery which now drips from every branch!

Again, dear Friends, the Christian has other reasons for seeking to save some—chiefly because of *the terrible future of impenitent souls*. That veil which hangs before me is not penetrated by every glance, but he who has his eyes touched with heavenly eye-salve sees through it and what does he see? Myriads upon myriads of spirits in dread procession passing from their bodies and passing—*where*? Unsaved, unregenerate, unwashed in precious blood, we see them go up to the solemn bar where, in silence, the sentence comes forth and they are banished from the Presence of God—banished to horrors which are not to be described nor even to be imagined! This, alone, were enough to cause us distress day and night! This decision of destiny has about it a terrible solemnity.

But the Resurrection trumpet sounds! Those spirits come forth from their prison. I see them returning to earth, rising from the Pit to the bodies in which they lived! And now I see them stand—multitudes! Multitudes! Multitudes! Multitudes—in the Valley of Decision. And HE comes with the crown upon His head and the books before Him, sitting on a Great White Throne. And there they stand as prisoners at the bar! My vision now perceives them—how they tremble! How they quiver like aspen

leaves in the gale! To where can they flee? Rocks cannot hide them! Mountains will not open their bowels to conceal them! What shall become of them? The dread angel takes the sickle, reaps them as the reaper cuts up the tares for the oven—and as he gathers he casts them down where despair shall be their everlasting torment! Woe is me, my heart sinks as I see their doom and hear the terrible cries of their too-late awaking!

Save some, O Christians! By all means save some! By yonder flames and outer darkness and the weeping and the wailing and the gnashing of teeth, seek to save some! Let this, as in the case of the Apostle, be your great, your ruling objective in life, that by all means you may save some! For, oh, if they are saved, *observe the contrast*. Their spirits mount to Heaven and after the Resurrection their bodies ascend, also, and there they praise redeeming love! No fingers more nimble on the harp strings than theirs! No notes more sweet than theirs, as they sing, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood, be Glory forever and ever.” What bliss to see the once rebellious brought home to God and heirs of wrath made possessors of Heaven!

All this is involved in salvation. O that myriads may come to this blessed state. “Save some”—oh, some at least! Seek that some may be there in Glory! Behold your Master! He is your Pattern. He left Heaven to save some. He went to the Cross, to the grave, to “save some.” This was the great objective of His life, to lay down His life for His sheep. He loved His Church and gave Himself for it, that He might redeem her unto Himself. Imitate your Master! Learn His self-denial and His blessed consecration if by any means you may save some! My soul yearns that I personally may “save some,” but broader is my desire than that. I would have *every one of you*, my beloved Friends, associated here in Church fellowship, to become spiritual parents of children for God!

Oh, that each of you might “save some!” Yes, my venerable Brothers and Sisters, you are not too old for service. Yes, my young Friends, you young men and maidens, you are not too young to be recruits in the King’s service! If the kingdom is ever to come to our Lord and, come it will, it never will come through a few ministers, missionaries, or evangelists preaching the Gospel. It must come through each of *you* preaching it—in the shop and by the fireside—when walking abroad and when sitting in the chamber. You must, all of you, be always endeavoring to “save some.” I would enlist you all afresh tonight and bind anew the King’s colors upon you! I would that you would fall in love with my Master all over again and enter a second time upon the love of your espousals!

There is a hymn of Cowper’s which we sometimes sing—

“O for a closer walk with God!”

May we get to have a closer walk with Him and if we do, we shall also feel a more vehement desire to magnify Christ in the salvation of sinners. I would like to press the inquiry upon my hearers tonight, you who are saved—How many others have you brought to Christ? You cannot do it by yourself, I know, but I mean how many has the Spirit of God brought by you? How many, did I say? Is it quite certain that you have led *any* to Je-

sus? Can you remember *one*? I pity you, then! “Write,” said Jeremiah, “Write that man childless.” That was considered to be a fearful curse! Shall I write you childless, my beloved Friends? Your children are not saved, your wife is not saved and you are spiritually childless! Can you bear this thought? I pray you wake from your sleep and ask the Master to make you useful.

“I wish the saints cared for us sinners,” said a young man. “They do care for you,” answered one, “care very much for you.” “Why don’t they show it, then?” he asked, “I have often wished to have a talk about good things, but my friend, who is a member of the Church, never broaches the subject and seems to study how to keep clear of it when I am with him.” Do not let them say this about you! Tell them about Christ and things Divine and make this your resolve, every one of you, that if men perish they shall not perish for lack of *your* prayers, nor for lack of *your* earnest and loving instructions! God give you Grace, each one of you, to resolve, by all means, to save some and then to carry out your intentions!

III. But my time is almost gone and therefore I have to mention, in the last place, THE GREAT METHODS WHICH THE APOSTLE USED. How did he, who so longed to, “save some,” set about it? Why, first of all, *by simply preaching the Gospel of Christ*. He did not attempt to create a sensation by startling statements. Neither did he preach erroneous doctrine in order to obtain the assent of the multitude. I fear that some evangelists preach what, in their own minds, they must know to be untrue. They keep back certain doctrines, not because they are untrue but because they do not give scope enough for their ravings and they make loose statements because they hope to reach more minds. However earnest a man may be for the salvation of sinners, I do not believe that he has any right to make any statement which his sober judgment will not justify.

I think I have heard of things said and done at revival meetings which were not according to sound doctrine, but which were always excused by “the excitement of the occasion.” I hold that I have no right to state false doctrine even if I knew it would save a soul! The supposition is, of course, absurd! But it makes you see what I mean. My business is to bring to bear upon men, not falsehood, but the Truth of God and I shall not be excused if, under *any* pretense, I palm a lie upon the people. Rest assured that to keep back any part of the Gospel is not the right, nor the true method for saving men. Tell the sinner all the doctrines. If you hold Calvinistic doctrine, as I hope you do, do not stutter about it, nor stammer over it, but speak it out! Depend upon it, many revivals have been worthless because a full-orbed Gospel was not proclaimed.

Give the people every Truth of God, every Truth of God baptized in holy fire, and each Truth will have its own useful effect upon the mind. But the great Truth is the Cross, the Truth that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Brethren, keep to that! That is the bell for you to ring. Ring it, man! Ring it! Keep on ringing it! Sound forth that note upon your silver trumpet, or if you are only a ram’s horn, sound it forth

and the walls of Jericho will come down! Alas for the fineries of our “cultured” modern divines. I hear them crying out and denouncing my old-fashioned advice. This talking about Christ Crucified is said to be archaic, conventional and antique—and not at all suitable to the refinement of this wonderful age!

It is astonishing how learned we have all grown lately. We are getting so very wise, I am afraid we shall ripen into fools before long, even if we have not arrived at it already! People need “*thinking*” nowadays, so it is said, and the working men will go where *science* is deified and profound “thought” is enshrined. I have noticed that as a general rule wherever the new “thinking” drives out the old Gospel there are more spiders than people—but where there is the simple preaching of Jesus Christ, the place is crowded to the doors! Nothing else will crowd a meeting house, after all, for any length of time, but the preaching of Christ Crucified!

But as to this matter, whether it is popular or unpopular, our mind is made up and our foot is put down. We have no doubts or questions as to our own course. If it is foolish to preach up Atonement by blood, we will be fools! And if it is madness to stick to the old Truths of God just as Paul delivered them, in all their simplicity, without any refinement, or improvement, we mean to stick to it even if we are put in the stocks as being incapable of progressing with the age, for we are persuaded that this “foolishness of preaching” is a Divine ordinance and that the Cross of Christ which stumbles so many and is ridiculed by so many more, is still the power of God and the wisdom of God! Yes, just the old-fashioned Truth of God—if you believe, you shall be saved—we will stick to that and may God send His blessing upon it according to His own eternal purpose.

We do not expect this preaching to be popular, but we know that God will justify it before long. Meanwhile, we are not staggered because—

***“The Truths we love, a sightless world blasphemes
As childish dotage and delirious dreams!
The danger they discern not they deny—
They laugh at their only remedy—and die.”***

Next to this, *Paul used much prayer*. The Gospel alone will not be blessed. We must *pray* over our preaching. A great painter was asked what he mixed his colors with and he replied he mixed them with brains. That is well for a painter, but if anyone should ask a preacher what he mixes the Truth of God with, he ought to be able to answer—with *prayer*, much prayer. When a poor man was breaking granite by the roadside, he was down on his knees while he gave his blows and a minister passing by, said, “Ah, my Friend, here you are at your hard work! Your work is just like mine—you have to break stones, and so do I.” “Yes,” said the man, “and if you manage to break stony hearts, you will have to do it as I do—down on your knees.” The man was right. No one can use the Gospel hammer well except he is much on his knees. But the Gospel hammer soon splits flinty hearts when a man knows how to pray. Prevail with God and you will prevail with men. Fresh from the closet to the pulpit let us come, with the anointing oil of God’s Spirit fresh upon us. What we receive in secret, we are to cheerfully dispense in public. Let us never ven-

ture to speak for God to men until we have spoken for men to God! Yes, dear Hearers, if you want a blessing on your Sunday school teaching, or any other form of Christian labor, mix it up with fervent intercession!

And then observe one other thing. *Paul went to his work always with an intense sympathy for those he dealt with—a sympathy which made him adapt himself to each case.* If he talked to a Jew, he did not begin at once blurting out that he was the Apostle to the Gentiles, but he said he was a Jew, as Jew he was. He raised no questions about nationalities or ceremonies. He wanted to tell the Jew of Him of whom Isaiah said, “He is despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” in order that he might believe in Jesus and so be saved. If he met a Gentile, the Apostle to the Gentiles never showed any of the squeamishness which might have been expected to cling to him on account of his Jewish education. He ate as the Gentile ate and drank as the Gentile did. He sat with him and talked with him. He was, as it were, a Gentile with him.

He never raised any question about circumcision or uncircumcision, but solely wishing to tell him of Christ who came into the world to save both Jew and Gentile and to make them one. If Paul met with a Scythian, he spoke to him in the barbarian tongue and not in classic Greek. If he met a Greek, he spoke to him as he did at the Areopagus, with language that was fitted for the polished Athenian. He was all things to all men, that he might, by all means, save some! So with you, Christian people—your one business in life is to lead men to believe in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit—and every other thing should be made subservient to this one objective. If you can but get them saved, everything else will come right in due time.

Mr. Hudson Taylor, a dear man of God, who has labored much in Inland China, finds it helpful to dress as a Chinaman and wear a pigtail. He always mingles with the people and, as far as possible, lives as they do. This seems to me to be a truly wise policy. I can understand that we shall win upon a congregation of Chinese by becoming as Chinese as possible and, if this is the case, we are bound to be Chinese to the Chinese to save the Chinese! It would not be amiss to become a Zulu to save the Zulus, though we must mind that we do it in another sense than Colenso did. If we can put ourselves on a level with those whose good we seek, we shall be more likely to effect our purpose than if we remain aliens and foreigners and *then* talk of love and unity.

To sink myself to save others is the idea of the Apostle. To throw overboard all peculiarities and yield a thousand indifferent points in order to bring men to Jesus is our wisdom if we would extend our Master's kingdom! Never may any whim or conventionality of ours keep a soul from considering the Gospel—that were horrible, indeed. Better far to be personally inconvenienced by compliance with indifferent things, than to retard a sinner's coming by quarrelling about trifles. If Jesus Christ were here today I am sure He would not put on any of those gaudy rags in which the Puseyite delights himself. I cannot imagine our Lord Jesus Christ dressed out in that style. Why, the Apostle tells our women that

they are to dress themselves modestly and I do not think Christ would have His ministers set an example of tomfoolery!

But yet, even in dress, something may be done on the principle of our text. When Jesus Christ was here, what dress did he wear? To put it in plain English, He wore a smock frock. He wore the common dress of His countrymen—a garment woven from the top throughout, without seam—and I think He would have His ministers wear clothes which are most like the clothes which their hearers wear in common—and so, even in dress, associate with their hearers and be one among them. He would have you teachers, if you want to save your children, talk to them like children and make yourselves children if you can. You who want to get at young peoples' hearts must try to be young. You who wish to visit the sick must sympathize with them in their sickness. Get to speak as you would like to be spoken to if *you* were sick. Come *down* to those who cannot come up to you.

You cannot pull people out of the water without stooping down and getting hold of them. If you have to deal with bad characters you must come down to them, not in their *sin*, but in their roughness and in their style of language so as to get a hold of them. I pray God that we may learn the sacred art of soul-winning by adaptation. They called Mr. Whitefield's chapel at Moorfields, "The Soul Trap." Whitefield was delighted and said he hoped it always would be a soul trap! Oh that all our places of worship were soul traps and every Christian a fisher of men, each one doing his best, as the fisherman does, by every art and artifice, to catch those they fish for! Well may we use all means to win so great a prize as a spirit destined for eternal weal or woe!

The diver plunges deep to find pearls and we may accept any labor or hazard to win a soul. Rouse yourselves, my Brothers and Sisters, for this God-like work and may the Lord bless you in it! I commend these wandering thoughts to your earnest attention. I pray the ungodly to think of what their ruin will be unless they come to Jesus and trust in Him. And I ask Believers to be doubly earnest, from this time forth, in laboring to save the souls of men! And may God send us such a blessing that we shall not have room to receive it! Amen.

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THE HEAVENLY RACE

NO. 198

A SERMON DELIVERED ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 11, 1858,
 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
 ON THE GRAND STAND, EPSOM RACE-COURSE.

“So run, that you may obtain.”
1 Corinthians 9:24.

WE are continually insisting upon it from day to day that salvation is not of works, but of grace. We lay this down as one of the very first doctrines of the Gospel. “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” “By grace are you saved, through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God.” But we find that it is equally necessary to preach the absolute necessity of a religious life for the attainment of Heaven at last. Although we are sure that men are not saved for the sake of their works, yet are we equally sure that no man will be saved without them. And he who leads an unholy life, who neglects the great salvation, can never inherit that crown of life which fades not away.

In one sense, true religion is wholly the work of God. Yet there are high and important senses in which we must ourselves “strive to enter in at the strait gate.” We must run a race. We must wrestle even to agony. We must fight a battle before we can inherit the crown of life. We have in our text the course of religion set down as a race. And inasmuch as there are many who enter upon a profession of religion with very false motives, the Apostle warns us that although all run in a race, yet all do not obtain the prize. They all run, but only one is rewarded.

And he gives us, therefore, the practical exhortation to run that we may obtain. For unless we are the winners we had better not have been runners at all. For he that is not a winner is a loser. He who makes a profession of religion and does not at last obtain the crown of life, is a loser by his profession. For his profession was hypocrisy or else formality and he had better not have made a profession, than fall therein. And now, in entering upon the text, I shall have to notice *what it is we are to run for*. “So run that you may *obtain*.” Secondly, the *mode of running*, to which we must attend—“So run that you may obtain.” And then I shall give a few *practical exhortations* to stir those onward in the heavenly race who are flagging and negligent, in order that they may at last “obtain.”

I. In the first place, then, WHAT IS IT THAT WE OUGHT TO SEEK TO OBTAIN?

Some people think they must be religious, in *order to be respectable*. There are a vast number of people in the world who go to Church and to Chapel, because everybody else does so. It is disreputable to waste your Sundays, not to be found going up to the House of God, therefore they take a pew and attend the services and they think they have done their duty. They have obtained all that they sought for, when they can hear their neighbors saying, “Such-and-Such is a very respectable person. He is always very regular at his Church. He is a very reputable person and exceedingly praiseworthy.” Verily, if this is what you seek after in your re-

ligion, you shall get it. For the Pharisees who sought the praise of men “had their reward.”

But when you have gotten it, what a poor reward it is! Is it worth the drudgery? I do not believe that the drudgery to which people submit in order to be called respectable is at all compensated by what they gain. I am sure, for my own part, I would not care a solitary rap what I was called, or what I was thought of. Nor would I perform anything that was irksome to myself for the sake of pleasing any man that ever walked beneath the stars, however great or mighty he may be. It is the sign of a fawning, cringing spirit, when people are always seeking to do that which renders them respectable. The esteem of men is not worth the looking after and sad it is that this should be the only prize which some men put before them, in the poor religion which they undertake.

There are people who go a little farther. They are not content with being considered respectable, but they want something more. They *desire to be considered pre-eminently saints*. These persons come to our places of worship and after a little time they venture to come forward and ask whether they may unite with our Churches. We examine them and so hidden is their hypocrisy that we cannot discover its rottenness. We receive them into our Churches. They sit at the Lord’s Supper. They come to our Church meetings—perhaps, they are even voted into the deacon’s office. Sometimes they attain to the pulpit, though God has never called them and preach what they have never felt in their hearts.

Men may do all this merely to enjoy the praise of men. And they will even undergo some persecution for the sake of it—because to be thought a saint, to be reckoned by religious people to be everything that is right and proper—to have a name among the living in Zion—is to some persons a thing exceedingly coveted. They would not like to be set down among the “chief of sinners,” but if they may have their names written among the chief of *saints* they will consider themselves exceedingly exalted. I am afraid we have a considerable admixture of persons of this sort in our Churches who only come for the mere sake of keeping up their religious pretensions and obtaining a religious status in the midst of the Church of God.

“Verily, I say unto you *they have their reward*,” and they shall never have any but what they obtain here. They get their reward for a little time. For a short time they are looked up to. But perhaps even in this life they stumble and down they go. The Church discovers them and they are sent out like the ass stripped of the lion’s skin to browse once more among their native nettles, no longer to be glorious in the midst of the Church of the living God.

Or perhaps, they may wear the cloak until the last day of their lives and then death comes and strips them of all their tinsel and gewgaw. And they who acted upon the stage of religion as kings and princes are sent behind the stage to be unrobed and to find themselves beggars to their shame and naked to their eternal disgrace. It is not this which you and I would seek after in religion. Dearly Beloved, if we do run the race, we would run for a higher and more glorious prize than any of these things.

Another set of people take up with religious life for *what they can get by it*. I have known trades-people attend Church for the mere sake of getting customers of those who went there. I have heard of such things as people

knowing which side their bread was buttered and going to that particular denomination, where they thought they could get the most by it. Loaves and fishes drew some of Christ's followers and they are very attracting baits, even to this day. Men find there is something to be gotten by religion. Among the poor it is, perhaps, some little charity to be obtained and among those that are in business, it is the custom which they think to get. "Verily I say unto you, they have their reward." For the Church is never foolish and suspicious. We do not like to suspect our fellow creatures of following us from sordid motives.

The Church does not like to think that a man would be base enough to pretend to religion for the mere sake of what he can get and, therefore, we let these people easily slip through and they have their reward. But ah, at what a price they buy it! They have deceived the Lord's servants for gold and they have entered into His Church as base hypocrites for the sake of a piece of bread. And they shall be thrust out at last with the anger of God behind them, like Adam driven out of Eden, with the flaming Cherubim with a sword turning every way to keep the tree of life. And they shall forever look back upon this as the most fearful crime they have committed—that they pretended to be God's people when they were not and entered into the midst of the fold when they were but wolves in sheep's clothing.

There is yet another class and when I have referred to them I will mention no more. These are the people who take up with religion for the sake of *quieting their conscience* and it is astonishing how little of religion will sometimes do that. Some people tell us that if in the time of storm men would pour bottles of oil upon the waves, there would be a great calm at once. I have never tried it and it is most probable I never shall, for my organ of credulity is not large enough to accept so extensive a statement. But there are some people who think that they can calm the storm of a troubled conscience by pouring a little of the oil of a profession about religion upon it. And it is amazing how wonderful an effect this really has.

I have known a man who was drunk many times in a week and who got his money dishonestly and yet he always had an easy conscience by going to his Church or Chapel regularly on the Sunday. We have heard of a man who could "devour widows' houses"—a lawyer who could swallow up everything that came in his way and yet he would never go to bed without saying his prayers. And that stilled his conscience. We have heard of other persons, especially among the Romanists, who would not object to thieving, but who would regard eating anything but fish on a Friday as a most fearful sin, supposing that by making a fast on the Friday, all the iniquities of all the days in the week would be put away.

They want the outward forms of religion to keep the conscience quiet. For Conscience is one of the worst lodgers to have in your house when he gets quarrelsome—there is no abiding with him. He is an ill bed-fellow—ill at lying down and equally troublesome at rising up. A guilty conscience is one of the curses of the world—it puts out the sun and takes away the brightness from the moonbeam. A guilty conscience casts a noxious exhalation through the air, removes the beauty from the landscape, the glory from the flowing river, the majesty from the rolling floods. There is nothing beautiful to the man that has a guilty conscience. He needs no accusing—everything accuses him.

Hence people take up with religion just to quiet them. They take the Sacrament sometimes. They go to a place of worship. They sing a hymn now and then, they give a guinea to a charity. They intend to leave a portion in their will to build almshouses. And in this way Conscience is lulled asleep and they rock him to and fro with religious observances till there he sleeps while they sing over him the lullaby of hypocrisy and he wakes not until he shall wake with that rich man who was here clothed in purple, but in the next world did lift up his eyes in Hell, being in torments, without a drop of water to cool his burning tongue.

What, then, is it, for which we ought to run in this race? Why Heaven, eternal life, justification by faith, the pardon of sin, acceptance in the Beloved and glory everlasting. If you run for anything else than salvation, should you win, what you have won is not worth the running for. Oh, I beseech everyone of you, make sure work for eternity, never be content with anything less than a living faith in a living Savior. Rest not until you are certain that the Holy Spirit is at work in your souls. Do not think that the outside of religion can be of use to you. It is just the inward part of religion that God loves. Seek to have a repentance that needs not to be repented of—a faith which looks alone to Christ and which will stand by you when you come into the swellings of Jordan.

Seek to have a love which is not like a transient flame, burning for a moment and then extinguished—but a flame which shall increase and increase and still increase—till your heart shall be swallowed up therein and Jesus Christ's one name shall be the sole object of your affection. We must, in running the heavenly race, set nothing less before us than that which Christ did set before Him. He set the joy of salvation before Himself and then He did run, despising the Cross and enduring the shame. So let us do. And may God give us good success, that by His good Spirit we may attain unto eternal life, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord!

II. Thus have I noticed what it is we are to run for. And now the Apostle says, "So run that you may obtain." I shall notice some people who never will obtain and tell you the reason why and in so doing, I shall be illustrating THE RULES OF THE RACE

There are some people who certainly never will obtain the prize, because they are not even *entered*. Their names are not down for the race and therefore it is quite clear that they will not run, or if they do run, they will run without having any warrant whatever for expecting to receive the prize. There are some such here this afternoon—who will tell you themselves—"We make no profession, Sir, none whatever." It is quite as well, perhaps, that you do not—because if you did, you would be hypocrites and it is better to make no profession at all than to be hypocrites. Still, remember, your names are not down for the race and therefore you cannot win. If a man tells you in business that he makes no profession of being honest, you know that he is a confirmed rogue.

If a man makes no profession of being religious, you know what he is—he is irreligious—he has no fear of God before his eyes, he has no love to Christ, he has no hope of Heaven. He confesses it himself. Strange that men should be so ready to confess this. You don't find persons in the street willing to acknowledge that they are confirmed drunkards. Generally a man will repudiate it with scorn. You never find a man saying to you, "I don't profess to be a chaste living man."

You don't hear another say, "I don't profess to be anything but a covetous wretch." No—people are not so fast about telling their faults—and yet you hear people confess the greatest fault to which man can be addicted—they say, "I make no profession"—which means just this—that they do not give God His due. God has made them and yet they won't serve Him. Christ has come into the world to save sinners and yet they will not regard Him. The Gospel is preached and yet they will not hear it, they have the Bible in their houses and yet they will not attend to its admonitions—they make no profession of doing so.

It will be short work with them at the last great day. There will be no need for the books to be opened, no need for a long deliberation in the verdict. They do not profess to be pardoned. Their guilt is written upon their own foreheads—their brazen shamelessness shall be seen by the whole world as a sentence of destruction written upon their very brows. You cannot expect to win Heaven unless your names are entered for the race. If there are no attempts whatever made, even at so much as a profession of religion, then, of course, you may just sit down and say, "Heaven is not for me. I have no part nor lot in the inheritance of Israel, I cannot say that my Redeemer lives. And I may rest quite assured that Tophet is prepared of old *for me*. I must feel its pains and know its miseries. For there are but two places to dwell in hereafter and if I am not found on the right hand of the Judge, there is but one alternative—namely, to be cast away forever into the blackness of darkness."

Then there is another class whose names are down, but they *never started right*. A bad start is a sad thing. If in the ancient races of Greece or Rome a man who was about to run for the race had loitered, or if he had started before the time it would not matter how fast he ran, if he did not start in order. The flag must drop before the horse starts, otherwise even if it reaches the winning post first, it shall have no reward. There is something to be noted, then, in the starting of the race. I have known men run the race of religion with all their might and yet they have lost it because they did not start right.

You say, "Well, how is that?" Why, there are some people who on a sudden leap into religion. They get it quickly and they keep it for a time and at last they lose it because they did not get their religion the right way. They have heard that before a man can be saved it is necessary that, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, he should feel the weight of sin—that he should make a confession of it—that he should renounce all hope in his own works and should look to Jesus Christ alone. They look upon all these things as unpleasant preliminaries and therefore, before they have attended to repentance, before the Holy Spirit has wrought a good work in them, before they have been brought to give up everything and trust to Christ—they make a profession of religion.

This is just setting up in business without a stock in trade and there must be a failure. If a man has no capital to begin with, he may make a fine show for a little time, but it shall be as the crackling of thorns under a pot—a great deal of noise and much light for a little time—but it shall die out in darkness. How many there are who never think it necessary that there should be heart work within! Let us remember, however, that there never was a true new birth without much spiritual suffering, that

there never was a man who had a *changed* heart without his first having a *miserable* heart.

We must pass through that black tunnel of conviction before we can come out upon the high embankment of holy joy. We must first go through the Slough of Despond before we can run along the walls of Salvation. There must be plowing before there is sowing. There must be many a frost and many a sharp shower before there is any reaping. But we often act like little children who pluck flowers from the shrubs and plant them in their gardens without roots—then they say how fair and how pretty their little garden is—but wait a little while and their flowers are withered, because they have no roots. This is an the effect of not having a right start, not having the “root of the matter.”

What is the good of outward religion, the flower and the leaf of it, unless we have the “root of the matter” in us—unless we have been dug into by that sharp iron spade of conviction and have been plowed with the plow of the Spirit and then have been sown with the sacred seed of the Gospel, in the hope of bringing forth an abundant harvest? There must be a good start—look well to that, for there is no hope of running unless the start is right.

Again, there are some runners in the heavenly race who cannot win because they *carry too much weight*. A light weight, of course, has the advantage. There are some people who have an immensely heavy weight to carry. “How hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of Heaven!” What is the reason? Because he carries so much weight. He has so much of the cares and pleasures of this world. He has such a burden that he is not likely to win, unless God should please to give him a mighty mass of strength to enable him to bear it.

We find many men willing to be saved, as they say. They receive the Word with great joy, but by-and-by thorns spring up and choke the Word. They have so much business to do. They say they must live. They forget they must die. They have such a deal to attend to, they cannot think of living near to Christ. They find they have little time for devotions. Morning prayer must be cut short, because their business begins early. They can have no prayer at night, because business keeps them so late. How can they be expected to think of the things of God? They have so much to do to answer this question—“What shall I eat? What shall I drink? With what shall I be clothed?”

It is true they read in the Bible that their Father who is in Heaven will take care of them in these things if they will trust Him. But they say, “Not so,” those are enthusiasts according to their notions who rely upon Providence. They say the best Providence in all the world is hard work. And they say rightly, but they forget that into the bargain of their hard work, “it is in vain to rise up early and sit up late and eat the bread of carefulness. For except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.”

You see two men running a race. One of them, as he starts, lays aside every weight, he takes off his garment and away he runs. There goes the other poor fellow, he has a whole load of gold and silver upon his back. Then around his loins he has many distrustful doubts about what shall become of him in the future, what will be his prospects when he grows old and a hundred other things. He does not know how to roll his burden upon the Lord. See how he flags, poor Fellow, and how the other distances

him, leaves him far behind, gains the corner and is coming to the winning post.

It is well for us if we can cast everything away except that one thing needful and say, "This is my business—to serve God on earth—knowing that I shall enjoy Him in Heaven." For when we leave our business to God, we leave it in better hands than if we took care of it ourselves. They who carve for themselves generally cut their fingers. But they who leave God to carve for them, shall never have an empty plate. He who will walk after the cloud shall go aright, but he who will run before it shall soon find that he has gone a fool's errand. "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is." "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that wait upon the Lord shall not want any good thing."

Our Savior said, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them, are you not much better than they?" "Trust in the Lord and do good and verily you shall be fed." "His place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him. His waters shall be sure." "Seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." Carry the weight of this world's cares about you and it will be as much as you can do to carry them and to stand upright under them—but as to running a race with such burdens, it is just impossible.

There is also another thing that will prevent man's running the race. We have known people who stopped on their way to *kick their fellows*. Such things sometimes occur in a race. The horse, instead of speeding onwards to the mark, is of an angry disposition and sets about kicking those that are running beside him—there is not much probability of his coming in first. "Now they that run in a race all run, but one receives the prize." There is one however who never gets it and that is the man who always attends to his fellow creatures instead of himself.

It is a mysterious thing that I never yet saw a man with a hoe on his shoulder, going to hoe his *neighbor's* garden. It is a rarity to see a farmer sending his team of horses to plow his neighbor's land. But it is a most singular thing that every day in the week I meet with persons who are attending to other people's *character*. If they go to the House of God and hear a trite thing said, they say at once, "How suitable that was for Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Brown." The thought never enters their head, how suitable it was to themselves.

They lend their ears to everybody else, but they do not hear for themselves. When they get out of Chapel, perhaps as they walk home, their first thought is, "Well, how can I find fault with my neighbors?" They think that putting other people down is going up themselves (there never was a greater mistake). They think that by picking holes in their neighbor's coat they mend their own. They have so few virtues of their own that they do not like anybody else to have any—therefore they do the best they can to despoil everything good in their neighbor. And if there is a little fault, they will look at it through a magnifying glass—but they will turn the glass the other way when they look at their own sins.

Their own faults become exceedingly small while those of others become magnificently great. Now this is a fault not only among professing religious men, but among those who are not religious. We are all so prone to find fault with other people instead of attending to our own affairs. We attend to the vineyards of others, but our own vineyard we have not kept. Ask a worldly man why he is not religious and he tells you, "Because So-and-So makes a profession of religion and is not consistent." Is that any business of yours? To your own Master you must stand or fall and so must he. God is their judge and not you.

Suppose there are a great many inconsistent Christians—and we are compelled to acknowledge that there are—so much the more reason why you should be a good one. Suppose there are a great many who deceive others—so much the more reason you should set the world an example of what a genuine Christian is. "Ah, but," you say, "I am afraid there are very few." Then why don't *you* make one? But after all, is that your business? Must not every man bear his own burden? You will not be judged for other men's sins, you will not be saved by their faith, you will not be condemned for their unbelief.

Every man must stand in his own proper flesh and blood at the bar of God to account for the works done in his own body, whether they have been good or whether they have been evil. It will be of little avail for you to say at the Day of Judgment, "O Lord, I was looking at my neighbors. O Lord, I was finding fault with the people in the village. I was correcting their follies." But thus says the Lord—"Did I ever commission you to be a judge or a divider over them? Why, if you had so much time to spare and so much critical judgment, did you not exercise it upon yourself? Why did you not examine yourself, so that you might have been found ready and acceptable in the Day of God?" These persons are not very likely to win the race, because they turn to kicking others.

Again, there is another class of persons who will not win the race—namely, those who, although they seem to start very fair, very soon *loiter*. They dart ahead at the first starting and distance all the others. There they fly away as if they had wings on their heels. But a little further on in the race, it is with difficulty that with whip and spur they are to be kept going at all and they almost come to a standstill. Alas, this race of persons is to be discovered in all our Churches. We get young people who come forward and make a profession of religion and we talk with them and we think it is all well with them and for a little while they do run well. There is nothing wanting in them. We could hold them up as patterns for the imitation of others.

Wait a couple of years. They drop off just by little and little. First, perhaps, there is the attendance on a week-day service neglected—then it is altogether discontinued. Then one service on Sabbath. Then perhaps family prayer, then private prayer—one thing after another is given up—until at last the whole edifice which stood upright and looked so fair, having been built upon the sand, gives way before the shock of time and down it falls and great is the ruin thereof.

Remember, it is not *starting* that wins the race—it is running all the way. He that would be saved must hold on to the end—"He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved." Stop and loiter in the race before you have come to the end thereof and you have made one of the greatest mis-

takes that could possibly occur. On, on, on! While you live—still onward, onward, onward! For until you come to the grave, you have not come to your resting place. Until you arrive at the tomb, you have not come to the spot where you may cry, “Halt!” Ever onward if you would win. If you are content to lose, if you would lose your own soul, you may say, “Stop,” if you please. But if you would be saved evermore, be on, on, till you have gained the prize.

But there is another class of persons who are worse than these. They start well, too, and they run very fast at first, and at last they leap *over* the posts and rails. They *go quite out of the course* altogether and you do not know where they are gone. Every now and then we get such people as this. They go out from us, because they are not of us, for had they been of us, doubtless they would have continued with us. I might point out in my congregation on the Sabbath-Day, a man whom I saw start myself.

I saw him running so well I almost envied him the joy he seemed always able to preserve, the faith which ever seemed to be so buoyant and full of jubilee. Alas, just when we thought he was speeding onwards to the prize, some temptation crossed his path and he turned aside. Away he is scrambling far over the heath, out of the path of right and men say, “Aha, aha, so would we have it. So would we have it.” And they laugh and make merriment over him, because, having once named the name of Jesus Christ, he has afterwards gone back again and his last end is worse than the first.

Those whom God starts never do this, for they are preserved in Christ Jesus. Those who have been “entered” in the great roll of the Covenant before all eternity shall persevere, by the aid of the good Spirit. He that began the good work in them, shall carry it on even unto the end. But, alas, there are many who run on their *own* account and in their *own* strength. And they are like the snail, which as it creeps, leaves its life as a trail upon its own path. They melt away. Their nature decays. They perish and where are they? Not in the Church, but lost to all hope. They are like the dog that returned to his vomit and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. “The last end of that man shall be worse than the first.”

I do not think I shall now mention any other class of persons. I have brought before you the rules of the race, if you would win. If you would “so run that you may obtain,” you must first of all take care to start well. You must keep to the course. You must keep straight on. You must not stop on the road, or turn aside from it, but, urged on by Divine Grace, you must ever fly onwards, “like an arrow from the bow, shot by an archer strong.” And never rest until the march is ended and you are made pillars in the house of your God, to go out no more forever.

III. But now I am about to give you some few reasons to URGE YOU ONWARD IN THE HEAVENLY RACE—those of you who are already running.

One of my reasons shall be this—“*We are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses.*” When zealous racers on yonder heath are flying across the plain, seeking to obtain the reward, the whole heath is covered with multitudes of persons who are eagerly gazing upon them and no doubt the noise of those who cheer them onward and the thousand eyes of those who look upon them, have a tendency to make them stretch every

nerve and press on with vigor. It was so in the games to which the Apostle alludes.

There the people sat on raised platforms, while the racers ran before them and they cried to them and the friends of the racers urged them forward and the kindly voice would ever be heard bidding them go on. Now, Christian Brethren, how many witnesses are looking down upon you? Down, do I say? It is even so. From the battlements of Heaven the angels look down upon you and they seem to cry today to you with sweet, silvery voice, "You shall reap if you faint not. You shall be rewarded if you continue steadfast in the work and faith of Christ."

And the saints look down upon you—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Martyrs and confessors and your own pious relatives who have ascended to Heaven look down upon you and if I might so speak, methinks sometimes you might hear the clapping of their hands when you have resisted temptation and overcome the enemy. And you might see their suspense when you are lagging in the course and you might hear their friendly word of caution as they bid you gird up the loins of your mind and lay aside every weight and still speed forward, never resting to take your breath, never staying for a moment's ease till you have attained the flowery beds of Heaven where you may rest forever. And remember, these are not the only eyes that are looking upon you. The whole world looks upon a Christian—he is the observed of all observers—in a Christian every fault is seen.

A worldly man may commit a thousand faults and nobody notices him. But let a Christian do so and he will very soon have his faults published to the wide world. Everywhere men are looking at Christians and it is quite right that they should do so. I remember a young man, a member of a Christian Church, who went to a public hall of the lowest character. And he was no sooner mounting up the stairs, than one of them said, "Ah, here comes the Methodist. We will give it to him." As soon as they had him in the room, they first of all lead him up and down to let everybody see the Methodist who had come among them and then they kicked him down the stairs.

I sent them my respectful compliments for doing so, for it served him right. And I took care that he was kicked down stairs in another sense afterwards and kicked out of the Church. The world would not have him and the Church would not have him. The world then looks upon you. It never misses an opportunity of throwing your religion in your teeth. If you don't give sixteen ounces to the pound of morality—if you don't come up to the mark in everything—you will hear of it again.

Don't think the world is ever asleep. We say, "as sound asleep as a Church," and that is a very good proverb. But we cannot say, "as sound asleep as the world" for it never sleeps. It always has its eyes open, it is always watching us in all we do. The eyes of the world are upon you. "We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses." "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." And there are darker and yet more malignant eyes that scowl upon us. There are spirits that people of this air, who are under the prince of the power of the air, who watch every day for our failures—

***"Millions of spiritual creatures walk this earth,
Both when we wake and when we sleep."***

And alas, those spiritual creatures are not all good. There are those that are not yet chained and reserved in darkness, but who are permitted by God to wander through this world like roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour, ever ready to tempt us. And there is one at the head of them called Satan, *the enemy* and you know *his* employment. He has access to the Throne of God and he makes most horrid use of it, for he accuses us day and night before the Throne. The accuser of the Brethren is not yet cast down—that is to be in the great day of the triumph of the Son of Man—but as Jesus stands as our Advocate before the Throne, so does old Satan first watch us and tempt us and then stands as our accuser before the bar of God. O my dear Brothers and Sisters, if you have entered into this race and have commenced it, let these many eyes urge you forward—

***“A cloud of witnesses around
Hold you in full survey;
Forget the steps already trod,
And onward urge your way.”***

And now a more urgent consideration still. Remember, your race is win or lose—death or life, Hell or Heaven, eternal misery or everlasting joy. What a stake that is for which you run! If I may so put it, you are running for your life. And if that does not make a man run, nothing will. Put a man there on yonder hill and put another after him with a drawn sword seeking his life. If there is any run in him you will soon see him run. There will be no need for us to shout out to him, “Run, man, run” for he is quite certain that his life is at hazard and he speeds with all his might—speeds till the veins stand like whipcords on his brow and a hot sweat runs from every pore of his body—and still flees onward.

Now, he looks behind and sees the Avenger of Blood speeding after him. He does not stop. He spurns the ground and on he flees till he reaches the City of Refuge, where he is safe. Ah, if we had eyes to see and if we knew who it is that is pursuing us every second of our lives, how we should run! O man, Hell is behind you, sin pursues you, evil seeks to overtake you. The City of Refuge has its gates wide open. I beseech you, rest not till you can say with confidence, “I have entered into this rest and now I am secure, I know that my Redeemer lives.”

And rest not even then, for this is not the place for rest. Rest not until your six days work is done—and your heavenly Sabbath is begun. Let this life be your six days of ever-toiling faith. Obey your Master’s commandment, “labor therefore to enter into this rest,” seeing that there are many who shall not enter in, because through their want of faith they shall not be able. If that does not urge a man to speed forward, what can?

But let me picture yet one more thing. And may that help you onward! Christian, run onward, for remember *who it is that stands at the winning post*. You are to run onward, always looking unto Jesus, then Jesus must be at the end. We are always to be looking forward and never backward. Therefore Jesus must be there. Are you loitering? See Him with His open wounds. Are you about to leave the course? See Him with His bleeding hands. Will not that constrain you to devote yourself to Him? Will not that impel you to speed your course and never loiter until you have obtained the crown?

Your dying Master cries to you today and He says. "By My agony and bloody sweat. By My Cross and passion—onward! By My life, which I gave for you. By the death which I endured for your sake—onward!" And see! He holds out His hand, laden with a crown sparkling with many a star and He says, "By this crown—onward!" I beseech you, onward, my Beloved. Press forward, for "I know that there is laid up for me a crown of life which fades not away and not for me only, but for all them that love His appearing."

I have thus addressed myself to all sorts of characters. Will you this afternoon take that home to yourself which is the most applicable to your case? Those of you who make no profession of religion, are living without God and without Christ, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel—let me affectionately remind you that the day is coming when you will *want* religion. It is very well now to be sailing over the smooth waters of life, but the rough billows of Jordan will make you want a Savior. It is hard work to die without a hope—to take that last leap in the dark is a frightful thing, indeed.

I have seen the old man die when he has declared he would not die. He has stood upon the brink of death and he has said, "All dark, dark, dark! O God, I cannot die." And his agony has been fearful when the strong hand of the Destroyer has seemed to push him over the precipice. He lingered shivering on the brink and feared to launch away. And frightful was the moment when the foot slipped and the solid earth was left and the soul was sinking into the depths of eternal wrath.

You will want a Savior then, when your pulse is faint and few. You will need an angel then to stand at your bedside—and when the spirit is departing, you will need a sacred convoy to pilot you through the dark clouds of death and guide you through the iron gate and lead you to the blessed mansion in the land of the hereafter. Oh, "seek you the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him. And to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."

O Lord, turn us and we shall be turned. Draw us and we will run after You. And Yours shall be the glory. For the crown of our race shall be cast at Your feet and You shall have the glory forever and ever.

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A CAUTION TO THE PRESUMPTUOUS NO. 22

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 13, 1855,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”
1 Corinthians 10:12.***

IT is a singular fact, but nevertheless most certain, that the vices are the counterfeits of virtues. Whenever God sends from the mint of Heaven a precious coin of genuine metal, Satan will imitate the impress and utter a vile production of no value. God gives love, it is His Nature and His Essence. Satan also fashions a thing which he calls love, but it is lust. God bestows courage. And it is a good thing to be able to look one's fellow in the face, fearless of all men in doing our duty. Satan inspires foolhardiness, styles it courage and bids the man rush to the cannon's mouth for "bubble reputation." God creates in man holy fear. Satan gives him unbelief and we often mistake the one for the other. So with the best of virtues, the saving Grace of faith—when it comes to its perfection it ripens into confidence—and there is nothing so comfortable and so desirable to the Christian as the full assurance of faith. Hence, we find Satan, when he sees this good coin, at once takes the metal of the bottomless pit of Hell, imitates the heavenly image and superscription of assurance and palms upon us the vice of presumption!

We are astonished, perhaps, as Calvinistic Christians, to find Paul saying, "Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." But we need not be astonished. We have a great right to believe that we stand if we think we stand through the power of God. But we cannot be too confident of the might of the Most High because there is a thing so near akin to true confidence that unless we use the greatest discernment we cannot tell the difference. *UNHOLY PRESUMPTION*—it is against that which I am to speak this morning. Let me not be misunderstood. I shall not utter one word against the strongest faith. I wish all Little-Faiths were Strong-Faiths, that all Fearings were made Valiant-for-Truth and the Ready-to-Halts, Asahel's Nimble-of-Foot—that they might all run in their Master's work. I speak not against strong faith or full assurance. God gives it to us—it is the holiest, happiest thing that a Christian can have—and there is no state so desirable as that of being able to say, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him." It is not against that I speak. I warn you against that evil thing—a false confidence and presumption which creeps over a Christian like the cold death sleep on the mountaintop—from which, if he is not awakened, as God will see that he shall be, death will be the in-

evitable consequence. “Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”

I shall this morning attempt first, *to find out the character*. Secondly, *to show the danger* and thirdly *to give the counsel*. The character is the man who thinks he stands. The danger is that he may fall. And the counsel is, “let him take heed.”

I. My first business shall be to FIND OUT THE CHARACTER intended by the presumptuous man, the man who thinks he stands. I could find a multitude of such if I might search the wide world over. I could find men in business filled with an arrogant hardihood, who, because they have in one speculation been successful, will wade far out into the stormy sea of this contending life, risk their all—and lose it, too. I might mention others who, presuming upon their health, are spending their years in sin and their lives in iniquity because they think their bones are iron and their nerves, steel, and “all men mortal but themselves.” I might speak of men who will venture into the midst of temptation, confident in their boasted power, exclaiming with self-complacency, “Do you think I am so weak as to sin? Oh, no, I shall stand. Give me the glass. I shall never be a drunkard. Give me the song. You will not find me a midnight reveler. I can drink a little and then I can stop.” Such are presumptuous men. But I am not about to find them there. My business, this morning, is with God’s Church! The fanning must begin with the floor, the winnowing must try the wheat. So we are to winnow the Church this morning to discover the presumptuous. We need not go far to find them. There are in every Christian Church—men who think they stand, men who vaunt themselves in fancied might and power. They are children of nature finely dressed, but not the living children of the living God. They have not been humbled or broken in spirit, or if they have, they have fostered carnal security until it has grown to a giant and trampled the sweet flower of humility under its foot. They think they stand. I speak now of *real* Christians, who, notwithstanding, have grown presumptuous and indulge in a fleshly security. May my Master awaken such, while in preaching I endeavor to go to the core and root of the matter. For a little while I will expatiate upon the frequent causes of presumption in a Christian.

1. And first, a very common cause is continued *worldly prosperity*. Moab is settled on his lees, he has not been emptied from vessel to vessel. Give a man wealth. Let his ships continually bring home rich freights. Let the winds and waves appear to be his servants, to bear his vessels across the bosom of the mighty deep. Let his lands yield abundantly. Let the weather be propitious to his crops and the skies smile pleasantly upon his enterprise. Let the bands of Orion be loosed for him. Let the sweet influence of the Pleiades descend upon him. Let uninterrupted success attend him. Let him stand among men as a successful merchant, as a princely Dives, as a man who is heaping up riches to a large extent, who is always prospering—or, if not wealth, let him enjoy continued health. Let him know no sickness. Allow him with braced

nerve and brilliant eyes to march through the world and live happily. Give him the buoyant spirit. Let him have the song perpetually on his lips and his eyes are always sparkling with joy—the happy, happy man who laughs at care and cries, “Begone, dull care, I pray you be gone from me.” I say the consequence of such a state to a man, let him be the best Christian who ever breathed—will be presumption! And he will say, “I stand.” “In my prosperity,” says David, “I said, I shall never be moved!” And we are not much better than David, nor half as good. If God should always rock us in the cradle of prosperity—if we were always caddled on the knees of fortune—if we had not some stain on the alabaster pillar, if there were not a few clouds in the sky, some specks in our sunshine—if we had not some bitter drops in the wine of this life, we would become intoxicated with pleasure, we would dream, “we stand.” And stand we would, but it would be upon a pinnacle. Stand we might, but like the man asleep upon the mast, each moment we would be in jeopardy! We bless God, then, for our afflictions! We thank Him for our depressions of spirit. We extol His name for the losses of our property. For we feel that had it not so happened to us, had He not chastened us every morning and vexed us every evening, we might have become too secure. Continued worldly prosperity is a fiery trial. If it is so with any of you, apply this Proverb to your own state, “As the fining pot for silver and the furnace for gold—so is a man to his praise.”

2. Again, *light thoughts of sin* will engender presumption. When we are first converted, our conscience is so very tender that we are afraid of the slightest sin. I have known young converts almost afraid to proceed a step lest they should put their feet in the wrong direction. They will ask advice of their minister and difficult cases of moral casuistry will they bring before us, such as we hardly know how to answer. They have a holy timidity, a godly fear lest they should offend God. But alas, very soon the fine bloom upon these first ripe fruits is removed by the rough handling of the surrounding world! The sensitive plant of young piety turns into a willow in after life, too pliant, too easily yielding. It is sadly true that even a Christian will grow by degrees so callous that the sin which once startled him and made his blood run cold does not alarm him in the least. I can speak from my own experience. When first I heard an oath, I stood aghast and knew not where to hide myself. Yet now I can hear an imprecation or blasphemy against God and though a shudder still runs through my veins, there is not that solemn feeling, that intense anguish which I felt when first I heard such evil utterances. By degrees we get familiar with sin. The ear in which the cannon has been booming will not notice slight sounds. The men who work in those huge vessels, the hammering of which causes immense noise, cannot, at first, sleep, for the continual din in their ears, but, by-and-by, they, when they are used to it, think nothing of it. So with sin. First, a little sin does startle us. Soon we say, “Is it not a little one?” like Lot did of Zoar. Then there comes another, larger and then another, until by degrees we begin to re-

gard it as but a little ill. And then you know, there comes an unholy presumption and we think we stand. "We have not fallen," we say, "we only did such a little thing. We have not gone astray. True, we tripped a little, but we stood upright in the main. We might have uttered one unholy word, but as for the most of our conversation, it was consistent." So we palliate sin. We throw a gloss over it, we try to hide it. Christian, beware! When you think lightly of sin, you have become presumptuous! Take heed, lest you should fall. Sin—a little thing? Is it not a poison? Who knows its deadliness? Sin—a little thing? Do not the little foxes spoil the vines? Sin—a little thing? Does not the tiny coral insect build a rock that wrecks a navy? Do not little strokes fell lofty oaks? Will not continual droppings wear away stones? Sin—a little thing? It girded *His* head with thorns that now is crowned with Glory! Sin—a little thing? It made *Him* suffer anguish, bitterness and woe till He endured, "All that Incarnate God could bear, with strength enough and none to spare."

It is not a little thing, Sirs! Could you weigh it in the scales of eternity, you would fly from it as from a serpent and abhor the least appearance of evil. But alas, loose thoughts of sin often beget a presumptuous spirit—and we think we stand!

3. A third reason is often *low thoughts of the value of religion*. We, none of us, value religion enough. Religious furor, as it is called, is laughed at everywhere. But I do not believe there is such a thing as religious furor at all. If a man could be so enthusiastic as to give his body to be burned at the stake—pour out his drops of blood and turn each drop into a life—and then let that life be slaughtered in perpetual martyrdom—he would not love his God too much! Oh, no, when we think that this world is but a narrow space, that time will soon be gone and we shall be in the forever of eternity. When we consider we must be either in Hell or in Heaven throughout a never-ending state of immortality, how, Sirs, can we love too much? How can we set too high a value on the immortal soul? Can we ask too great a price for Heaven? Can we think we do too much to serve that God who gave Himself for our sins? Ah, no! And yet my Friends, most of us do not sufficiently regard the value of religion. We cannot, any of us, estimate the soul rightly. We have nothing with which to compare it. Gold is sordid dust, diamonds are but small lumps of congealed air that can be made to melt away. We have nothing with which to compare the soul—therefore we cannot tell its value. It is because we do not know this, that we presume. Does the miser who loves his gold let it be scattered on the floor that his servant may steal it? Does he not hide it in some secret place where no eyes shall behold it? Day after day, night after night, he counts out his treasure because he loves it. Does the mother trust her baby by the riverside? Does she not, in her sleep, think of it? And when it is sick, will she leave it to the care of some poor nurse who may allow it to die? Oh, no! What we love, we will not wantonly throw away. What we esteem most precious, we will guard with the most anxious care!

So, if Christians knew the value of their souls, if they estimated religion at its proper rate, they never would presume. But low thoughts of Christ, low thoughts of God, mean thoughts of our souls' eternal state—these things tend to make us carelessly secure. Take heed, therefore, of low ideas of the Gospel, lest you be overtaken by the Evil One!

4. But again, this presumption often springs from *ignorance of what we are and where we stand*. Many Christians have not yet learned what they are. It is true, the first teaching of God is to show us our own state but we do not know that thoroughly till many years after we have known Jesus Christ. The fountains of the great deep within our hearts are not broken up all at once. The corruption of our soul is not developed in an hour. “Son of man,” said the angel of Ezekiel, “I will show you the abominations of Israel.” He then took him in at one door where he saw abominable things and stood aghast. “Son of man, I will show you greater abominations than these.” Then he takes him into another chamber and Ezekiel says, “Surely I have now seen the worst.” “No,” says the angel, “I will show you greater things than these.” So, all our lifelong the Holy Spirit reveals to us the horrid abomination of our hearts! I know there are some here who do not think anything about it—they think they are good-hearted creatures. Good hearts, have you? *Good* hearts? Jeremiah had a better heart than you, yet he said, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?” No, the black lesson cannot be learned in a night. God alone knows the evil of the heart. And Young says, “God spares all eyes but His own that awful sight—the vision of a human heart.” If we could but see it, we would stand aghast. It is ignorance of this that makes us presume. We say, “I have a good nature, I have a good disposition. I have none of those hot and angry passions that some have, I can stand secure. I have not that dry, tinder heart that is on fire in a moment. My passions are weakened, my powers for evil are somewhat taken down and I may stand safely.” Ah, you little know that it is when you talk like this that you presume, O worm of the dust! You are not yet free from an evil nature, for sin and corruption remain in the heart even of the regenerate. And it is strangely true, though it appears a paradox, as Ralph Erskine said, that a Christian sometimes thinks himself—

**“To good and evil bent
And both a devil and a saint.”**

There is such corruption in a Christian that while he is a saint in his life and justified through Christ, he seems a devil sometimes in imagination and a demon in the wishes and corruptions of his soul. Take heed, Christian, you have need to be upon the watch tower. You have a heart of unbelief—therefore watch both night and day!

5. But to finish this delineation of a presumptuous man. *Pride* is the most pregnant cause of presumption. In all its various shapes it is the fountain of carnal security. Sometimes it is *pride of talent*. God has endowed a man with gifts. He is able to stand before the multitude or to

write for the many. He has a discerning mind, he has a judgment and such like things. Then he says, "As for the ignorant, those who have no talent, they may fall. My Brother ought to take care—but look at me. How am I wrapped in grandeur!" And thus in his self-complacency he thinks he stands. Ah, those are the men who fall! How many that flamed like comets in the sky of the religious world have rushed into space and been quenched in darkness! How many a man who has stood like a prophet before his fellows and who would exclaim as he wrapped himself in his conceit, "I, only I am alive. I am the only Prophet of God." And yet that only prophet fell! His lamp was quenched and his light put out in darkness. How many have boasted of their might and dignity and have said, "I have built this mighty Babylon," but then they thought they stood and they fell at once. "Let him that thinks he stands," with the proudest talents, "take heed lest he fall." Others have the *pride of Grace*. That is a curious fact. But there is such a thing as being proud of Grace. A man says, "I have great faith, I shall not fall. Poor Little-Faith may, but I never shall." "I have fervent love," says another man, "I can stand, there is no danger of my going astray. As for my Brother over there, he is so cold and slow, he will fall, I dare say." Says another, "I have a most burning hope of Heaven and that hope will triumph. It will purge my soul from sense and sin, as Christ the Lord is pure. I am safe." He who boasts of Grace, has little Grace to boast of! But there are some who do, who think their graces shall keep them, knowing not that the stream must flow constantly from the fountainhead, otherwise the bed of the brook shall soon be dry and you shall see the pebbles at the bottom. If a continuous stream of oil comes not to the lamp, though it burn brightly, today, it shall smoke tomorrow and noxious will be the scent. Take heed that you neither glory in your talents nor in your Graces!

Many are still worse. They think they shall not fall because of their *privileges*. "I take the Sacrament, I have been baptized in an orthodox manner, as written in God's Word. I attend such-and-such a ministry. I am well fed. I am fat and flourishing in the courts of my God. If I were one of those starved creatures who hear a false gospel. I might possibly sin, but oh, our minister is the model of perfection! We are constantly fed and made fat—surely we shall stand." Thus in the complacency of their privileges they run down others, exclaiming, "My mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved." Take heed, presumption, take heed!

Pride comes before a fall—and a haughty spirit is the usher of destruction. Take heed, watch your footsteps, for where pride creeps in it is the worm at the root of the gourd, causing it to wither and die. "Let him that thinks he stands," because of pride of talent, or Grace, or privilege, "take heed lest he fall."

I hope I have touched some here. I trust the lancet has been sharp. I have taken the scalpel and I hope I have discovered something. O you presumptuous ones! I speak to you and I shall do so while next I warn you of your danger.

II. I shall be more brief on the second point—THE DANGER. He who thinks he stands is in danger of a fall. The true Christian cannot possibly suffer a *final* fall, but he is very much disposed to a foul fall. Though the Christian shall not stumble so as to destroy his life, he may break his limbs. Though God has given His angels charge over him—to keep him in all his ways—yet there is no commission to keep him when he goes astray. And when he is astray he may thrust himself through with many sorrows.

1. I must now try and give you the reason why a man who thinks he stands is more exposed to the danger of falling than any other.

First, because *such a man in the midst of temptation will be sure to be more or less careless*. Make a man believe he is very strong and what will he do? The fight is thickening around him. Yet he has his sword in his scabbard. “Oh,” he says, “my arm is nimble and strong. I can draw it out and strike home.” So perhaps he lies down in the field, or slothfully sleeps in his tent. “For,” he says, “when I hear enemies approaching, such is my prowess and such my might that I can mow them down by thousands. You sentinels watch the weak! Go to the Ready-to-Halts and the Fearings and awaken them. But I am a giant. And let me once get this old Toledo blade in my hand, it will cut through body and soul. Whenever I meet my enemies I shall be more than conqueror.” The man is careless in battle. He lifts up his helmet, as it is said Goliath did and then a stone pierces his forehead. He throws away his shield and then an arrow penetrates his flesh. He will put his sword into his scabbard—then the enemy smites him—and he is ill prepared to resist. The man who thinks he is strong, is off his guard. He is not ready to ward off the strokes of the Evil One—and then the poison enters his soul.

2. Again, *the man who thinks he stands will not be careful to keep out of the way of temptation*, but rather will run into it. I remember seeing a man who was going to a place of worldly amusement—he was a professor of religion—and I called to him, “What are you doing there, Elijah?” “Why do you ask me such a question as that?” he asked. I said, “What are you doing here, Elijah? Are you going in *there*?” “Yes,” he replied, with some sort of blush, “but I can do that with impunity.” “I could not,” I said, “If I were there, I know I would commit sin. I would not care what people said about it—I always do as I like, as far as I believe it to be right. I leave the *saying* to anybody who likes to talk about me. But this is a place of danger and I could not go there with impunity.” “Ah,” he said, “I can. I have been, before, and I have had some sweet thoughts there. I find it enlarges the intellect. You are narrow-minded. You do not get these good things. It is a rich treat I assure you. I would go if I were you.” “No,” I said, “it would be dangerous for me—from what I hear, the name of Jesus is profaned there. And there is much said that is altogether contrary to the religion we believe. The persons who go there are none of the best and it will surely be said that birds of a feather flock together.” “Ah, well,” he replied, “perhaps you young men had better stay away. I am a strong

man, I can go.” And off he went to the place of amusement. That man, Sirs, was an apple of Sodom! He was a professor of religion. I guessed there was something rotten at the core from that very fact. And I found it so by experience, for the man was a downright sensualist even then. He wore a mask, he was a hypocrite and had none of the Grace of God in his heart. Presumptuous men will say they can go into sin—they are so full of moral strength. But when a man tells you he is so good, always read his words backwards and understand him to mean that he is as bad as he can be. The self-confident man is in danger of falling because he will even *run into* temptation in the confidence that he is strong and able to make his escape!

3. Another reason is that *these strong men sometimes will not use the means of Grace* and, therefore, they fall. There are some persons here, who, very likely, never attend a place of worship. They do not profess to be religious and I am sure they would be astonished if I were to tell them that I know some professedly religious people, accepted in some Churches as being true children of God, who yet make it a habit of staying away from the House of God. They conceive they are so advanced that they do not need it. You smile at such a thing as that. They boast such deep experience within. They have a volume of sweet sermons at home and they will stop and read them. They need not go to the House of God, for they are fat and flourishing. They conceit themselves that they have received food enough seven years ago, to last them the next ten years! They imagine that old food will feed their souls now. These are your presumptuous men. They are not to be found at the Lord’s Table, eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ in the holy emblems of bread and wine. You do not see them in their closets. You do not find them searching the Scriptures with holy curiosity. They think they stand—they shall never be moved—they fancy that means are intended for weaker Christians. And leaving those means, they fall. They will not have the shoe to put upon the foot and, therefore, the flint cuts them. They will not put on the armor and, therefore, the enemy wounds them—sometimes well-near unto death! In this deep quagmire of neglect of the means, many a haughty professor has been smothered.

4. Once more, the man who is self-confident runs a fearful hazard, because *God’s Spirit always leaves the proud*. The gracious Spirit delights to dwell in low places. The Holy Dove came to Jordan. We read not that it ever rested on Bashan. The man upon the white horse rode among the myrtle trees—not among the cedars. The myrtle trees grew at the foot of the mountains. The cedars on the summit! God loves humility. He who walks with fear and trembling, fearing lest he should go astray—that man the Spirit loves. But when once pride creeps in and the man declares, “Now I am in no danger,” away goes the Dove. It flies to Heaven and will have nothing to do with him. Proud Souls, you quench the Spirit. You arrogant men, you grieve the Holy Spirit. He leaves every heart where pride dwells—that evil spirit of Lucifer He abhors. He will not rest

with it. He will not tarry in its company. Here is your greatest danger, you proud ones—that the Spirit leaves those who deny their entire dependence on Him.

III. The third point is THE COUNSEL. I have been expounding the text—now I want to enforce it. I would, if my Lord would allow me, speak home to your souls and so picture the danger of a presumptuous man, that I would make you all cry out to Heaven that sooner might you die than presume. That sooner might you be found among those who lie prostrate at the foot of Christ, trembling all their lives, than among those who think they stand and, therefore, fall! Christian, the counsel of Scripture is—“Take heed.”

1. First, take heed, because *so many have fallen*. My Brothers and Sisters, could I take you into the wards of that hospital where lie sick and wounded Christians, I could make you tremble. I would show you one, who, by a sin that occupied him not a single moment, is so sorely broken that his life is one continued scene of misery. I could show you another one, a brilliant genius, who served his God with energy who is now—not a priest of the devil it is true, but almost that—sitting down in despair because of his sin. I could point you to another person who once stood in the Church, pious and consistent, but who now comes up to the same House of Prayer as if he were ashamed of himself. He sits in some remote corner and is no longer treated with the kindness he formerly received—the Brothers and Sisters, themselves, being suspicious because he so greatly deceived them and brought such dishonor upon the cause of Christ. Oh, do you know the sad pain which those who fall, endure? Could you tell how many have fallen (and have not perished, it is true), but still have dragged themselves along in misery throughout their entire existence, I am sure you would take heed. Come with me to the foot of the mountain of Presumption. See there the maimed and writhing forms of many who once soared with eagles' wings in the airy regions of self-confidence, yet there they lie with their bones broken and their peace destroyed. There lies one who has immortal life within him. See how full of pain he appears. And he looks like a mass of helpless matter. He is alive, it is true, but just barely alive. You know not how some of those enter Heaven who are saved, “so as by fire.” One man walks to Heaven. He keeps consistent. God is with him and he is happy all his journey through. Another says, “I am strong, I shall not fall.” He runs aside to pluck a flower. He sees something which the devil has laid in his way. He is caught, first, in this sin and then in that trap. And when he comes near the river, instead of finding before him that stream of nectar of which the dying Christian drinks, he sees fire through which he has to pass, blazing upon the surface of the water! The river is on fire and as he enters it, he is scorched and burned. The hand of God is lifted up saying, “Come on, come on.” But as he dips his foot in the stream, he finds the fire kindling around him and though the hand clutches him by the hair of the head and drags him through, he stands upon the shore of Heaven

and cries, "I am a monument of Divine Mercy, for I have been saved so as by fire." Oh, do you want to be saved by fire, Christians? Would you not rather enter Heaven singing songs of praises? Would you not glorify Him on earth and then give your last testimony with, "Victory, victory, victory, unto Him that loved us"? Would you not rather shut your eyes on earth and open them in Heaven? If you would do so, presume not! "Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."

2. Once more, my Brothers and Sisters, take heed, because *a fall will so much damage the cause of Christ*. Nothing has hurt religion one-half, or one thousandth part, so much as the fall of God's people. Ah, when a true Believer sins, how will the world point at him. "That man was a deacon, but he knows how to charge exorbitantly. That man was a professor, but he can cheat as well as his neighbors. That man is a minister and he lives in sin." Oh, when the mighty fall—it is, "rejoice fir tree, for the cedar has fallen"—how does the world exult! They chuckle over our sins, they rejoice over our faults. They fly around us and if they can see one point where we are vulnerable, how they will say, "See these holy people are no better than they should be." Because there is one hypocrite, men set down all the rest the same. I heard one man say, a little while ago, that he did not believe there was a true Christian living because he had found out so many hypocrites. I reminded him that there could be no hypocrites if there were no genuine ones. No one would try to forge bank notes if there were no genuine ones. No one would think of passing a bad sovereign if there were no sterling coin. So the fact of their being some hypocrites proves that there are some genuine characters. But let those who are so, take heed. Let them always, in their conduct, have the ring of true gold. Let your conversation be such as to become the Gospel of Christ—lest by any means the enemy get the advantage over us and slander the name of Jesus. And especially is this incumbent upon the members of our own denomination, for it is often said that the Doctrines we believe have a tendency to lead us to sin. I have heard it asserted most positively that those high Doctrines which we love and which we find in the Scriptures, are licentious ones! I do not know who has the hardihood to make that assertion when they consider that the holiest of men have been believers in them. I ask the man who dares to say that Calvinism is a licentious religion, what he thinks of the character of Augustine, or Calvin, or Whitfield who, in successive ages, were the great exponents of the system of Grace! Or what will he say of those Puritans whose works are full of them? Had a man been an Arminian in those days, he would have been accounted the vilest heretic breathing! But now *we* are looked upon as the heretics and *they* the orthodox! *We* have gone back to the old school, *we* can trace our descent from the Apostles. It is that vein of free Grace running through the sermonizing of Baptists which has saved us as a denomination. Were it not for that, we would not stand where we are. We can run a golden link from here up to Jesus Christ Himself through a holy succession of mighty fathers who all held these glorious Truths! And

we can say to them, where will you find holier and better men in the world? We are not ashamed to say of ourselves that however much we may be maligned and slandered, you will not find a people who will live closer to God than those who believe that they are saved, not by their works, but by free Grace alone. But, oh, you Believers in free Grace, be careful. Our enemies hate the Doctrine. And if one falls, “Ah there,” they say, “see the tendency of your principles?” No, we might reply, see what is the tendency of *your* doctrine! The exception in our case proves the rule is true, that after all, our Gospel does lead us to holiness. Of all men, those have the most disinterested piety, the most sublime reverence, the most ardent devotion who believe that they are saved by Grace, without works, through faith and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God! Christian take heed, lest by any means Christ should be crucified afresh and should be put unto an open shame.

And now, what more can I say? Oh you, my Beloved, you, my Brothers and Sisters, think not that you stand, lest you should fall. Oh you fellow heirs of everlasting life and Glory—we are marching along through this weary pilgrimage. And I, whom God has called to preach to you, would turn affectionately to you little ones and say, take heed lest you fall. My Brothers and Sisters, stumble not. There lies the sin, there the snare. I am come to gather the stones out of the road and take away the stumbling blocks. But what can I do unless, with due care and caution, you yourselves walk guardedly? Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, be much more in prayer than ever. Spend more time in pious adoration. Read the Scriptures more earnestly and constantly. Watch your lives more carefully. Live nearer to God. Take the best examples for your pattern. Let your conversation be fragrant of Heaven. Let your hearts be perfumed with affection for men’s souls. So live that men may take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus and have learned of Him. And when that happy day shall come when He whom you love shall say, “Come up higher,” let it be your happiness to hear Him say, “Come My Beloved, you have fought a good fight, you have finished your course and henceforth there is laid up for you a crown of righteousness that fades not away.” On, Christian, proceed with care and caution! On with holy fear and trembling! On yet, with faith and confidence, for you shall not fall. Read the next verse of this very Chapter—“He will not allow you to be tempted above that which you are able to bear, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape.”

But I have some here, perhaps, who may never hear my voice again. And I will not let my congregation go, God helping me, without telling them the way of salvation. Sirs, there are some of you who know you have not believed in Christ. If you were to die, where you now sit you have no hope that you would rise among the glorified in bliss. How many are there here who, if their hearts could speak, must testify that they are without God, without Christ, and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel? Oh, let me tell you, then, what you must do to be saved. Does

your heart beat high? Do you grieve over your sins? Do you repent of your iniquities? Will you turn unto the living God? If so, this is the way of salvation—"Whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved." I cannot reverse my Master's order—He says, "believes," and then "baptized." And He tells me that, "He that believes *not* shall be *damned*." Oh, my Hearers, your works cannot save you! Though I have spoken to Christians and exhorted them to live in good works, I talk not so to you. I ask you not to get the flower before you have the seed. I will not bid you get the roof of your house before you lay the foundation! Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. Whoever here will now cast himself as a guilty worm, flat on Jesus—whoever will throw himself into the arms of Everlasting Love—that man or woman shall be accepted! They shall go through that door justified and forgiven, with their souls as safe as if they were in Heaven, without the danger of ever being lost. All this is through belief in Christ!

Surely you need no argument. If I thought you did, I would use it. I would stand and weep till you came to Christ if I thought I was strong enough to fetch a soul to Jesus. If I thought that moral persuasion could win you, I would go round to each of your seats and beg of you in God's name to repent. But since I cannot do that, I have done my duty when I have prophesied to the dry bones. Remember, we shall meet again. I boast of neither eloquence nor talent and I cannot understand why you come here. I only speak right on and tell you what I feel. But mark me—when we meet before God's bar—however ill I may have spoken, I shall be able to say that I said to you, "Believe on the name of Jesus and you shall be saved." Why will you die, O house of Israel? Is Hell so sweet, is everlasting torment so much to be desired that therefore you can let go of the glories of Heaven, the bliss of eternity? Men, are you to live forever? Or, are you to die like brutes? "Live!" you say. Well, then, are you not desirous to live in a state of bliss? Oh may God grant you Grace to turn to Him with full purpose of heart! Come, guilty Sinner, come! God help you to come and I shall be well repaid if but one soul is added to the visible fold of Jesus through anything I may have said. Amen.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

COMFORT FOR THE TEMPTED

NO. 2603

A SERMON

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JANUARY 1, 1899.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 27, 1883.

*“There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man:
but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond
what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the
way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”*
1 Corinthians 10:13.

THE children of God are all subject to temptation—some of them are tempted more than others, but I am persuaded that there is not one, except those who are too young to be conscious of evil, who will enter Heaven without having endured some temptation. If anyone could have escaped, surely it would have been “the First-Born among many brethren,” but you will remember how He was led of the Spirit, straight from the waters of His Baptism, into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And the Apostle Paul informs us that He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Truly, the Lord Jesus might say to us who are His followers, “If I, your Master and Lord, have been tempted, you must not expect to escape temptation, for the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord.”

The fact that we are tempted ought to humble us, for it is sad evidence that there is sin still remaining in us. I am old enough to remember the times when we used to strike with a flint upon the steel in order to get a light in the morning, and I recollect that I always left off trying to produce a spark when I found that there was no tinder in the box. I believe that the devil is no fool and that if there is a man who has no tinder in the box—that is, no corruption in his nature—depend upon it, Satan will not long continue to tempt him! He does not waste his time in such a useless exercise. The man who believes that he is perfect can never pray the Lord's Prayer—he must offer one of his own making, for he will never be willing to say, “Lead us not into temptation.” But, Beloved, because the devil thinks it worth his while to tempt us, we may conclude that there is something in us that is temptable—that sin still dwells there, notwithstanding that the Grace of God has renewed our hearts.

The fact that we are tempted ought also to remind us of our weakness. I referred just now to the model prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ, which contains the sentence, “Lead us not into temptation.” The reason for pre-

sending that petition must be because we are so weak and frail. We ask that we may not be burdened, for our back is not strong, and we plead that we may not have sin put before us in any of its enticing forms, for, oftentimes, the flesh borrows strength from the world and even from the devil! And these allied powers will be too much for us unless the Omnipotence of God shall be exerted on our behalf to hold us up lest we fall.

Some children of God, whom I know of, are very greatly troubled because they are tempted. They think they could bear trial if it were trial dissociated from sin, though I do not see how we can, as a general rule, separate trial from temptation, for every trial that comes to us has in it some kind of temptation or other, either to unbelief, or to murmuring, or to the use of wrong means to escape from the trial. We are tempted by our mercies and we are tempted by our miseries—that is, tempted in the sense of being tried by them—but, to the child of God, the most grievous thing is that, sometimes, he is tempted to do or say things which he utterly hates. He has set before him, in a pleasant aspect, sins which are perfectly abhorrent to him. He cannot bear the very name of them! Yet Satan comes and holds before the child of God the unclean meats which he will never touch. And I have known the devil to tempt the people of God by injecting into their mind blasphemous thoughts, hurling them into their ears as with a hurricane. Yes, even when you are in prayer it may happen to you that thoughts the very opposite of devotional, will come flocking into your brain. A little noise in the street will draw you off from communion with God and, almost before you are aware of it, your thoughts, like wild horses, will have gone galloping over hill and dale—and you hardly know how you shall ever catch them.

Now, such temptations as these are dreadfully painful to a child of God. He cannot bear the poisoned breath of sin and when he finds that sin stands knocking at his door, shouting under his window, pestering him day and night, as it has occurred with some—I hope not with many—then he is sorely beset and is grievously troubled. It may help such a person if I remind him that there is *no sin in being tempted*. The sin is that of the tempter, not of the tempted. If you resist the temptation, there is something praiseworthy about your action. There is nothing praiseworthy about the temptation—that is evil and only evil, but you did not tempt yourself—he or she that tempted you must bear the blame of the temptation. You are evidently not blameworthy for thoughts that grieve you—they may prove that there is sin still remaining in you, but there is no sin in your being tempted. The sin is in your *yielding* to the temptation, but blessed shall you be if you can stand up against it. If you can overcome it, if your spirit does not yield to it, you shall even be blessed through it! “Blessed is the man that endures temptation.” There is a blessedness even in the temptation and though for the present it seems not to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless, afterward, it yields blessed fruit to those who are exercised thereby.

Moreover, there are worse things in this world than being tempted with painful temptations. It is much worse to be tempted with a pleasant temptation—to be gently sucked down into the destroyer’s mouth—to be carried along the smooth current, afterwards to be hurled over the cataract. This is dreadful, but to *fight* against temptation—this is good. I say again that there are many worse things than to be tried with a temptation that arouses all the indignation of your spirit. An old divine used to say that he was more afraid of a sleeping devil than he was of a roaring one, and there is much truth in that observation, for, when you are left quite alone and no temptation assails you, you are apt to get carnally secure and to boastfully say, “I shall never be moved.” I think no man is in such imminent danger as the man who thinks that there is no danger likely to befall him, so that anything that keeps us on the watchtower, even though it is, in itself, evil, is, so far, overruled for good. The most dangerous part of the road to Heaven is not the Valley of the Shadow of Death—we do not find that Christian went to sleep there when the hobgoblins were all about him and when he found it hard to feel the path and stay on it—but when he and Hopeful came to the Enchanted Ground, “whose air naturally tended to make one drowsy.” Then were the pilgrims in great peril until Christian reminded his fellow traveler that they were warned by the shepherds not to sleep when they came to that treacherous part of the way.

I think, then, that to be tempted with painful temptations—those that goad the spirit almost to madness. Bad as that trial is—grievous as it is to be borne—may be, spiritually, not the worst thing that can possibly happen to us. Of all evils that beset you, always choose that which is less than another and, as this is less than something else might be, do not be utterly driven to despair if it falls to your lot to be tempted as many before you have been.

This will suffice by way of preface to a little talk about temptation with a view of comforting any who are sorely tempted of Satan. I know that I am speaking to many such and I would repeat to them the words of my text—“There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” Remember, dear tried Friend, that you must not sit down in despair and say, “I am greatly tempted, now, and I am afraid that I shall be tempted worse and worse until my feet shall slide, and I shall fall and utterly perish.” Do not say as David did when he had been hunted like a partridge upon the mountains, “I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul,” but believe that the Lord, who *permits* you to be tempted, will deliver you in His own good time!

I. Here is your first comfort. THERE HAS BEEN A LIMIT IN ALL YOUR FORMER TRIALS. “There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.”

Temptation has sometimes laid hold of you, like a murderer takes a man by the throat, all of a sudden. It has seized you—perhaps that is as correct a word as I can use—temptation has seized you, unawares, pinioned you and seemed to grip you tightly. And yet, up till now, the temptations you have had to endure have only been such as are common to man!

First, *they are such as have been endured by your fellow Christians*. I know that you are tempted to think that you are a lone traveler on a road that nobody has ever traversed before you, but if you carefully examine the track, you can discover the footprints of some of the best of God's servants who have passed along that wearisome way. It is a very dark lane, you say—one that might truly be called, "Cut-Throat Lane." Ah, but you will find that Apostles have been along that way, confessors have been that way, martyrs have been that way—and the best of God's saints have been tempted just as you now are. "Oh, but," says one, "I am tempted, as you said a little while ago, with blasphemous and horrible thoughts." So was Master John Bunyan. Read his *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* and see what he had to pass through. Many others have had a similar experience and among them are some of us who are alive to tell you that we know all about this special form of temptation, yet the Lord delivered us out of it.

"Oh, but," says another tried soul, "I have been even tempted to self-destruction!" That, also, has not been an unusual temptation, even to God's dearest saints and, though He has preserved them and kept them alive, yet they have often felt like Job when he said, "My soul chooses strangling and death rather than my life." "Ah," cries another, "I am tempted to the very worst sins, the foulest sins. I would not dare to even mention to you the abominations Satan tempts me to commit!" You need not tell me and I trust that you will be kept from them by the almighty power of God's Holy Spirit, but I can assure you that even the saints in Heaven, if they could speak to you at this moment, would tell you that some of them were hard beset—even some of the bravest of them who walked nearest to God were hard beset by temptations which they would not have told to their fellow men, so troubled were they by them. Perhaps yet another friend says, "I have been actually tempted to self-righteousness, which is as great a temptation as can befall a man whose whole confidence is in Christ." Well, so was Master John Knox, that grand preacher of justification by faith. When he lay dying, he was tempted to glory in his own bravery for Christ—but he fought against that evil thought and overcame it—and so may you!

You think that when a man is very patient, he is not tempted to impatience? Brother, the Spirit of God says, by the pen of the Apostle James, "You have heard of the patience of Job." I suggest to you this question—Have you not heard of the *impatience* of Job? You have heard, no doubt, of the strong faith of Peter. Have you never heard of Peter's unbelief?

God's people usually fail in the very point for which they are most famous—and the man who has the greatest renown for any work of the Spirit of God in him, so far as the Bible biographies are concerned, has usually been the man who has made a failure at just the place where he thought he was strongest! "I have been reading the life of a good man," you say, "and I am not like he." Shall I tell you why? Because the *whole of his life* was not written! But when the Holy Spirit writes a man's life, He tells it all. When biographers write the lives of good men, of course they do not put down their inward struggles and fears, unless the subject happens to be a man like Martin Luther, whose life seemed to be all an inward struggle and who, while he was brave on the outside, was often a trembler within! When they write my life, they will tell you that I had strong faith, but they will not tell you all about the other side of it. And then you will, perhaps, get to thinking, "Oh, I cannot reach even to such a height as Mr. Spurgeon attained!" That all comes of your not knowing the inside of us, for if you knew the inside and the outside of the man who walks nearest to God—if he is a sincere, true-hearted man, he will tell you that the temptations you have to endure are just such temptations as he has had and, as he expects to have again and again and that, as the Apostle says, "there has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man."

Then, again, no *temptation has assailed you but such as fit for men to be tried with while they are in this state of trial*. This is not the time for the final victory, Brothers and Sisters, this is the hour of battle! And the weapons that are used against us are only such as have been employed against the armies of the faithful in all ages. You and I never were tempted as were the angels who kept their first estate and overcame the temptation. I cannot tell you how the Prince of Darkness was tempted, or how he went about tempting his fellow servants from their loyalty to the great King. But of this I am sure—you were never tried with a temptation suitable to an angel! Your temptation has only been such as is suitable to a *man*, and which as other men, like yourself, have overcome. Others have fought valiantly against similar temptations as yours and you must do the same, yes, and you *shall* do the same by the power of God's Spirit resting upon you!

It is said, in the affairs of common life, that what man has done, man can do, and that is true with regard to the spiritual life. Temptations that have been grappled with by other men, can be grappled with by you if you seek the same source of strength and seek it in the same name as they did. The strength to overcome temptation comes from God, alone, and the conquering name is the name of Jesus Christ! Therefore, go forward in that strength and in that name against all your temptations. Up and at them, for they have been routed long before, and you shall rout them again! Tremble not to go from fight to fight and from victory to vic-

tory, even as did the others who have gone before you and who have now entered into their rest—

**“Once they were mourning here below,
And wet their couch with tears.
They wrestled hard, as we do now,
With sins, and doubts, and fears.”**

If you ask them from where their victory came, they ascribe it to the resources which are as open to you as they were to them—even to the mighty working of God the Holy Spirit and the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ! There has no temptation happened to you but such as human beings can grapple with and overcome by the help of God!

Again, there has no temptation ever happened to you but such as is common to man in this sense—that *Christ has endured it*. That great Head of manhood, that representative Man has suffered from the very temptation which is now pestering you. “In all their affliction—that is, the affliction of His people in the wilderness, which is just the same as yours if you are in the wilderness—“in all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them.” He was compassed with infirmity, “a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.” To repeat the text I have already quoted, and which is so suitable here, He “was, in all points, tempted like as we are.” “In all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He, Himself, has suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” He knows all about the case of each one of us and He knows how to deal with it, and how to bear us up and bear us through.

So you see, dear Friends, there has no temptation happened to you but such as is common to man in the sense of having been endured by men like yourselves, having been overcome by men such as you are and having been endured and vanquished by your blessed Representative, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Come, then, Beloved, let all mystery with regard to your temptations be banished! Mystery puts an edge upon the sword of trial. Perhaps the hand that wrote upon the wall would not have frightened Belshazzar if he could have seen the body to which that hand belonged. There is no mystery, after all, about your trouble! Though you did write it down as being bigger than any that ever happened to a human being, that is not the truth—you are not an emperor in the realm of misery! You cannot truly say, “I am the man that has seen affliction above all others,” for your Lord endured far more than you have ever done—and many of His saints, who passed from the stake to the crown, must have suffered much more than you have been called to undergo thus far.

II. Now let us turn to the second comfort revealed in our text. That is, **THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD**—“There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful.”

Oh, what a blessed word is this, “God is faithful”! Therefore, *He is true to His promise*. Even Balaam said, “God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: has He said, and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken, and shall He not make it good?” One of God’s promises is, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” “God is faithful,” so He will fulfill that promise! Here is one of the promises of Christ, and Christ is God—“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” “God is faithful,” so that promise shall be fulfilled! You have often heard this promise, “As your days, so shall your strength be.” Do you believe it, or will you make God a liar? If you believe it, then banish from your mind all dark forebodings with this blessed little sentence, “God is faithful.”

Notice, next, that not only is God faithful, but *He is master of the situation, so that He can keep His promise*. Note what the text says. “Who will not suffer you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear.” Then you could not have been tempted if God had not allowed it to happen to you. God is far mightier than Satan. The devil could not touch Job except by Divine permission, neither can he try and tempt you except as God allows him. He must have a permit from the King of Kings before he can tempt a single saint! Why, Satan is not allowed to keep the key of his own house, for the keys of death and of Hell hang at the belt of Christ! And without God’s permission, the dog of Hell cannot even open his mouth to bark at a child of God, much less can he come and worry any of the sheep whom the Lord has called by His Grace into His fold! So, then, Beloved, you have great cause for comfort from the fact that the temptation that tries you is still under the control of the faithful Creator, “who will not suffer you to be tempted beyond what you are able.”

That is a second reason for comfort—roll it under your tongue as a sweet morsel.

III. The third comfort lies in **THE RESTRAINT WHICH GOD PUTS UPON TEMPTATION**. He “will not suffer you to be tempted beyond what you are able.” The tide of trial shall rise to high-water mark and then God shall say, “Hitherto shall you come, but no further: and here shall your proud waves be stayed.”

He “will not suffer you to be tempted beyond what you are able.” That may apply, sometimes, to *the period when the temptation comes*. I have carefully watched how God times the trials of His people. If such-and-such a trial had come to one of His children when he was young, I believe he could not have borne it. Or if he had lost some dear friend while he was, himself, sick, the double trouble would have crushed him. But God sends our trials at the right time and if He puts an extra burden on in

one way, He takes something off in another. “He stays His rough wind in the day of the East wind.” It is a very simple thing to say, but it is true—if the wind blows from the North, it does not, at the same time, blow from the South. And if one set of troubles comes to a Christian, another set of troubles generally departs from him. John Bradford, the famous martyr, was often subject to rheumatism and depression of spirit—in which I can greatly sympathize with him—but when he was laid by the heels in a foul damp dungeon and knew that he would never come out except to die, he wrote, “It is an amazing thing that ever since I have been in this prison and have had other trials to bear, I have had no touch of my rheumatism or my depression of spirit.” Was not that a very blessed thing? And you will usually find that it is so—you shall not be tempted above what you are able to bear because God will permit the trial to come at a time when you are best able to stand up under it.

There is also great kindness on God’s part *in the continuance of a trial*. If some of our trials lasted much longer, they would be too heavy for us to bear. Concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, our Lord said, “Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” And I have no doubt that, oftentimes, God makes quick work of His children’s trials because if they were continued longer, they would have not a good, but an evil effect upon us. If a child must be whipped, let not the punishment last as if he were a criminal who must be sentenced for a long period—let him have his chastisement and have done with it. So is it often in the discipline of God’s house, yet there are other trials which are protracted year after year because trial is an ingredient in their efficacy and they might not be blessed to us if they were shortened. In every case there is Infinite Wisdom which makes our troubles to be just as long as they are and no longer.

So there is in the *number of the trials*. Blessed be God—

***“If He ordains the number ten,
They never can be eleven.”***

If He intends His servants to pass through the fire and not through the water, Satan himself cannot make them go through the water! God counts the drops of bitter tonic that He administers to His ailing saints and not one drop more shall they possibly have than He measures out to them. So, dear tried children of God, you shall not be tempted above what you are able so far as the number of your temptations and trials is concerned.

It is the same, also, *in the stress with which the temptation comes*. Have you ever seen a great tree in the full blast of a tremendous tempest? It sways to and fro and seems scarcely able to recover itself from the powerful blows of the storm, yet the roots hold it. But now comes another tornado and it seems as if the tree must be torn up out of the earth, but the strain ceases just in time for the old oak to rock back into its place, again. But if there were a pound or two more force in that tre-

mendous blast, the tree would be laid prone upon the grass! But God, in His people's case, at any rate, stops just at the right point. You may be tried till you have not an ounce of strength left. Sometimes, the Lord tests His people till it seems as if one more breath from Him would assuredly cause them to sink. Then it is that He puts under them the everlasting arms and no further trial is laid upon them. This is a blessed thing, for all of you have troubles of one sort or another, and you who are the people of God may take this text and rely implicitly upon it—"God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted beyond what you are able."

As for you who are *not* His people, I am very sorry for you. I am holding up these precious things, but they are not for you. God's Word declares, "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked." If you have not God to flee to, what will you do when the storms beat upon your boat? To whom or where can you flee? As for the Christian, he can sing—

***"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Your bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high!
Hide me, O my Savior, hide,
Till the storm of life is past
Safe into the haven guide.
Oh receive my soul at last!"***

But, poor dear souls who love not Christ, where can you find comfort in your seasons of sorrow and trial? You who have lost wife and children—you who are pinched with poverty—you who are racked with sickness and yet have no Savior, what can you do? Poor houseless people in a snowstorm—what can they do without even a bush to shelter them? That is your state and I grieve for you, and plead with you not to remain in such a pitiful condition a moment longer!—

***"Come, guilty souls, and flee away
Like doves to Jesus' wounds.
This is the welcome Gospel-day,
Wherein free Grace abounds!"***

Oh, that your sense of need might drive you to accept Christ as your Savior this very hour! As for His believing people, there is this solid comfort for them—they shall never be tempted above what they are able.

IV. The next comfort we gather from our text relates to THE PROVISION WHICH THE LORD MAKES FOR THE TEMPTED "God is faithful, who...will with the temptation also make a way to escape."

The Greek has it, "who will with the temptation also make *the* way to escape," for *there is a proper way to escape from a temptation*. There are 20 improper ways and woe to the man who makes use of any of them! But there is only one proper way out of a trial and that is the straight way, the way that God has made for His people to travel. God has made *through* all trials the way by which His servants may rightly come out of them. When the brave young Jews were tried by Nebuchadnezzar, there was one way by which they might have kept out of the burning fiery fur-

nace. They had only to bow their knees before the great image when the flute, harp, sackbut and psaltery sounded. That way of escape would never have answered, for it was not the right one! The way for them was to be thrown into the furnace and there to have the Son of God walking with them in the midst of the fire that could not hurt them! In like manner, whenever you are exposed to any trial, mind that you do not try to escape from it in a wrong way.

Notice especially that *the right way is always of God's making* and, therefore, any of you who are now exposed to temptation or trial have not to make your own way of escape out of it. God, and God alone, has to make it for you, so do not attempt to make it for yourselves. I knew a man who was in trouble because he was short of money—and the way he made for himself was to use somebody else's money with which he had been entrusted. That was not God's way of escape for him, so he only plunged himself into a worse trial than he was in before! I have known a man of business in great trouble and things were going wrong with him, so he speculated, gambled and ruined both his business and his personal character. That was not God's way for him to escape from his troubles! Sometimes the best thing a man in trouble can do is to do nothing at all—but to leave all in the hands of God. "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord."

When the Israelites came out of Egypt, God led them in a way at which men might well have quibbled. There was nothing before them but the sea and behind them came Pharaoh in all his rage, crying, "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them." Now, then, what was God's way of escape for them? Right through the Red Sea! And on the other side they sang, when the Egyptians were drowned, "Sing you to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea." It would have been a great pity if they had tried to escape by any way of their own, or had attempted to turn around and fight Pharaoh—that would not have done at all—but the Lord made for His people the very best way of escape that could possibly have been devised.

Notice, also, that *the Lord makes the way of escape "with the temptation."* He suffered the trial to come and, at the same time He made the way of escape from it. God has planned it all, my Brothers and Sisters, how you, His champion, shall go forth and fight valiantly in His strength—and how He will be your shield and your exceedingly great reward. He will lead you into the dangerous situation, but He can see the way out of it as well as the way into it, and He will take you safely through. Did not the Psalmist sing, "To Him which led His people through the wilderness: for His mercy endures forever"? He not only led them *into* the wilderness, but He led them *through* it, blessed be His holy name! And if He has brought you into the wilderness of trouble and af-

fliction, He made the way out of it at the same time that He made the trouble. "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed. Delight yourself, also, in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him: fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked devices to pass." "Seek you first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," and all else that you need shall be added unto you. Keep clear of the sin of the temptation and you need not fear the sorrow of the temptation. If the trials do not drive you to your own devices, but drive you to your knees, they will, after all, be blessings to you.

That is the fourth comfort, that God has made the way of escape for His people out of their trials. "Well, then," says someone, "I shall escape from this trial." Wait a moment, my Friend, and listen to the closing words of the text, with which I will conclude my discourse.

V. This is the last point of comfort, THE SUPPORT WHICH GOD SUPPLIES IN THE TRIAL—"that you may be able to bear it."

God's way of escape from trial is not for His people to avoid it, so as not to pass through it, but such an escape as leads them *through* the trouble and out at the other end—not an escape *from* the Red Sea, but an escape *through* the Red Sea from a still greater trial! If you, Beloved, are exposed to trial or temptation, you are to be made able to bear it. Now, pray, before you leave this building, that this last word, upon which I have not time to enlarge, may be fulfilled in your experience—"that you may be able to bear it."

Suppose you are to be poor. Well, if God has so appointed it, you *will* be poor, therefore pray that you may be able to bear it. With honest industry and stern integrity, struggle to attain to a better position, but, if all your efforts fail, then say to the Lord, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." Perhaps your dear child is dying, or your wife is sickening. You dread the thought of losing them and you would willingly give your life, if you could, for them. Well, do all you can for their recovery, for life is precious, and any money spent to save it will be well spent. But, if health is not to be granted to them, pray that you may be able to bear even that heavy trial. It is wonderful how God helps His people to bear troubles which they thought would crush them. I have seen poor feeble women that I thought would die under their bereavement, become brave and strong! And I have seen men who were faint-hearted in the prospect of trouble, nevertheless bless the Lord for it when the blow has actually fallen! And you may do the same.

Suppose you are to be sick. Well, that is a sore trial and I know that, personally, I would do anything I could to escape from the affliction that often besets me, but if it must not be, then I must change my note and

pray that I may be able to bear it. I had a letter from a man of God, this morning, which sustained me very much. He said, “My dear Brother, I was sorry to hear that you were again in pain and depressed in spirit, and so forth, but, as I remembered how God had blessed you in so many ways, I thought to myself, ‘Perhaps Mr. Spurgeon would not have kept to preaching the Doctrines of Grace, and would not have been so able to comfort God’s poor people if he did not get these smart touches sometimes.’ So,” he said, “I congratulate you upon these trials!” And I accepted the congratulations. Will not you do the same, my afflicted Brother or Sister? Pray, “Lord, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me,” but, if it must not, then here comes that other form of comfort, “that I may be able to bear it.”

And remember, dear Friends, while I tell you to make this passage into a prayer, it is really a *promise*, and there is no prayer like a promise that is turned, as it were, roundabout, and cut prayer-wise! God Himself has said, by His inspired Apostle, that He “will not suffer you to be tempted beyond what you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.” Up with the banners, then! Forward, whatever obstructs the way! Let us sing, with good old John Ryland—

***“Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads,
I’ll follow where He goes!
‘Hinder me not,’ shall be my cry,
Though earth and Hell oppose!”***

The immortal life within us can never be destroyed! The Divine Nature, which God, the Holy Spirit, has implanted, shall never be trodden under foot! “Rejoice not against me, O my enemy. When I fall, I shall arise. When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.”

But, oh, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry am I, from the bottom of my soul, for you who know not the Lord, for this comfort is not for you! Seek Him, I pray you! Seek Him as your Savior. Look to Him and trust in Him—and then all the blessings of the Everlasting Covenant shall be yours, for the Father has given Him to be a Leader and Commander unto the people, and they that look to Him, and follow Him, shall live forever and ever! God bless you, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY
TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

COMFORT FOR TRIED BELIEVERS

NO. 2912

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1904.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 21, 1876.

***“There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man:
but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above
what you are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a
way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.”
1 Corinthians 10:13.***

THIS verse immediately follows the warning to “him that thinks he stands” to “take heed lest he fall.” None of us know what stuff we are really made of until we are tried and tested. It is a very easy thing to imagine yourself to be strong, but it is a very different matter to find that you have sufficient strength when you actually need it. It has even been found possible, in these modern days, for some Brothers and Sisters to believe themselves to be perfect—to believe that sin is entirely conquered within them—but I will guarantee you that you will find that the *practice* of perfection is not nearly so common as the *profession* of it—and nothing like so easy. And I will venture to go even further and say that if you watch those in whom sin is said to be dead, you will find that if it is dead, it is not buried—and that it smells remarkably like other dead things which ought to be buried! It is possibly worse than when it was alive, for it has become alive again in an even worse sense with a double putridity. Let no one of us imagine himself to be perfect, or to be immune against the temptations of Satan or even the grosser vices to which the flesh is prone. It may only need for you to be attacked at a certain point and in a certain way and you will be overcome even as others have been. Your wisest way is to believe yourself neither to be wise nor strong and, therefore, to lie humbly at His feet who can make you both wise and strong—and to look away from yourself up to Him who will keep the feet of His saints. It ought to cool the hot blood of self-conceit in any man to remind him that although he thinks that he stands, it is simply because he has not been tempted as others have been who have fallen! Or if he has been tempted in a way which overthrew them, while he has stood fast, yet, if the temptations were still further increased and he were left to himself, he would find that at the last the fierce wind from the Pit would sweep him off his feet even as it has swept off other men who thought that *they* could never be moved.

After the Apostle Paul had, by this warning, rebuked the boastings of these who thought they were standing securely, he thought of the far larger number of persons who never think that they can stand, but who are in constant terror lest they should fall. They say they are not the people of God yet, in almost the next breath they say they are afraid that they will lose what they just said they did not have! They sometimes hope that they are saved, yet they quickly doubt if it is so with them—and they are troubled with the fear that even though they are saved, they may yet fall and perish! Their feelings are a strange mingle-mangle of incorrect caution and incorrect doubt! And Paul seems to me in this verse to give them a cordial by which their fainting spirits may be revived. And I would like to pass it on to any of you who also need it. You may be tried in two senses—trial will come, and the trial will often be a temptation, while the temptation will always be a trial

I. Now comes in the comfort—and the first comfort, even in great trouble, is that **WE HAVE NOT, AFTER ALL, BEEN TRIED IN ANY VERY UNUSUAL WAY**—“There has no temptation (or trial) taken you but such as is common to man.”

You may think, my dear Brothers and Sisters, that you have been tried more than others, but it is only your lack of knowledge of the trials of others which leads you to imagine that your trials are unique. There are many others besides you in the furnace and in quite as hot a part of it as that in which you are now placed. Note what Paul says—“There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.” It is a *human* temptation, not a superhuman one, which has assailed you. That is to say, one which can be withstood by men—not one that must inevitably sweep them away. You have never been tempted with an angelic temptation. Satan has tempted you, young man, but not with the same temptation with which he allured the angels who kept not their first estate. There may be other orders of intelligence for whom there are other forms of temptation because their intellects are superior to yours—but God has allowed you to be assailed in a way which is suitable as a test to you as a man. The trials that have come upon you have been moderated to your capacity as a man. The Lord knows that you are but animated dust, so He has not permitted you to be treated as if you were made of steel or iron. He has, Himself, dealt with you as an earthen vessel—a thing of clay in which He has caused life to dwell. He has not broken you with His rod of iron as He would have done if He had struck you with it.

“But I am very sorely tempted,” says one. Yes, perhaps you are, but the Lord has given you the history of the children of Israel in the wilderness to let you see that you have not been tempted more than they were. “Ah,” says another, “but I find myself placed in a very peculiar position where I am greatly tried. I have to labor hard and I have much difficulty in earning my daily bread—and I am beset with trials of many kinds.” Well, dear Friend, even though what you say is perfectly true, I am not certain that your position is any more likely to bring temptation than was that of the children of Israel in the wilderness. “Ah,” you say, “but they

had not to work to earn their bread. The manna came to them every morning and they had only to gather it to eat it. They were not engaged in commercial transactions. There were no markets in the desert—no Corn Exchange, no Stock Exchange, no Smithfield, no Billingsgate—no taking down the shutters in the morning and putting them up again at night—and going a great part of the day without any customers. They were separated from all other nations and were in a peculiarly advantageous position.”

Yet, dear Friends, you need not wish to be placed in such a position because, advantageous as it was, in some respects the Israelites there were evidently tempted to all sorts of sins and fell into them very grievously. Having often read the story of their 40 years’ sojourn in the wilderness, you know their sad history. With so favorable a position granted to them under the Lord’s own special guardianship and enriched with many choice mercies, we might have expected that they would have been free from temptation—or, at any rate, that they would not have fallen into its snare! Yet it was not so, for the devil can tempt in the wilderness quite as well as in the city, as we know from the experience of Christ, Himself! The devil would tempt you even if your bread was given to you every morning instead of your having to earn it. He would tempt you if you had no business to attend to and never had to go into the world to meet with your fellow men. In fact, the story of the Israelites teaches me that it is best for you to work and best for you to be poor—and best for you not to make money as fast as you would like—and best for you to be surrounded by cares of various kinds. I think I judge rightly that the people of God, the saved ones, do not fall into such gross sins as the Israelites did in the wilderness. So that the saints’ position, though it may appear worse than that of Israel, is really better.

To what, my dear Brothers and Sisters, are you tempted? *Are you tempted to lust after evil things?* They lusted after the meat that was not suitable to the climate, nor good for their health—and they despised the manna which was the very best food they could have! Do you ever get a craving for what you ought not to desire? Are you growing covetous? Do you long for ease? Do you wish for wealth? Do you love pleasure? Well, dear Friends, this temptation has happened to others before it happened to those people in the wilderness! You are not the first to be tempted in that fashion and if Divine Grace has helped others to overcome the covetous desire and the lusting of the spirit, it can help you to do the same! But, mark also that if others have fallen through such temptations and perished in the wilderness, you, too, apart from Divine Grace, will do the same! Therefore have you urgent need to cry to the Strong for strength lest you also should fall even as they did.

Are you tempted to idolatry? It is a very common temptation to make an idol of a child, or of some particular pursuit in which you are engaged. Is there anything in the world that is so dear to you that the very thought of losing it makes you feel that you would rebel against God if He took it away from you? Remember what John was inspired to write. “Lit-

tle children, keep yourselves from idols.” But if you are tempted to idolatry, do not forget that this is a thing that is common to men. In the wilderness the Israelites were tempted to set up a golden calf and to worship it—and even to practice other idolatrous rites which were too foul for me to describe. They were tempted to idolatry, so it is not an uncommon temptation. And if you are also tempted in a similar fashion, you must cry to God for Grace to resist and to overcome the temptation.

Are you tried, sometimes, even with that terrible temptation which is mentioned in the verse where Paul says, “*Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed*”? Has strong passion sometimes suggested to you that which your soul abhors? Have you been, at times, forced to the very brink of that dread abyss of uncleanness till you have had to cry with the Psalmist, “My feet were almost gone! My steps had well-near slipped”? Ah, this temptation, also, is not uncommon to men! And even those who live nearest to God and are the most pure in heart sometimes have to blush before the Lord that such evil suggestions should ever come into their minds.

And have you, too, been *tempted* “to tempt Christ, as some of them were also tempted and were destroyed by serpents”? They wanted God to change His plans and purposes concerning them. They found fault with Him and said that He had brought them into the wilderness to destroy them. Do you feel that your present troubles are too severe—that they should not have been sent to you—at least not as many and as heavy as they are? If so and if you feel that you have a cause for complaint against the Most High—and that you want Him to change His methods of dealing with you so as to suit your whims and fancies—alas, sad as such a state of mind is, it is only too “common to man.”

And possibly you may also have been *tempted to murmur*, “as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.” I must withdraw that word, “possibly,” for I am greatly afraid that many professing Christians *do* murmur and that they do not always realize what a gross sin it is to murmur, seeing that it is an act of distinct rebellion against God. But, should you at any time feel a murmuring spirit rising up within your heart, you must not say, “This is a trial which nobody else has ever experienced.” Alas, it is a very human temptation which is exceedingly “common to man.”

So, summing up all that I have been saying and looking around this congregation and upon all of you who know the Lord—although it would be impossible for me to recount all the different forms of temptation and trial through which you have gone, yet this is a matter of fact—“there has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.” We are all in the same boat, Brothers and Sisters, as far as temptation and trial are concerned. We are all warring the same warfare. Your duty may call you to one part of the field and mine may call me to another part, but the bullets whiz by me as well as by you. There is no nook so quiet but it has its own special dangers and there is no Valley of Humiliation so lowly but it has its peculiar temptations. Sins are everywhere! They sit down with

you at your board and they go with you to your bed. Snares are set for you in your home and in the street—in your business and in your recreations. Snares are not absent from your pains and they are abundant in your pleasures. Everywhere and under all circumstances, we must expect to be tried—this experience is common to men! The remembrance that it is so ought to be somewhat of a comfort to us in every time of trial and temptation.

II. But secondly, in our text we have a far better source of comfort than that—it is this—“**BUT GOD IS FAITHFUL.**” There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able.”

“God is faithful.” Oh, how I love those words! They sound in my heart like heavenly music. “GOD is faithful.” You are not faithful, my Brother or Sister—at least I know I am not, in the full sense of the term, faithful—full of faith and faithful. “But”—oh, that blessed “*but*”—“*but* GOD is faithful”! “If we believe not, yet He abides faithful”—always true to every promise He has made—always gracious to every child whom He has adopted into His family—“a very present help in trouble”—preserving us from sinking in our seas of trouble and delivering us from the trouble when it has accomplished the purpose for which it was sent.

“God is faithful”—faithful to that first promise of His which came into your soul when you yielded yourself to Jesus and He whispered to your heart, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Do you remember that promise? And has not the Lord been faithful to it? “God is faithful” also to that promise which He made of old concerning His Son, Jesus Christ—“He shall see His seed.” He has seen His seed in you and He will see you to be His seed forevermore.

“God is faithful” to all His promises! And in your experience, my Brother or Sister, He has been faithful to the promises which met your case in all your changing circumstances. Has He not been faithful? Can you put your finger upon a single page of your diary and say, “God was unfaithful this day”? Your friend who ate bread with you has lifted up his heel against you, but has your God forsaken you? Even your own children have been unkind and ungrateful to you, but has the Lord ever treated you ill? Where you had the most hope among your earthly friends and acquaintances, you have had the most disappointments—but has Jesus ever been a wilderness to you? “All men are liars,” you have said in the bitterness of your spirit when you have trusted in them and they have failed you in the time of trial! But have you ever found Christ false to His Word? Can you not join your testimony with that of all the saints above and the saints below and say with Paul, “God is faithful”?

Even if any of you are looking forward to a dreaded sickness, or to a painful operation, or to business losses which may sink you from your present comfortable position to one of great trial and poverty—think of this blessed Truth of God—“God is faithful.” The whole world may reel to and fro like a drunken man, but the Rock of Ages stands secure! The shooting stars of temporary prosperity may die out in everlasting night,

but God is “the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” “God is faithful.” Whatever your future trials are to be, put this short sweet sentence into your mouth and keep it there as a heavenly lozenge which shall sustain you at all times. Make it also into a jubilant refrain and, as you go on your way, sing again and again, “God is faithful.” Trials and temptations will assail you, “but God is, faithful.” Friends will fail and forsake you, “but God is faithful.” Wealth may be lost and property may vanish, “but God is faithful.” What more do you need than this, soldiers of Christ? Here you have breastplate, helmet, sword, shield, spear—yes, the whole panoply of God!

III. The third comfort for a tried and tempted Believer arises from GOD’S POWER, for Paul says, “God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able.”

God, then, has power to limit temptation! It is clear, from the Book of Job, that Satan could not tempt or try the Patriarch except by Divine permission and, even then, his power was limited. Nor can he tempt us unless God allows him to do so. Although the devil had great power over the elements, so that he brought disaster upon poor Job, yet there was a very definite limit to his chain, even when the Lord let him loose, to a certain extent. And when God set up his barriers, Satan could not go beyond them. You remember that the Lord first said to Satan, concerning His servant Job, “Behold, all that he has is in your power; only upon himself put not forth your hand.” When the devil again intruded himself among the sons of God, the Lord let out more links of his chain, but there was still a most emphatic limit to his power over the Patriarch, “Behold, he is in your hands, but spare his life.” The devil would have liked to kill Job outright, but he could go no further than the Lord allowed him to go and God still has unlimited power over the devil and over every form of temptation or trial that can ever come upon you.

If the Lord appoints for you 10 troubles, He will not suffer them to be increased to eleven. If He ordains that you shall be in trouble for six years, you will not be in it for six years and a day, but when the allotted time has expired, you shall come out of it. Nothing can resist the might of the Omnipotent Jehovah, “who make the clouds His chariot: who walks upon the wings of the wind.” He can put a bit in the mouth of the tempest and rein in the rushing steeds of the storm—and the fiercest of your trials and temptations must feel the force of His overruling and restraining hand! When you are on the dunghill, remember that God is on His Throne. Well did the Psalmist sing, “The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice.” But much more may His own people rejoice because His sovereignty is pledged to defend them! Why, if all the armies of the devil were let loose upon a single saint who felt himself to be weak as a worm and the Lord said to them, “I am his defense and you shall not touch him,” they could not touch him! And he would be able to say with the utmost confidence, “Greater is He that is for me than all that can be against me.” The adversaries of the righteous may rage as much as they will, but they

will have to spend their strength in raging—for that is all they can do against God's people without His express permission!

Not a hair of their head can be scorched by the fires of persecution unless the Lord allows it. The waters of the Red Sea cannot drown them—they march between the watery walls dry shod. The lions cannot devour them—Daniel enjoyed a good night's rest even in the lions' den. Even the waves of the sea become the servitors of the saints, for, "Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights," in preparation for future service for God. All His people are kept by His almighty power! How greatly this ought to comfort you who are sorely tried! Every twig of the rod of correction has been made by God and every stroke of it is counted by Him. There is not a drop more gall in your cup than the Lord has ordained. He has weighed, in the scales of the sanctuary, every ingredient of your medicine and mixed it with all His Infallible skill so that it may produce the cure of all your ills. Should not this make you rejoice in the Lord all the day long, and in the night seasons as well?

IV. Fourthly, not only should tried Believers rejoice in God's power, but they should also rejoice in GOD'S JUDGMENT, for Paul says, "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able."

Who beside God knows how much we are able to are? Our consolation arises from the fact that God knows exactly how much we *can* bear. We have no idea, ourselves, what we can bear. I have many a time heard a person say, "If such-and-such a thing were to happen, it would break my heart and I would die." Well, that very thing has happened, but the person concerned did not break his heart and he did not die! On the contrary, he behaved himself as a Christian in a trial should. God helped him wondrously and he played the man, became more than conqueror and was the brighter and the braver, ever afterwards, for all the affliction through which he had passed. Brother, your own strength, in some respects, is greater than you think and, in other respects, it is less than you think—but God knows just how much you can bear, so leave yourself in His hands!

I have known some people who have wished for trouble—it is a great pity that anybody should be so foolish as that. I remember one who used to think that he was not a child of God because he had not had much trouble. He used to fret all day long because he had nothing really to make him fret! I once heard a woman in the street say to her child who was screaming lustily, "If you cry for nothing, I'll give you something to cry for." So, when a man wants trouble, he will probably get it, but it is a very silly child or man who asks for the rod! Be content to have as little of it as you really must—you will have quite enough of it before you get to Heaven. Do not ask for it—you will have it in due time. God knows, to an ounce, just what His children and His servants can carry and He never overloads them. It is true that He sometimes sends them more trouble than they could have carried by themselves, but then, as He increases the weight of their burden, He also increases the strength of the back upon which He places it!

I have often admired the loving-kindness of the Lord to many of my own flock and have noted the great joy that our young Christians have had for a number of years. I have observed how remarkably God has preserved them from temptation without and from trials within. The Lord does not send His young children out to battle. He does not intend such little boats as these to go far out to sea. He will not overdrive these lambs. Yet the advanced Christians are just as happy as the young people are and they are stronger and more fit for stern service and more able to sympathize with others who are in trouble because of what they have, themselves, passed through. As they have grown stronger, God has given them more fighting to do for Him, while the raw recruits have been kept at home to be drilled and disciplined. You know that when there is a desperate fight being waged and the issue of the battle seems in doubt, the commander orders “the old guard” to the front. That is part of the privilege of being an old guardsman—to go into the hottest place on the field of battle. And it is one of the privileges of the advanced children of God to be tempted more than others and to suffer more than others. If I could have any trial or temptation which, otherwise, would fall upon a young Brother who has only known the Lord a week or two, I would gladly say, “Let me have it.” It might stagger him and I would be sorry for him to be staggered by it, so I will willingly endure it. You tried Believers must not imagine that God does not love you as much as He did in the days of your spiritual youth when He did not test you as He does now. He loves you quite as much as He did then and He trusts you even more than He did then because He has made you stronger than you used to be! He gives you the honor and privilege of marching with the vanguard of His army, or leading the forlorn hope, or standing foot to foot with old Apollyon!

God knows exactly how much temptation or trial you can bear and He will not suffer the trial to go beyond that point. But, mark you, it will go right up to that point, for there is no such thing in the world as faith that runs to waste! For every grain of faith that God gives, He usually gives the equivalent trial of some sort or other, for, if faith could ever be in excess, it would degenerate into fanaticism, or some other unholy thing. If the Lord supplies us at our back door, as it were, with His good treasure, we are to dispose of it in our front shop in our holy trading for Him.

V. Fifthly, our text seems to intimate that GOD HAS IN STORE SOMETHING TO GO WITH OUR TEMPTATIONS—“He will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

You know how you treat your own child. There is a dose of nasty medicine to be taken and the little one does not like it. The very sight of the spoon and cup makes him afraid. But mother says, “Now, Johnny, take this medicine and then you shall have this lump of sugar, or this fruit, to take away the taste of it.” And when God sends a trial or trouble to one of His children, He is sure to have a choice sweetmeat to go with it. I have heard a child say, “I do not mind taking the medicine so long as I get the sugar.” And I have known some of the Lord’s people say, “We will willing-

ly bear sickness, pain, bereavement, temptation and persecution if we may but have our Savior's Presence in it all." Some of us will never forget our experiences in sickness when our pain has been sharpest and worst—it has also been sweetest and best at the same time! What do I not personally owe to the file, the anvil and the hammer in my Master's workshop? I have often said, and I say again that the best piece of furniture in my house is the cross of affliction. I have, long ago, learned to prize it and to praise God for it—and for that which has come to me with it—for I have often found that with the trial the Lord has made a way of escape and that I have been able to bear it.

Even with the temptation to sin, the Lord often sends to the tempted soul such a Revelation of the sinfulness of sin and of the beauty of holiness, that the poison of the temptation is quite neutralized. Even with temporal trials, the Lord often gives temporal mercies. Sometimes, when He has been pleased to take away a man's wealth, He has restored to Him His health and so the man has been a distinct gainer. I have known several instances in which that has occurred. And when one dear child has been taken away out of a family, there has, perhaps, been the conversion of another of the children which has been a wonderful compensation for the trial. And oftentimes trouble has been attended with an unusual delight in the Lord. The Word of God has been peculiarly sweet at such a time and the minister has seemed to preach better than he ever did before—his message exactly fitting your condition just then. You have been surprised to find that the bitterness which came with the trouble has passed away almost before you were aware of it! And, as death is swallowed up in victory, like one bitter drop in a glass of water, so your trouble has been diluted with sweet wine and you have swallowed it and have scarcely tasted its bitterness. Thus the Lord, by His Grace, and Presence, and comfort, has made you so glad that you have hardly known that you have been in such trouble because of the superabounding mercy which came with it! Ought not that comfort us and make us ready for whatever the Lord pleases to send to us or to permit to come upon us?

VI. Now notice, in the last place, that GOD MAKES A WAY OF ESCAPE FOR HIS PEOPLE—"He will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it."

I will read that over again. "He will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape"—"that you may get out of it?" Oh, no!—"That you may not have to endure it"? Oh, no!—"That you may be able to bear it." That is a curious way to escape, is it not? Here is your way of retreat blocked up and the opposing army is in front of you—yet you are to escape. You say to the Lord, "Which way am I to run?" But the Lord replies, "You must not run away. Your way to escape is to cut a road right through your adversaries." That is a singular way to escape, but it is the most glorious way in the whole world. The best way for an army to escape is by conquering its foe. It is not the best way for the pilgrim to go, to the right into the dark mountains, or to the left into the thick forest to escape from

his enemies—the best way for him to escape is to go straight forward, despite all his adversaries—and that is the only right way for you to escape.

Now, beloved Brother or Sister, you may, at this moment, be expecting some very heavy affliction and you have been asking the Lord to make a way of escape for you. You have said, “Oh, that I might not have to come to that hour of trial!” But you *will* have to come to it. “But cannot that dear one’s life be spared?” I hope it may, but it is possible that it may not. “Then how am I to have a way of escape?” Your way of escape is not to avoid the trial, but *to be able to bear it*. What a mercy it is that God, though He will not let His people escape trial, will really let them escape, for this is a way of escape for them and the best way of escape, too! It is a way of escape from all the sin of the temptation and from all the evil of the trial—you must have the trial, but you will only have the beneficial part of it! Brother, you must be plunged into that sea of sorrow, but it will not drown you, it will only wash and cleanse you. Sir, you must go into that fire—your Lord has so ordained it—yet you are going to escape the fire. Do you ask, “How can that be?” Why, thus—none of your gold shall be destroyed, only the dross shall be consumed and you shall be all the purer for passing through the fire! So again I say that this is the very best way to escape, for if we could escape in any other way, we would lose all the benefit of the trial!

What shall I say, then, in closing, but this, Brothers and Sisters? Are you troubled just now and are you inclined to despair? Take wise counsel—the storms that are beating about your boat are only such as beat about your Master’s vessel and the ships and boats in which His Apostles sailed across the sea of old. The storms are not Supernatural—they are not beyond what believers in Jesus are able to bear. Put your vessel’s head to the wind like a brave sailor! Do not try to avoid that fierce blast. Sail in its very teeth, for there is a power within you which can overcome all the winds and the waves, for is not the Lord, Himself, with you as your Captain? And is not the Holy Spirit with you as your Pilot? And have you not a faithful God to trust to in the stormiest night you will ever know? True, your foes are many and mighty, but face them like a man! Have no thought of turning back and flinging away your shield, but resolve, in the mighty power of faith, that since the Lord has said that, “as your days, so shall your strength be,” to the end you shall endure and that, with Job, you will say, “Though He slay me, yet, will I trust, in Him.”

It will not be easy to keep that resolve, yet the Lord deserves that we should keep it. Think of yourself, beloved Brother, in the worst conceivable condition and then know that there is no sufficient reason, even in such a condition as that, for you to doubt your God! Suppose you were brought to your last penny, yet remember that there was a time when you were not worth a penny—a time when you could not put food into your own mouth and could not put on your own garments. You were cast upon God in your first childhood and He took care of you then—and if you grow to be a child again and the infirmities of age increase and mul-

tiply, He who was so good at the beginning will be quite as good at the end! Remember His ancient promise, “Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry and will deliver you.” Such a promise as this, if God the Holy Spirit will bless it, will make the most tried Believer rejoice in the Lord and go on his way defying every foe who may be in his path!

What I cannot understand is what people do who have not a God to trust to. I often go to see poor sick people, full of aches and pains, and it charms me to hear them talk of the goodness of the Lord to them. In talking, this week, with one of our Brothers who is very sick and ill, he spoke with such holy joy and boasting of the Lord’s goodness to him that I could not help saying that it would take a great many infidel arguments to make me doubt the power of true religion after I had listened to him! I like to see God’s tried people dying full of joy, praising and blessing the name of the Lord who is their All-in-All in their most trying hour! It is not so with all of you—then what do you do when trial comes without a God to help you? You have not much of this world’s goods and you have to work hard, yet when you die, you have no Home to go to, you have no hope of going to Heaven. Oh, you poor No-Hopes!

“Oh,” says one, “we are not all poor! Some of us are quite well-to-do.” But you are poor, for all that, even if you have all your heart can wish for here. If you have not a God, where do you carry your troubles and your griefs, for I am sure that you have some? O my dear Friend, may the Lord make you feel that you cannot do without Him! And when your heart has come to this resolve, “I cannot do without my God, I will not try to do without Him. I feel that I must have Him,” then you shall have Him! He waits to be gracious and He has said, “They that seek Me early shall find Me.” May you seek Him now and find Him—and to Him shall be the praise forever and ever! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-13.**

Verses 1-4. *Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ.* You see, then, dear Brothers and Sisters, that the possession of privileges is not everything. Paul would not have us to be ignorant that all those who were with Moses in the wilderness had privileges of a very high order. Did they not all pass through the Red Sea and so escape from their powerful and cruel foes? Did they not all drink of water which gushed forth from the flinty Rock? Were they not all fed with manna from Heaven? Yet their privileges did not save them, for while they had the five privileges mentioned in these four verses, they fell into the five great sins

of which we are about to read. And so their privileges, instead of being a blessing to them, only increased their condemnation!

5, 6. *But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples. Or warnings, for just as they were overthrown in the wilderness, so may we be, notwithstanding all the Gospel privileges which we enjoy, if we are not true Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ! If the life of Christ is not in our souls, all the privileges of the Church of God cannot save us. "These things were our examples."*

6-11. *To the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be you idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur you, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for example. The Apostle has told us that before, but he tells it to us again, to warn us, by these beacons, lest we come to a similar destruction to that which fell on those ancient unbelievers.*

11, 12. *And they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Therefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. We also are to take heed lest we fall, especially those of us who think we are standing securely! You have seen how terrible was the fate of those unbelievers in the wilderness who never entered into Canaan, but left their carcasses in the desert! Now Paul urges us, with such beacons to warn us, to take heed lest we also fall as they did.*

13. *There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. O Lord, fulfill Your gracious purpose unto Your servants! Hold us up, lest we fall! We are very weak! Keep us, for your dear Son's sake! Amen.*

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST

NO. 2572

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 29, 1893.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK,
EARLY IN THE YEAR 1856.**

***“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”
1 Corinthians 10:16.***

THERE is one great difference between Christ, as the Founder of the Christian religion, and all mere men who have attempted to fashion a system of belief. The difference is not merely that Christ's was a true religion and theirs a false one, but there is another distinction. All false prophets have sought to keep their disciples at a distance and to impress upon them not merely a high estimation of their importance, but also a superstitious reverence for their person. Yes, and sometimes altogether putting aside the thought of allowing any of their disciples to hold communion with them. Look at the false prophet, Mohamed, and you will see how he kept himself aloof from his disciples. He taught them to regard him as something superior to themselves. And the caliphs, to this day, and all those who take to themselves the titles of his successors, endeavor to invest themselves with solemn pomp and state. They forbid all to approach them without certain salaams and salutations—they never allow their followers to hold fellowship with them.

It was also so with the old Pagan priests. They bade the worshippers fall down before them, but they never permitted them to come near to them and hold fellowship with them. They were for driving the people away and, in fact, the whole system of their religion depended upon the eminence of one who kept himself distinct from every other man. They were to be looked up to as a god, being regarded as a personage above all the rest, with whom they might, on no pretense whatever, hold any communion at all! Look at the “Pope,” that great antichrist and false prophet! Does he encourage any to stand on friendly terms with him? Is he at all times accessible? Ah, no! He surrounds himself with cardinals and bishops and keeps himself distinct from others. It must not be expected that a “Pope” is to be seen by everybody, nor can it be supposed that he should herd with common men. It is very much the same with the bishops of another church that we know. How they labor to put men away from them with their pomp, their tinsel, their gewgaws, and their parade!

Christ, as the great Founder of a new dispensation, revealed the idea of communion with Himself on the part of everyone of His disciples and, today, instead of endeavoring to keep His followers at a distance, He is always striving to bring them near to Him. He blames them not for familiarity, but because they are not familiar enough! He does not praise them because they stand at a respectful distance, but He praises Enoch because he walks with God. And He loves John because he lays his head on the bosom of his Savior. Christ, our Master, loves to have all His followers live near Him! He loves to have them in sympathy with Him. He loves to make them feel that while He is their superior and their King, He is also as their fellow, bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh, in ties of blood, one with them! One objective of Christ's religion is to bring all His disciples into union and communion with its great Founder that they may have fellowship with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

Our present subject is the Doctrine of Fellowship with Christ. We think there are four degrees of fellowship with Christ. The first is *the fellowship of communion*. The second, *the fellowship of sympathy*. The third, *the fellowship of unity*. And the fourth will be *the fellowship of Heaven*.

I. The first grade of communion with Christ is that with which all Believers commence, and without which they cannot attain to any other. It is THE FELLOWSHIP OF COMMUNION.

Probably a large proportion of those here who love the Savior will not be able to go much farther with me than with regard to the fellowship of communion. Let me explain myself. I meet with one or two of you, I talk with you, we discourse with one another. In Scripture phraseology it might be said, we "commune with each other," "we hold communion with one another." So, Beloved, there are times when Christ and His people meet—when He talks to them and they talk to Him and so, "commune with Him." That is the fellowship of communion. Let me show you how we enter into it.

We enjoy this kind of communion when, by *faith*, we lay hold of Christ and when Christ, in honoring faith, lays hold of us. And when, under sorrows and troubles, we go and tell our Master what our sorrows and troubles are. We are talking with Him while He cheers us, reminds us of His promises, speaks to our heart with that sweet voice which lays our fears in their graves and makes our tears to dry. It is then that we hold with Him a fellowship of communion—the communion of faith. Mark you, this is no mean attainment, to be able to take Christ's arm, to command His ear, to possess His heart and to feel that when our lips speak to Him, His lips reply to us. It is only by His Grace that when we look at Him and are lightened, that lightening comes from the fact that He looks at us—and that we are cheered by knowing that the reason of our cheerfulness is because His right hand is under our head and His left hand embraces us.

It is a privilege for which angels might barter their crowns, to be allowed to talk with Christ as Faith does, for Faith asks of Christ and Christ gives to Faith! Faith pleads promises and Christ fulfills promises!

Faith rests wholly upon Christ and Christ lays all His honor upon the head of Faith and is content to let Faith wear His own diadem. Yes, He uncrowns Himself to put His crown upon the head of Faith! You young Believers know how sweet it is, by holy assurance, to come near your Master. You put your hand into His side and you say, "My Lord, and my God." You know what it is to throw your arms around Him and to receive that gracious smile from Him, without which your spirits could not rest. That is the communion of faith, the communion which we have by faith in Jesus Christ.

There is, too, a communion in *prayer* which is called the communion of conversation, for, in prayer, what do I do? If I pray aright, I talk to God! And if I pray with faith, what does Christ do, but talk with me? In prayer, the heart of man empties itself before God and then Christ empties His heart out to supply the needs of His poor believing child. In prayer, we confess to Christ our needs and He reveals to us His fullness. We tell Him our sorrows, He tells us His joys. We tell Him our sins, He shows to us His righteousness. We tell Him the dangers that lie before us, He tells us of the shield of Omnipotence with which He can and will guard us. *Prayer talks with God*, yes, it walks with Him and he who is much in prayer will hold very much fellowship with Jesus Christ.

Then, again, there is a fellowship of communion which we derive from *meditation*. When we sit down and in thought see Christ in Gethsemane, and witness the blood-red drops wetting the soil. When we look upon Him shamed, spit upon, mocked and buffeted. When we view Him on Golgotha and hear His death-shriek startling the darkness—then our heart goes out after Him and we love Him. While He holds up His hands and says, "These were pierced for you," we hold up our hearts and say, "Here are our hearts, Lord, take and seal them; they are Yours because bought with Your precious blood."

Have you never felt the sweet communion of meditation? Many Christians know little about it. They have so much occupation, such a perpetual whirl of business, that they have not half-an-hour to spend in meditation upon God. Beloved, you will never hold much personal communion with the Savior unless you have a place where you can sit down and—

***"View the flowing
Of His soul-redeeming blood,
With Divine assurance knowing
That He made your peace with God."***

You cannot expect to talk much to Christ unless your mind is freed from the cares of earth. Oh, 'tis then that Christ descends and talks with His children—and gives us sweet communion with Him—and fellowship in meditation on His sufferings! Children of God, you know this! All of you who are His people have had some taste of this communion of conversation with God. You know much more of it than I can tell. Alas! Alas, that the great majority of the people of God are far enough from understanding even this first and faintest form of communion with Jesus Christ!

Let me make one or two remarks here, before we pass away from this communion of conservation. I would not have you despise this fellowship because you have not attained to the rest I am about to mention, but, dear Friends, take care that you hold communion with Christ. There is a ladder between the Believer's soul and Heaven—mind that you tread its rungs very often. There is a road between Mansoul and the Celestial City—let the track be hard-beaten with the hoofs of the steeds of prayer! Let the chariots of praise whirl along the highway to Glory! Do not let your Jesus live a day without a line from you—and do not be happy if you live a day without a word from Him! I marvel at some professors who can live weeks and months quite satisfied without holding this fellowship with Christ. What? A wife happy if her husband smiles not on her? And is not Christ my Husband and shall I be blessed, shall I be easy, if He shuts His mouth and speaks not a word to me? Can I be content if I have not one smile all day long? Is Christ my Brother and shall I be willing to live without the assurance of my Brother's love to me? Can I be content to pass a week without knowing that my Brother's heart is still beating with affection towards me? Verily, Christians, I marvel at you! And angels marvel, too, that you can be so foolish, so stolid, so stone-like, as to live days beyond number without holding even this most common of all communions with our Lord Jesus Christ!

Stir yourselves up, Beloved! You have a ticket to admit you to the King's Palace—why do you not enter? You have an invitation to the wedding feast—why do you not go? You have constant access to the banqueting house—why do you not go and feast on Divine Love? There are the “apples of gold in baskets of silver”—why do you not go and take them? There is Christ's open heart! There are His open hands! His open eyes! His open ears! Will you not go to Him who stands ready and waiting to bless you? And you, too, poor Sinner—I have often thought that a true description of Christ on the Cross would be a fine sermon to illustrate that hymn—

“Come and welcome, Sinner come!”

Do you not see the Savior there? He has His arms stretched out, as though He had them wide open to take a big sinner in. There are His hands nailed fast, as if they intended to wait there till you were brought to Him! His head is hanging down, as if He had stooped to kiss you. And there are His feet pouring out streams of blood, as if His very blood would run after you, if you would not come after Him! Verily, if you saw Christ by faith, each bleeding wound and quivering atom of His body would say to you—

“Come and welcome, Sinner, come!”

Much more do they say to *you*, beloved children of God, “Come to your Savior and hold this fellowship of conversation with Jesus Christ your Lord.”

II. Now we have done with the lowest grade of fellowship and we pass on to another—THE FELLOWSHIP OF SYMPATHY.

Let me tell you what I mean by this expression. I said before that if we meet two or three friends and converse together, that is communion. But

there was one friend there who had a lofty project in hand and, though I talked to him, I did not share his views and I did not wish to see his project accomplished. Therefore I did not enjoy such deep communion with him as I might otherwise have done. Another of my friends was exceedingly sick, but I was not suffering, just then, so that when he spoke of his illness, I could not commune with him as fully as I could have wished to do. There was Another who was upbraided, scorned and spit upon—but I was not assailed in the same way and, therefore, I had only partial communion with Him and that not of the deepest kind. I could not say that I had complete fellowship with Him in His sufferings. But, Christians, some of you have climbed another step on the heavenly ladder of communion—you have come to hold communion with Christ in sympathy!

Here I must divide this head of my discourse into two or three points. Some of us have known what it is to hold communion with Christ in sympathy when we have *suffered just like Christ*. Did you ever find a friend fail you—a friend of whom you expected far better things, at whose table you had often sat, who had walked to the House of God with you—and with whom you had held sweet converse? Did you not find him, all of a sudden, unaccountably lifting up his heel against you and doing all he could to bring despite and injury to you? Did you not press your hand to your burning brow and say, “Ah! Christ had His Judas and now I can hold communion with Christ, because my friend has deserted me, too. And I can sympathize with Christ in the desertion of men”?

Did you ever have a false report spread about you? Possibly, somebody said you were “a drunk and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.” Or, perhaps, someone said that on such-and-such a night you committed such-and-such an act. Or, if they could not stain your character by charging you with immorality, they said that you were insane! And did not your spirit, at first, beat high with passion as you thought that you would answer the calumny? But, in a moment, you put your hand to your heart, as you said, “Ah! He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.” And did you not sit down and say, “Now I can hold fellowship with Christ in my reproaches. Now I can bear a part in the brunt of the battle. Now I can feel as He did, when He, too, was oppressed by wicked men”?

Some of you, also, have been exceedingly poor. Here and there, one could say, “I have not a place where to lay my head,” and looking down on your ragged garments, you may have thought, “Ah, now I know how Jesus felt when He said, ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head.’ And so,” you thought, “I am holding the fellowship of sympathy with Him in His poverty.”

There was a time, too, *when you prayed and received no answer*—your agonized spirit went backward and forward many times while you cried

to God, but no reply came. In the intensity of your importunity, you could almost have “sweat, as it were, great drops of blood,” as Jesus did! Yet God did not answer you. Rising from your knees, you only rose to fall down upon them, again, and, at last, you clasped your hands in agony and said, “O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless not as I will, but as You will.” And you started up, for you thought you heard your Lord say those words in tones of deeper woe and greater agony than you had ever dreamed of! And you said, “Ah! I, in my humble measure, have held fellowship with Him whose bloody sweat has made Him always memorable, and whose agony in Gethsemane helped to make Him my Savior.”

And, perhaps, too, you have known what it is, at times, to lose the sight of the Countenance of God. You have said, “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! That I might come, even, to His seat!” Your heart melted with agony because God seemed to frown on you. Your prayers were rejected. You had no light of His Countenance. You had no peace, no light, no love, no joy, no God—and you cried, “My God! My God! Why have You forsaken me?” And then you remembered that Christ said those words, too, and that you were holding communion of *sympathy* with Him, for you were feeling just as He felt—you had entered into a part of His agony, you had drunk some drops of the awful cup which He drained to its dregs, you had dived a little into the sea without a bottom, into which Christ plunged—you had the fellowship of sympathy, for you suffered with Him.

That is the most wonderful fellowship in the world, the fellowship of fellow-suffering. Those two holy martyrs who were burned at Oxford have this link forever between them because they were burned in the same fire. Oh, what sweet fellowship they had because they were to die together! Nothing makes us love Christ like feeling the same whip on our shoulder which Christ had on His, to be pierced with the same nails, to be spit upon by the same mouths and to suffer, though in a very humble degree, the same kind of sufferings which Christ Himself endured! O wondrous Grace, that we should be allowed to share in our body the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Some of us are not called to suffer so much as to serve. And we, too, have our *communion with Christ in labor*. See the Sunday school teacher who takes the little children on his knee as he teaches them. Though some laugh, he seems to say, as did his Lord, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.” There is the same spirit in the servant as there was in his Master—and he is holding communion with Christ in labor! See the faithful evangelist. He is in an open field and he is preaching to the people with hands uplifted and with an earnestness that makes him eloquent. Look! He has concluded. He feels a sweet stillness in his soul. He knows not the reason of it, but it is because he has been having communion with Christ and has felt, in a measure, as Christ did, when we have wept over your poor dying souls. When, on our bended knees we have asked God for your salvation. When we have

groaned and cried to bring you near to God. When, with most impassioned supplication we have wrestled for your souls—then, Beloved, we think we have had some communion with Christ, for —

**“Cold mountains and the midnight air
Witnessed the fervor of His prayer.”**

He, too, wept over Jerusalem and said, “If you had known, even you, at least in this, your day, the things which belong unto your peace but now they are hid from your eyes.” Laboring Christians have sympathy with Christ and when they work with might and main, with good intentions, with earnest desires, with cries and tears, they can say, “O Lord, we have entered into fellowship with You!”

So too, we have fellowship with Christ, a heavenly *fellowship of desire*, when we neither suffer nor work with Him, but yet sympathize with Him. Perhaps you are not often sick, but you often feel a fellowship of compassionate pity and love. You are not persecuted—you almost wish you were. Perhaps you have very little talent and you cannot labor for Christ, but you have sometimes said, as you have trodden the way to this Chapel, “What would I not give to see sinners saved? Oh, I think I would be willing to die if I might but have my son and my daughter converted to God.” Do you know that, just at that moment, you were holding communion with Christ, for you felt just as Christ did, who loved us with a love so pure and so perfect, that He gave up His body to death that He might redeem us from Hell? You have, perhaps, also said to Jesus, sometimes, “I have but little that I can give to You but—

**‘Had I ten thousand hearts, dear Lord,
I’d give them all to Thee!
Had I ten thousand tongues, they all
Should join the harmony.’”**

Ah, you had fellowship with Christ, then, for you desired to do all that you could for the extension of His Kingdom!

I will show how we hold *fellowship with Christ in our designs*. You see two men in a court of justice. One man stands there to be tried—there is every probability that he will be condemned. There is a person in court who is about to plead—he is a barrister, but, besides that, he is a friend of the prisoner. The man is being tried for his life. Do you see the awful agony on his face? But up rises his advocate and you notice that as he pleads, he turns his eyes towards the prisoner at the bar. And when he sees the tears start from the poor man’s eyes, out comes an eloquent period! There is a sigh just heaved by the culprit—look how the counselor waxes hot. The prisoner begins to weep excessively and hides his face. Do you notice how the advocate gets more fiery and more zealous as he proceeds, and how much more pathetic his speech becomes, and how earnestly he pleads as his tongue is set at liberty? Why is that? Because he is in fellowship with the poor man! He feels for him! He is not *talking to him*—that would only be the fellowship of conversation—he is *feeling* with him and their hearts are near akin. Even supposing they have not seen each other before, if they feel for one another, they are nearer akin than blood-relationship could make them!

Beloved, when you see a minister pleading with souls as if he were pleading for himself. When you hear him contending for Jesus Christ's Divinity as much as if he were contending for his own honor, that minister is holding communion with Christ! And when you see a saint speaking to a poor sinner of the Redeemer's death and pointing to his wounds, why, every drop of Calvary's blood seems to make the man speak more eloquently and every groan he thinks he hears makes him urge his plea in more desperate earnestness with men! This, Beloved, is sympathy with Christ, fellowship with Him—and that I call a higher grade of communion than the fellowship of conversation. I hope some of you have arrived at it. If you have, you will be more useful than those who only understand the fellowship of conversation. God grant to us all the fellowship of fellow-feeling, the fellowship of *sympathy with Christ!*

III. The third point is THE FELLOWSHIP OF UNITY.

Do you see this hand? Do you see this brow? This hand and this brow are more nearly allied together than my brother's heart and mine, although he loves me with all his heart and would plead for me even to the death. But this hand and this brow have not only a communion of fellow-feeling, they have the *same* feeling. The members of the body have positively the same feeling—so Christ's mystical members feel the same emotion as He does.

You ask, "Do Christians ever arrive at this stage of fellowship?" Yes, certainly they do—the Supper of the Lord was intended to set forth that highest grade of communion which Christians ever hold with their Master here below. It is not a communion with Him in His sufferings, it is not a communion with Him in His service, but it is *a communion with Himself*. You Believers are invited *spiritually* to eat the flesh of Christ, and *spiritually* to drink His blood—and that is a nearer, clearer fellowship than any of which we have spoken of before because it brings you into positive unity with Him. It makes you feel that you are not only pleading for Him as your Friend, but that you are a *part of Him*, a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. Many hearers of the Gospel do not understand this great mystery. Some even think it is profanity to talk of this oneness with Christ. It *would* be the very height of profanity for a man to say, "I am one with Christ," if the Scripture did not warrant him in saying so! To call oneself, "a friend of God," would be blasphemous presumption—but Scripture says that Believers *are* His friends and, therefore, there is no blasphemy in repeating the declaration.

Some may think it is absurd to talk of our being "one with the Savior." It is not absurd, because it is Scriptural. We *are* so and we feel, when we drink the wine, that the blood of the Savior is spiritually in our veins, as well as in His—that we are brethren in ties of blood. I hope we shall be able to say that we were one with Him when He died, one with Him when He rose, one with Him when He triumphed over the grave, one with Him when He ascended up on high, one with Him, now, and one with Him eternally! I believe that not a few of us will get so near to Christ that we shall not only lay our heads on His bosom, but shall do more than that—

we shall not put our heart *against* His heart, but right *into* His heart—and we shall feel as much one with Christ as the little drop of dew is with the stream into which it falls. I hope we shall be as much a portion of Christ, while we sit around the Communion Table, as the particle of flesh is of the body and shall feel that each pulse that beats in Him also throbs through our frame—that the blood of Christ runs through our veins! That each sigh we heave, He heaves, and that each groan we utter, He utters! I hope we shall hear Him say—

***“I feel at My heart all your sighs and your groans,
For you are most near Me, My flesh and My bones.
In all your distresses your Head feels the pain,
Yet all are most needful, not one is in vain,”***

Beyond this, the Christian cannot survive on earth! It is the highest style of communion, till—

***“That happy hour of full discharge
Shall set his ransomed soul at large!
Unbind his soul and drop his clay,
And speed is wings far, far away”—***

up where Christ dwells!

And there, Beloved, we shall know communion with Christ in a sense which only folly will labor to depict, for wisdom’s self knows nothing of it! There at His feet we will sit and on His breast we will lean! There from His lips will we hear sweet music, from His mouth we will breathe perpetual balm, from His eyes we will draw Divine Light! We will press His hand inside these palms. We will kiss Him with these very lips. We will put ourselves within His arms we will abide all day close by our Beloved. We will talk with Him. We will be with Him wherever He goes. And He shall lead His sheep “unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

IV. This fellowship, of which I have been speaking, is a steppingstone to that best, that beatified fellowship which we shall have in a few more years—THE FELLOWSHIP OF HEAVEN.

O Christians do you ever imagine how sweet it will be to be with your Lord? I sometimes think to myself—Oh, how strange it will seem, to have a crown upon this head, to have sandals of gold on these feet, to have a vesture of white on this poor body, to have rings of everlasting love decorating these fingers, to have a harp, over which my delighted fingers shall run, making it emit the sweetest melody in praise of Jesus! And to have a throne on which to sit to judge the tribes of Israel. To have songs more melodious than music ever evoked, perpetually rolling from my lips! To have my heart brimful of bliss and my soul baptized in love and glory! Above, beneath, around, within, without, EVERYWHERE, it is Heaven! I breathe Heaven, I drink Heaven, I feel Heaven, I think Heaven, everything is Heaven!

Oh, “what must it be to be there?” To be there is to be with Christ! Wait but a little while, Dearly-Beloved, and you shall realize what Paul meant when He said, “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with

hands, eternal in the heavens.” Soon, World, I shall say farewell to you! Soon, beloved Friends, I shall, for the last time, shake hands with you! Soon, these eyes shall see their last dim mists, there last tears shall have been wiped away forever! My last sighs shall have been wafted away by the breath of God and there, ah, there! God knows how soon, there—

***“Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in”***

—I shall be with Him forever!

Do you believe that concerning yourselves, my dear Christian Brothers and Sisters? Then, why are you afraid to die? Why are you so often fearing? What? Men and women, Brothers and Sisters, do you believe that in a few more days you will be in Heaven—and see all you love and all you live for here below? Do you believe that in a few more months or years, you will clasp your Savior and be blessed forever? Why, Beloved, it is enough to make you leap for joy and clap your hands in ecstasy! What? You are troubled? You are desponding? No, go your way, eat your bread with joy, be happy all your life, for you know that your Redeemer lives and though after your flesh, worms shall destroy this body, yet in your flesh you shall see God!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31.**

Verses 12, 13. *For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, whether we are bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.* Oh, what a sacred oneness that is which subsists between all the Lord’s people! We are not simply Brothers and Sisters, but we are one! We are not allied by affinity, but by actual identity! We are parts of the same body. We are brought into spiritual membership with each other as real and as effectual as that membership which subsists between the various parts of the body. Yet we are not all alike, although we are all of one body. Some are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are bond, some are free. And yet, in some things, we are all alike, for we have all been baptized by one Spirit. And, moreover, we have all been made to drink into one Spirit—we have had one spiritual baptism, and we have had one spiritual drinking. Would to God that we felt more one, that our hearts beat more in tune with each other, that we had a sympathy with each other in woes and sufferings, that we had a fellow feeling with all who love the Lord and could at all times weep with those that weep, as well as rejoice with those that rejoice

14, 15. *For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body—is it, therefore, not of the body? Do not be comparing yourself with others and saying, “Ah, if I were such-and-such a person, I might then think myself to be part of Christ’s body.” No, you might not, even if you were just like he. As there are only certain members of a sort in a man’s body, so, by a parity of reasoning,*

there would not be more than a certain number of members alike in the mystical body. We do not imagine that there will be many members of this body, the Church, of one class, or of one character—so that, if you are different from others, you are fulfilling a different office in the body. You may, from that fact, draw an inference of comfort rather than one of sorrow and despondency. Even should you say, “Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, are you therefore not of the body?” Oh, no! You are still of the body, even though you do not think that you are.

16, 17. *And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?* If we were all preachers. If we could all see into God’s Truth and set it forth in a public manner, where should we get our congregations?

17. *If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?* There must be different members to fill different offices. If we were all so one that there was no distinction, whatever. If we were all of one rank, all of one age, all of one standing, the body would be incomplete.

18-21. *But now has God set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it has pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of you: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.* Brothers and Sisters, you sometimes think there are some belonging to the Church whom we could well spare. But there is not one superfluous member in the whole body! If they are truly united to Christ, they have all their offices, all their places. There is not a poor old woman who has not been able to get up to the House of Prayer for several years, who is not of some use to the Church, for she lies upon her bed and there she intercedes with God! There is not a member of the Church so humble, so illiterate, so uninstructed, that he or she may not be of essential service to the whole body. There is some little part, my Brother or Sister, which you are to take in the great Church of Christ. You may not be always able to tell what it may be, but still there is a place for you to fill! There is a linchpin in a chariot—who thinks much about or thanks that pin? Indeed, it is so very small and insignificant, who would imagine it is necessary to the locomotion or speed? The wheels carry it around, but who would suppose that if it were taken away, the wheel would fly off? Perhaps you are like one of these little linchpins which keep the wheel right. You may not know what use you are, but, possibly, you prevent someone else from turning aside. Let us each keep in our station, endeavoring, God helping us, to exert the influence which He has given us.

22-24. *No, much more, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: and those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need but God both tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked.* A moment’s thought will

tell you that those parts of our frame which are most tender are the most necessary parts; and those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these, by clothing them more than other parts, we bestow more abundant honor. And our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness, for our comely parts have no need of being covered and, therefore, we leave them exposed.

25. *That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care, one for another.* We have heard this text urged by some who are in the Church of England as a proof that we are wrong in departing from it. They tell us that there should be no schism in the body. We beg to tell them that there *is* no schism in the body that we know of! We do not belong to their body and, therefore, we make no schism in that body—we are quite clear of them. We have neither stick, nor stone, nor part, nor lot in their State Establishment! Therefore we do not create a schism in the body. When they divide themselves into Puseyites and Evangelicals, they make a schism in their own body, but, as long as we are all united, as long as the members of a church walk together in unity, there is no schism in the body. We are different bodies altogether! They say that a schismatic is one who departs *from* a Church, and makes a rent *from* it. By no means! A schismatic is one who makes a rent *in* it, not *from* it. We, I say, are not schismatics. Those who are in the Church of England and yet do not agree with its fundamental principles and its Articles of Faith, they are schismatics! But we are not.

26. *And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.* Is that true of our churches? I am afraid not. The members of the one Church of Christ have not been brought to that unity of feeling and sympathy which they ought to have.

26-30. *Or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ and members in particular. And God has set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? God intended that there should be different offices in His Church. Let us look on each other as being different and yet united in the common faith of Christ.*

31. *But covet earnestly the best gifts.* I would not wish you, Brothers, to repress your aspirations after these blessings. I am most anxious that you should earnestly desire and seek to possess a large share of all these spiritual endowments.

31. *And yet show I unto you a more excellent way.* Which is, holding the Truth of God in love and walking in charity, one toward another.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY
TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

COMMUNION WITH CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE NO. 3295

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 1912.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT A COMMUNION SERVICE AT MENTONE,
ON A LORD'S-DAY AFTERNOON IN DECEMBER, 1882.**

***“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”
1 Corinthians 10:16, 17.***

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon on verse 16 is #2572, Volume 44—
FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST—
read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

I will read you the text as it is given in the Revised Version—“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ?” That is to say, is it not one form of expressing the communion of the blood of Christ? “The bread,” or as it is in the margin, “the loaf which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ seeing that we, who are many, are one loaf, one body: for we all partake of the one loaf.” The word, “loaf,” helps to bring out more clearly the idea of unity intended to be set forth by the Apostle .

It is a lamentable fact that some have fancied that this simple ordinance of the Lord's Supper has a certain magical, or at least physical power about it, so that by the mere act of eating and drinking this bread and wine, men can be made partakers of the body and blood of Christ! It is marvelous that so plain a symbol should have been so complicated by genuflection, adornments and technical phrases! Can anyone see the slightest resemblance between the Master's sitting down with the 12 and the “mass” of the Roman community? The original rite is lost in the superimposed ritual! Superstition has produced a sacrament where Jesus intended a fellowship. Too many who would not go the length of Rome, yet speak of this simple feast as if it were a dark and obscure mystery. They employ all manner of hard words to turn the children's bread into a stone! It is not the Lord's Supper, but the “Eucharist.” We see before us no plate, but a “paten.” The cup is a “chalice,” and the table is an “altar.” These are incrustations of superstition, whereby the blessed ordinance of Christ is likely to be again overgrown and perverted!

What does this Supper mean? It means communion—communion with Christ, communion with one another!

What is communion? The word breaks up easily into union, and its prefix *com*, which means *with*, “union with.” We must, therefore, first en-

joy union with Christ and with His Church or else we cannot enjoy communion. Union lies at the basis of communion. We must be one with Christ in heart, soul and life—baptized into His death, quickened by His life—and so brought to be members of His body, one with the whole Church of which He is the Head. We cannot have communion with Christ until we are in union with *Him*. And we cannot have communion with the Church till we are in vital union with it.

I. The teaching of the Lord's Supper is just this—that while we have many ways of COMMUNION WITH CHRIST, yet the receiving of Christ into our souls as our Savior is the best way of communion with Him.

I said, dear Friends, that we have many ways of communion with Christ. Let me show you that it is so.

Communion is ours by *personal union* with the Lord Jesus. We speak with Him in prayer, and He speaks with us through the Word. Some of us speak more often with Christ than we do with wife or child—and our communion with Jesus is deeper and more thorough than our fellowship with our nearest friend. In meditation and its attendant thanksgiving we speak with our risen Lord. And by His Holy Spirit He answers us by creating fresh thought and emotion in our minds. I like sometimes, in prayer, when I do not feel that I can say anything, just to sit still and look up—then faith spiritually catches sight of the Well-Beloved and hears His voice in the solemn silence of the mind. Thus we have union with Jesus of a closer sort than any words could possibly express. Our soul melts beneath the warmth of Jesus' love and darts upward her own love in return. Think not that I am dreaming, or am carried off by the memory of some unusual rhapsody—no, I assert that the devout soul can converse with the Lord Jesus all day and can have as true fellowship with Him as if He still dwelt bodily among men! This thing comes to me, not by the hearing of the ears, but by my own personal experience—I know of a surety that Jesus manifests Himself unto His people as He does not unto the world!

Ah, what sweet communion often exists between the saint and the Well-Beloved, when there is no bread and wine upon the table, for the Spirit Himself draws the heart of the renewed one and it runs after Jesus, while the Lord, Himself, appears unto the longing spirit! “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” Do *you* enjoy this charming union?

Next, we have communion with Christ *in His thoughts, views and purposes*, for His thoughts are our thoughts according to our capacity and sanctity. Believers take the same view of matters as Jesus does—that which pleases Him pleases them, and that which grieves Him grieves them, also. Consider, for instance, the greatest theme of our thought, and see whether our thoughts are not like those of Christ. He delights in the Father, He loves to glorify the Father—do not we? Is not the Father the center of our soul's delight? Do we not rejoice at the very sound of His name? Does not our spirit cry, “Abba Father”? Thus it is clear that we feel as Jesus feels towards the Father and so we have the truest communion with Him. This is but one instance—your contemplations

will bring before you a wide variety of topics wherein we think with Jesus. Now, identity of judgment, opinion and purpose forms the highway of communion—yes, it is *communion*.

We have also communion with Christ *in our emotions*. Have you never felt a holy horror when you have heard a word of blasphemy in the street? Thus Jesus felt when He saw sin and bore it in His own Person—only He felt it infinitely more than you do. Have you never felt, as you looked upon sinners, that you must weep over them? Those are holy tears and contain the same ingredients as those which Jesus shed when He lamented over Jerusalem. Yes, in our zeal for God, our hatred of sin, our detestation of lies, our pity for men, we have true communion with Jesus.

Further, we have had fellowship with Christ *in many of our actions*. Have you ever tried to teach the ignorant? This Jesus did. Have you found it difficult? So Jesus found it. Have you strived to reclaim the backslider? Then you were in communion with the Good Shepherd who hastens into the wilderness to find the one lost sheep—finds it, lays it upon His shoulders and brings it home rejoicing! Have you ever watched over a soul night and day with tears? Then you have had communion with Him who has borne all our names upon His broken heart and carries the memorial of them upon His pierced hands! Yes, in acts of self-denial, liberality, benevolence and piety, we enter into communion with Him who went about doing good. Whenever we try to disentangle the snarls of strife and to make peace between men who are at enmity, then are we doing what the great Peacemaker did and we have communion with the Lord and Giver of peace! Wherever, indeed, we co-operate with the Lord Jesus in His designs of love to men, we are in true and active communion with Him.

So it is *with our sorrows*. Certain of us have had large fellowship with the Lord Jesus in affliction. “Jesus wept.” He lost a friend and so have we. Jesus grieved over the hardness of men’s hearts—we know that grief. Jesus was exceedingly sorry that the hopeful young man turned away and went back to the world—we know that sorrow. Those who have sympathetic hearts and live for others readily enter into the experience of “the Man of Sorrows.” The wounds of calumny, the reproaches of the proud, the venom of the bigoted, the treachery of the false and the weakness of the true—we have known in our measure and therein have had communion with Jesus.

Nor this only—we have been with our Divine Master *in His joys*. I suppose there never lived a happier man than the Lord Jesus. He was rightly called, “the Man of Sorrows,” but He might with unimpeachable truth have been called “the Man of Joys.” He must have rejoiced as He called His disciples and they came to Him—as He bestowed healing and relief and gave pardon to penitents, and breathed peace on Believers. His was the joy of finding the sheep and taking the piece of money out of the dust. His work was His joy—such joy that for its sake He endured the Cross, despising the shame! The exercise of benevolence is joy to loving

hearts—the more pain it costs, the more joy it is. Kind actions make us happy and in such joy we find communion with the great heart of Jesus.

Thus have I given you a list of windows of agate and gates of carbuncle through which you may come at the Lord. But *the ordinance of the Lord's Supper sets forth a way which surpasses them all*. It is the most accessible and the most effectual method of fellowship. Here it is that we have fellowship with the Lord Jesus by receiving Him as our Savior. We, being guilty, accept of His Atonement as our sacrificial cleansing and in token thereof, we eat this bread and drink this cup. "Oh," says one, "I do not feel that I can get near to Christ. He is so high and holy—and I am only a poor sinner." Just so. For that very reason you can have fellowship with Christ in that which lies nearest to His heart! He is a Savior and to be a Savior there must be a sinner to be saved! Be you that one, and Christ and you shall at once be in union and communion—He shall save and you shall be saved! He shall sanctify and you shall be sanctified—and two shall thus be one! This Table sets before you His great Sacrifice. Jesus has offered it—will you accept it? He does not ask you to bring anything—no drop of blood, no pang of flesh—all is here and your part is to come and partake of it, even as of old the offerer partook of the peace offering which he had brought and so feasted with God and with the priest. If you work for Christ, that will certainly be some kind of fellowship with Him, but I tell you that the communion of receiving Him into your inmost soul is the nearest and closest fellowship possible to mortal man! The fellowship of service is exceedingly honorable when we and Christ work together for the same objectives! The fellowship of suffering is exceedingly instructive, when our heart has engraved upon it the same characters as were engraved upon the heart of Christ. But still, the fellowship of the soul which receives Christ and is received by Christ is closer, more vital, more essential than any other! Such fellowship is eternal! No power upon earth can henceforth take from me the piece of bread which I have just now eaten! It has gone where it will be made up into blood, nerve, muscle and bone. It is *within* me, and *of* me. That drop of wine has coursed through my veins and is part and parcel of my being! So he that takes Jesus by faith to be his Savior has chosen the good part which shall not be taken away from him. He has received Christ into his inward parts and all the men on earth, and all the devils in Hell cannot extract Christ from him! Jesus said, "He that eats Me, even he shall live by Me." By our sincere reception of Jesus into our hearts, an indissoluble union is established between us and the Lord—and this manifests itself in mutual communion. To as many as received Him, to them has He given this communion, even to them that believe on His name!

II. I have now to look at another side of communion, namely, THE FELLOWSHIP OF TRUE BELIEVERS WITH EACH OTHER. We have many ways of communing, the one with the other, but there is no way of mutual communing like the common reception of the same Christ in the same way! I have said that there are many ways in which Christians commune with one another—and these doors of fellowship I would mention at some length.

Let me go over much the same ground as before. We commune *by holy converse*. I wish we had more of this. Time was when they that feared the Lord spoke often, one to another. I am afraid that now they more often speak one *against* another. It is a grievous thing that full often love lies bleeding by a brother's hand. Where we are not quite so bad as that, yet we are often backward and silent—and so miss profitable converse. Our clannish reserve has often made one Christian sit by another in utter isolation, when each would have been charmed with the other's company. Children of one family need not wait to be introduced to each other—having eaten of this one bread, we have given and received the token of brotherhood. Let us therefore act consistently with our relationship and fall into holy conversation next time we meet! I am afraid that Christian brotherhood in many cases begins and ends inside the place of worship. Let it not be so among us! Let it be our delight to find our society in the circle of which Jesus is the center and let us make them our friends who are the friends of Jesus. By frequent united prayer and praise, and by ministering, the one to the other, the things which we have learned by the Spirit, we shall have fellowship with each other in our Lord Jesus Christ!

I am sure that all Christians have fellowship together in their *thoughts*. In the essentials of the Gospel we think alike—in our thoughts of God, of Christ, of sin, of holiness, we keep in step. In our intense desire to promote the Kingdom of our Lord we are as one. All spiritual life is one. The thoughts raised by the Spirit of God in the soul of men are never contrary to each other. I say not that the thoughts of all professors *agree*, but I do assert that the minds of the truly regenerate in all sects and in all ages are in harmony with each other—a harmony which often excites delighted surprise in those who perceive it! The marks that divide one set of nominal Christians from another set are very deep and wide to those who have nothing of religion but the name. Yet living Believers scarcely notice them. Boundaries which separate the cattle of the field are no division to the birds of the air! Our minds, thoughts, desires and hopes are one in Christ Jesus—and herein we have communion.

Beloved Friends, our *emotions* are another royal road of fellowship. You sit down and tell your experience and I smile to think that you are telling mine! Sometimes a young Believer enlarges upon the sad story of his trials and temptations, imagining that nobody ever had to endure so great a fight, when all the while he is only describing the common adventures of those who go on pilgrimage and we are all communing with him! When we talk together about our Lord, are we not agreed? When we speak of our Father and all His dealings with us, are we not one? And when we weep, when we sigh, when we sing and when we rejoice—are we not all akin? Heavenly fingers touching like strings within our hearts bring forth the same notes, for we are the products of the same Maker and tuned to the same praise! Real harmony exists among all the true people of God—Christians are one in Christ!

We have communion with one another, too, in our *actions*. We unite in trying to save men—I hope we do. We join in instructing, warning, inviting and persuading sinners to come to Jesus. Our life-ministry is the same—we are workers together with God. We live out the one desire, “Your Kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven.”

Certainly we have much communion, one with the other, in our *sufferings*. There is not a poor sick or despondent saint upon the earth with whom we do not sympathize at this moment, for we are fellow members and partakers of the sufferings of Christ. I hope we can each one say—

**“Is there a lamb in all Your flock,
I would disdain to feed?
Is there a foe, before whose face,
I fear Your cause to plead?”**

No, we suffer with each other, bear each other’s burdens and so fulfill the Law of Christ. If we do not, we have reason for questioning our own faith! But if we do so, we have communion with each other.

I hope we have fellowship in our *joys*. Is one happy? We would not envy him, but rejoice with him! Perhaps this spirit is not so universal as it should be among professors. Are we at once glad because another prospers? If another star outshines ours, do we delight in its radiance? When we meet a Brother with ten talents, do we congratulate ourselves on having such a man given to help us, or do we depreciate him as much as we can? Such is the depravity of our nature that we do not readily rejoice in the progress of others if they leave us behind—but we must school ourselves to this. A man will readily sit down and sympathize with a friend’s griefs, but if he sees him honored and esteemed, he is apt to regard him as a rival and does not readily rejoice with him. This ought not to be! Without effort we ought to be happy in our Brother’s happiness. If we are ill, be this our comfort, that many are in robust health! If we are faint, let us be glad that others are strong in the Lord! Thus shall we enjoy a happy fellowship like that of the perfected above.

When I have put all these modes of Christian communion together, not one of them is so sure, so strong, so deep as communion in receiving the same Christ as our Savior and trusting in the same blood for cleansing unto eternal life! Here on the Table you have the tokens of the broadest and fullest communion. This is a kind of communion which you and I cannot choose or reject—if we are in Christ, it is and must be ours! Certain brethren restrict their communion in the outward ordinance, and they think they have good reasons for doing so. But I am unable to see the force of their reasoning, because I joyfully observe that these brethren commune with other Believers in prayer, praise, hearing of the Word and other ways! The fact is that the matter of real communion is very largely beyond human control and is to the spiritual body what the circulation of the blood is to the natural body—a necessary process not dependent upon volition. In perusing a deeply-spiritual Book of Devotion, you have been charmed and benefited, and yet upon looking at the title page, it may be you have found that the author belonged to the Church of Rome. What then? Why, then it has happened that the inner life has broken all barriers and your spirits have communed! For my own part, in

reading certain precious works, I have loathed their Romanism and yet I have had close fellowship with their writers in weeping over sin, in adoring at the foot of the Cross and in rejoicing in the glorious enthronement of our Lord. Blood is thicker than water, and no fellowship is more inevitable and sincere than fellowship in the precious blood and in the risen life of our Lord Jesus Christ! Here, in the common reception of the one loaf, we bear witness that we are one. And in the actual participation of all the chosen in the one redemption that unity is in very deed displayed and matured in the most substantial manner. Washed in the one blood, fed on the same loaf, cheered by the same cup, all differences pass away, and “we, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another.”

III. Now then, dear Friends, if this kind of fellowship is the best, LET US TAKE CARE TO ENJOY IT. Let us at this hour avail ourselves of it!

Let us take care *to see Christ* in the mirror of this ordinances. Have any of you eaten the bread and yet have you not seen Christ? Then you have gained no benefit. Have you drunk the wine, but have you not remembered the Lord? Alas, I fear you have eaten and drunk condemnation to yourselves, not discerning the Lord’s body! But if you did see through the emblems, as aged persons see through their spectacles, then you have been thankful for such aids to vision! But what is the use of glasses if there is nothing to look at? And what is the use of the communion if Christ is not in our thoughts and hearts?

If you did discern the Lord, then be sure, again, to *accept Him*. Say to yourself, “All that Christ is to any, He shall be to me. Does He save sinners? He shall save me. Does He change men’s hearts? He shall change mine. Is He All-in-All to those who trust Him? He shall be All-in-All to me.” I have heard persons say that they do not know how to take Christ. What said the Apostle? “The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart.” If you have something in your mouth that you desire to eat, what is the best thing to do? Will you not swallow it? That is exactly what faith does. Christ’s Word of Grace is very near you—it is on your tongue—let it go down into your inmost soul! Say to your Savior, “I know I am not fit to receive You, O Jesus, but since You do graciously come to me as bread comes to the hungry, I joyfully receive You, rejoicing to feed upon You. Since You come to me as the fruit of the vine to a thirsty man, Lord, I take You willingly, and I thank You that this reception is all that You require of me. Has not Your Spirit so put it, ‘As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name’?”

Beloved Friends, when you have thus received Jesus, fail not to *rejoice in Him* as having received Him! How many there are who have received Christ, who talk and act as if they never had received Him! It is a poor dinner of which a man says, after he has eaten it, that he feels as if he had not dined! And is it a poor Christ of whom anyone can say, “I have received Him, but I am none the happier, none the more at peace.” If you have received Jesus into your heart, you *are* saved. You *are* justified. Do

you whisper, “I hope so”? Is that all? Do you not *know*? The hoping and hopping of so many are a poor way of going—put both feet down and say, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” You are either saved or not! There is no state between the two! You are either pardoned or condemned and you have good reason for the highest happiness or else you have grave causes for the direst anxiety. If you have received the Atonement, be as glad as you can be! And if you are still an unbeliever, rest not till Christ is yours!

Oh, the joy of continually entering into fellowship with Christ in such a way that you never lose His empathy! Be this yours, Beloved, every day and all the day! May His shadow fall upon you as you are in the sun, or stray in the gardens! May His voice cheer you as you lie down upon the seashore and listen to the murmuring of the waves. May His Presence glorify the main solitude as you climb the hills! May Jesus be to you an all-surrounding Presence, lighting up the night, perfuming the day, gladdening all places and sanctifying all pursuits! Our Beloved is not a Friend for Lord’s-Days only, but for weekdays too! He the inseparable passion of His loving disciples. The who have had fellowship with His body and His blood at this Table may have the Lord as an habitual Guest at their own tables! Those who have met their Master in this supper room may expect Him to make their own chamber bright with His royal Presence! Let fellowship with Jesus and with the elect brotherhood be henceforth the atmosphere of our life, the joy of our existence! This will give us a Heaven below and prepare us for Heaven above!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
MATTHEW 26:14-35.**

Verses 14-16. *Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? And they covenanted with Him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.* It was one of the twelve who went to the chief priests, to bargain for the price of his Lord’s betrayal! He did not even mention Christ’s name in his infamous question, “*What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?*” The amount agreed upon, *thirty pieces of silver*, was the price of a slave and showed how little value the chief priests set upon Jesus—and also revealed the greed of Judas in selling his Master for so small a sum. Yet many have sold Jesus for a less price than Judas received—a smile or a sneer has been sufficient to induce them to betray their Lord! Let us who have been redeemed with Christ’s precious blood, set high store by Him, think much of Him and praise Him much. As we remember with shame and sorrow these thirty pieces of silver, let us never undervalue Him, or forget the priceless preciousness of Him who was reckoned as worth no more than a slave.

17, 18. *Now on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where will You that we prepare for*

You to eat the Passover? And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples. How truly royal was Jesus of Nazareth even in His humiliation! He had no home of His own wherein He could “keep the Passover” with His disciples. He was soon to be put to a public and shameful death, yet He had only to send two of His disciples “into the city to such a man,” and the guest chamber, furnished and prepared, was at once placed at His disposal! He did not take the room by arbitrary force, as an earthly monarch might have done, but He obtained it by the Divine compulsion of Almighty Love. Even in His lowest estate, our Lord Jesus had the hearts of all men beneath His control. What power He has now that He reigns in Glory!

19. *And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover.* If Christ’s disciples always loyally *did as Jesus appointed them*, they would always speed well on His errands. There are many more people in the world ready to yield to Christ than some of us think. If we would only go to them as Peter and John went to this man in Jerusalem, and say to them what “the Master says,” we would find that their hearts would be opened to receive Christ even as this man’s house was willingly yielded up at our Lord’s request!

20, 21. *Now when the evening was come, He sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.* Our Lord remained in seclusion until the evening and then went to the appointed place and sat down, or rather, reclined at the paschal table with the twelve. And as they did eat, He said, “Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.” This was a most unpleasant thought to bring to a feast, yet it was most appropriate to the Passover, for God’s commandment to Moses concerning the first paschal lamb was, “With bitter herbs they shall eat it.” This was a painful reflection for our Lord, and also for His twelve chosen companion—“One of you,” and His eyes would glance round the table as He said it, “One of you shall betray Me.”

22. *And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and began, each of them, to say unto Him, Lord, is it I?* That short sentence fell like a bombshell among the Savior’s bodyguard! It startled them—they had all made great professions of affection for Him and, for the most part, those professions were true. *And they were exceedingly sorrowful*—and well they might be! Such a revelation was enough to produce the deepest emotions of sorrow and sadness. It is a beautiful trait in the character of the disciples that they did not suspect one another, but each of them enquired, almost incredulously, as the form of the question implies—“*Lord, is it I?*” No one said, “Lord, is it Judas?” Perhaps no one of the eleven thought that Judas was base enough to betray the Lord who had given him an honorable place among His Apostles. We cannot do any good by suspecting our brethren—but we may do great services by suspecting ourselves! Self-suspicion is near akin to humility.

23, 24. *And He answered and said, he that dips his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born.* A man may get very near to Christ, yes, may dip his hand in the same dish with the Savior, and yet betray Him. We may be high in office and may apparently be very useful, as Judas was—yet we may betray Christ. We learn from our Lord's words that Divine decrees do not deprive a sinful action of its guilt—*"The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed."* His criminality is just as great as though there had been no "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." *"It had been good for that man if he had not been born."* The doom of Judas is worse than non-existence! To have consorted with Christ as he had done—and then to deliver Him into the hands of His enemies—sealed the traitor's eternal destiny!

25. *Then Judas which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, You have said.* Judas appears to have been the last of the twelve to ask the question, "is it I?" Those who are the last to suspect themselves are usually those who ought to be the first to exercise self-suspicion. Judas did not address Christ as, "Lord," as the other disciples had done, but called Him, Rabbi—"Master." Otherwise his question was like that of his eleven companions. But He received from Christ an answer that was given to no one else—He said unto him, "You have said." Probably the reply reached his ears alone, and if he had not been a hopeless reprobate, this unmasking of his traitorous design might have driven him to repentance, but there was nothing in his heart to respond to Christ's voice. He had sold himself to Satan before he sold his Lord.

26-28. *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat, this is My body. And He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* The Jewish Passover was made to melt into the Lord's Supper, as the stars of the morning dissolve into the light of the sun. As they were eating, while the paschal supper was proceeding, Jesus instituted the new memorial which is to be observed until He comes again. How simple was the whole ceremony! *Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."* Christ could not have meant that the bread was His actual body, for His body was reclining by the table! But He intended that broken bread to represent His body which was about to be broken on the Cross. Then followed the second memorial, the cup, filled with "the fruit of the vine," of which Christ said, *"Drink you all of it."* There is no trace here of any altar or priest—there is nothing about the elevation or adoration of the "host." There is no resemblance between the Lord's Supper and the Romish "mass." Let us keep strictly to the letter and spirit of God's Word in everything, for if one adds a little, another will add more, and if one alters one point, and another alters another point, there is no telling how far we shall get from the Truth of God! The disciples had been

reminded of their own liability to sin—now their Savior gives them a personal pledge of the pardon of sin, according to Luke's record of His words, "This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you."

29. *But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom.* Thus Jesus took the great Nazarite vow never to drink of the fruit of the vine till He should drink it new with His disciples in His Father's Kingdom. He will keep His tryst with all His followers, and they, with Him, shall hold high festival forever!

30. *And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.* Was it not truly brave of our dear Lord to sing under such circumstances? He was going forth to His last dread conflict, to Gethsemane and Gabbatha and Golgotha—yet He went with a song on His lips! He must have led the singing, for the disciples were too sad to start the Hallel with which the paschal feast closed. *And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.* Then came that desperate struggle in which the great Captain of our salvation wrestled even to a bloody sweat and prevailed.

31, 32. *Then said Jesus unto them, All you shall be offended because of Me, this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.* Observe our Lord's habit of quoting Scripture! He was able to speak words of Infallible Truth, yet He fell back upon the Inspired Record in the Old Testament! His quotation from Zechariah does not seem to have been really necessary, but it was most appropriate to His prophecy to His disciples—"All you shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." Jesus was the Shepherd who was about to be smitten, but He foretold the scattering of the sheep! Even those leaders of the flock that had been first chosen by Christ and had been most with Him would stumble and fall away from Him on that dread night, but the Shepherd would not lose them—there would be a reunion between Him and His sheep—"After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." Once again He would resume, for a little while, the Character of their Shepherd-King, and with them He would revisit some of their old haunts in Galilee before He ascended to His heavenly home. "I will go before you," suggests the idea of the Good Shepherd leading His flock after the Eastern manner. Happy are His sheep in having such a Leader! And blessed are they in following Him wherever He goes!

33. *Peter answered and said unto Him, Though all men shall be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended.* This was a very presumptuous speech, not only because of the self-confidence it betrayed, but also because it was a flat *contradiction* of the Master's declaration! Jesus said, "All you shall be offended because of Me this night," but Peter thought he knew better than Christ, so he answered, "Though all men shall be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended." No doubt

these words were spoken from his heart, but “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Peter must have been amazed, the next morning, as he discovered the deceitfulness and wickedness of his own heart as manifested in his triple denial of his Lord! He who thinks himself so much stronger than his brethren is the very man who will prove to be weaker than many of them, as did Peter, not many hours after his boast was uttered.

34. *Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, That this night, before the cock crows, you shall deny Me thrice.* Jesus now tells His boastful disciple that before the next morning’s cockcrowing, he will thrice deny his Lord. Not only would he stumble and fall with his fellow disciples, but he would go beyond them all in his repeated denials of that dear Master whom he professed to love with as intense an affection as even John possessed. Peter declared that he would remain true to Christ if he were the only faithful friend left. Jesus foretold that of all the twelve, only Judas would exceed the boaster in wickedness!

35. *Peter said unto Him, Though I shall die with You, yet will I not deny You. Likewise also said all the disciples.* Here again Peter contradicts his Master straight to His face. It was a pity that he should have boasted once after his Lord’s plain prophecy that all the disciples would that night be offended. But it was shameful that Peter should repeat his self-confident declaration in the teeth of Christ’s express prediction concerning him! He was not alone in his utterance, for *likewise also said all the disciples.* They all felt that under no circumstances could they deny their Lord. We have no record of the denial of Christ by the other ten Apostles, although they all forsook Him and fled, and thus practically disowned Him. Remembering all that they had seen and heard of Him, and especially bearing in mind His most recent discourse, the communion in the upper room, and His wondrous intercessory prayer on their behalf, we are not surprised that they felt themselves bound to Him forever. But, alas, notwithstanding their protests, the King’s Prophecy was completely fulfilled, for that night they were all “offended.”

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

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 4, 1882.**

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you. That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner, also, He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do you as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till He comes.”
1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

WE have no respect whatever for the ordinances of men in religion. Anything that is only invented by churches, or councils, is nothing whatever to us. We know of two ordinances instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ—the Baptism of Believers and the Lord's Supper. And we utterly abhor and reject all pretended “sacraments” of every kind. And because we observe these two ordinances, and these two, only, we are the more concerned that they should be properly used and duly understood, and that they should minister to the edification of those who participate in them. We would have those who are baptized understand what is meant by that expressive rite—that they, being dead with Christ, should also be buried with Him and rise with Him into newness of life. And when we observe the Lord's Supper, we feel a deep and earnest desire that none should come to the Table in ignorance of the significance of the observance—or that, at least, ignorance may not be an occasion of eating unworthily—but that we may comprehend what we are doing and understand the spiritual meaning of this pictorial instruction by which the Lord Jesus Christ would, even until the end of the age, remind His Church of His great Sacrifice upon the Cross.

I. So, first, I will speak briefly concerning THE FORM OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

We do not think that it is at all material where that supper is held. It is just as valid and helpful in your own private apartments, in your bedroom, or in your parlor, as it is in any place where Christians usually congregate. We do not attach so much importance as some people do to the *time* when it is observed, but we are astonished that High Churchmen should be opposed to evening communion, for, if any definite time for partaking of it can be quoted from Scripture, it certainly is the evening! I should like to ask the Ritualists whether they can find any instance, either in holy or profane things, of a supper being eaten before breakfast—until they invented that absurd practice! There is no time that is more like the first occasion when the Master celebrated the ordinance with His disciples than is the evening of the day. Then it was that He gathered the 12 Apostles together and instituted this blessed memorial feast! At Emmaus, too, it was at the close of the day that He was made known to His two disciples in the breaking of bread. It must be sheer superstition, utterly unwarranted by Holy Scripture, which tells us that the Lord's Supper can only be properly received *in the morning* and that we ought not to eat anything before we partake of the sacred emblems! We reject all such nonsense, for we find no authority for it in the only standard which we recognize, that is, the Inspired Word of God! Let us see what it teaches us concerning this ordinance.

We learn, first, that *the Lord's Supper should begin with thanksgiving*. So the Master Himself evidently commenced it—"He took bread and gave thanks." All through the Supper, the emotion of gratitude should be in active exercise. It is intended that we should give thanks for the bread—at the same time giving still more emphatic thanks for the sacred body which it *represents*. Then we should also give thanks for the cup and for that most precious blood which is therein *represented* to us. We cannot rightly observe the Lord's Supper unless we come to the table, blessing, praising, magnifying and adoring our Savior—praising Him even for instituting such a festival of remembrance—such a memorial ordinance to help our frail memories! And praising Him yet more for giving us so blessed a thing to remember as His own great Sacrifice for our sin.

After the thanksgiving, it is very clear that our Divine Lord *broke the bread*. We scarcely know what kind of bread was used on that occasion. It was probably the thin passover cake of the Jews, but there is nothing said in Scripture about the use of leavened or unleavened bread and, therefore, it matters not which we use! Where there is no ordinance, there is no obligation and we are, therefore, left free to use the bread which it is our custom to eat. When the Master had broken the bread, *He*

gave it to His disciples, and said, "Take, eat." And they all participated in eating it. And this, mark you, is essential to the right observance of the Lord's Supper, so that, when the priest, in celebrating "mass," takes the wafer, which is not bread and which he does not break, but which he, himself, eats whole, there is no Lord's Supper there! Whatever it may be called, it is not the Lord's Supper. In the eating of the bread, there must be the participation of such a number of faithful, godly disciples of Christ as may be present, or else it is not the ordinance which the Lord instituted.

That being done, the next thing was that, "*After the same manner also He took the cup.*" That is to say, after the same manner of thanksgiving, blessing God for the fruit of the vine, which was henceforth to be the emblem of His poured-out blood. Even so should we. It is no vain thing to praise the Lord, though we do it twice, thrice—yes, and ten thousand times! Well did the Psalmist say, "Praise you the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely." Especially comely is it for us to praise our God when we are calling to remembrance the unspeakable gift of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son!

Then came the partaking of the cup—the fruit of the vine—of which the Master expressly said, "Drink you all of it." Hence, when the Church of Rome takes away the cup from the people and denies it to them, there is no observance of the Lord's Supper, for another essential part of the ordinance is left out. It may be the "mass," or it may be anything else, but it is not the Supper of the Lord! There must be a participation by all the faithful in the cup, as well as in the bread, otherwise the Lord's death is not shown, or proclaimed according to Christ's most holy and blessed command.

Further, in order that this may be the Lord's Supper in very truth, *it must be observed in remembrance of Christ*, who said to His disciples, "This do in remembrance of Me." From which we learn that only those who *know Him* must come to His Table, for how shall we remember what we never knew? And how shall we remember Him with whom we have never spoken and in whom we have never believed? You are not to come to the Lord's Supper to *get* faith—you must have faith, first—or else you have no right to draw near to this sacred spot. What do you do here? If you suppose that this is a *saving* ordinance, I must say to you what Christ said to the Sadducees, "You do err, not knowing the Scriptures." Salvation comes to us through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and it is *the result of the effectual working of the Spirit of God within us!* This Supper is a most instructive ordinance for those who are saved, but those who are not born again and are not, by Divine Grace, members of the Lord's family, have no right here. They who ate the Passover were such as were

born in the priest's house, or bought with the priest's money—and if you have been born in Christ's house, or bought with Christ's blood—if you know, by blessed experience, the meaning of regeneration and redemption, then you may come to the Communion Table. But, if not, as the Passover was only intended for Israel, so is this supper a family feast for those who belong to Jesus Christ—no others may come to it! If they do come, it will be at the peril of eating and drinking unworthily since they are unable to discern the Lord's body.

I have thus given you a very brief account of the form of observing the Lord's Supper, as we find it in the New Testament. You notice that I have not said anything about a chalice, or a paten, or about consecrating the elements, or uplifting the host and all that Romish rubbish of which some people think so much. The reason for my silence is that there is nothing about these things in the Bible. "To the Law, and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." Clear away all the additions of superstition—they are but the dust and the rust which have accumulated during the ages and they spoil and mar the purity of Christ's own ordinance! Our great concern must be to observe it *exactly* as He has delivered it to us, in accordance with His own injunction, "This do in remembrance of Me"—not something else in its place.

II. Now, secondly, from our text I gather THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

First, *because it was revealed by the Lord Himself*. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were all accessible to Paul and, though they had not then written their Gospels, yet he could have learned from *them* how the Savior instituted the Supper. But, as if Christ would not let it be secondhand, He was pleased to declare to Paul, personally—to Paul, himself—directly and distinctly, how the Supper should be celebrated. The Apostle says, "I have received of the Lord"—not, "*we*"—not, "I and the rest of the Apostles and disciples," but—"I have received of the Lord," indicating a definite *personal* Revelation from Christ as to this matter. After the Lord Jesus had gone up into Glory, His Revelations were but few, yet this was one of them. He would have His disciples, therefore, pay due attention to this important matter which He thus especially revealed to Paul. O Beloved, I often tremble for those who tamper with the ordinances of Christ—they alter them, or shift them out of their proper places—and then say that their alterations are unimportant! Mary said to the servants at Cana of Galilee, "Whatever He says unto you, do it." And we have need of the same command today! We must not alter anything that Christ has ordained, for, "where the word of a king is,

there is power” and, in the Word of the King of Kings, there is power to condemn those who alter His Word. Whatever Christ has commanded is to be obeyed by us—and as He took special pains concerning this ordinance, to make a distinct Revelation over and above the guidance of the Holy Spirit to the four Evangelists, we may be certain that He intended to surround this Supper with the utmost solemnity and authority.

I have already referred to the next point, but it is so important that I remind you, again, that *this Supper was commanded by the Lord*. He said, “This do in remembrance of Me.” And again, “This do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” If I love Christ, I am bound to keep His commandments—and among the rest of His commandments, this one in which He, here, says, “This do.” I might have thought, from the conduct of some professing Christians, that Jesus must have said, “This *do not*,” but as He said, “This do you,” where shall I find an apology for those who either never have done it at all, or, being His people, do it so seldom that He could not say to them, “This do you, as *often* as you drink it,” but He might rather say, “This do you as *seldom* as you drink it,” since the idea of frequency does not enter into their observance of it? But, dear Friends, what Christ revealed and commanded, it is incumbent upon His own beloved ones to obey!

Notice, again, that *this supper was instituted by Christ, Himself, and He, Himself, first set the example for its observance*. As to Baptism, you remember how He said, “Thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness,” and so He set us the example in that matter. And, in the Supper, it was He who first blessed and broke the bread. It was He who first passed the cup and said, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood.” If He had given the command and the Apostles had been the first to attend to it, it would have been binding upon us, but, inasmuch as, in *addition* to giving the command concerning it, He, Himself, set the example of observing it—sitting at the center of the table, with the 12 all around Him—I think He has put a special halo about this ordinance and we must, by no means forget, or neglect, or despise it.

Remember, too, that *He established it on a very special occasion*. To my mind, it is very touching to read, “The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread.” I cannot help noticing that the Apostle is very particular to say here, “The Lord Jesus.” Very often He uses the name, “Christ,” in speaking of the Savior. But here it is, “the Lord Jesus,” to show the awe and reverence which the Apostle felt as, by faith, he saw the Master at the first Communion Table. Paul could not forget that, though Jesus was then Lord of All, He was that same night betrayed. He that ate bread with Him lifted up his heel against Him and sold Him for 30 pieces of silver! Yet, even while the anticipation of that

betrayal and all which it involved was tearing His heart asunder, He remembered us and established this ordinance that, by refreshing our memories concerning His blessed Self, we might not be left to play the traitor, too, but might be kept steadfast in every time of trial. O Brothers and Sisters, it seems to me that we must be especially careful to observe such an ordinance as this, instituted when our Savior's heart was breaking with anguish on our behalf!

And remember, too, the importance of the ordinance, because of *the peculiar personal motive with which it was instituted*—"This do in remembrance"—of what? Of Christianity and its doctrines and practices? No. But, "in remembrance of *Me*." You know how tenderly a thing comes home to you if a dying husband says, "This do, my beloved one, in remembrance of me, when I am dead and gone." You never fail to do that, I am sure, if it is in your power. You know how it is with a friend who has gone from you and who has left you some forget-me-not. You treasure it with the utmost care. The memento is very precious for your friend's sake and our dear Lord and Master has put about this Supper all the loveliness of His personality, all the graciousness of His affection for us and all the tenderness that ought to be in our love to Him. If there is anything that He bids you do, you ought to do it—but when it is something to be done *in remembrance of Him*, you must do it—your love impels you to do it! Are you not ashamed if you are not doing it in the most loving, humble, grateful and earnest manner possible, as becomes the memory of Him who loved you and gave Himself for you? I would not like to have to urge any Christian to come to the Communion Table—I feel as if I would do nothing to spoil the perfect spontaneity of it. If you do not love Him, do not come to His Table! But if you love Him, come because you love Him. Come because you remember Him and because you wish to be helped to remember Him yet more. If there is nothing about Him that you wish to remember, do not dare come! But, if He is precious to your soul, your transport and your trust. If His very name is music to your ears, honey to your mouth and joy to your heart, then you do not need me to press you to come to His Table, but you will come because He says, "This do you in remembrance of *Me*."

There is one more thing which adds to the importance of this Supper and that is, *it is to be observed "till He comes."* It is not an ordinance, then, for the first Christian centuries, alone, to be, as it were, the bridge between the ceremonialism of the Old Testament and the spirituality of the New Testament. No, it is intended to be celebrated "till He comes." We must keep on gathering at His Table, giving thanks, breaking bread and proclaiming His death till the trumpet of the archangel shall startle us—and then we shall feel it to be truly blessed to be found obediently re-

remembering Him when He puts in His appearance at the last! As He comes to us, we shall say, "Blessed Master, we have done as You did bid us. We have kept alive Your memory in the world to ourselves and to those who looked on as we broke the bread and drank of the cup in Your name. And now we rejoice to see You in Your Glory." I do not know that the meeting between Christ and His people could happen at a better time than if He were to come when they were gathered at His Table, obeying His command and showing His death "till He comes."

Thus I have tried, as briefly as I could, to give instruction as to the importance of this Supper. I hope that the Holy Spirit will press home the Truth of God upon the hearts of any who have not observed this ordinance, before, and that He will lead them to ask if they are, indeed, Believers in Jesus, and lovers of the Lord, how they can justify themselves for their disobedience to what Christ has so expressly commanded!

III. But now, thirdly, let us enquire, IN WHAT SPIRIT OUGHT WE TO COME TO THIS TABLE?

I should say, first, that we are bound to come in the spirit of *deep humility*. Brothers and Sisters, to my mind, it is a very humbling thing that we should need anything to help us to remember Christ. I see no better evidence of the fact that we are not yet perfectly sanctified, for, if we were, we would need nothing to help us to remember Him. There is, alas, still an imperfection in our memory—and that strangest and saddest thing of all—in respect to Jesus Himself. It is extraordinary that we should ever require anything to help us to remember Him. Can He, to whom we owe so much, be ever forgotten by us? The fact that this ordinance is to be observed in remembrance of Him, "till He comes," is a humbling proof that till that glorious event, His people's memories will be faulty and they will need this double forget-me-not to remind them of Him who is their All-in-All.

What do I see on that Table? I see bread there. Then I gather this humbling lesson—that I cannot even keep myself in spiritual food. I am such a pauper, such an utter beggar, that my own table cannot furnish me with what I need and I must come to the Lord's Table—and I must receive, through Him, the spiritual nutriment which my soul requires. What do I see in the cup? I see the wine which is the token of His shed blood. What does that say to me but that I still need cleansing? Oh, how I rejoice in that blessed text in John's first Epistle—"If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another." And then what follows? That we do not need to make any more confession of sin because we are quite cleansed from it? Nothing of the sort! "And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin." We still need the cleansing fountain even when we are walking in the light, as God is

in the light—and we need to come to it every day! And what a mercy it is that the emblem sets forth the constant provision of purifying blood whereby we may be continually cleansed! As we partake of this cup, we must do so humbly, for thus it becomes us to come to the Table of our Lord.

But, next, we must come *very thankfully*. Some pull a long face when they think about coming to the Communion Table, like Mrs. Too-Good who is described in Rowland Hill's *Village Dialogues*. She made a mistake about the week that the ordinance was to be observed, so she did not play cards during that week and kept herself wonderfully pure, poor old soul. And then, when she found, on Sunday, that she had made a blunder as to the time, she said she had wasted the whole week in getting ready! Ah, dear Friends, I hope we do not know anything of *that* method of keeping the sacred feast. We are to come in a very different frame of mind than that, for we are not coming to a funeral supper, but to the luxuries and dainties that become a marriage feast! Let us come, therefore, with thankfulness, as we say to one another concerning our Lord, "He is not here, for He is risen, glory be to His holy name!" These tokens of remembrance tell us that He has gone where it was expedient for Him to go, that the Holy Spirit might descend upon us. Therefore, Beloved, rejoice even because of the absence of your Lord, for it is well that He should be gone up into Glory. And, as we come to the Table, each one feeling what a sinner he is—how unworthy he is to come—how unfit he is to sit with saints—should not each heart say, "Bless the Lord, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name"? Twice during the feast, special thanksgivings are to be presented—but all through the feast let the heart be full of holy gratitude and praise to God!

But, we should certainly come to the Table *with great thoughtfulness*. There are some, we are told, who do not discern the Lord's body—let us think and pray, lest we should be numbered with them. If there is no right thinking, there will be no true spiritual feeling and there will be no Lord's Supper so far as you are concerned. Think of what your Savior suffered for you, what He has done for you and what He has gone to prepare for you! Let us remember that the bread sets forth the suffering of His body, that the wine typifies the blood of the Atonement whereby we are cleansed—that the two, apart—the body separated from the blood, form a most suggestive symbol of the matchless death whereby we are made to live! Think much at the Table, but think of nothing but Christ! Fix your thoughts entirely upon Him and so shall you eat of this bread and drink of this cup to your soul's refreshment and profit!

But come, also, *with great receptiveness*. It is a meal, you know. We receive the bread and the wine. So, come to the Table begging the Lord to

give you the Grace to feed upon Himself spiritually, that you may, by faith, receive Him into your inward parts—that in your inmost soul you may have the virtue of His life and of His death! Come empty, therefore, for so you will be the better qualified to feed upon Him. Come hungering and thirsting—thus you will have the greater appetite for Christ. Receive Him in all His fullness by a wonderful faith that takes Him in to be a joy to the heart forever.

That is the spirit, then, in which to come to the Lord's Table. May the blessed Spirit be with you, dear Brothers and Sisters, that all who do come to the Table may come in that humble, thankful, thoughtful, receptive style!

IV. Now I finish my discourse by dwelling, for a minute or two, upon THE GREAT LESSONS WHICH THIS SUPPER INCIDENTALLY TEACHES.

The first lesson is, that *Jesus is for us*. There has been a great dispute over this verse, "This is My body, which is broken for you." The word, "broken," appears in some of the ancient manuscripts, but it is, undoubtedly, an interpolation. It is absent from several of those manuscripts upon which we are obliged to rely for the correct text of the New Testament and, therefore, very properly, the Revised Version reads, "This is My body, which is for you." And, to my mind, that rendering gives a new thought which is well worth having. "This is My body, which is for you." That is to say, Christ is for you—does not the Supper, itself, say that? The bread represents His body for you—the wine represents His blood for you. We know that it is for you because you are going to eat it. There is nothing that is more certainly a man's than what he eats or drinks. Our proverb says, "Possession is nine points of the law." And I wonder how many points of the law it is when a man has eaten a thing up? There is no legal quibble that can deprive him of that. Whatever suit at law may be brought, there is no possibility of taking away from a man that which he has eaten and, in like manner, when we have really received Christ by faith, there is no possibility of robbing us of Him. "This is My body, which is for you." Oh, what a blessed Doctrine! Lay hold of this great Truth of God, all that there is in Christ is for you! All the fullness of the Godhead is in Him, "and of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." Glory be to His name for this!

The next lesson is that *His blood has sealed the Covenant*. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." I wish I had an hour or two in which I might speak to you about the Covenant. It is no use to begin on that great subject in the few minutes we have left. There was a Covenant that cursed us—the Covenant of Works. There is another Covenant that has blessed the elect of God and shall bless them to all eternity—the Covenant of Grace—and this Covenant is signed, sealed and ratified, in all

things ordered well—and for its seal it has the blood of God's own Son! Therefore it shall stand fast forever and ever. So, as you partake of that cup, drink with joy because it reminds you that God has made with you “an everlasting Covenant ordered in all things and sure.” Oh, I am certain that if you know the music of that word, “Covenant,” you will enjoy coming to the Table, even if nothing but that one word shall be brought to your memory!

The third great Doctrine that is taught by this Supper is that *Believers feed on Christ Himself*. Sometimes they forget this and they try to feed on doctrines. They will make as great a mistake as if the Jew, when he went up to the tabernacle, had tried to feed on the curtains, or the altar, or the golden tongs! What did he have for food? Why, the peace-offering! When he drew near to his God, he fed on the sacrifice—and the true food of a Believer is Christ Jesus, Himself! Feed on Him, then, Beloved. We cannot *literally* eat His body or drink His blood—we would be worse than cannibals to attempt such a thing! But we *can* do it, and we *must* do it *spiritually*, by having our hearts and our minds resting upon what Christ is and what He has done, and so feeding upon our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have finished when I have mentioned one more lesson which is to be learned from this ordinance. It is clear, from this Supper, that *the way to remember Christ is to feed on Him again and again*. Is it not a strange thing that if I have had a great mercy, the way to remember that mercy is to come to God and get another mercy? If Christ was ever sweet to my taste, the way to perpetuate that sweetness is to come and taste Him again! Dear Brothers and Sisters, do not try to live upon your old experiences! Even the best kind of bread will not stay fresh very long—it soon gets musty if you lay it by. You need to have bread constantly coming fresh from the oven. Even the manna, which came down from Heaven, could not be kept, lest it should breed worms—and so it is with the food for your souls. Do not try to live on moldy experiences.

More than 30 years ago I had great joy in the Lord when first I knew Him. I am very glad that I can remember it, but that recollection is of little use to me when I get depressed in spirit. No, then I need the Lord to come to me again as He came then. You came to Jesus Christ, did you not, as a poor, empty sinner, ever so many years ago? Then, come again in the same way! Come to Christ every day as you came to Him the first day! “Oh, but I was only a sinner then!” Well, you are not much more than that now! And you will find it the safest thing to come just as you came at first. “Well, but am I not an experienced saint by this time?” Yes, yes, I daresay you are, but I find that whenever I have on the one robe of my experience, I am like the lady at court with a long train—somebody is

sure to step on it—and then it gets torn. I like to come to Jesus Christ just as I came at first.

Suppose that the devil says to me, “You are no child of God.” I have often said to him, “You do not know much about that matter, though you know that you are not one, yourself.” “But,” he says, “you do not know the Lord.” “Ah, then,” I ask him, “what am I?” He answers, “You are a great black sinner!” Then, like Luther, I cut off his head with his own sword, just as David did with Goliath, for I say to him, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and I am going off to the sinners’ Savior, just to trust in Him as I did at the first!” And the devil generally departs when I tell him that. There is nothing that is so soul-strengthening as taking another look at the bronze serpent, or having another plunge in the fountain filled with blood, or feeding, once again, on the inexhaustible provision that is stored up for us in the Person of our Lord!

If any of you who have come to the Table of the Lord are not believers in Christ, never dare to come again while you are in that state! You have no right here unless you are resting in Jesus and trusting in Him! This is the proof of your being new creatures in Christ Jesus. But if you have the faintest, feeblest faith in Jesus, come and welcome! If you are trusting in your own merits, go to your own table—if you think there will be some *merit* in your coming to the Communion Table, do not dare to come, for that were to turn the ordinance upside down! You are not to bring something, but to *receive* something. May you who love the Lord find Him to be very precious to you and may those of you who do not know Him, seek Him at once, not at the Table, but at the Mercy Seat and at the Cross! Trust in Jesus, for so you shall be saved, and then you shall have the right of entry to the Lord’s House—and you shall have the privilege of sitting at His Table and of enjoying every other blessing which is the portion of the chosen family. The Lord make it to be so, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-34; LUKE 22:14-24.**

The members of the Church at Corinth abounded in gifts and, therefore, they thought it right for each one to speak to edification. They had no pastoral oversight whatever—acting, in this respect, like certain brethren whom we know nowadays. The result, however, was very deplorable. They do not appear to have been able to even conduct the Lord’s Supper without the most disorderly proceedings. Church discipline was utterly forgotten or neglected and it seems as if the two Epis-

bles to the Corinthians are given to us as beacons to warn us against that form of worship, seeing that it produces such mischievous and sad results!

1 Corinthians 11:17. *Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that you come together not for the better, but for the worse.* It is a very bad state of things when we meet for worship and separate without any improvement, or, like these Corinthians, “come together, not for the better, but for the worse.”

18. *For first of all, when you come together in the Church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and I partly believe it.* It was very gracious and kind on the Apostle's part to put it so mildly—and he sets us the example of not believing anything against our brethren too quickly. “I partly believe it.”

19-21. *For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When you come together, therefore, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating everyone takes before others his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunk.* They seem to have regarded it as a common feast to which they brought their own provisions and, without waiting for each other, they disgraced the Table of the Lord by their scandalous proceedings.

22. *What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise you the Church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.* No doubt they hoped to be praised and expected that they had done everything in the right way! Perhaps they even believed that they were acting under the Inspiration of the Spirit and, therefore, could not do anything wrong. But the Apostle deals very faithfully with them and tells them how the Supper is to be celebrated. How much we have gained by the mistakes of others! As the Inspired Apostle is guided to inform us as to the right mode of observing this ordinance, we may almost be thankful that the Corinthians fell into error concerning it—as much as we may regret their faults on their own account.

23, 24. *For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me.* These are the words of the Lord Jesus, Himself, and therefore they come to us with all the weight of His Infallible authority! Then Paul continues—

25, 26. *After the same manner, also, He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood: this do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this*

bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till He comes. "Show" or, "proclaim." The latter is the better word. "You do proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." That last phrase ought finally to settle the question of the perpetuity of the Lord's Supper, which is to be observed "till He comes."

27. *Therefore whoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.* "Unworthily," that is, in a thoughtless, careless way—or with a view to worldly gain, as some used to take it in order to obtain an office under government and as some, doubtless, do take it, to obtain the alms of the church. Such an unworthy participation is a sin against the very body and blood of the Lord!

28. *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.* Paul does not say, "Let a man examine himself and then *not* eat or drink at the communion." The examination should lead him to repentance, to faith and should then bring him to the Table of fellowship in the right state of mind and heart. The examination is not a door to shut him out from the ordinance, but a door at which he may pause awhile, to see whether he is in a right condition to enter. And if he is not, he should seek to be made so, and *then* enter.

29. *For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.* "Eats and drinks judgment to himself," for "judgment" is the word here used by the Apostle.

30. *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.* It appears that God visited this Church at Corinth with sickness, and took away many of the members by death because they had profaned the Lord's Table and had walked in a disorderly manner before Him. Paul did not mean to say that these persons were lost—he intended to remind their fellow members and all who might read his Epistle, that God visits Churches after this fashion with discipline and chastening because of the unseemly conduct which is always so offensive to Him.

31, 32. *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* So, you see, that chastening process, which is going on in the Church, is all in love—"that we should not be condemned with the world"—just as a father exercises discipline in his household and uses chastisement that his children may never disobey the laws of the realm. They will never come before the police court, for they are kept under proper control at home and are tutored and trained by their father's wise government. So we come not under the judgment of the Law of God, as the world, itself, comes—we come under the disciplinary treatment of the great Head of the Church, even the Lord Jesus Christ!

33, 34. *Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that you come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.* Now let us read Luke's account of the institution of this Supper. As we do so, it will be well for us to remember that Luke was a friend and intimate companion of Paul.

Luke 22:14-16 *And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.* This was to be the last occasion on which our Lord and His disciples would thus meet.

17, 18. *And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come.* That was the Passover cup. Now the Passover melts into the Lord's Supper and, henceforth, the Lord's Supper remains and the Passover has passed away.

19-21. *And He took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. But, behold, the hand of him that betrays Me is with Me on the table.* What a sobering, saddening effect this must have had upon those who were at that festival! We have reason to fear that it will be true of our gathering, also. There were only 12 Apostles, yet there was a Judas among them. We shall have many hundreds at our observance of the ordinance—may we not fear that there will be many a Judas, too? Can we expect that we shall have a better selection of professed followers of Christ than the Lord had made for His Apostles?

22-24. *And truly the Son of Man goes, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed! And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.* That had been their question among themselves, but now they have another enquiry, of quite a different sort, to answer. It was wise of the Master to give them a heart-searching question to drive out that question of ambition which had filled them with pride and contention. Oh, if any of us ever had such a thought as that in our bosom—which of us is greatest?—who can speak the best?—who can serve God the most?—who can take the lead?—let all such questions be set aside while we sorrowfully entertain the other sad enquiry—which of us will betray our Lord? God grant that none of us may ever do so!

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—938, 282, 942.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY
TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

THE REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST

NO. 2

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, JANUARY 7, 1855,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

*“This do in remembrance of Me.”
1 Corinthians 11:24.*

IT seems, then, that Christians may forget Christ. The text implies the possibility of forgetfulness concerning Him whom gratitude and affection should compel them to remember. There could be no need for this loving exhortation if there were not a fearful supposition that our memories might prove treacherous and our remembrance superficial in its character, or changing in its nature. Nor is this a bare supposition—it is, alas, too well confirmed in our experience, not as a possibility, but as a lamentable fact. It seems at first sight too gross a crime to lay at the door of converted men. It appears almost impossible that those who have been redeemed by the blood of the dying Lamb should ever forget their Ransomer—that those who have been loved with an everlasting love by the eternal Son of God, should ever forget that Son. But if startling to the ear, it is, alas, too apparent to the eye to allow us to deny the fact. Forget Him who never forgot us? Forget Him who poured His blood forth for our sins? Forget Him who loved us even to the death? Can it be possible? Yes, it is not only possible, but conscience confesses that it is too sadly a fault of all of us—that we can remember anything except Christ. The Object which we should make the monarch of our hearts is the very thing we are most inclined to forget. Where one would think that memory would linger and unmindfulness would be an unknown intruder—that is the very spot which is desecrated by the feet of forgetfulness—the place where memory too seldom looks. I appeal to the conscience of every Christian here—can you deny the truth of what I utter? Do you not find yourselves forgetful of Jesus? Some creature steals away your heart and you are unmindful of Him upon whom your affection ought to be set. Some earthly business engrosses your attention when you should have your eye steadily fixed upon the Cross. It is the incessant round of world, world, world—the constant din of earth, earth, earth, that takes away the soul from Christ. Oh, my Friends, is it not too sadly true that we can recollect anything but Christ and forget nothing so easy as Him whom we ought to remember? While memory will preserve a poisoned weed, it suffers the Rose of Sharon to wither.

The cause of this is very apparent—it lies in one or two facts. We forget Christ because regenerate persons as we are—still corruption and death remain even in us. We forget Him because we carry about with us the old Adam of sin and death. If we were purely new-born creatures, we would never forget the name of Him whom we love. If we were entirely regenerated beings, we would sit down and meditate on what our Savior did and suffered. As He is. All He has gloriously promised to perform. And never would our roving affections stray, but stay centered, nailed, fixed eternally to one Object—we should continually contemplate the death and sufferings of our Lord. But alas, we have a worm in the heart, an abode of pests, a morgue within. Lusts, vile imaginations and strong evil passions like wells of poisonous water send out streams of impurity. I have a heart, which God knows I wish I could wring from my body and hurl to an infinite distance. I have a soul which is a cave of unclean birds, a den of loathsome creatures where dragons haunt and owls congregate, where every evil beast dwells—a heart too vile to have a parallel—“deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” This is the reason why I am forgetful of Christ. Nor is this the sole cause. I suspect it lies somewhere else, too. We forget Christ because there are so many other things around us to attract our attention, “But,” you say, “they ought not to do so, because though they are around us, they are nothing in comparison with Jesus Christ—though they are in dread proximity to our hearts, what are they compared with Christ?” But do you know, dear Friends, that the nearness of an object has a very great effect upon its power? The sun is many, many times larger than the moon, but the moon has a greater influence upon the tides of the ocean than the sun, simply because it is nearer and has a greater power of attraction. So I find that a little crawling worm of the earth has more effect upon my soul than the glorious Christ in Heaven. A handful of golden earth, a puff of fame, a shout of applause, a thriving business, my house, my home will affect me more than all the glories of the upper world. Yes, than the Beatific Vision itself—simply because earth is near and Heaven is far away. Happy day, when I shall be borne aloft on angels’ wings to dwell forever near my Lord—to bask in the sunshine of His smile and to be lost in the ineffable radiance of His lovely Countenance. We see, then, the cause of forgetfulness. Let us blush over it. Let us be sad that we neglect our Lord so much. And now let us attend to His Word, “This do in remembrance of Me,” hoping that its solemn sounds may charm away the demon of base ingratitude.

We shall speak, first of all, *concerning the blessed Object of memory*. Secondly, *upon the advantages to be derived from remembering this Person*. Thirdly *the gracious help, to our memory*—“This do in remembrance of Me.” And fourthly, *the gentle command*, “This do in remembrance of

Me.” May the Holy Spirit open my lips and your hearts, that we may receive blessings.

I. First of all, we shall speak of THE GLORIOUS AND PRECIOUS OBJECT OF MEMORY—“This do in remembrance of *Me*.” Christians have many treasures to lock up in the cabinet of memory. They ought to remember their *election*—“Chosen of God before time began.” They ought to be mindful of their *extraction*, that they were taken out of the miry clay, hewn out of the horrible pit. They ought to recollect their *effectual calling*, for they were called of God and rescued by the power of the Holy Spirit. They ought to remember their *special deliverances*—all that has been done for them and all the mercies bestowed on them. But there is One whom they should embalm in their souls with the most costly spices—One who, above all other gifts of God, deserves to be had in perpetual remembrance. *One*, I said, for I mean not an act, I mean not a deed. But it is a *Person* whose portrait I would frame in gold and hang up in the stateroom of the soul. I would have you earnest students of all the *deeds* of the conquering Messiah. I would have you conversant with the *life* of our Beloved. But O forget not His *Person*. For the text says, “This do in remembrance of ME.” It is Christ’s glorious Person which ought to be the object of our remembrance. It is His image which should be enshrined in every temple of the Holy Spirit.

But some will say, “How can we remember Christ’s Person when we never saw it? We cannot tell what was the peculiar form of His visage. We believe His countenance to be fairer than that of any other man—although through grief and suffering more marred—but since we did not see it, we cannot remember it. We never saw His feet as they trod the journeys of His mercy. We never beheld His hands as He stretched them out full of loving kindness. We cannot remember the wondrous intonation of His language, when in more than seraphic eloquence He awed the multitude and chained their ears to Him. We cannot picture the sweet smile that always hung on His lips, nor that awful frown with which He dealt out anathemas against the Pharisees. We cannot remember Him in His sufferings and agonies for we never saw Him.” Well, Beloved, I suppose it is true that you cannot remember the *visible* appearance, for you were not then born. But do you not know that even the Apostle said though He had known Christ after the flesh, yet, thenceforth after the flesh He would know Christ no more. The natural appearance, the race, the descent, the poverty, the humble garb—they are nothing in the Apostle’s estimation of His glorified Lord. And thus, though you do not know Him after the flesh, you may know Him after the spirit! In this manner you can remember Jesus as much now as Peter, or Paul, or John, or James, or any of those favored ones who once trod in His footsteps, walked side by side with Him, or laid their heads upon His bosom. Mem-

ory annihilates distance and leaps over time and can behold the Lord, though He is exalted in glory!

Ah, let us spend five minutes in remembering Jesus. Let us remember Him in His *Baptism*, when descending into the waters of Jordan, a voice was heard, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Behold Him coming up dripping from the stream. Surely the conscious water must have blushed that it contained its God. He slept within its waves a moment—to consecrate the tomb of Baptism—in which those who are dead with Christ are buried with Him. Let us remember Him in the *wilderness*, where He went straight from His immersion. Oh, I have often thought of that scene in the desert, when Christ, weary and worn, sat down, perhaps upon the gnarled roots of some old tree! Forty days had He fasted. He was hungry. Then in the extremity of His weakness there came the evil spirit. Perhaps he had veiled his demon royalty in the form of some aged pilgrim and taking up a stone, said, "Wayworn Pilgrim, if you are the Son of God, command this stone to be made bread." I think I see him, with his cunning smile and his malicious leer, as he held the stone and said, "If"—blasphemous if—"If you are the Son of God, command that this stone shall become a meal for me and You, for both of us are hungry and it will be an act of mercy. You can do it easily, speak the word and it shall be like the bread of Heaven. We will feed upon it and You and I will be friends forever." But Jesus said—and O how sweetly did He say it—"Man shall not live by bread alone." Oh, how wonderfully did Christ fight the Tempter! Never was there such a battle as that. It was a duel foot to foot—a single-handed combat—when the champion lion of the Pit and the mighty Lion of the tribe of Judah fought together. Splendid sight! Angels stood around to gaze upon the spectacle, just as men of old did sit to see the tournament of noted warriors. There Satan gathered up his strength. Here Apollyon concentrated all his Satanic power that in this giant wrestle he might overthrow the Seed of the woman! But Jesus was more than a match for him. In the wrestling He gave him a deadly fall and came out more than a conqueror. Lamb of God! I will remember Your desert strivings when next I combat with Satan. When next I have a conflict with roaring Diabolus, I will look to Him who conquered once and for all and broke the dragon's head with His mighty blows!

Further, I beseech you remember Him in all *His daily temptations* and hourly trials, in that life-long struggle of His through which He passed. Oh, what a mighty tragedy was the death of Christ! And His life, too! Ushered in with a song, it closed with a shriek, "It is finished!" It began in a manger and ended on a Cross—but oh, the sad interval between! Oh, the black pictures of persecution when His friends abhorred Him. When His foes frowned at Him as He passed the streets. When He heard the hiss of calumny and was bitten by the foul tooth of envy. When

slander said He had a devil and was mad—that He was a drunken man and a wine-bibber—and when His righteous soul was vexed with the ways of the wicked. Oh, Son of God, I must remember You. I cannot help remembering You, when I think of those years of toil and trouble which You did live for *my* sake! But do you know my chosen theme—the place where I can always best remember Christ? It is a shady garden full of olives. O that spot! I would that I had eloquence, that I might take you there. Oh, if the Spirit would but take us and set us down hard by the mountains of Jerusalem, I would say, See, there runs the brook of Ise-dron, which the King, Himself, did pass. And there you see the olive trees. Possibly, at the foot of that olive tree lay the three disciples when they slept. And there, ah, there, I see drops of blood! Stand here, my Soul, a moment. Those drops of blood—do you behold them? Mark them. They are not the blood of wounds—they are the blood of a Man whose body was then unwounded. O my Soul, picture Him when He knelt down in agony and sweat—sweat because He wrestled with God—sweat because He agonized with His Father. “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.” O Gethsemane! Your shades are deeply solemn to my soul. But ah, those drops of blood! Surely it is the climax of the height of misery. It is the last of the mighty acts of this wondrous Sacrifice. Can love go deeper than that? Can it stoop to greater deeds of mercy? Oh, had I eloquence I would bestow a tongue on every drop of blood that is there—that your hearts might rise in mutiny against your languor and coldness and speak out with earnest burning remembrance of Jesus. And now, farewell, Gethsemane.

But I will take you somewhere else where you shall still behold the “Man of Sorrows.” I will lead you to Pilate’s hall and let you see Him endure the mockeries of cruel soldiers—the smiting of mailed gloves, the blows of clenched fists. The shame, the spitting, the plucking of the hair—the cruel buffetings. Oh, can you not picture the King of Martyrs stripped of His garments—exposed to the gaze of fiend-like men? See you not the crown about His temples, each thorn acting as a lancet to pierce His head? Stare you not at His lacerated shoulders and the white bones starting out from the bleeding flesh? Oh, Son of Man! I see You scourged and flagellated with rods and whips! How can I cease to remember You? My memory would be more treacherous than Pilate, did it not ever cry, *Ecce Homo*—“Behold the man.”

Now, finish the scene of woe by a view of Calvary. Think of the pierced hands and the bleeding side. Think of the scorching sun and then the entire darkness. Remember the broiling fever and the dread thirst. Think of the death shriek, “It is finished!” and of the groans which were its prelude. This is the Object of memory. Let us never forget Christ. I beseech you, for the love of Jesus, let Him have the chief place in your memories.

Let not the Pearl of Great Price be dropped from your careless hand into the dark ocean of oblivion.

I cannot, however, help saying one thing before I leave this head—and that is, there are some of you who can very well carry away what I have said because you have read it often and heard it before. But still you cannot spiritually remember anything about Christ because you never had Him manifested to you—and what we have never *known*—we cannot remember. Thanks be unto God, I speak not of you all, for in this place there is a goodly remnant according to the election of Grace and to them I turn. Perhaps I could tell you of some old barn, hedge-row, or cottage. Or if you have lived in London, about some attic, or some dark lane or street, where first you met with Christ. Or some chapel into which you strayed and you might say, “Thank God, I can remember the seat where first He met with me and spoke the whispers of love to my soul and told me He had purchased me”—

***“Do mind the place, the spot of ground,
Where Jesus did you meet!”***

Yes, and I would love to build a temple on the spot and to raise some monument there—where Jehovah-Jesus first spoke to my soul and manifested Himself to me. But He has revealed Himself to you more than once—has He not? And you can remember scores of places where the Lord has appeared of old unto you, saying, “Behold I have loved you with an everlasting love.” If you cannot all remember such things, there are some of you that can. And I am sure they will understand me when I say, come and do this in remembrance of Christ—in remembrance of all His loving visitations—of His sweet wooing words—of His winning smiles upon you—of all He has said and communicated to your souls. Remember all these things, tonight, if it is possible for memory to gather up the mighty aggregate of Grace. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul and forget not all His benefits.”

II. Having spoken upon the blessed Object of our memory, we say, secondly, a little upon THE BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM A LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST.

Love never says, “*Cui bono?*” Love never asks what benefit it will derive from love. Love from its very nature is a disinterested thing. It loves for the creature’s sake it loves and for nothing else. The Christian needs no argument to make Him love Christ—just as a mother needs no argument to make her love her child. She does it because it is her nature to do so. The new-born creature must love Christ—it cannot help it. Oh, who can resist the matchless charms of Jesus Christ?—the fairest of ten thousand fairs, the loveliest of ten thousand loves! Who can refuse to adore the Prince of Perfection, the Mirror of Beauty, the Majestic Son of God? But yet it may be useful to us to observe the advantages of remembering Christ, for they are neither few nor small.

And first, remembrance of Jesus will tend to give you *hope when you are under the burden of your sins*. Let us notice a few characters here tonight. There comes in a poor creature. Look at him! He has neglected himself this last month. He looks as if he had hardly eaten his daily bread. What is the matter with you? “Oh,” he says, “I have been under a sense of guilt. I have been again and again lamenting, because I fear I can never be forgiven—once I thought I was good, but I have been reading the Bible and I find that my heart is ‘deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.’ I have tried to reform, but the more I try, the deeper I sink in the mire. There is certainly no hope for me. I feel that I deserve no mercy—it seems to me that God must destroy me, for He has declared, ‘The soul that sins it shall die.’ And die I must, be damned I must, for I know I have broken God’s Law.” How will you comfort such a man? What soft words will you utter to give him peace? *I know!* I will tell him to *remember Christ*. I will tell him there is One who paid the mighty debt of misery. Yes, I will tell you drunks, swearers—whatever you have been—I will tell you that there is One who for you has made a complete Atonement! If you only *believe* on Him you are safe forever. Remember Him, you poor dying, hopeless creature and you shall be made to sing for joy and gladness. Look, the man believes and in ecstasy exclaims, “Oh, come all you that fear God and I will tell you what He has done for my soul”—

**“Tell it unto sinners, tell,
I am, I am out of Hell.”**

Hallelujah! God has blotted out my sins like a thick cloud! That is one benefit to be derived from remembering Christ. It gives us hope under a sense of sin and tells us there is mercy yet.

Now, I must have another character. And what does he say? “I cannot stand it any longer—I have been persecuted and ill-treated because I love Christ. I am mocked and laughed at and despised—I try to bear it, but I really cannot. A man will be a man—tread upon a worm and he will turn upon you. My patience altogether fails me. I am in such a peculiar position that it is of no use to advise me to have patience, for patience I cannot have. My enemies are slandering me and I do not know what to do.” What shall we say to that poor man? How shall we give him patience? What shall we preach to him? You have heard what he has to say about himself. How shall we comfort him under this great trial? If we suffered the same, what should we wish some friend to say to us? Shall we tell him that other persons have borne as much? He will say, “Miserable comforters are you all!” No, I will tell him, “Brother, you are persecuted, but remember the words of Jesus Christ, how He spoke unto us and said, ‘Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for great is your reward in Heaven, for so persecuted they the Prophets that were before you.’” My Brother! Think of *Him*, who when He died, prayed for His murderers and

said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." All you have to bear is as nothing compared with His mighty sufferings. Take courage—face it again like a man—never say die. Let not your patience be gone. Take up your cross daily and follow Christ. Let Him be your motto—set Him before your eyes. And, now, receiving this, hear what the man will say. He tells you at once—"Hail, persecution! Welcome shame! Disgrace for Jesus shall be my honor and scorn shall be my highest glory—

***'Now, for the love I bear His name,
What was my gain I count my loss,
I pour contempt on all my shame,
And nail my glory to His cross.'***

There is another effect, you see, of remembering Christ. It tends to give us *patience under* persecution. It is a belt to brace up the loins so that our faith may endure to the end.

Dear Friends, I would occupy your time too much if I went into the several benefits. So I will only just run over one or two blessings to be received. It will give us strength in *temptation*. I believe that there are hours with every man when he has a season of terrific temptation. There was never a vessel that lived upon the mighty deep but sometimes it has to do battle with a storm. There she is, the poor ship, rocked up and down on the mad waves. See how they throw her from wave to wave, all toss her to mid-heaven. The winds laugh her to scorn. Old Ocean takes the ship in his dripping fingers and shakes it to and fro. How the mariners cry out for fear! Do you know how you can put oil upon the waters and all shall be still? Yes, one potent word shall do it. Let *Jesus* come. Let the poor heart *remember Jesus* and steadily, then, the ship shall sail, for Christ has the helm. The winds shall blow no more, for Christ shall bid them shut their mighty mouths and never again disturb His child. There is nothing which can give you strength in temptation and help you to weather the storm like the name of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God! Then again, what *comfort* it will give you on a sick bed—the name of Christ! It will help you to be patient to those who wait upon you and to endure the sufferings which you have to bear. Yes, it shall be so with you, that you shall have more hope in sickness than in health and shall find a blessed sweetness in the bitterness of gall. Instead of feeling vinegar in your mouth through your trouble, you shall find honey for sweetness in the midst of all the trial and trouble that God will put upon you—"For He gives songs in the night."

But just to close up the advantages of remembering Christ—do you know where you will have the benefit most of all? Do you know the place where chiefly you will rejoice that you ever thought of Him? I will take you to it. Hush! Silence! You are going upstairs into a lonely room. The curtains hang down. Someone stands there weeping. Children are

around the bed and friends are there. See that man lying there? That is yourself—look at how his eyes are your eyes—his hands are your hands. That is *yourself*—you will be there soon, Man! That is *yourself*—do you see it? It is a picture of *yourself*—those are your eyes that soon will be closed in death—your hands that will lie stiff and motionless—your lips that will be dry and parched, between which they will put drops of water. Those are your words that freeze in air and drop so slowly from your dying lips. I wonder whether you will be able to remember Christ there? If you do not, I will picture you. Behold that man, straight up in the bed—see his eyes starting from their sockets? His friends are all around, they ask him what he sees. He represses the emotion. He tells them he sees nothing. They know that there is something before his eyes. He starts again. Good God! What is that I see—I seem to see? That is it? Ah, one sigh! The soul is gone. The body is there. What did he see? He saw a flaming throne of judgments. He saw God upon it with His scepter. He saw books opened. He beheld the Throne of God and saw a messenger with a sword brandished in the air to smite him low. Man! That is *yourself*. There you will be soon. That picture is your own portrait. I have photographed you to the life. Look at it. That is where you shall be within a few years—yes, within a few days. But if you can *remember Christ*, shall I tell you what you will do? Oh, you will smile in the midst of trouble. Let me picture such a man. They put pillows behind him. He sits up in bed and takes the hand of the his loved one and says, “Farewell! Weep not for me! The kind God shall wipe away all tears from every eye.” Those round about are addressed, “Prepare to meet your God and follow me to the land of bliss.” Now he has set his house in order. It is done. Behold him, like good old Jacob, leaning on his staff, about to die. See how his eyes sparkle! He claps his hands—they gather round to hear what he has to say. He whispers, “Victory!” And summoning a little more strength, he cries, “Victory!” And at last, with his final gasp, “Victory, through Him that loved us!” And he dies. This is one of the great benefits to be derived from remembering Christ—to be enabled to meet death with blessed composure.

III. We are now arrived at the third portion of our meditations which is A SWEET AID TO MEMORY.

At schools we use certain books, called “Aids to Memory.” I am sure they rather perplexed than assisted me. Their utility was equivalent to that of a bundle of canes under a traveler’s arm—true, he might use them one by one to walk with, but in the meantime he carried a host of others which he would never need. But our Savior was wiser than all our teachers and His remembrances are true and real aids to memory. His love tokens have an unmistakable language and they sweetly win our attention.

Behold the whole mystery of the sacred Eucharist. It is bread and wine which are lively emblems of the body and blood of Jesus. The power to excite remembrance consists in the appeal thus made to the senses. Here the eye, the hand, the mouth find joyful work. The bread is tasted and entering within, works upon the sense of taste, which is one of the most powerful remembrances. The wine is sipped—the act is palpable. We know that we are drinking and thus the senses which are usually clogs to the soul become wines to lift the mind in contemplation. Again—much of the influence of this ordinance is found in its simplicity. How beautifully simple the ceremony is—bread broken and wine poured out. There is no calling *that* thing a chalice, *that* thing a paten and *that* a host. Here is nothing to burden the memory—here is the simple bread and wine. He must have no memory at all who cannot remember that he has eaten bread and that he has been drinking wine. Note again, the *mighty pregnancy* of these signs—how full they are of meaning. Bread broken—so was your Savior broken. Bread to be eaten—so His flesh is food, indeed. Wine poured out, the pressed juice of the grape—so was your Savior crushed under the foot of Divine Justice. His blood is your sweetest wine. Wine to cheer your heart—so does the blood of Jesus. Wine to strengthen and invigorate you—so does the blood of the Mighty Sacrifice. Oh, make that bread and wine to your souls tonight a sweet and blessed help of remembrance of that dear Man who once on Calvary died. Like the little ewe lamb, you are now to eat your Master's bread and drink from His cup. Remember the hand which feeds you.

But before you can remember Christ well here, you must ask the assistance of the Holy Spirit. I believe there ought to be a preparation before the Lord's Supper. I do not believe in Mrs. Toogood's preparation, who spent a week in preparing and then finding it was not the Ordinance Sunday, she said she had lost all the week. I do not believe in that kind of preparation. But I do believe in a holy preparation for the Lord's Supper—when we can on a Saturday, if possible, spend an hour in quiet meditation on Christ and His Passion. When, especially on the Sabbath afternoon, we can devoutly sit down and behold Him—then these scenes become realities and not mockeries, as they are to some. I fear greatly that there are some of you who will eat the bread tonight and will not think about Christ—some of you who will drink the wine and not think of His blood—and vile hypocrites you will be while you do it! Take heed to yourselves, “He that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks—what?—“damnation to himself.” This is plain English. Mind what you are doing! Do not do it carelessly. For of all the sacred things on earth, it is the most solemn. We have heard of some men banded together by draining blood from their arms and drinking it all round. That was most horrid, but at the same time most solemn. Here you are to drink blood from the veins of Christ and sip the trickling stream which gushed from His

own loving heart. Is not that a solemn thing? Ought anybody to trifle with it? To go to church and take it for sixpence? To come and join us for the sake of getting charities? Away with it! It is an awful blasphemy against Almighty God and among the damned in Hell! Those shall be among the most accursed who dared thus to mock the holy ordinance of God. This is the remembrance of Christ. "This do in remembrance of Me." If you cannot do it in remembrance of Christ, I beseech you, as you love your souls, do not do it at all! Oh, regenerate man or woman, enter not into the court of the priests, lest Israel's God resent the intrusion.

IV. And now to close up. Here is A SWEET COMMAND—"This do in remembrance of Me." To whom does this command apply? "This do YOU." It is important to answer this question—"This do YOU." Who are intended? You who put your trust in Me. "This do you in remembrance of Me." Well, now, you should suppose Christ speaking to you tonight. And He says, "This do you in remembrance of Me." Christ watches you at the door. Some of you go home and Christ says, "I thought I said, 'This do you in remembrance of Me.'" Some of you keep your seats as spectators. Christ sits with you and He says, "I thought I said, 'This do you in remembrance of Me.'" "Lord, I know You did." "Do you love Me, then?" "Yes, I love You. I love You, Lord, You know I do." "But, I say, go down there—eat that bread, drink that wine." "I do not like to, Lord. I should have to be baptized if I joined that Church and I am afraid I shall catch cold, or be looked at. I am afraid to go before the Church, for I think they would ask some questions I could not answer." "What?" asks Christ, "Is this all you love Me? Is this all your affection to your Lord? Oh, how cold to Me, your Savior! If I had loved you no more than this, you would have been in Hell—if that were the full extent of My affection, I would not have died for you. Great love bore great agonies—and is this all your gratitude to Me?" Are not some of you ashamed, after this? Do you not say in your hearts, "it is really wrong"? Christ says, "Do this in remembrance of Me," and are you not ashamed to stay away? I give a free invitation to every lover of Jesus to come to this table. I beseech you, deny not yourselves the privilege by refusing to unite with the Church. If you still live in sinful neglect of this ordinance, let me remind you that Christ has said, "Whoever shall be ashamed of Me in this generation, of him will I be ashamed, when I come in the Glory of My Father." Oh, soldier of the Cross, act not the coward's part!

And not to lead you into any mistakes, I must just add one thing and then I have done. When I speak of your taking the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, do not imagine that I wish you for one moment to suppose that there is anything *saving* in it. Some say that the ordinance of Baptism is non-essential. So is the ordinance of the Lord's Supper—it is non-essential, if we look upon it in the light of *salvation*. Be saved by eating a piece of bread? Nonsense, confounded nonsense! Be saved by drinking a

drop of wine? Why, it is too absurd for common sense to admit any discussion upon! You know it is the blood of Jesus Christ. It is the merit of His agonies. It is the purchase of His sufferings—it is what *He did*—that alone can save us. Venture on Him—venture wholly—and then you are saved. Do you know, poor convicted Sinner, the way of salvation? If I ever meet you in the next world, you might, perhaps, say to me, “I spent one evening, Sir, in hearing you and you never told me the way to Heaven.” Well, you shall hear it—Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, trust in His name, find refuge in His Cross, rely upon the power of His Spirit, trust in His righteousness and you are saved beyond the vengeance of the Law, or the power of Hell. But trust in your own works and you are lost as sure as you are alive!

Now, O ever glorious Son of God, we approach Your table to feast on the viands of Grace. Permit each of us, in reliance upon Your Spirit, to exclaim in the words of one of Your own poets—

***“Remember You and all Your pains
And all Your love to me?—Yes,
While a pulse or breath remains,
I will remember Thee.
And when these failing lips grow dark
And thought and memory flee
When You shall in Your kingdom come,
Jesus, remember me!”***

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

THE DOUBLE FORGET-ME-NOT NO. 3099

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 2, 1908.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JULY 5, 1874.

*“This do in remembrance of Me.”
1 Corinthians 11:24.*

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon this passage and verses before and after are as follows—
Sermons #2, Volume 1—THE REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST; #2368, Volume 39—THE
GREATEST EXHIBITION OF THE AGE; #2595, Volume 44—WHAT THE LORD'S SUPPER
SEES AND SAYS and #2638, Volume 45—THE RIGHT OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER—
Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

THERE are some persons who do not consider the Lord's Supper to be a Divine ordinance. They say that they cannot see where it is commanded in Scripture. I have long ago given up trying to understand other people's understandings, for some of them are constructed upon such peculiar principles that I believe the Holy Spirit, Himself, could not put a Truth of God in such a form but that some people would understand Him to mean the very opposite of what He said! Now to me, Christ's command to observe the Lord's Supper seems to be so plain and so positive that it would take greater ingenuity than I possess to be able to justify myself, as a Christian, if I lived in neglect of the Communion! I know a good deal of what has been invented by others, but I cannot myself invent any syllogism, or argument, or reason by which I could set aside such a plain Divine precept as that which is recorded in this Chapter—"The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." If Christ did not mean that we were to do this, and to do it in remembrance of Him, what did He mean? It seems to me to be very plain and positive that this is what He did mean and being so, the precept comes to Christians with very great force for it is issued upon the highest possible authority! It is not the Apostle Paul who tells us to do this in remembrance of Christ, but the Master, Himself, who says, "This do in remembrance of Me." The utmost solemnity appertains to the Ten Commandments because they were issued by God Himself on Mount Sinai—and there is no less weight attaching to the command before us, since it was issued by the Son of God, Himself, who could truly say, "I and My Father are One."

It also seems to me that this command derives singular solemnity from the occasion upon which it was given. If the issuing of the Law of

God was specially solemn because “Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire,” I venture to say that the giving of this plain, positive command, “This do in remembrance of Me,” is none the less solemn because it was given by “the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed.” What other night, in the world’s history, can be more august and more solemn to Him and to us as Believers in Him, than that night when He went, with His disciples for the last time to Gethsemane? My Lord, as this command was given by You at such a special time, how dare I neglect it if I am indeed Your disciple? Let none of us who believe in Jesus, live in habitual disobedience to this command of His!

Let me make just one other introductory observation, namely, that this commandment was evidently not issued for one occasion only, for it is quoted by the Apostle Paul in writing to the Corinthians—and he adds these significant words, “For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He come.” The command, therefore, remains in force until the Second Advent—and until Christ, Himself, shall again appear upon this earth, these memorials of His passion are to be constantly before us!

I. I am going to remind you, first, of THE NEED OF SUCH COMMEMORATION OF CHRIST—“This do in remembrance of Me.”

The need exists, first, *because of our forgetful memories*. Memory, in common with every other faculty, has been injured by the Fall. It is more retentive of that which is evil than of that which is good and, as you all know, far more easily recollects injuries than benefits. But it certainly does show the deep depravity of the human heart that we should ever be likely to forget our Lord. Have we not often sung—

“Gethsemane, can I forget?”

Yet we have practically forgotten Gethsemane and have omitted to act towards our Lord as we should have acted had Gethsemane been perpetually painted on our memories. Yes, we are apt to forget our truest Friend, our best Beloved, Jesus, in whom our souls delight! We do forget Him, and it ought to humble us when we remember that Christ knew what forgetful lovers we would be and, therefore, gave us this love-token, this double forget-me-not.

Did there not also exist a need for this command in the fact of *our childish condition*? We are not, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, what we shall yet be. We are, to a great extent, still underage. We are children of God and heirs of the Kingdom of God, but at present we are under tutors and governors. Now in a child’s book there should be pictures. We are not altogether little children—we have grown somewhat—and some Christians think we have grown so big that we do not need pictures, but Jesus knew that we should be, in many respects, little children or big children, so He has put two pictures in the Book which He has given to us because He would have us remember that we are not yet men, we have not yet come to our full estate. The two pictures are Believers’ Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Because I am a child, therefore must I still have emblems and tokens, for these are more powerful to my mind than mere words would be.

No doubt, also, the two ordinances were left, and especially this one, *because we are yet in the body*. We are still linked with materialism. We are not yet purely spiritual and it is no use for us to pretend that we are. Some good people sit still till they are moved, which would be an admirable form of worship if we had not bodies. But, as long as we have bodies, there must be some kind of linking of the spiritual with the material, let the links be as few as they may. Christ has made two—they are enough, but they are none too many, for let it be remembered that there is a time coming when the material itself is to be lifted up and reunited with the spiritual! “The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” And as if to teach us not to despise the material, not to consider everything that can be touched and seen as therefore foul and beneath the consideration of spiritual minds, our Lord has given us water in which we can wash, and bread and wine, the products of the earth, that, being yet earthy, we may anticipate the time when the earth shall shake off the slough which came upon her at the Fall and, as a new earth, with her new Heaven of pure blue over her, shall become a holy Temple of the Living God!

I have often grieved over the fact that these two ordinances, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, have become nests in which the foul bird of superstition has laid her eggs. But the Lord foresaw that when He instituted them—yet I have often rejoiced, notwithstanding this drawback, that we are able, through these material symbols, to get nearer to Him whose body was material and is material, whose blood was real blood, who was born into this world of a virgin of real flesh and blood, was often weary and was, in fact, a Man such as we are, a real Man, who once on Calvary died—no phantom, no myth, no dream of history, but One who could have gripped my hand, as I, my Brother or Sister, can grip yours, and One who felt the nails that went through His hands as you and I would feel it if nails were driven through our hands! Therefore it is that we come to no shallow feast, but to a real one of bread and wine to make us feel that it was a real Christ who died for us and that this poor body, which is so real to us, is yet, after all, to be cleansed and purified by that great Sacrifice of His upon the Cross of Calvary!

I hope I shall not be thought uncharitable if I suggest that the Lord’s Supper was given to us *for other reasons*. Some have said, “We do not need this memorial, for we can think of Christ through hearing about Him from ministers in the pulpit.” Yes, you can hear the ministers, but what can you hear from some of them? In many and many a case, you will hear what will do you little good, for the one thing that is absent from many a ministry, nowadays, is the clear proclamation of the great central Truth of God of the substitutionary Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Earthly ministries are not to be relied upon, for almost all of them by degrees fall back from the faithfulness, seriousness, and earnestness with which they commenced. There is scarcely an instance in history in which human ministries have fully preserved their pristine purity, yet, wherever Christians have been able to meet together to observe this

ordinance as a memorial of Christ's death, they have always kept up a living testimony to Christ's death! If ministries were silenced, or if ministers had lost their zeal, there was always this memorial ministry—the breaking of bread and the pouring out of wine in remembrance of Christ!

Somebody probably says, "But, surely, the Church would always keep Christ in memory." Alas, alas, that which ought to be the very Glory of the earth-organized Christianity has full often become one of the main agents of evil in the earth! And therefore I bless God for an ordinance which is not a Church ordinance, or a minister's ordinance. I hope none of you are under the impression that, at the close of the present service, I am going to *administer the Lord's Supper*. God forbid that I should ever venture to do such a thing as that! No, it is you, or *we*, who come to the Lord's Table to break bread and to drink of the cup—and we come together, not as a Church holding certain views, but we come simply as Christians to, "do this in remembrance" of the Savior who died for us! You may break bread wherever you will, wherever two or three Christians can meet together and if you truly love your Lord, the oftener you do this, the better. "This do you, as often as you drink it," is no command addressed to an ecclesiastical organization concerning an ordinance to be administered by men who have the impertinence or impudence to call themselves priests, but a command to all Christians everywhere, on any day of the week, and in any place—beneath the blue sky of Heaven, or in a barn, or in a tavern if they happen to be tarrying there—to break a piece of bread in memory of their Lord's broken body, and to drink of the cup in mutual loving memory of His precious blood poured out for them! And, mark you, if it should ever come to this, that ministries should fail, I mean what we usually consider to be ordained earthly ministries. And if churches should fail, there will still be found faithful followers of Christ—hunted and harried, it may be—to the very ends of the earth! And they will break the bread and drink the wine in remembrance of Christ and so, till the trumpet sounds to announce His return, it shall be remembered that Jesus was Incarnate and that Jesus died, and that through Him we have access to the Father!

Thus have I tried to show you why a commemoration feast was needed, but I do not pretend to know all the reasons for its institution, nor a tithe of them. Jesus said, "This do you in remembrance of Me"—and that is all the reason that any truly obedient child of God will ever need!

II. Now, secondly, let me try to show you THE SUITABILITY OF THIS COMMEMORATION FOR THE PURPOSE INTENDED.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, *this ordinance is in itself a very suitable commemoration of the death of Christ*. A crucifix might have been suggested as a means of keeping the death of Christ before us, but I need not remind you how that has become the very emblem of idolatry. I do not know of any memorial of Christ that could have been so suggestive and so admirable as the one which Christ has ordained. In itself it is admirable, for here is bread, the very staff of life—a fit token of that flesh

of Christ which is, spiritually, “meat, indeed.” The fact of His Incarnation is most nourishing food to our hearts. We believe in Him as God, veiled in human flesh, and that great Truth of God, that wondrous fact is as much food for our souls as bread is for our bodies. Further, in this memorial we have the bread broken, indicating Christ’s sufferings and the breaking that He endured on our behalf. The bread is, in itself, a most appropriate memorial of suffering. Was it not wheat that was sown in a furrow in the field and there buried? Did it not spring up to be bitten by frosts, to be blown about by rough winds, to suffer all the extremities of climate, to be drenched by the rain and scorched by the sun, to be cut down by the sharp sickle, to be threshed, to be ground, to be kneaded, to be put into the oven, to be passed through I know not how many processes, any one of which might be a sufficient type of suffering? The suffering body of the Incarnate God is the spiritual food for our souls, but we must partake of it *if it is to nourish us*. This emblematic bread must not only be broken, but eaten—a significant type of our receiving Jesus by faith and depending upon Him, taking Him to be the nutriment of our new spiritual life. What can be more instructive than all this?

Then there is the wine, “the fruit of the vine.” There are two tokens, you see, because the two represent death. The blood in the body is life, the blood out of the body is death, so the two emblems are separate, the wine in the cup and the bread yonder—these together indicate death. Water was not used, for water had been applied, in another way, in the other ordinance of Believers’ Baptism, and water would have been a pale, faint memorial of Him whose rich living blood could far better be set forth by the blood of the grape, trodden under foot of man and made to flow forth from the winepress. The wine is an admirable token of the blood of the atoning Sacrifice. Men need drink as well as food—therefore both are put upon the Communion Table to show a whole Christ as the true food of the soul. You have not to go to Christ for spiritual food and to go somewhere else for spiritual drink, but all you need you can find in Jesus, and find it in Jesus Crucified, in Jesus Sacrificed and put to death in your place. Surely the emblems themselves are most significant and suitable reminders of Christ’s death.

And the whole ordinance is a most suitable memorial of Christ’s death because the Lord’s Supper *can be celebrated anywhere*. There is no climate where we cannot have bread and wine. There are no persons so poor that, among them, they cannot furnish the table with these simple emblems. It may be decorous to have a silver cup and plate, but it certainly is not necessary—any cup and plate will do. They talk of the “chalice” and “water” in the strange ecclesiastical jargon that so-called “priests” use, but I say, “cup” and “plate.” They may be of any material, and the table of any sort. A cloth of “fair white linen” is decorous, but not necessary. Let there be but a table and bread and wine, and that is all that is required. And if half-a-dozen godly peasants, women in homespun and men in smock frocks, are gathered together in a cave, or under a wide-spreading beech, they can show forth Christ’s death “till He come.” But as for that man-millinery show over yonder, and that “altar”

of theirs, and that bell and the people bowing down to worship Jack-in-the-Box—for I will give it no better name—all that is sheer idolatry! It is no memorial of Christ! It may be a memorial of the devil, and of the way in which he turns Christianity into Popery, puts Christ off the Throne and sets up a man who calls himself infallible! But wherever the bread is broken and the wine is poured out by true Believers in memory of Christ, there His command is obeyed.

The Lord's Supper is also a suitable memorial *because it can be frequently celebrated*. You may break this bread and drink of this cup as often as you please. A costly rite could only be performed now and then, but this ordinance can be observed in the morning and in the evening and every day of the week if you will—and very little expense will need to be incurred. To the end of this dispensation, there will be enough bread and wine and sufficient gracious men and women to come to the Table of their Lord and thus to keep up the recollection that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Son of Mary, died on Calvary's Cross, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." I devoutly thank my Lord and Master for giving me so cheap, so easy, so unostentatious and withal so significant and symbolic a memorial of the death He died for me and for all His people!

III. Now, thirdly, and very briefly, let me speak of THE PERSONS TO WHOM THIS CELEBRATION WAS ENTRUSTED. Who are to "do this in remembrance" of Christ?

Well, first, if you look at the connection of our text, you will find that they are *persons who discern the Lord's body*. That is to say, the persons who rightly come to this Table understand that this bread and this wine are types or emblems of Christ's broken body and shed blood, And they are also persons who have the spiritual perception to discern that the Christ Incarnate, the Christ who died upon the Cross is very precious to them. I trust there will be many who will come to this Table, each one of whom will be able to say, "Ah, I know what a precious Christ He is! He is my joy, my hope, my delight, my All in All." Come and welcome, all of you who can thus discern the Lord's body. I know that you can do so, by the joy which this Communion gives you, by the sweetness which it leaves upon your spiritual palate when you feed upon it. You may certainly come, for you have the spiritual life which possesses the spiritual senses by which you discern the Lord's body. Yes, you may come—no, more, you *must* come, for your Lord and Master said, "This do in remembrance of Me."

In the preceding chapter to that from which our text is taken, we are told that *those should come who have fellowship with Christ in so doing*—"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?...Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?...But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils: you cannot be partakers of the

Lord's Table, and of the table of devils." So it seems to me that as the Jew, who ate of the sacrifices, had, at any rate, a nominal fellowship with the God of the altar, and as the heathen, who drank of the cup of devils, thereby had communion with devils; so none may come to the Lord's Table but those who are prepared to acknowledge that they are in fellowship with the Lord. Is God your God? Is Christ your Savior? Do you avow yourself to be a disciple of Jesus and the child of God? If so, come and welcome to this Table! But if not, stand back, for you have no right to come here! If you do, you will bring upon yourself a curse, and not a blessing. But as for all of you who are trusting in the blood of Jesus, all of you to whom Christ is all your salvation and all your desire—all of you who call Jehovah your Father through faith in Jesus, all of you who are reconciled to God by the death of His Son—come to this Table and have fellowship with the God of Heaven and earth, the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! But let no one else come. I am always sorry when persons are urged to come to the Communion Table as though they would receive some benefit from it although they were not converted, for there can, by no possibility, be any benefit to any who come to the Lord's Table unless they are Believers in Jesus! God might bless the ordinance to their conversion, but in the nature of things it is highly improbable, for they would be acting in direct disobedience to His command! They have no right there and they will be far more likely to be blessed if they humbly stay away until they have believed in Jesus—and then they will have the right to come, the right given by His love.

IV. Now, lastly, LET US CARRY OUT THE DESIGN OF THIS ORDINANCE.

The Lord's Supper is intended to remind us of Jesus. I am not going to preach now. I want you who can, to carry out the text—"This do in remembrance of Me." Many of you are coming to the Table—*remember your Lord and Savior now*. Remember who He is and who He was. Remember Him, let Him stand before your mind's eye now as the "Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief." I do not appeal to your imagination, I appeal to your memory. You know—

***"The old, old story,
Of Jesus and His love."***

Recall it now. Remember that He died, for that is what you are especially bid to remember here. I have met with one, who was, I hope, a Christian, who said to me, "My confidence is in a glorified Savior." But I could not help saying to him, "My confidence is in a Crucified Savior." Christ Crucified is the foundation of all our hopes, for Christ could not have risen from the dead if He had not first died. Of what use would His plea be if He had not His blood to offer? Do not be led astray even by ideas about the Second Advent if they depreciate the death of Christ! Rejoice in Christ's Second Coming and look and long for it, but remember that the basis of our hope lies in Christ Crucified. "We preach Christ Crucified" and as we have preached so have you believed, so let none turn you away from your confidence in Christ Jesus suffering in the sinner's place, and—

***“Bearing, that we might never bear,
His Father’s righteous ire.”***

“Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth,” is a call from Christ upon the Cross. Remember that all your hope hangs upon Him who hung upon the Cross and died there. Remember that when He died, you died in Him, for “if One died for all, then were all dead.” And now you must “reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ.”

Remember Him, I pray you, till your hearts grow warm and your love burns within you. Remember Him till you resolve to serve Him, till you go from this Table determined to die for Him if necessary. Remember Him till you also remember all His people, for it is not to one that He says, “This do you,” but, “This do in remembrance of Me,” is said to all His people, and it needs at least a little company to do this. Remember Him till all the Church militant, and the Church triumphant, too, seem gathered around your heart and you commune with the whole Church of Christ in Heaven and on earth! Remember Jesus till you feel that He is with you, till His joy gets into your soul and your joy is full. Remember Him till you begin to forget yourself and forget your temptations and your cares. Remember Him till you begin to think of the time when He will remember you and come in His Glory for you. Remember Him till you begin to be like He. Gaze upon Him till when you go down from this mount into the wicked world again, your face will glow with the Glory of having seen your Lord! I long to get to this Table again, though I have not been away from it any Sabbath for many a long day, for it has been my constant habit, wherever I have been, to get a few Christian friends together to break bread in remembrance of Christ. When I am with you, you know that I would never be absent on the first day of the week, from my Master’s Table unless there was something that absolutely prevented it and I trust you may come with as keen an appetite as I have now, and then you shall lack no stores for this feast! And may the Lord feed us with Himself to the full!

How sorry I am that there are many here who must not come to this Table, for they have never trusted in Christ! If it seems nothing to you now not to love and trust the Lord Jesus Christ, remember that if you die in that state, a day will come when it will seem to you to have been the most horrible thing that ever happened that you should have lived and died without love to Him and trust in Him! God save you! Believe in Jesus now and you shall be saved now. Cast yourselves upon Him and He will not cast you away. So may He bless you, for His dear name’s sake! Amen and amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
*MARK 15:1-41; LUKE 8:1-3.***

Let us read again what we have often read before, that saddest of all stories which, nevertheless, is the fountain of the highest gladness—the story of our Savior’s death, as recorded by Mark.

Mark 15:1. *And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried Him away, and delivered Him to Pilate.* “The whole council” could be there, so early in the morning, for such an evil purpose! Wicked men are very diligent in carrying out their sinful schemes, so, when Christ was to be murdered, His enemies were there, as Luke tells us, “as soon as it was day.” How much more diligent ought the followers of Christ to be to give Him their devoted service! It is a good thing to begin the day with united prayer and holy converse with His people. Let these wicked men who were so early in the morning seeking to secure the death of Christ make us ashamed that we are not more diligent in His blessed service.

2, 3. *And Pilate asked Him, Are You the King of the Jews? And He answering said unto Him, You say it. And the chief priest accused Him of many things: but He answered nothing.* Silence was the best answer, the most eloquent reply that He could give to each accusers—they deserved no other answer. Moreover, by His silence, He was fulfilling the prophecy, “As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth.”

4, 5. *And Pilate asked Him again, saying, Answer You nothing? Behold how many things they witness against You. But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.* You will often find that your highest wisdom, when you are slandered, will lie in the imitation of your Lord and Master. Live a blameless life, and it shall be the best reply to the false charges of the wicked.

6-10. *Now at that feast He released unto them one prisoner, whomever they desired. And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had always done unto these. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will you that I release unto you the King of the Jews? For he knew that the chief priest has delivered Him for envy.* And he therefore hoped that the people, who were not moved by the same envy, would have chosen to have Jesus set at liberty.

11-13. *But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will you then that I shall do unto Him whom you call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify Him.* This was the very best reply to the charge of high treason, for if Jesus had really set Himself up as a king in the place of Caesar, the people, when they were thus publicly appealed to, would not have cried out, “Crucify Him.” If there had been any truth in the allegation that He was the ringleader of a sedition, the Jews would not have said again and again, “Crucify Him.” Thus Christ gave Pilate a much more effectual answer than if He had Himself spoken.

14-16. *Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil has He done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify Him. And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus,*

when He had scourged Him, to be crucified. And the soldiers led Him away into the hall, called *Praetorium*. The hall of the Praetorian guard.

16, 17. *And they called together the whole band. And they clothed Him with purple.* The uniform of the Roman soldiers was purple, as if to indicate that they belonged to an imperial master. So when these soldiers, in mockery, put on our Lord the old cloak of one of their comrades, it sufficed to clothe Him with the royal purple to which, as King, He was fully entitled.

17-19. *And platted a crown of thorns, and put it about His head, and began to salute Him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote Him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon Him, and bowing their knees worshipped Him.* All this homage was paid to Him in mockery, yet what stern reality there was in that mockery! That band of soldiers really preached to Christ such homage as a whole world could give Him.

20. *And when they had mocked Him, they took off the purple from Him, and put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.* They “led Him out to crucify Him.” It seems as if Christ had to lean upon those who led Him. The word almost signifies as much as that. At least it might be the word employed concerning anyone leading a child or a sick man who needed support, for the Savior’s weakness must have been very apparent by that time. After the agony and bloody sweat in Gethsemane and the night and morning trials, and scourging, and mockery, and the awful strain upon His mind and heart in being made a Sacrifice for sin, it was no wonder that He was weak! Besides, He was not like the rough, brutal criminals that are often condemned to die for their crimes. He was a man of gentle mold and more delicate sensibilities than they were, and He suffered much more than any ordinary man would have done in similar circumstances.

21. *And they compelled one Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear His Cross.* Christ could not bear it Himself. The soldiers saw that He was faint and weary, so they laid the Cross, or at least one end of it, on Simon’s shoulders. [See Sermon #1853, Volume 31—UP FROM THE COUNTRY AND PRESSED INTO SERVICE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

22. *And they brought Him.* Here the word almost implies that they lifted Him and carried Him, for His faintness had increased. They “led Him out to crucify Him,” but now they bear Him.

22. *Unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.* We sometimes speak of it as *Mount Calvary*, but it was not so—it was a little rising ground, the common place of execution, the Tyburn or Old Bailey of Jerusalem.

23. *And they gave Him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but He received it not.* He did not wish to have His sufferings abated, but to bear them to the bitter end. Christ forbids not that pain should be alleviated in the case of others, wherever that is possible. But in His own case, it was not fit that it should be so relieved, since He was to bear the full brunt of the storm of vengeance that was due on account of sin.

24. *And when they had crucified Him, they parted His garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.* Christ’s garments

must go to His executioners in order to carry out the full shame associated with His death as well as to fulfill the prophecy, “They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.”

25-27. *And it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. And the superscription of His accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. And with Him they crucified two thieves; the one on His right hand, and the other on His left. As if, in carrying out that ordinary etiquette which gives the central place to the chief criminal, they gave to Christ the place of greatest contempt and scorn.*

28. *And the Scripture was fulfilled, which said, And He was numbered with the transgressors. You could not count the “transgressors” on those crosses without counting Him. There were three, and the One in the middle could not be passed by as you counted the others.*

29-32. *And they that passed by railed at Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, You that destroy the Temple, and build it in three days, save Yourself, and come down from the Cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the Cross, that we may see and believe. That is the world’s way—“that we may see and believe.” But Christ’s way is, “Believe and you shall see.” Christ off the Cross is admired by worldlings, but Christ on the Cross is our hope and stay, especially as we know that this same Christ is now on the Throne waiting for the time when He shall return to claim as His own all who have trusted in the Crucified.*

32. *And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him. Out of their black hearts and mouths came words of ridicule and scorn even then.*

33. *And when the sixth hour was come. When the sun had reached the zenith, at high noon.*

33-41. *There was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, He calls Elijah. And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink, saying, Let Him alone; let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down. And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the Temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom. And when the centurion, which stood over against Him, saw that He so cried out, and gave up the ghost, He said, Truly this Man was the Son of God! There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome (who also, when He was in Galilee, followed Him, and ministered unto Him). And many other women which came up with Him unto Jerusalem. We can read further about these gracious women if we turn to Luke 8.*

Luke 8:1-3. *And it came to pass afterward, that He went throughout every city and village, preaching and strewing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God: and the twelve were with Him. And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called*

Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto Him of their substance. The previous Chapter tells how the woman in Simon's house manifested her love to the Savior. She showed her love in one way, and in a very special way. But there were others who had similar affection for Him, who showed it in other ways. What is right for one person to do might not be a wise or right thing for everybody to do. Christ did not need His feet washed with tears every minute in the day, nor to have them anointed with even precious ointment very often. There are some Christians who ought to do and I trust will do, some extraordinary thing for Christ—something which shall need no apology from them because they are extraordinary persons, who used to be extraordinary sinners—and it would not be right for them to run in the ruts made by others—they ought to strike out a distinct pathway for themselves. Happy is the Church that has any such members! Happier still if it has many such. But there are others who love Christ just as truly, yet who must be content to show their love to Him in some other and apparently more common but, perhaps, in the long run, more useful way. These gracious women ministered to Christ of their substance. He was only a poor itinerant Preacher who needed daily sustenance. Some people say that every preacher ought to earn his own bread by trade or profession and preach freely, yet the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Preachers, did not do this.

“Oh, but Paul did!” Yes, Paul attained to a very high honor. But we may be perfectly satisfied, as the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, to attain to as high a degree of honor as our Master did and, inasmuch as He never did any carpentering after He began to preach, but gave His whole soul and being up to the work of preaching, He was fed and cared for by the kindness of these godly women who were glad to minister unto Him of their substance. “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.” So, as ministers of Christ, we need not be ashamed to minister spiritual things to the people and to receive of their carnal things in return. These women, though they did not wash Christ's feet with their tears, nor anoint them with precious ointment, did well, for they “ministered unto Him of their substance.” Let us all do for Him all that we can.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

“IN REMEMBRANCE”

NO. 3130

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1909.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 5, 1873.**

***“This do in remembrance of Me...This do you, as
often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”
1 Corinthians 11:24, 25.***

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon this passage and verses before and after, are as follows—
Sermons #2, Volume 1—THE REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST; #2307, Volume 39—THE GREATEST EX-
HIBITION OF THE AGE; #2595, Volume 44—WHAT THE LORD’S SUPPER SEES AND SAYS; #2638,
Volume 45—THE RIGHT OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER and #3099, Volume 54—
THE DOUBLE FORGET-ME-NOT—

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IT is a wonderful proof of the deep depravity of human nature that men have made so much mischief out of the too symbolical ordinances which were instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ. You know how the ordinance of Believers’ Baptism has been perverted, twisted and turned aside altogether from its pristine use. And the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper has been quite as shamefully misrepresented. In neither case is there any excuse whatever for this perversion, for in each instance the regulations for its observance are perfectly simple and clear. In the institution of the Lord’s Supper there was not a solitary word said about the new rite being a sacrifice nor so much as a single syllable concerning an altar upon which it was to be offered. It was not instituted in the Temple at Jerusalem, but in the upper room of a private house. It was not ordained at a great Temple festival, but at the Passover Supper, when Christ and His disciples were gathered around a table to feast together according to the ancient Jewish custom. There was nothing said by our Lord about any repetition of His one great Sacrifice by the offering of the unbloody sacrifice of the “mass” of which the priests of Rome make so much. It is as simple and plain as it can possibly be—“This do in remembrance of Me.” Those who stumble here, stumble, surely, in the light—and their eyes must be blinded, for there are no stumbling blocks in the ordinance itself.

Observe that Christ does not prescribe anything in the Lord’s Supper by way of elaborate ceremonies. There is nothing at all resembling the various intricate rules that are laid down for the celebration of the “mass” in the Church of Rome, or even for the celebration of the communion in the Church of England. Nothing is here ordered to be done except the breaking of bread and the eating of it—and the pouring out of wine and the drinking of it. And these two things are to be done in *remembrance of Christ*. He has not even laid down any rule with regard to the

posture that is to be assumed by communicants. I have no doubt whatever that the disciples were reclining around the supper table in the usual Oriental manner, but Christ does not say that we are to recline, or kneel, or stand, or sit for the right observance of the ordinance. Nothing appears to be really essential to the right celebration of this Supper by Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ but just this—“Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” How very little there is here of anything like a grand ceremony!

And yet, mark you, there is a certain rubric with regard to the *spiritual* part of the Lord’s Supper which is not left to anybody’s choice. It is essential—it is the very soul and marrow of the ordinance that we should remember Christ in it—“This do in remembrance of Me.” The external order may vary in certain respects, but the internal essence must be there, else you will have the mere dead carcass and you will have lost the soul, the spirit, the very life of the whole ordinance! Again and again our Savior says, “This do in remembrance of Me...This do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” *To remember Christ, then, is the main point in the right observance of this ordinance.* To let the memory look Him in the face again, to put the finger once more into the print of the nails and to thrust the hand again into His side. Once again to adore the Savior whose head was crowned with thorns for us, but is now coroneted with Glory—to remember Him, to recall Him—that is our main business as we gather around His Table. May God graciously grant to us the Grace to attain to that which is the very essence, soul and life of the Lord’s Supper, that is, the remembrance of Christ!

I. And, first, let me remark, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, that as we gather around the Lord’s Table, OTHER MEMORIES WILL COME, BUT THEY MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO CROWD OUT THE ONE MEMORY—“This do in remembrance of Me.”

Other memories will come—I am sure they will come to me and I believe that they will come also to my Christian Brothers and Sisters here. *You will remember well the time when you did not know Jesus.* With deep regret our memory will go back to the period when the little that we did know of Christ was misused. When we despised and rejected Him. When we had ill words for His people and hard words for everything that concerned Him. It is a profitable exercise for us to look unto the rock from which we were hewn and to the hole of the pit from which we were dug. That is not an ill memory with which to come to our Lord’s Table—with our eyes full of the tears of repentance for our past sin, yet rejoicing that we are now washed and cleansed, although once we were defiled and altogether unfit to occupy the children’s place!

Will you not remember, too, *the times when God’s Spirit first began to work upon you* and you hovered around the Cross and, in consequence, began also to hover around the Communion Table? Do you remember when you sat up in the gallery and looked down on the people of God

who were gathered to remember their Lord in the observance of this ordinance? Your mother was there and perhaps your brothers and sisters were there. And maybe a wife was there, or a husband was there—and you felt the separation from them very sorely—and all the more because you feared that it might be the prelude to an eternal separation, when those who have been joined together by ties of blood must be separated from one another as far as Heaven is from Hell because they have never really been one in Christ Jesus! You remember the prayers that you used to put up, that you also might know Jesus as your Savior and might then be able to make a profession of your faith and come to His Table with your loved ones to remember Him. I remember well those times in my own experience. And as I recall them, I bless the Lord that He answered my prayers and set me, also, among His children.

Do you not also recollect *the time when you first came to His Table*? With some of you, it was in the first flush of your youth. You had heard of Jesus and believed on Him. Immediately you said, “I will be His disciple and I will take up His Cross and follow Him.” You joined His Church and then, when the hour came that you should, for the first time, enjoy the privilege of fellowship with Him at His Table, you reckoned on it with eager anticipation. And you came to your first Communion service with much prayer and holy longing that you might meet your Lord there. It was a very precious season to you. Since then, you may have had better times than that, but probably none that you remember better, and none in which there was a greater freshness about your heart’s affection for your Lord. The bloom was on the peach then—the dew of the morning was still on the field that the Lord had blessed. Possibly, some of that dew and that bloom has been brushed away by contact with the world, but it was very fresh and beautiful then. It cannot be unprofitable for you to remember the love of your espousals! And if that remembrance should lead you to do your first works with your first love, that memory will not be out of place even at your Lord’s Table!

And, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, as we are coming again to the Communion Table at the close of this service, there are hallowed memories that come to me, just now, *of some who used to sit with us at this Table*, some officers of the Church who sat on this platform and many members of the Church who sat down there, and there, and there—good men and true, and holy women, and young saints who rejoiced in Christ, workers of different sorts, and sufferers of different kinds—persons of differing rank and degree, but “all one in Christ Jesus”—and now they are enjoying the higher fellowship in the Kingdom of their Father above! They were ready “to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better,” and that is now their blessed portion. I am sure that such memories as these must come to many of you, for some of you are occupying the very seats upon which they used to sit, or else next to you there sits one who did not sit there this time last year. Well, I do not think these are unprofitable memories, because they link us to those who have gone in to see the King—and help us to remember the mighty hosts of the redeemed who

have triumphed through His Grace and are now with Him in His Glory! They also help us to realize the unity of the one Church of Jesus Christ, of which we sometimes sing—

**“One family we dwell in Him
One Church above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.”**

There also come to some of us the memories of *dear ones who are not here, though their hearts are here*, for sickness has detained them from the Communion Table these many days. Some of us who have experienced the bitterness of that deprivation feel intense sympathy with other sufferers who are kept away from the sacred feast. And we pray the Master to send home to each of them a blessing that shall fill their souls with rejoicing and their mouths with thanksgiving! As David ordained that those who tarried by the stuff should share equally with those who went down to the battle, so may those who are shut out from the public ministry and the observance of the ordinance with us here, have a special portion direct from the Master’s own hand and heart!

And as we sit here, some of us *think with great pleasure of those who are sitting with us*. I regret that we are so often tempted to remember the fault of our fellow Christians. Oh, may they be blotted from my memory forever! Let us treasure the virtues and excellences of our fellow members and search for signs of the Spirit’s work in them! And remembering our own imperfections and failures, let us not fix our eyes upon their defects. But there are many sitting with us here who are monuments of God’s Grace—and as we look at them, we recollect what God has done for their souls. Some dear Brothers and Sisters here have been made very useful to others during the past year. And if they turn their eyes a little, they can see many of their spiritual children sitting around them. I know that it is a joyous memory to them that the past year was a fruitful one in their portion of the Lord’s vineyard! And I also bless God as I look many of you in the face, for I know that there is a love between us which many waters cannot quench because in this place God first spoke to your souls by the ministry of His Word. These memories are profitable ones and we do well to remember those who form a part of the one mystical body of Christ. Is it not a part of our communion that the members of Christ’s body should commune with their fellow members as well as with their glorious Head?

One dark memory, however, crosses my mind, as I have no doubt it often crossed the minds of those who were with Christ that night when He said, “This do in remembrance of Me,” and that was the *remembrance of Judas*. It was that sentence, “One of you shall betray Me,” that made the night so sorrowful to they who were in that upper room—and Judas has had many successors in the Church. There have been those even high in official standing who, nevertheless, have bartered their Lord and Master for paltry silver. Alas! Alas, alas, while we remember those who have done so, it will not be with the self-righteousness that makes us think we should never have done it, but with the sacred caution which enquires,

"Lord, shall I, also, do this thing?" And with the holy prayerfulness that cries, "Hold You me up, and I shall be safe."

Now I think all these memories are natural, allowable and profitable, but they must be kept in a secondary place, and they must never crowd out the remembrance of Christ! He did not say to His disciples, "This do you in remembrance of one another," or, "in remembrance of your own conversion," or, "in remembrance of your former state of sin." No, He said, "This do in remembrance of Me." So I claim the first place for remembrance of the Master—and I say to these other memories, "Stand back! Stand back and let Him fill the central position, let Him occupy the Throne! If you will, you may sit upon the steps of His grand Throne, but upon that Throne of God you must not sit—that is for Him who says to His disciples, 'This do in remembrance of Me.'"

II. Note, next, that THIS ORDINANCE IS VERY HELPFUL TO THAT ONE SACRED MEMORY—the memory of Christ.

The emblems upon the Table—covered up from your sight at present, but to be visible soon—*the bread and wine remind us that Jesus Christ was truly Man.* When He came upon this earth, He was no phantom. Even after His Resurrection, when His disciples supposed that they had seen a spirit, He said to them, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have." He took a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb and ate it in front of them. The Apostle John says that they had seen Him with their eyes and had handled Him with their hands. He was really God manifest in the flesh—and we are thankful that in this ordinance there are two material emblems set before us to remind us that although our holy religion is most deeply spiritual, yet it also touches the material, for Christ was verily bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh—Man of the substance of His mother—and as such He lived and as such He really died.

These signs being laid upon a table are meant to show us, next, *the familiarity of our blessed Lord with us.* The bread is not elevated so as to be exhibited to you while you bow down before it as if it were your God, nor is the wine in the cup lifted up as an object of adoration and worship—but both these emblems are placed upon the Table—the bread to be eaten and the wine to be drunk. This is to remind us that the Word of God, Incarnate, Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior, was familiar with the sons of men. "He came unto His own." He was a Man among men. He was with them at their feasts and He wept with them at their funerals. He suffered hunger, thirst, weariness and pain as we do. He spoke familiarly yet faithfully with the poor sinful woman at Sychar's well. And He spoke in a similar style to the great multitude. He was no recluse! He was no Oriental potentate, guarded from the throng, but He was always among the people, healing their sicknesses and sympathizing with them in their sorrows!

This is a great blessing to us because while Jesus thus comes near to us, we are thereby invited to draw near to Him. The bread is placed upon

the Table, but the Table is not lifted up beyond our reach. And we are bid to gather round it and to eat the bread that is upon it—and so to have the most familiar acquaintance with that which is upon the Table. So, today, Jesus invites the sinful and the sorrowful to come to Him. “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” And as for His own people, He is so familiar with them that if there were anything He had not told them which was really for their good, He would tell them now. He said to His disciples concerning the many mansions in His Father’s house, “If it were not so, I would have told you.” And He also said to them, “Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knows not what his lord does: but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.” Jesus Christ is not like Moses, whose glory repelled—His Glory attracts! He is the Good Shepherd who delights to fold the lambs in His bosom. He is the Man among men who loves men and loves to have men about Him, for His delights are still as they have always been—with the sons of men.

This Truth ought to help us to remember our Lord—that He is truly Man, a Man among us, near to us, to whom we are very dear and who should be, and I trust is, very dear to us! He is our Brother, yes, He is nearer even than a brother, for He is a part of ourselves! Have I exaggerated in using that expression? No, for is He not our Head and are we not “members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones”? And should we not, therefore, rejoice that we are reminded of this great fact by the homely tokens which set Him forth so familiarly in this ordinance?

Then you will note, by-and-by, that *the bread has to be broken and the wine poured forth to show the sufferings of the Savior*. The bread itself is a most impressive type of suffering. The corn is buried in the dark earth, pinched by many a frost when it peers above the ground and exposed to many trials before it comes to its full growth. When it is ripe, it is cut down with a sharp sickle, threshed with many a heavy blow, then ground in the mill, the flour kneaded into dough, pressed into the shape of loaves, thrust into a hot oven and baked—and then in this last process, broken. Our blessed Master seemed to be passing through all that experience in His lifetime on earth. He actually used some of the processes that I have described as pictures of Himself, as in that notable instance when He said, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it dies, it brings forth fruit.” Especially was that last part of the process—the breaking of the bread as a type of His sufferings—illustrated throughout His whole life. When did He not suffer? What sorrows were crowded into the three years of His public ministry! His life was one of constant suffering and then at the last came the great climax of it all—and none of us can fully tell what was meant by Gethsemane and its bloody sweat, by Gabbatha and its terrible flagellation, and by Golgotha and its cruel and shameful death upon the accursed tree. There is, also, another most suggestive symbol of Christ’s sufferings in the various processes that result in “the fruit of the vine” in the cup on the Communion Table. Both emblems impressively set forth our Savior’s sufferings.

But you have more than that, for *you have Christ's death set forth in the instructive symbol of the bread separated from the wine*. To mix them in one cup would be to spoil the whole metaphorical teaching of the ordinance! The blood with the flesh is life, but the blood drained from the flesh is death. The blood is represented by the *wine by itself* in the cup—and the *bread by itself* represents the flesh. And the two emblems together set forth death—a violent death—such a death as Jesus died. Did you not sing of it just now—

**“See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did ever such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?”**

Never forget that the punishment for sin is not simply suffering, but death. “The soul that sins it shall die.” And it was not until Christ died that the debt, which was due from His people to the justice of God, was fully discharged. The two emblems in this ordinance, therefore, needed to be separate in order to set before us the death of our dear Lord and Savior—and so to help us to remember Him.

Then, *the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine symbolize our reception of Christ into our innermost selves*. After looking at the signs, they who commune eat and drink thereof to show, as in a figure, how Christ is received into the soul. Faith must be the mouth of the soul and into that mouth we must receive Christ Himself and live upon Him. That new life, which God has created within us, must be fed and sustained by the grand Truth of the Atonement of Christ, the wondrous Doctrine of His Substitutionary Sacrifice on behalf of all who believe in Him. There is a very important point of instruction there and I pray that none of you may ever miss it.

The thought also occurred to me that when the feast is over, and the bread is eaten, and the wine is drunk, no one ever says, “Where shall we find the bread for another observance of the Supper?” Or “From where shall we get wine that we may come again to celebrate this sacred feast?” No, for everybody knows that, practically, of bread there is no stint and of wine there is no limit—and so it seems as though, among other reasons, *these two emblems were selected to teach us, by their plenteousness, the all-sufficiency of Christ*. When we have spiritually fed upon Him tonight, there is as much for us to feed upon tomorrow! And when we have been drinking with joy in remembrance of Him, we may come and drink again and again, for this is a very sea of blessing of which we are bidden to drink. If you took a cupful of water from the sea, there would be so much the less there though none could tell the difference! But if you took an ocean full of love and joy out of the Redeemer, there would be none the less left in Him! It is true of His Grace that it is not diminished by all that His people receive of it and it never can be exhausted. 'Tis pleasant to gather fruit where there are many heavily-laden trees and to receive money from a store in which there is much left after we have had all we need. And it is pleasant to come and feast at a table that is still richly laden after myriads have been fed at it and that is still as full

as ever though ten thousand times ten thousand saints have here been feasted to the full!

Thus I think I have shown you, and I pray the Holy Spirit to show you that in this ordinance there is much to help us to remember our Lord and Savior.

III. But now, Beloved, in the third place, it may be useful to you if I call to your mind anew the fact THAT THE REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST IS, OF ITSELF, MOST NECESSARY FOR ALL BELIEVERS.

For, first, *the remembrance of Christ is the prolongation of the act of faith.* What is faith but the first look at Christ? And what is remembering Him but continuing to look at Him? At any rate, if it is not the same thing, the one act leads up to the other, for never did any soul truly remember Christ without its faith growing. Come, then, to the Lord’s Table, all you who are alive unto God through faith in Jesus Christ, and pray that here your faith may be greatly increased! You have believed on Him and He is made of God unto you, “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.” You have trusted in Him and you are pardoned, accepted, saved by Him. Come then to His Table, looking to Him as your Savior, looking to Him in whom you are accepted, looking to Him through whom you hope to enter into Heaven at the last! Let your remembrance be blessed to you as being the continuance of your first faith.

Then, next, *the remembrance of Christ is a very blessed stimulus to our love.* “Absence makes the heart grow fonder,” some say. That is a questionable proverb in relation to our earthly friends, but I am sure that it never was true and never will be true with regard to Christ and His people! We must be with Him to really love Him—and the longer we are with Him, the more we shall love Him! And when we are with Him forever and forever without a break, then shall we love Him with all our heart, soul and strength—without coldness or chill forever. Remembrance of Christ will bring Him to you! It will hold up His portrait before your mind’s eye and enable you to see His heart beating with love to you! It will make you feel that He still loves you although He reigns exalted high, and then your love will flow out to Him more freely in return.

And, Beloved, there will be another good thing which will come out of this remembrance of Christ, for *it will be the suggestion to you of renewed hope.* When a man remembers that Jesus Christ is really his, then he says, “Have I such a Savior as this? Then, by-and-by, I shall be with Him where He is and I shall behold His Glory, for that is His prayer concerning me! His arm is strong enough to keep me. His heart is warm enough to love me. His eyes are bright enough to see me. I know that I shall be eternally saved by Him.”

It seems to me, also, that *coming to this Communion Table to remember Christ, if we really do remember Him, is like a recall,* as when you have heard the trumpet sound for the soldiers to come back to the standard. It is a recall from the world. It says to you, “Now forget your business, forget your pains, forget your family cares, forget everything but your Lord! Come back, poor perplexed Martha, and become like Mary and sit at Christ’s feet. This do in remembrance of Him.” It is a recall from self. You

have been saying, “I have not grown in Grace as I hoped to do. My doubts are many, my sins innumerable, my spiritual state is not what I would like it to be.” Then come back from all that to your Lord—from the filthiness to the cleansing fountain, from the leprosy to the healing, from prison to the great Liberator, from your poverty to His wealth, from your lost estate to Him who is all your salvation and all your desire, and who says to you, “This do in remembrance of Me.” It calls you back from introspection, from looking within to looking away to your Lord, looking off unto Jesus!

And does not this remembrance call all of us back to our Lord from whatever we have been engaged in, even for His own name’s sake? Have we been engaged in controversy? Have we been fighting for liberty of worship, for the severance of Church and State, for Calvinistic Doctrine, for some view of the Second Advent, or for any particular form of Doctrine? Then I think I hear the voice of Jesus saying, “Come back, My child, from the battlefield on which you have been contending with a brave and true heart for the defense of My faith—come back to Me. I call you now not to remember Doctrine, but to remember Me. “This do in remembrance of Me.” So let us come together to His Table though we differ from one another in many respects. We can remember Him in unity here wherever else we may not be able to unite. And let us come back, too, from all our Christian labors. I would like to forget, at this Table, everything that is faulty in my own work, or in the work of my Brothers and Sisters, or in their characters—everything that might grieve, vex and annoy. We will try to put it all away from us, for just now our Lord’s command to us is, “This do in remembrance of Me.”

I said that this remembrance was like a recall, to summon the soldiers back to the standard. But it also seems to me *like the morning bugle sounding clearly throughout the camp to wake the soldiers*. “This do in remembrance of Me.” Christ has gone up into His Glory, away from the damps and mists of earth. Think, Beloved, of the Glory and brightness that abound where He stands, and of which He is the central sun! And from that glory, clear and shrill, as though it were the first notes from the archangel’s trumpet, I hear the message sounding again and again, “Remember Me! Remember Me! Remember Me in My Glory as well as in My shame! Remember Me in my triumph as well as in my warfare. “This do in remembrance of Me.”” If we have really believed in Jesus, let us come to His Table as though our communion here were the first course of that Everlasting Supper to which we shall sit down with Him above! Or, to change the figure and make it more correct, let this sad feast be, as one of the martyrs called it, the breakfast wherein we break the long fast of this world and feed on Heaven’s bread with Christ, knowing that we shall soon be at the great marriage supper of the Lamb, who shall know no end and where we shall feast forever in His sight!

Is it not true, then, that in this remembrance there is much that is precious, valuable and really necessary to all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?

IV. But now I must close by reminding you that THIS SYMBOLIC FESTIVAL IS HIGHLY BENEFICIAL IN REFRESHING OUR MEMORIES.

I am sure *we need this Supper, though it is but a material feast, because we are yet in the body.* There are some people who, if they had the power, would be presumptuous enough to do away with Baptism and the Lord’s Supper because they have been so grossly misused. But if they could blot them out, it would be an irreparable loss to the Church of Christ. These ordinances are the only link between the spirituality of our faith and materialism—and we must remember that God has not flung away materialism as a thing that cannot be bettered. He did curse the earth, once, and it still brings forth thorns and thistles, but He does not mean it to always remain under the curse. There will come a time when there shall be a literal new Heaven and a new earth—and here, where sin has triumphed—Grace shall reign. Believers are still here in the body, but Paul’s words are as true, today, as when he wrote them, “Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you?” These very bodies of ours shall rise again from the grave! They may sleep in the dust for a while, but they shall come again from the land of their captivity and in our flesh shall we see God—and our body as well as our spirit shall enjoy an eternity of bliss with our Savior in His body as well as in His spirit in His great triumph! Of course it will not be such flesh as it now is, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. But still, it will be the same body, though it will have undergone a wonderful change. So I thank God for the two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper because they teach me that nothing is common or unclean. They sanctify the rivers for me. They sanctify my daily bread for me. They make me feel not as if I lived, like a Brahmin, in a world where everything might pollute me, but like a Christian—in a world where Christ has lived and in a position in which everything may be to me “holiness unto the Lord” if my heart is right before Him!

Not only is this symbolic festival beneficial to us because materialism still appertains to our bodies, but *it is specially so because Jesus appointed it.* He would never have appointed a needless ceremony! And He was no lover of useless ceremonies. He never wrote a Directorium (is not that the name of it?) giving instructions as to how to celebrate various ecclesiastical ceremonies! So, as He has ordained this memorial, He must have known that we needed it because of our forgetfulness. And we may be quite sure that as He has ordained it, He will make it answer the ends for which He instituted it!

Besides, *experience has taught many of us how valuable this ordinance is.* I can bear my own witness that many and many a Sabbath, when I have found but little food for my own soul elsewhere, I have found it at the Communion Table. You know that sometimes we who preach the Gospel are not ourselves fed by it even when those who hear us may be feasting upon it—but the Master still presides at His own Table and He sees that the minister is fed as well as the rest of the communicants! I have been in a foreign land where there was no congregation to meet for public worship, but the two or three Believers who were there have al-

ways broken bread together each Sunday, and it has been to us quite a full service, most strengthening to the soul, when we have gathered around the Table of our Lord to do “this” in remembrance of Him!

One other thing I will mention and that is how often has Christ set His seal to this Supper by *blessing it, not only to those who were doing it in remembrance of Him, but even to those who were only spectators*. It is an encouraging thought to us that the Spirit of God, while He has been hovering over the assembly of Believers in Jesus, has turned His eyes of pity upon those who were but observers looking on at the ordinance—and has made the symbols to be a sermon, and the communion service to be a most impressive discourse! And many there are now in Heaven who were led there through holy thoughts that were first implanted in their minds and hearts at the communion feast! And many others are on their way to Glory whose feet were first guided into the right road while they were watching others who had met together thus to remember their dear Lord and Savior! So prize this ordinance much, Beloved, because it is so highly beneficial to you in refreshing your memories and also because, incidentally, it may be made a means of blessing to others!

I close by saying that *it is clear, from our Lord’s command, that attendance at this ordinance is binding upon all Christians*. “This do”—not, “This look at”—but, “This do in remembrance of Me.” All who truly love their Lord should hear Him say to them, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” Some Believers neglect this ordinance. If any such are in this congregation now, I would say to them—Beloved Friends, you are losing a great blessing and you are disobedient to your Lord. Think what would happen if all other Believers were to do as you are doing. If they did (and they have as much right to do it as you have), then the Lord’s Supper would cease to be celebrated and this showing forth of Christ’s death which is to go on “till He comes,” would necessarily cease. Your abstaining from church membership and your neglect of the two ordinances appointed by Christ is an example which it would be disastrous for all others to follow! Do not imagine that this neglect on your part can be right, but end it at the first convenient opportunity. The observance of this ordinance will not save you. And if you are not already saved, you have no right to partake of it, but if you are saved, if you have really believed in Jesus, He says to you, “This do in remembrance of Me.”

Remember, too, that *this ordinance is to be often observed by all Christians*. Our Lord said to His disciples, “This do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” I will not say that Christ actually laid down the rule that it should be observed *often*, but it seems to me that His words imply that it should be. And as often as it is observed, it should be in remembrance of Him. Do not live month after month without remembering Christ by means of these outward signs which He has Himself appointed as His special memorial! Remember Him often! Pray that memory may always bear His image on its very front, but do not neglect the helpful ordinance which the Lord Himself instituted for you.

And then, last of all, *never come to this Table except it is with the solemn determination that you will remember Him*. You mock Christ if you regard this communion as anything other than the remembrance of Him. What is there in that bread? What is there in that wine? There is nothing whatever there but bread and wine after we have invoked a blessing upon them just as there was before! We pay these emblems no reverence of any kind, nor could we do so without being guilty of idolatry! There is nothing in the whole ordinance but a help to our memory and I have tried to explain to you how it does help the memory. But if you do not remember Jesus, if you have no faith in Him, if you do not love Him, if you do not cast yourselves wholly upon Him, what business have you at His Table? You have no part nor lot in this matter! Faith in Christ first, then Baptism, then the Lord’s Supper! But neither of these ordinances is for unbelievers—and whoever dares to observe them as an unbeliever, or to get others who believe not in Christ to observe them—is a profaner of the ordinances, a thief and a robber who is doing incalculable mischief to the souls of men! Come to Jesus first—believe in Him and you shall be saved. Go to the foot of the Cross, confessing your sins and trusting in Him who hung there—and then, after that, we are told to bid you remember all things that He has commanded you and to tell you that He has promised to be with us even to the end of the age!

Observe you, then, these things in their right order! Faith in Jesus first and then obedience to Jesus and the remembrance of Jesus in His own appointed way. If you miss the all-important matter of faith in Jesus, you have gained the chaff, but lost the wheat—you have gained the salt, but it has no savor—you have a name to live, but you have not life eternal! God grant that none of us may be found thus lacking the one thing necessary, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
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THE LORD'S SUPPER—SIMPLE BUT SUBLIME! NO. 3151

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 1, 1909.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING IN THE YEAR 1866.

“This do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.”
1 Corinthians 11:25, 26.

[Mr. Spurgeon preached many times upon these and the preceding verses. The following sermons have already been published—#2, Volume 1—“THE REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST; #2307, Volume 39—THE GREATEST EXHIBITION OF THE AGE; #2595, Volume 44—WHAT THE LORD'S SUPPER SEES AND SAYS; #2638, Volume 45—THE RIGHT OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER; #2872, Volume 50—THE LORD'S SUPPER; #3099, Volume 54—THE DOUBLE FORGET-ME-NOT and #3130, Volume 55—“IN REMEMBRANCE”—
Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

IT would be a waste of time and would tend to mar our fellowship with Christ, were I to attempt an enumeration of the errors and misapprehensions into which men have fallen concerning the objective of the Lord's Supper. There are some communities of men among us—and they seem to be multiplying—who turn the Communion Table into an altar and convert the bread and wine, which are but a memorial, into the semblance of a sacrifice. I will only say that into their secret may we never enter and with their confederacy may we never be united, for their table is the table of idolatry, and their altar is little better than a sacrifice unto devils! Such offerings cannot be acceptable unto God, for those who observe them turn aside altogether from the simplicity of the Truth of God unto the cabalistic devices of Antichrist.

This simple feast of the Lord's Supper, consisting of the breaking and eating of bread, and the pouring forth and drinking of wine, has two objectives upon its very surface. It is intended *as a memorial of Christ*, and it is intended as a shouting or a manifestation of our faith in Christ, and of Christ's death, to others. These are the two objectives—“This do you in remembrance of Me”—and “Thus you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.”

I. First, then, WE VIEW THE SUPPER OF OUR LORD AS BEING A MEMORIAL OF HIM. And as such, *it is simple and very significant.*

How plainly it sets forth Christ's Incarnation! We take the bread. That bread, upon which we feed and which becomes assimilated with our flesh, is the type of the Incarnation of the Savior who veiled His Glory in our human clay. The same bread broken becomes the type of that body of the Savior rent and torn with anguish. We have there the nails, the scourge, the Cross—all set forth by that simple act of breaking the bread.

And when the wine is poured out, there is no mystification, but rather the disclosure of a mystery. It represents the blood of Him who took blood in order that He might become one blood with us, His incarnate people and who, "being found in fashion as a Man," "became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." So that just as the wine is pressed from the cluster and is poured forth into the cup, so was His blood pressed from Him in the winepress of Divine Wrath and poured forth that He might make Atonement for the sin of men. A child, standing by the Communion Table, and asking the question of his father, "What does this ordinance mean?" might very soon be told, "My Child, we break this bread to show how Jesus Christ's body suffered. And we pour out this wine in token that Jesus Christ poured forth his heart's blood for the sins of men." It is marvelous that men should have added so many things of their own invention to screen and veil this very simple and, therefore, very sublime ordinance! Brothers and Sisters, let us come to those two symbols and here discern Christ's body broken for our sin and view His blood streaming forth for our redemption!

The type, however, is suggestive because it not only sets forth the suffering of Christ, but also the result of that suffering. It pictures the end as well as the means. That is to say, when I take that bread and eat it, and take that cup and drink from it, I bring to remembrance—to my own remembrance and the remembrance of those round about me—not merely the fact that Christ suffered, but that He suffered for me and that I had an interest in Him. Believe me, Beloved, this Truth of God is so simple, that while I speak, I can half fancy some of you saying, "Why does he not tell us something new?" But let me say to you, it is always a new Truth and there is no Truth which the Christian heart more readily forgets! Oh, that I could always feel that He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*! I know He did—it is long since I had a doubt about it—but I do not always remember it. Going abroad into the world, how apt we are to let the remembrance of the Savior's love slip! The love of wife and husband follows us like our own shadow. The love of our dear child seems to encompass us like the atmosphere in which we live. But Jesus Christ is not visibly here and, therefore, the remembrance of Him requires spirituality of mind—and we are carnal—too often but babes in Grace, and so we forget His sufferings. And, worse still, we forget our interest in them! Oh, that I could have the Cross painted on my eyeballs that I could not see anything except through the medium of my Savior's passion! O Jesus, set Yourself as a seal upon my hand and as a signet on my arm, and let me wear forever the pledge where it is conspicuous before my soul's eyes! Happy is that Christian who can say, "I scarcely need that memorial." But I am not such an one and I fear, my Brothers and Sisters, that the most of us need to be reminded by that bread and wine that Jesus died—and need to be reminded, by the eating and drinking of the same, that, He died *for us*!

I do not want to say a word tonight that shall have any oratory in it—any elocutionary display about it. I want to speak so plainly that those of you who are not Christians will say that it was a dry and dull sermon! I do not care what you say, or what you feel—if I can get each Believer

here to just think over this thought and remember it—"The Lord of Glory loved *me* and gave Himself *for me*. That head which now is crowned with Glory was once crowned with thorns—and crowned with thorns *for me*. He whom all Heaven adores, who sits upon the loftiest Throne in Heaven, once did hang upon the Cross in extreme agony for me—*for me*." I know you are apt to think that He died for so many that He had not a special end to serve in redeeming you, but it has been very beautifully said that as the love of Christ is Infinite, if you divide the Infinite by any number you please, (I do not care what the divisor is, whether it is ten, or whether it is twenty million), the quotient is Infinite and so, if the love of Jesus Christ, Infinite as it is, can be supposed to be divided among us, we would, each one of, us have an Infinite Love! It is our arithmetic that teaches us this, but, oh, if we do but know by experience the infinite depth, the amazing abyss of the love of Jesus to each one of us, our souls will be comforted and rejoice with unspeakable joy! The sign, then, is significant.

But, in the next place, it is worthy of notice that *the memorial which we are about to celebrate tonight is a joint one*. There is something painful, but pleasing, when the father dies, for the children come together at the funeral and go together to his grave. Many family heartbreaks have been healed when the various members of the family have joined in a memorial to their father. The poor man's grave, especially, has much charm in it to me. Here come the sons and daughters and pool together their shillings to buy the grave and to buy the coffin. Often, over the rich men's grave, there is a squabble as to who shall share his wealth—but there is not any such quarrel in this case. The man has died penniless and John, Mary and Thomas all come—and they all see who can do the most in providing their father's grave. And if there is a tombstone, it is not only one who pays for it, but they all put their money together, so that Father's memorial may be shared by them all! How I like that thought! So in this ordinance, "we being many are one bread," and we being many are one cup. Brothers and Sisters, I cannot do without you! If I want to celebrate the Lord's death, I cannot go into my chamber and take the piece of bread and the cup and celebrate the ordinance alone—I must have you with me! I cannot do without you! And you, the most spiritually-minded of you, if you shut yourselves up in a cell and try to play the monk and the super-excellent, cannot keep this ordinance! You must have fellowship with other Believers! You must come down among the saints, for our Savior has given us this memorial which cannot be celebrated except jointly, by the whole of us together! You Christians must come together to break this bread and to drink of this cup. "This do *you*, as often as *you* drink it, in remembrance of Me." Did the Master foresee that we would be so apt to split up into sections? Did He know that we would be so apt to be individualized till we forgot to bear one another's burdens? And did He, therefore, while He made Baptism the personal, solitary confession of faith, make this Communion to be a united joint memorial in order that we might be compelled to come together—might

by sweet constraint be driven to meet in the same place with one accord, or else be unable to make a memorial of His death?

It is a joint memorial. You have thought that over. Well, now, let us try and link hearts together. Are there any differences between us tonight? I am not conscious, my Beloved, of any difference with any one of you. If I were, I would seek Grace to shake it off. And if you tonight are conscious of anything against any Brother or Sister with whom you will commune at the Table, I pray you now to put it all away before you come here. Remember that you must eat and drink jointly with that very friend with whom you have offended now and, therefore, make up the offense, and so come together. God has forgiven you so much that you may well forgive your Brother this little, supposing him to have offended you. Come, then, together, Beloved—together let us keep the feast!

At the same time, I must not forget to remind you that *while a united memorial, it is most distinctly a personal one*. There can be no Lord's Supper, though we all meet, unless every man puts the bread into his mouth and unless each one of us, himself, drinks the wine. That cannot be done as a joint act. The bread is passed around and there must be a distinct reception on the part of every person here. So let us not lose ourselves in the crowd. We are drops in one great sea, but still we must remember that we are drops and, as no drop of the sea is without its salt, so let no one among us be without the salting influence of true communion with Jesus. Dear Friend, I cannot commune for you and you cannot commune for me. If you are all happy, I shall be glad, but it will be little benefit to me unless I can see the Savior, too, and so will it be with each one of you. Therefore let me pray you to cry unto God to give Divine Grace to you to now *personally* remember the Lord Jesus Christ—His love for you, His death for you, His rising for you. "He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*!" let that thought be uppermost in your mind just now.

Yet further, I must not fail to remind you that *as a memorial of Christ, while it is very solemn, it is singularly happy*. Christ has ordained, as a memorial of His death, what? Why, a feast! Not a funeral, not a meeting together to sing dirges over His mangled body, or to go to a grave to weep! That might have been a memorial, but we have a better one—we have a happy one! It is very significant that after supper they sang a hymn. Singing *then*? Oh, yes, singing! Joy becomes a feast and joy is to attend our recollection of the woes of Jesus. The position which we ought to occupy at the Lord's Table also suggests that Christ meant us to be happy. Did He ordain that we should kneel? No, there is not a hint of it! Did He intend us to stand? There is not a syllable about it! How was the Lord's Supper originally received? The guests reclined around the table, leaning their heads in each other's bosoms! It was the easy posture of the ordinary feaster in Oriental nations. The most proper posture for us, seeing that we could not well lie along, is to sit in the easiest posture conceivable. Choose for yourselves—never mind what people say about reverence! Familiarity with Jesus is the highest reverence! Put your body at the Communion Table into the easiest possible position in which you can rest and you have then reached Christ's ideal.

It is a feast where you are to be perfectly at ease, in contrast, mark you, with the Passover. There they stood, with their loins girt about, with their hats on and with their staves in their hands—and they ate like men in haste who had to go through the wilderness! Now, we have gone through the wilderness! We who have believed have entered into rest—our Passover has been eaten. We fear not the destroying angel—he has passed over us. We are out of Egypt, we have entered into Canaan and though the Canaanite is still in the land, we are driving him out. We are not now keeping the Passover with haste, and fear, and confusion—it is the Lord's Supper of rest, and joy, and peace! For, “being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is a happy memorial! Joy becomes the face of everyone who shall come to the Table tonight, or at any other time!

Well now, Brothers and Sisters, if to remember Christ is the objective of the Lord's Supper, then you will not have come here to any purpose unless you remember Him! So I pray you to put away every other thought. Have you doctrinal difficulties? Leave them till tomorrow! Have you a sick child, or does business go amiss? Well you will not relieve your cares by violating this sacred hour. Let these burdens be cast on Him who cares for you! One thing you have to do with, it is Jesus Christ crucified—crucified for you, received by you. Now blot out the other stars and let one star alone shine in the sky—the Star of Bethlehem! Bid farewell to every love but the love of Jesus and to every fellowship but fellowship with Him. Ask the Lord to take your heart as an arrow and fit it to His bow—and shoot it right up to where Christ is in Heaven. “Set your affection on things above.” Many people misquote that, “Set your *affections*.” Paul wrote no such thing! “Set your affection”—tie your affections into one bundle and make them *one affection*—and then set it upon things above. Let your whole heart lie in the bosom of the Savior. I pray the Master that we may not, one of us, hold back—not even you, Mrs. Much-Afraid, nor you, Little-Faith. Nor you, Ready-to-Halt—may you forget your crutches and may you now remember only Him who is the All-in-All of both the strong and the weak—

**“The strong, the feeble and the weak,
Are one in Jesus now”**

and let them know it as they sit here and remember Him!

II. The second objective of this Communion Supper is THE SHOWING OF CHRIST'S DEATH TILL HE COMES.

“Till He comes.” I must not say anything about that except that He will come! And I think that ought to be enough for Christians. To my great sorrow, I had sent to me this last week, two or three copies of a tract purporting, according to the title page to have been written by myself, prophesying the coming of the Lord in the year 1866. Now, you may expect to hear of me being in Bedlam [London insane asylum] whenever by my tongue or my pen, I give countenance to such rubbish! The Lord may come in 1866, and I shall be glad to see Him, but I do not believe He will. And one reason why I don't believe He will, I have told you before—it is because all these false two-penny-halfpenny prophets say that He will. If they said He would not, I would begin to think He would, but inasmuch

as they are all crying as one man that He will come in 1866, or 1867, I am inclined to think He will not come at any such time! It seems to me that there are a very great many prophecies which must be fulfilled before the coming of Christ—which will not be fulfilled in the next 12 months. And I prefer, Beloved, to stand in the position of a man who knows neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man comes—always looking for His appearing, but never interfering with those dates and figures which seem to me to be proper amusement for young ladies who have nothing to do, and who take to them instead of reading novels. And for certain divines who have exhausted their stock of knowledge about sound Doctrine and, therefore, make up and gain a little ephemeral popularity by shuffling texts of Scripture as the Norwood gypsies shuffled cards in days gone by! Leave the *prophets* to divide the *profits* which they get from simpletons—and as for you, watch for Christ's coming, whether it shall be today, or tomorrow—and set no limits, and no dates, and no times! Only work while it is called today. Work so that when He comes, He may find you, as faithful servants, ready to come in to the wedding with Him. "Till He comes," then, the Lord's Supper is to be a showing forth of His death!

Let us just notice how we show it forth.

I think *we show it to ourselves*. The Lord's Supper may be celebrated without any spectators. It should be in public where it can be, but if there are none to look on, it may be otherwise. In Venice, in Milan, in Paris and in other cities where Romanism prevails, five or six of us have met together in our room at our hotel and we have had the true Lord's Supper there, though there were none to look on. And probably if there had been, in some cities where we have partaken of it, we might have been amenable to the law! 'Tis a showing forth of Christ's death to ourselves. We see the bread broken and see the wine poured out, and we ourselves see here, in symbol, Christ crucified! And we see as before our eyes, when we eat and drink, our interest in the Sacrifice offered upon Calvary!

But next, *we show it to God*. We do, in effect, say before the all-witnessing Jehovah, "Great God, we break this bread in Your august Presence in token that we believe in Your dear Son. And we drink this wine here before You, You Searcher of Hearts, to solemnly say to You again, 'We are Yours, bought with Jesus' blood and washed clean in it.'" It is a showing of Christ's death to God!

Moreover, *it is a showing of it to our fellow Christians*. We say to those who sit with us, "Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us join together. We join with you, why don't you join with us?" We say to you, 'We love Him,' and you say the same to us. Together we clasp hands and renew our Christian fellowship with one another through renewing our fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ. We do, as it were, teach one another, admonish one another and comfort one another when we thus show forth the Lord's death.

But besides showing forth Christ's death to ourselves, to our God and to our fellow Christians, *we also show it to the world*. We do, in effect, say to the world, "Here we show that we believe in Him whom you cruci-

fied. He who went outside the camp, the Man of Nazareth, despised and rejected of men, is our Master. You may trust in your philosophies—we trust in Him. You may rely upon your own merits, sacrifices and performances, but as for us, His flesh and His blood are our dependence. As we eat this bread and drink of this cup, Christ Jesus is set forth to you as being All-in-All to us—the bread which sustains our spiritual life and the wine which gives us joy, sacred exhilaration and delight.”

And then, in addition to saying this to the world, *we also say it to sinners* who may happen to be present, and to whom it may be blessed. How often within these walls has God blessed the breaking of bread to the conversion of souls! Let me refresh the memories of such. Some of you had been looking on from these galleries—you dared not come down with the people of God, but you did not want to leave. And so you sat and you looked on. And your mouths were watering, not for the bread and wine, but for Christ! You wanted Him and gradually you were like the robins in the cold wintry days. You first, as it were, tapped at the church's windowpane very gently and you were afraid, so you stepped back again. But all the world was cold and there was not a crumb for you anywhere else. Then you saw the open window of a gracious promise, “He that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out” and, pressed by absolute necessity, you came to Jesus! You came into the family circle of Jesus Christ's people and you feasted—and tonight you are glad!

Well, dear Friends, as we come together at the Table, we will be remembering any among the onlookers who are not yet brought to Christ. We will think of them and we will breathe this prayer, “Lord, save them! As we show forth Christ, help them to see Him. May they say, ‘Yes, His body was broken for sinners, His blood was poured out for sinners, so we will trust Him.’” And if they trust Him, they shall be saved!

Well, now, may we accomplish these two designs—to remember Christ and to show His death. We can only do it by His Spirit. Let us, with bowed head, ask for that Spirit. Let us seek that we may worship Christ in spirit and in truth while we receive the outward symbols of His suffering.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: JOHN 17; 18:1-9.

Chapter 17:1. *These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to Heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son; that Your Son also may glorify You.* Christ's great intercessory prayer begins with His appeal to His Father to glorify His Son. Christ knew all that He would have to suffer during that “hour” to which He had looked forward to from eternity, but His eyes could see beyond the gross with all its shame, the crown with all its glory! The Son being glorified, He would also glorify His Father and there is a wondrous Glory that comes to the Father through the death of His Son upon the Cross.

2. *As You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.* [See Sermon #566, Volume 10—GENERAL AND YET PARTICULAR—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

<http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Some people seem unable to see that there is perfect harmony between the general and the particular aspects of Christ's Atonement. As the one Mediator between God and men, He has absolute power over all men, to do with them as He wills, yet that power has a special relation to those whom His Father gave Him before the foundation of the world. And they are those who come to Him in accordance with His declaration, "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and He that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out."

3. *And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.* [See Sermon #2396, Volume 41—ETERNAL LIFE!—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] So that the only way to obtain eternal life is to know God the Father and God the Son—and the best way to know them is to ask God the Holy Spirit to teach us what is revealed concerning them in the Sacred Scriptures which He inspired holy men of old to write.

4, 5. *I have glorified You on the earth: I have finished the work which You gave Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify You Me with Yourself with the Glory which I had with You before the world was.* As Christ had carried out His Father's will and done the work He had been sent to do, it was but right that He should go back to the Glory which He had, for a season, voluntarily laid aside. You notice that although He had not then died upon the Cross, He was so certain that He would there complete His great mediatorial work that He spoke of it as being already "finished."

6. *I have manifested Your name unto the men which You gave Me out of the world: Yours they were, and You gave them to Me; and they have kept Your word.* No one but Christ could or would have borne such a testimony concerning His fickle, feeble followers. Happy will it be for us if He can also say concerning us who profess to be His disciples, "They have kept Your word."

7, 8. *Now they have known that all things whatever You have given Me are of You. For I have given unto them the words which You gave Me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from You, and they have believed that You did send Me.* You see how the Truth reached these disciples. The Father gave the words to His Son in His mediatorial capacity. And He gave those words to His disciples—and they received them and believed that Christ was indeed the Sent One from the Father.

9, 10. *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me; for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I am glorified in them.* [See Sermon #2331, Volume 39—CHRIST'S PASTORAL PRAYER FOR HIS PEOPLE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] See what perfect union there is between the Father and the Son, and note their mutual relationship to the chosen people, "They are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine."

11, 12. *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name: those that You gave Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scrip-*

ture might be fulfilled. So it is clear that Judas was not among those who were given to Christ by His Father—if He had been, He also would have been “kept.”

13. *And now come I to You.* Christ looked beyond all that was to happen to Him before He could return to His Glory and, as He saw His Father waiting to welcome Him, He cried “And now come I to You.” These might be appropriate words in the mouth of a dying Believer: “And now come I to You.”

13, 14. *And these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.* Never did anyone more thoroughly mix with men than Christ did—and never had anyone greater sympathy with human beings than He had—yet everyone knows that He never was “of the world.” He was distinct from all who were round about Him and He says that His disciples were as He was. “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” Christ’s people have a life that others have not. They have a relationship to God that others have not. They are swayed by motives which others understand not and they are journeying onward toward a perfection to which others do not even desire to attain! So they are not of the world and the world treats them as speckled birds—and hates them even as it hated their Lord and Master.

15. *I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from evil.* [See Sermons #47, Volume 1—CHRIST’S PRAYER FOR HIS PEOPLE; #2355, Volume 40—CHRIST’S NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE PRAYER and #2703, Volume 46—THE PRESERVATION OF CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Christ did not pray that there might be monasteries and nunneries where His servants might be shut away from the world, nor even that His followers might die in early youth and go home to Heaven! He prayed that, remaining in the world for gracious purposes—to be its salt and its light—they might themselves be kept from the evil that is in the world. It would be a dreadful thing, indeed, if the chosen people of God were to be overcome by the world. So Christ prayed that His Father would keep them from the evil, for He well knew that they could not be kept from it by any power that was not Divine. There is no less power needed for the preservation of a Believer than for his regeneration. The sustaining of a Saint is a constant miracle which can only be worked by God Himself.

16, 17. *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Your Truth: Your Word is Truth.* [See Sermon #1890, Volume 32—OUR LORD’S PRAYER FOR HIS PEOPLE’S SANCTIFICATION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Some men tell us that the Truth of God is *in* the Word, but that the Word is not the Truth. I read, the other day, that we might regard the Bible as a casket which contained the jewel of the Truth, but was not itself the jewel. Christ did not talk in that fashion, for He said to His father, “Your Word is Truth.” This shows that God’s Word is not merely the casket of Truth, but is the Truth itself!

18. *As You have sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.* They are sent ones, even as Christ was *the* Sent One. As

He is the Christ, they are *Christians*, anointed with the same anointing as He Himself is and they should endeavor to be in all respects missionaries to the world, even as Christ was God's great Missionary to the lost.

19. *And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the Truth.* "I set Myself apart wholly for them, that they also may be set apart for holy uses."

20. *Neither pray I for these alone.* "For these who are already saved by My Word."

20. *But for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.* And so His blessed arm encircled not only the converts gathered to Him by His own personal ministry, but also those who should, in later days, be converted under His servants' ministry! And it always seems to me to have been great condescension on His part to have said, "I pray for them also which shall believe on Me through *their* word." We should have expected that He would have said, "through *My* word," and indeed, it is His Word that leads sinners to repent and to believe! Yet Christ puts this honor upon those who speak His Word out of the fullness of their hearts. They have by *experience* made it their own, so He calls it theirs and gives them this honorable position as the messengers of the Gospel of salvation.

21. *That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.* I wish that we could see more of this blessed unity, yet it does exist, even if we cannot see it. Wherever there is any true spiritual life—it matters not how much it may be marred by denominational divisions—there is and there always will be, an essential unity. All Christians are one family in Christ. I do not mean all who *call themselves Christians*, but all who really are Believers in Christ. The inner life is one, the source of that life is one, the nourishment of that life is one and the end of that life is one—so that all who possess it must be one—one in Christ and one with one another, even as Christ is One with the Father.

22, 23. *And the Glory which You gave Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are One: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.* That is the real secret of the saints' unity—"I in them," together with the everlasting Union of Christ Jesus with the Father—"and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one."

23. *And that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.* [See Sermon #1472, Volume 25—THE GLORY, UNITY AND TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] This is a great deep—the words are very simple and clear—but their meaning is unfathomable. Is it really true that the Father has loved His chosen ones as He has loved His only-begotten Son? It is such a wondrous thing that one might be willing to lie awake at night to meditate upon the amazing Truth here revealed in our Savior's words—"You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me."

24. *Father, I will that they also whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory, which You have given Me: for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.* [See Sermons #188, Volume 4—THE REDEEMER'S PRAYER and #1892, Volume 32—WHY THEY LEAVE US—Read/download the en-

tire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Some foolish folk talk about the saints being put away for a while into some purgatorial “limbo” in order that they may be made ready for Heaven but Christ speaks not so! He says, “I will that they...be with Me where I am.” We care not to answer curious questions about the disembodied state—it is enough for us that Christ knows all and that we shall be with Him forever!

What shall be the occupation of those who are with Christ? “That they may behold My Glory.” There will be something worth looking at, something to be delighted with forever and ever! “The glory which You have given Me: for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” So God must have loved His people before the foundation of the world, for He has loved them as He has loved His Son! There was no beginning and there shall be no end to the Father's love to His people! He says to each one of them, “I have loved You with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn You.” Here are waters to swim in—plunge into them and revel in the bliss they are meant to convey to all who are in Christ Jesus!

25-26. *O righteous Father, the world has not known You: but I have known You, and these have known that You have sent Me. And I have declared unto them Your name, and will declare it: that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them.* [See Sermons #1378, Volume 23—THE RIGHTEOUS FATHER KNOWN AND LOVED and #1667, Volume 28—“LOVE AND I”—A MYSTERY—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] How rich is this language! How musical! Surely, never did any human poem match this peerless prose of the Divine Teacher! And now, what a descent it is as we pass on to the next scene in His life!

John 18:1, 2. *When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where was a garden, into the which He entered, and His disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, knew the place.* [See Sermon #2767, Volume 48—JESUS IN GETHSEMANE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] He was familiar with the Master's place of retirement for private prayer and he had, doubtless, heard the Master pray there. Yes, and many a Judas knows the place where the saints meet for worship and knows the Communion Table, too, and knows some of the most hallowed gatherings of God's people where they pour out their hearts in private prayer. And the pity is that knowing all that—the ancient Judas and the modern one do not savingly know the Master Himself!

2. *For Jesus oftentimes resorted there with His disciples.* If ever any man might have lived without prayer, it was our Lord Jesus Christ! His Humanity was perfect, yet He abounded in prayer. And the nearer we grow to Christian perfection the more shall we pray. I heard of one who said that she was so perfectly acquiescent in the will of God that she had left off praying, she had got beyond that! What a fearful delusion! God save all of us from ever falling into it! Here is One who could say from His heart, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as You will.” He expressed in prayer His perfect acquiescence in His Father's will. Did Christ, our Lord and Master pray so,

and will any who profess to be His followers speak so presumptuously as to say that they can live without prayer? God forbid!

3. *Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.* What strange paraphernalia they brought with them to the Garden of Gethsemane—"lanterns" to show them the way to the Sun of Righteousness. "Torches" with which to find out the bright Morning Star and, "weapons" with which to overcome the Lamb of God, who had nothing to oppose them with but His own innocence!

4. *Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth and said unto them, Whom do you seek?* It is a wonderfully suggestive thought that Jesus knew everything that would happen to Him. Martyrs and other sufferers for Christ's sake have had some measure of foresight of what they had to endure, but none of them could have so exquisite a foretaste of everything as our blessed Lord had. He knew it all—every single atom of pain, anguish and heartbreak. He knew it all, yet He calmly "went forth" to meet it and said to those who came to drag Him away to His death, "Whom do you seek?"

5, 6. *They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, I am He. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them. As soon, then, as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground.* "Jesus said unto them, I Am," as though appropriating to Himself the name of Jehovah. And "they went backward, and fell to the ground," astounded and confounded! Even though He restrained His Omnipotence, He claimed the Omnipotent name, I AM, and before the majesty of that name they prostrated themselves upon the ground!

7-9. *Then asked He them again, Whom do you seek? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am He: if therefore you seek Me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, Of them which You gave Me have I lost none.* [See Sermons #2368, Volume 40—THE LIVING CARE OF THE DYING CHRIST and #2616, Volume 45—CHRIST'S CARE OF HIS DISCIPLES—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] That was a very gracious saying of Christ's, "If therefore you seek Me, let these go their way." This is what Christ says on His people's behalf to death and to the Law and the justice of God. And though this saying does not excuse the disciples' flight, it does make some sort of apology for their going away, every man to his own home. Christ knew that they would be safer there. One of them followed Him afar off instead of going his way—and you know what came of it. There is a time for openly following Christ, but there is a time when Jesus says, "Let these go their way." So, right to the end He takes care of His sheep and bids them scatter for a while now that the sword is about to enter their Shepherd's heart.

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

THE GREATEST EXHIBITION OF THE AGE NO. 2307

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 7, 1893.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MAY 5, 1889.**

***“For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you
do show the Lord's death till He comes.”
1 Corinthians 11:26.***

FIRST, let me say that the Lord's Supper is nothing to us unless we partake of it as spiritual persons in a spiritual way. We must understand what we are doing in coming to the Communion Table. The mere mechanical celebration will be vanity. It may even be a sin. To observe this ordinance aright, you must bring your mind in an awakened state. You must come with holy faith, love and concentrated thought. I pray that we may so come, tonight. I know how mechanical we all get. We even stand up and sing and, oftentimes, we forget what we are singing while the sounds issue from our lips. We cover our eyes in prayer, but we do not always pray. There is such a thing as preaching from the mouth outward, instead of speaking from the heart. And I believe there is a kind of hearing which is dreadfully superficial and can do the hearer no good. Now, if you come to the Supper, tonight, bring your hearts with you! And if your hearts are warm with love to Christ, desire to have them yet more full of love to your Lord.

I remember reading of a Mr. Welch, a very devout minister of the Gospel in Suffolk, who was found weeping one day. And when he was asked by a brother minister why he wept, he said it was because he should love Christ more than he did. That was a very good reason for weeping. Now, let us love our Lord much, tonight, and if we cannot feel the glow of love as we wish to feel it, let us weep to think that it is so. May the Spirit of God come and put life into our Communion, that every child of God, here, may have real fellowship with Christ in the breaking of bread!

But now, let us get to our work. The Lord's Supper, dear Friends, is, first of all, a memorial. “This do in remembrance of Me.” It is intended to keep alive in our own hearts and in the minds of others, the wondrous fact that the Son of God was here among men and laid down His life a Sacrifice for sin. It is well known that a custom, a rite, a festival, has a very great historical power to keep up in the minds of men the recollection of a fact—and our Lord has selected this common meal, this Supper, as a method by which men should be made to know to the very end of time that He died. There can be no doubt about the death of Christ because through long ages all history bears record that Christian men and women

have met together—and have eaten bread and have drunk wine—to keep up the memory of His sufferings and death. This is better than if there had been a statue erected, or than if a document had been written, or than if a brass tablet had been inscribed. We are not without memorials of other sorts, especially are we not without *books*, but this perpetually celebrated feast—kept up without cessation, kept up in every country on the face of the earth—is one of the very best memorials that the death of Christ can have. All of you who come to the Table, tonight, will be helping to keep alive, in the memory of men, the great fact that Jesus died.

But the Lord's Supper is more than a memorial, it is a fellowship, a communion. Those who eat of this bread, spiritually understanding what they do—those who drink of this cup, entering into the real meaning of that reception of the wine—do, therein, receive Christ *spiritually* into their hearts. Their heart, soul, mind feeds upon Christ, Himself, and upon what Christ has done. We do not merely record the fact, but we enjoy the *result* of it. We do not merely say that Christ died, but we desire to die with Him and to live only as the result of His having died! We take scot and lot with Christ as we come to the table. We say deliberately, "Yours are we, You Son of God, and all that we have. And You are ours and, in testimony thereof, we eat this bread and we drink of this cup to show that we are one with Yourself, partners with You in this great fellowship of love."

Well, now, if you need a permanent memorial and a perpetual means of fellowship, it will be wise to have a rite or ceremony in which there shall also be a likeness to the fact that has to be remembered! This supper is, therefore, an exhibition, a showing, a setting forth, a proclamation of the *death of Christ*. That you may remember that Jesus died, there is something here that bears a resemblance to His death. That you may the better have fellowship with Him in His death, here is something which is a vivid picture of that death and which will help to bring it more clearly before your mind's eyes. That is the subject for tonight's meditation—this Supper as a showing forth, an exhibition of Christ's death, "till He comes."

In speaking of this exhibition, this showing forth, we will consider, first, *what it shows*. Secondly, *how it shows it*. And thirdly, *how long it is to show it*.

I. Thinking of this Supper that we are about to celebrate, we will consider, first, **WHAT IT SHOWS**. "As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, *you do show the Lord's death*."

Brothers and Sisters, tonight we are to show, to exhibit, to demonstrate, to set forth, to symbolize, to represent, to picture the death of Christ! He lived, or He could not have died. That fact is, therefore, included in our confession of faith. But the point we especially set forth is this, that He died, He who was born at Bethlehem, the Son of Mary, and who lived here on earth, being also the Son of God, in due time, *died!* He gave His life a ransom for many. Why do we record that fact? To my intense grief, I have heard it said, even among a certain class of preachers, that we dwell too much upon the death of Christ. They ask why we do not talk more about His life. The death of a *man*, they say, is not so important, by a great many degrees, as his life. The Lord have mercy upon the

miserable and ignorant men who talk in that fashion! But we have a reason for making so much of Christ's death—the Lord has instituted no memorial of His life—the memorial that He has instituted is to keep before His people the perpetual remembrance of His *death*. And why is that the case?

I take it because *this is the very heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!* The doctrine that He died, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God,” is essential to the Gospel. Leave out the vicarious Sacrifice unto death, and you have left out the life of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! There are some Truths of God which ought to be preached in due proportion with other Truths, but if they are *not* preached, souls may be saved. But *this* is a Truth of God which *must* be preached and if it is left out, souls will *not* be saved! I should have more hope of the salvation of a man hearing a Romish priest, with all his superstition, if he preached the death of Christ, than I should of one hearing a Unitarian, with all his intelligence, if he left out the doctrine of the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ! “The blood is the life thereof.” “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” Because the death of Christ is the *life* of the Gospel, therefore it is that there is an ordinance to set forth that death “till He comes.”

And this is the more so, in the next place, because *this is the point where the Gospel is always being assailed*. You shall find, in almost every controversy, that the fight thickens about the Cross. It is around the standard that the foemen cluster. There the sword rings upon the armor! There the loudest shout is heard! There you see the garment rolled in blood! So the Cross, the Cross is the standard of our Christianity! Round the Atoning Sacrifice the controversialists gather. They think they are aiming at other things, but the real password is, “Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the Divine Substitute for men.” If they could once get rid of the Doctrine of the Atoning Sacrifice, they would destroy that which is the greatest tower of strength to the Gospel of Christ! But, thank God, they cannot get rid of the Cross! We can still sing—

***“The Cross it stands fast, Hallelujah!
Defying every blast, Hallelujah!
The winds of Hell have blown,
The world its hate has shown,
Yet it is not overthrown.
Hallelujah for the Cross!
It shall never suffer loss!*”**

Therefore, set forth the Atoning Sacrifice of Christ, Brothers and Sisters, in this ordinance, “till He comes.”

So well does this Supper set forth the death of Christ in that respect, that it has been argued by some Brethren that, if a man comes to the Communion Table, unless he is a great liar, he has already made a confession of faith in Christ. I will not go *that* length, but there is a good deal of truth in the argument. If you truly eat and drink of this Supper, you must believe in the Atoning Sacrifice—you come here under false pretences if you are not a believer in that, for, at the institution of this Supper, the Savior said, “This is My blood of the New Testament (or Covenant) which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” The pardon of sin must

be by the shedding of the blood of Christ—and if you reject the blood of Christ, you have rejected the true meaning of this Supper—and, certainly, you cannot come here with a clear conscience. This Supper, then, sets forth the great fact that Jesus died, and it is ordained to set that death forth because it is essential to the Gospel, and because it is the point which is most fiercely attacked.

And you will notice, Brothers and Sisters, according to our text, that this *showing of the death of Christ is to be kept up through every age “till He comes.”* It will not be needed after the Coming of Christ for reasons which we will speak of, by-and-by, but until then it will always be needed. Shall I always have to preach the Doctrine of Atonement? Yes, always. Shall we always have to set Christ forth evidently crucified among men? Yes, always. First, because we always need to have this Truth of God set forth. You and I, who are firm believers in this glorious Truth of God, yet cannot too often think upon it. I love to come every Lord’s-Day to the Communion Table—I should be very sorry to come only once a month, or, as some do, only once a year. I could not afford to come as seldom as that. I need to be reminded, forcibly reminded, of my dear Lord and Master very often. We do so soon forget and our unloving hearts so soon grow cold. How is it with you, my Brothers and Sisters? I know that it is thus with me. I sing, sometimes—

**“Gethsemane, can I forget?
Or there Your conflict see,
Your agony and bloody sweat,
And not remember Thee!”**

But that is the point of my argument. We need to go often to Gethsemane and there see our Lord’s agony and bloody sweat, that we may remember Him. I suppose that, until we see His face, we shall never have one Communion too many, and we shall never have a thought of Christ that is superfluous. No, banish all poetic thought rather than that I should lose a thought of Him! Be gone the most delightful classical expression and the most charming thoughts of philosophers, if they would push out one thought of Jesus, for thoughts of Christ are golden thoughts—and thoughts of other things, however burnished by the wit and genius of men—are but poor metal compared with thoughts of Jesus! We need this Supper for ourselves, Brethren, and we should partake of it often, for that is what is meant by our Lord’s words, “As oft as you drink it.” We need that often we should eat this bread and drink this cup—and show His death for our own sins.

But this Supper is as much needed for the sake of others. We are to show Christ’s death that others may know about it, that others may be impressed by it, that others may be saved by it! I sometimes wonder, when I am talking to you upon this theme, that I do not preach much better. And yet, when I have done, I say to myself, “Well, how can there be anything better if one only tells the tale truly?” That God came here in human flesh and for our sins did serve, did die. That He bore the vengeance due to our guilt, the punishment which our transgressions had incurred. Brethren, that is poetry! It is *essential* poetry, even though I only put it into a child’s speech. It needs no garnishing. The face of perfect

beauty must not be touched with Jezebel's paints! And all the garnishing of eloquence that can be brought to such a fact as this is unnecessary, meretricious, and degrading. Oh, hear you the tale, and then, as you come to the Table, remember what it is that you set forth, and say to yourself, "I am, by this action, telling a story more wonderful than all the histories of men put together. I am showing to those who look on something which angels desire to look into, which the most wonderful intelligences will, throughout all the ages, study with ever-growing wonder and delight—God Incarnate, suffering in the sinner's place!"

Show that forth, Brothers and Sisters, for it is worth the showing!

II. But now, secondly, having mentioned what it is that this Supper shows, let me prove to you HOW IT SHOWS IT.

It does so, first, *very instructively in the emblems themselves*. We need to tell men and to tell our own hearts that Jesus died. Well, look, here is bread! Mark you, not a *wafer*, but a piece of household bread. And here is wine in a cup. Not wine and water, but the true juice of the grape, which our Lord called, "the fruit of the vine." What then? Here are bread and the fruit of the vine, separately. Bread, representing the flesh of Christ, has a million sermons in it. Shall I tell you its story? It was a grain of wheat. They threw it into the ground, they buried it beneath the clods, it lay there exposed to winter's cold. It sprang up and many a frost nipped it in the green blade. But then came spring weather and summer tide, and the wheat grew and grew on till it turned into the yellow golden grain. Look, they come along with a sharp sickle and cut it down! It must feel the keen edge. After cutting it down, they take it away in sheaves. They spread it out upon the barn floor. Here are flails which come hammering down upon it—in those olden times they used flails. Now they beat out the grain from the ear and now, when they have all the grain separated from the straw, it must be winnowed and the chaff must be blown away.

Then they take this wheat and put it between two stones and grind it. Woe unto you, O Grain, you are ground into the finest flour! But it has not finished its history of suffering yet. When well ground and separated from the bran, it is taken and a woman kneads it with all her might, and makes it into dough. Nor is its suffering ended, yet, for she thrusts it into the oven! Now does it feel the heat of the fire and when the loaf is taken out of the oven, it is cut, or broken, and devoured. It is a story of suffering from the beginning to the end!

Now take that cup and look into its ruddy depths. Do you see that vine yonder? You expected to find it festooned on trelliswork, a lovely object—but looking at it in the winter and spring, you say to yourself, "Is that a vine? It looks like an old, dead stick left in the ground." Yes, it has been cut down. Did you not see the pruner's knife? How sharply he cut! "Surely," you said, "he is killing that vine." No, vines are made to bear much fruit by being closely cut and pruned. But now it is summer and in the early months of autumn the vine is loaded with red grapes—and those grapes must be taken off the vine and severed from the branch. Look, they are throwing them into the winepress, heaps upon heaps! Look how they are piled up! And what happens now? Men leap in upon them and with

their feet they tread the grapes. The blood of the grape runs out of the winepress, red like ruddy gore! This is the history of the wine of which you drink and so it comes to you. And, oh, I need not tell you of your Lord, how He was thrown into the winepress, and how He suffered even unto death! These elements of bread and wine are stories to you and emblems of *suffering!*

You notice, too, that these emblems are separate. If I were to take the bread and crumble it into the cup, and then pass it to you that you might drink of that curious mixture, you would not celebrate the Lord's death at all! It would not be possible, for it is the body with the blood *separated from it* that sets forth death! While the blood is in the veins, you have life, but when the blood is drawn away from the body, which is set forth to you in the pure white bread and in the red juice of the grape, then you have the picture of death—and in that way you show Christ's sufferings and death in the celebration of this Supper.

So much I have, I hope, made plain enough for all to understand.

Now notice *the manner of the use of these two elements*, for the manner of their use vividly shows Christ's death. I think it is in the Church Catechism that we are taught that the word, "sacrament," means "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual Grace." That definition will do for this ordinance, which is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual Grace.

It is very remarkable how the emblems before us appeal to our various senses. Notice, first, the Savior took the bread and the cup. You see them—they are before you, you can see them. After He had blessed them, He said, "Take." Did you ever see, in a very Ritualistic church, that little game played by the priest with his napkin held out under the chin of the communicant and, telling him to open his mouth and popping the wafer in? This is not eating the Lord's Supper, for the command at the institution of the Lord's Supper was, "Take, eat." It is essential that you *take it in your hand*. "Take, eat." So there is another sense that is affected in this sacred exercise, that is, the sense of *touch*. Jesus took the bread and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, that they might employ the second sense. They had *seen*, now they *touched*. "Take, eat," said the Lord, and they held it in their hands.

Never do you have the Lord's Supper without an appeal to the ears, for He said, "This is My body." Whenever we break this bread, we say the same, "This bread is Christ's body," so there is an appeal to the ears. You put the bread and the wine into your mouth—there comes in your fourth sense, your *taste*, so that four senses are made to assist you in realizing that Christ did really die, that His death is no dream, no fiction! It is not merely a man in a book, but a living Man who died, a real Man who poured out His life unto death for you! I have said that four senses are appealed to, but I might add the sense of smell, also. There is an old proverb, "Nothing smells so sweet as bread," and to a hungry man there is nothing so refreshing as the presence of bread which regales the nostril. The Lord has given us an ordinance, here, in which He brings our body to support our soul and to render vivid to our mind by at least four, if not all

of our five senses, this most blessed fact, that Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary and the Son of God, did really lay down His life a Sacrifice for us!

But now I remind you of another thing. We show the death of Christ, in the next place, by *the mode of the disposal of this bread and this wine*, for these elements go into our bodies. They are received into the inner man and are digested and assimilated there, and taken up into our system to build us up. And herein we teach that Christ, dying for us, is to be received by faith into the heart. We are to believe in that death as being for us. We are to appropriate it as our own. We are to trust in it. We are to live upon it. It is to become part and parcel of our spiritual nature and we are to be built up, thereby, for Christ's death on the Cross saves nobody to whom Christ does not come into the heart. If you do not believe, even Christ lifted up between earth and Heaven will not save you. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." But without receiving Him, Christ is dead in vain so far as you are concerned. You have no part nor lot in this matter. This fact, I say, we set forth by the method of the disposal of the emblems.

And now, carefully note that *the spirit of this ordinance is also very instructive*. How does it begin? Jesus takes bread and blesses it. In other words, He *gives thanks*. It is very usual to call this ordinance the Eucharist, or, *the giving of thanks*. That is the spirit of it—it is all through a giving of thanks. Now, mark you, there is no reason to give thanks for the death of Christ unless it was an Atoning death and an expiation for sin. I should regret, infinitely regret, that a good man should die as Jesus died unless there was an end to be accomplished by it worthy of that death. The end of Christ's death was that, dying for us, by the shedding of His blood, there might be *remission of sins*—and for that we may well give thanks! The Communion begins with thanksgiving, but how does it continue? It continues by our sitting at ease. There are some who think that to kneel at the Communion is the most reverent posture. So it is, and I doubt not that God accepts their reverence—but it is a most *unscriptural* posture! There is more presumption than reverence in it, for to alter the ordinance of Christ, even on the pretense of reverence, is not justifiable! When our Lord first of all instituted the Supper, they did not sit down as we do, but they reclined as the Orientals still do, at their ease, so much at their ease that the head of John was on the breast of Jesus.

I cannot conceive anything more exactly the opposite of coming up to an altar rail and kneeling down, than this reclining upon couches with your head upon your next neighbor's bosom! The fact is that it meant ease, it meant rest—and that is what the posture which we take up should mean. Our nearest approach to that which can be tolerated in our western clime is to sit as much as you can at ease, as a person in this country does at a banquet, as near an approach as possible to the method of the Oriental at his banquet. That is how the feast goes on—it began with a blessing, it proceeds with a restful posture. How does it end? After Supper they sang a hymn. It was not a dirge, it was not funeral—they *celebrated* the death of Christ, but not with funeral rites. They sang a hymn! It was joyous, probably part of the great Hallel of the Jewish Pass-

over. This indicates to us and we set it forth, that the death of Christ is now a joyous event—that to the whole of His people it is not a thing to sigh over, but that, believing in Christ—it is a thing to thank God for, to be at ease about and to sing over! And we set that forth by the manner in which we partake of this Supper.

One thing more we set forth. *The persons who come to the Table must be, according to Christ's rule, believers in Him.* They, and they only, have a right to eat of this feast. Others eat and drink unworthily and drink and eat condemnation to themselves. We do, therefore, say, albeit that there is no limit to the value of the Sacrifice of Christ (that were inconceivable), yet He had a special objective in it and He died for a special people, which people are known by their being led to believe in Him, to unite with Him in a distinct affiance by trusting in Him. Not for you all will this avail, but for all of you that believe, for so it is written, "For God so loved the world," so much and no more, "that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"—a universality which, nevertheless, has a specialty hidden in its inner self.

Believe this, or else this death is not for you. Trust Christ, or else you shall have no share in the blessings which His death has purchased. And we set that forth when, gathering at the Table, we come as Believers, but we are obliged to tell others that if they are *not* Believers, they must not come—they have no right to come.

III. My time has nearly gone, and therefore I must finish with the third point. We have seen what this Supper shows, and how it shows it. Now we are to consider HOW LONG IT IS TO SHOW IT.

I have tried, as best I could, in a very simple way, to show how this Supper symbolizes and sets forth the death of Christ. How long are we to do it? "*Till He comes.*" Well, now, what does that teach us? When Jesus comes, we are to leave off observing the Lord's Supper, but not till He comes.

It teaches us, then, that *there will always be a value in Christ's wondrous death.* God would not have us set forth a thing that is done with, a sucked orange, a mere shell out of which the seed is gone. If the death of Christ were not abundantly efficacious, still, He would not have us set it forth. But tonight we can sing, with as much meaning and force as ever we could—

***"Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved to sin no more."***

It is nearly 1,900 years since Jesus was here and yet His blood is still powerful, His death can still take away sin! Come and try it, tonight, some of you who have never believed in Him! Tonight, I say, at the close of this—

***"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky."***

Come now, tonight, and yield yourself to the Lamb of God, and wash in His precious blood, and you shall be whiter than snow! The Communion Table is just now covered with a white cloth, but when it is uncovered,

and you see the bread and the wine, they will say to you, "The Atonement is still existing, it is still efficacious, it is still full of power." We celebrate the ordinance because Christ's death is still available for all who trust to it.

The next thing is, dear Friends, that by saying that we will partake of this Supper till Christ comes, we set forth our belief in the *perpetuity of this ordinance until the influence of Christ's death shall have been infallibly secured*. We are now in a world where men forget and, as long as we are in such a world, we must keep this signpost, this direction to those who want to journey to Heaven! We must never take this signpost down till there will be no need of it because Christ will have come—and when He shall have come, Beloved, we shall not, even then, forget His death! When He shall come, do not think that we shall give up the Lord's Supper because we give up thinking of Him. No, we shall give it up because we shall, then, *never* give up thinking of Him! He will be present with us and He, being present with us, we shall not need the help which now our weakness requires!

So then, in closing, I say to you that this Supper is a window, a window of agate, and *the outlook of this Supper is the Second Coming of the Lord from Heaven*. This Supper is also a gate of carbuncle and through this gate we are to watch for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from the Throne of His Glory to this earth. The Lord shall come. As surely as we are sitting here in this house, so surely will He, before long, appear a second time on earth, "without sin, unto salvation!" And we mean to keep up this feast "till He comes."—

***"See, the feast of love is spread.
Drink the wine, and break the bread—
Sweet memorials, till the Lord
Calls us round His heavenly board.
Some from earth, from Glory some,
Severed only 'Till He come!"***

Could you keep on feasting "till He comes," my unsaved Hearer? I think that you had better weep and mourn, repent and believe, and so get ready for His appearance! But those who are ready may just keep on feasting upon Him and rejoicing in Him, till He puts in His last and glorious appearance! God help us to continue so, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. JOHN 16:1-20.

This chapter contains some of the most precious Words that the Lord Jesus uttered before He died upon the Cross.

Verse 1. *These things have I spoken unto you, that you should not be offended.* Or, as the Revised Version translates it, "be made to stumble." Christ would not have His children stumble. There is an offense of the Cross, but He would not have us needlessly offended. How careful is our dear Savior not to give us offense! We ought to be very careful not to offend Him, but what condescension it is on His part that He should be

careful of offending us, or of permitting us to be offended, or made to stumble!

2. *They shall put you out of the synagogues: yes, the time comes that whoever kills you will think that he dose God service.* Can you remain faithful to your Master, then, when you lose your position, or your character, or men put you out of the synagogue? When you nearly lose life, itself, and when they shall think they are doing God's service by seeking to kill you, can you stand true to Christ, then? The Master knew that days of bitter persecution would soon come upon His followers, so He strengthened them against those evil times that were approaching.

3. *And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me.* It is ignorance that makes men hate God's people and His Son—"They have not known the Father, nor Me." Truly did Paul say, "I did it ignorantly in unbelief," and for such persecutors there is full and free forgiveness. When they turn unto the Lord, even this sin shall be forgiven them. But they will not forgive themselves for having committed it and, like Paul, they will count themselves the chief of sinners because they persecuted the Church of God.

4. *But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, you may remember that I told you of them.* "You will then see My foresight, My care for you, My prophetic power. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. You will not be taken by surprise." If any of you who have lately been converted should meet with great opposition, do not be surprised—Jesus has told you to expect it—and if the fire should get seven times hotter, count it no strange thing that the fiery trial has happened to you. It has happened unto others before you and will happen to others after you! Therefore be prepared for it.

4. *And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.* "While I was with you, you could run to Me and tell Me all about your trials and difficulties. If anybody was hard with you, I could come to your help and comfort you. You did not need to know these things, before, so I did not tell you of them. You need to know them, now, and now I tell you of them."

5. *But now I go My way to Him that sent Me.* Christ was going to the Cross and to the grave, and afterwards to Heaven.

5. *And none of you asked Me, Where go you?* For lack of asking that question, Christ's disciples were full of grief. Sometimes we do not ask enough questions. We ask too many questions of doubt—it would be well if we were to ask a few more questions of believing curiosity! There are some things that we ought to wish to know and Christ encourages His people to come to Him for information.

6. *But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow has filled your heart.* When a poor Christian friend is dying, you are full of sorrow because he is going away from you. Why do you not ask where he is going? If he is going Home to Heaven and to Glory, why, then, be comforted about him! You have no cause for distress on his account.

7. *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away.* "It is better for yon that I should be absent than that I should be present."

Their Lord was their joy, their Leader, their Teacher, their Comforter. He is going away and He tells them that His absence will be a gain to them! "It is expedient for you that I go away."

7. *For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.* Now, it is better for us to have the Comforter than to have Christ here in bodily Presence, for if Christ were here, tonight, in this Tabernacle, where could we put Him so as to be equally near, each one of us? I should certainly want Him up here on the platform! And you, up there in the top gallery, would say, "Well, we are a long way off—why should He not come up here?" You see, if it is bodily Presence that is enjoyed, some must be near, and some must be far off. But now that Christ has gone up to Heaven, His Spirit is here. Where is that Spirit? On the platform, I hope, and everywhere else! Any of you who desire Him, may have the Holy Spirit's Presence. The Lord says, "I will put My Spirit within you." Better than the bodily Presence of Christ is the real, though *spiritual*, Presence of the Holy Spirit.

8. *And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement.* What? A Comforter reprove? Yes. The Holy Spirit never comforts till He has reproved. There must be a reproof of sin before there can be comfort in Christ! And while the Spirit comforts saints, He reproveth the world.

9. *Of sin, because they believe not on Me.* The greatest sin in all the world is not believing on Jesus. Our Lord did not say, "Of sin, because of the evil of drunkenness." That is a great sin, a cursed sin and there are other great sins, but Christ said, "Of sin, because they believe not on Me." That is the root sin, the foundation sin—the sin that keeps a man in his sin.

10. *Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and you see Me no more.* It is God's Righteousness that takes Christ up to Heaven. He has been here. He has lived a perfect life. He has died a Sacrificial death and God has shown His acceptance of Him, for He has gone to His reward.

11. *Of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged.* When Christ came here, there was a crisis, a judgement. And sin was judged and condemned and the Prince of the world, the chief sinner in the world, received his deathblow—"the Prince of this world is judged."

12. *I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them, now.* See how Christ teaches us slowly, wisely, prudently? There are some things which some of you young Christians do not know—you could not bear them if you did know them. You shall know them when you can bear them. A man with a doctrine that he cannot handle is often like a child with a tough piece of meat which he cannot bite. Give the child milk, or the crumb of the loaf! Do not put crusts into his mouth till he has teeth to bite them. Do not give him meat till he can digest it. See the gentle Savior's way of imparting instruction? He teaches us much, but not too much at a time.

13. *Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all Truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.* See, my dear

Brothers in the ministry, how little store the Holy Spirit sets by originality? We have men, nowadays, straining to be original! Strain the other way, for listen, “He shall not speak of Himself”—not even the Holy Spirit—“He shall not speak of Himself; but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak.” He is the Repeater of the Father’s message, not the inventor of His own! So let it be with us ministers. We are not to make up a Gospel as we go along, as I have heard some say. We are not to shape it to the times in which we live, and suit it to the congregations to which we speak. God forbid! Let this be true of every one of us, “He shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak”

14. *He shall glorify Me.* The Holy Spirit does that. Therefore, surely we, who are the preachers of the Gospel, should aim at the same objective—“He shall glorify Me.” It should be our one desire to magnify and glorify our Lord Jesus Christ!

14-16. *For He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father has are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you. A little while, and you shall not see Me; and again, a little while, and you shall see Me, because I go to the Father.* That was a very simple statement! Every Sunday scholar understands it, now, but the 12 Apostles did not understand it when they heard it.

17, 18. *Then said some of His disciples among themselves, What is this that He says unto us, A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and you shall see Me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that He says, A little while? we cannot tell what He says.* They said this “among themselves.” This was not a wise course, for what can ignorance learn from ignorance? Here were disciples questioning one another—none of them knew anything—and yet they were trying to teach one another. If they had all gone to their Master, how much more quickly would they have understood His words! Take everything to Jesus! Try everything by the Word of God. Do not believe what you hear because I say it, or because somebody else says it. Go to the Word of God to learn what you need to know, and to the Spirit of God to teach you the meaning of what you read!

19, 20. *Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask Him, and said unto them, Do you enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and you shall see Me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That you shall weep and lament.* Christ would die. He would go away and be unseen. On the Cross He would depart out of this life. In the tomb He would be hidden from His disciples—“You shall weep and lament.”

20. *But the world shall rejoice.* But not for long—the world’s joy at Christ’s death was soon over.

20. *And you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.* I think we may leave off our reading at this verse, with these words to flavor our mouth all this week—“Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.” God grant that it may be so with many here present, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

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

WHAT THE LORD'S SUPPER SEES AND SAYS NO. 2595

A SERMON
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JULY 1, 1883.

*“For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup,
you do show the Lord's death till He comes.”
1 Corinthians 11:26.*

THERE is something very tender about the Supper which Christ has instituted, for it very specially concerns Himself. Other things set forth the Truths of God which He taught, or the blessings which He purchased, or the duties which He enjoined, but this Supper has mainly to do with our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself. True, as we think and speak of it, we shall learn precious doctrine and we shall be incited to gracious practice, but the central thought at this Table is concerning our Lord, Himself, and that part of Himself which it is most easy for us to realize—His flesh, with which He touches us so tenderly, making Himself bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. His blood, which makes Him so near akin to us—

“In ties of blood with sinners one.”

It is very blessed not only to be reminded of Christ, but of that part of Christ to which we can most readily come. His Godhead is beyond us, but His Manhood is near to us, and I think that the tenderness of this Supper is greatly increased by the fact that it celebrates our Lord's death. If anything concerning our departed friends specially touches our heart, it is their death. How lovingly we remember their last moments! Their final utterance sounds to us like the language of Prophets—words that were commonplace, before, become golden when spoken to us by loved ones as they leave us. The tears come readily enough to the eyes and the heart beats faster than usual when we begin to remember our well-beloved friends—and to remember them in the solemn moment of their death. At this Supper we shall not forget that our blessed Master is exalted and sits at the right hand of God. And we shall also, there, be forcibly reminded that He is coming a second time in the clouds of Heaven with all the pomp and glory of His Father's court! Yet, the main intent of our gathering around this Table is to show forth His death. That is the principal point and, therefore, Beloved, collect all your thoughts into one thought, all your contemplations into one contemplation and lay the whole at the foot of the Cross as you “eat this bread, and drink this cup.”

To me, it is an exceedingly tender recollection that you and I should be called upon to keep up this memorial as if our Lord gave us this Supper with the commission that each one of us should see to it that His mem-

ory was always green—I was about to say, to keep His grave in order. But it is not so, He is not here, for He is risen! But, at least we are to keep the letters upon this monument always deeply carved and legible, showing forth His death that everyone who passes by—that everyone who rambles into the cemetery where men have slept and pauses at this open tomb, and asks who once slept here—may know from us that it was Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and the Son of Man, our dear and ever-to-be-adored Savior, who died, was buried and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures!

You see, then, that this Supper concerns our Lord Jesus and it especially concerns His death. And you have to attend to this ordinance and so to freshen up the memorials of the departed One. Do you not think that it will help you to do it if you remember that He has not gone far away? Before I rose to speak to you, I thought within myself that I could hear His footsteps upon this platform—and I opened my eyes after my Brother's prayer almost expecting to see the Master here! He is not here in that sense, though, if I said that He is here, who would dare to contradict me? He has so gone away as to be still present and He is still present so as to be absent! Make what you can of that riddle—many of you understand the blessed paradox! We have not lost our Lord's spiritual Presence, but we are looking for His bodily Presence and, I think, He is already so near that if He were suddenly to appear in our midst, it would be no surprise to us and we would all clap our hands, and say, "Welcome, You long-expected One! We knew that You would come and we felt the influence of Your Presence—the coming event had cast its brightness upon us! We knew that You were on the way, for our hearts burned within us and we felt You coming nearer and the days of Your Glory dawning!"

Very well, then, bearing all this in mind, we have now to consider what the Apostle said about this Supper and, first, I shall ask you to think of *the backward look of this ordinance*—"You do show the Lord's death." Secondly, I shall ask you to listen to *the present voice of this ordinance*, to try to hear what it now whispers in our ears. And then, thirdly, I shall speak of *the prophetic glance of this ordinance*, since the text tells us that in it we "do show the Lord's death till He comes." So there is, in the ordinance, a glimpse at Christ's coming Glory, a gleam of that long-expected light!

I. First, then, let us think of THE BACKWARD LOOK OF THIS ORDINANCE.

It was intended to be the memorial of the great event of Christ's life—and I think you will all agree with me that it is *a most effectual memorial*. It has been said, by men well competent to judge, that there is no better memorial of an event than the celebration of some such festival as this. If you write the record of it in a book, the book may be placed upon a shelf and, perhaps, remain unread. Or it may be completely destroyed so that not a copy of it remains. If you set up a stone or bronze pillar and engrave upon it some words by way of memorial, that pillar may be turned to some other use and the original intention of its erection may be wholly forgotten. I have seen marble columns, recording Roman triumphs, built

into the houses of Italian peasants—and you may have seen the same. Painted windows are broken and even solid brass wears away. How can you keep a thing upon the tablets of man's memory? Here is a nine days' wonder—will it last for nine centuries even in old worm-eaten books, or engrossed on parchment? Will not the Record Office be invaded by rats? Has it not often happened so and the best preserved documents have perished? But institute a Supper like this, so that wherever the followers of Christ meet together, a piece of bread and a little wine may suffice them to show forth Christ's death and you have instituted a memorial which will outlast your granite and laugh to scorn memorials of brass! Speak of imperishable marble? Here you have something far more enduring and now, for nearly 19 centuries has the Church of God kept alive the memory of Christ's death by this sacred feast. In the wisdom of Christ it was given to us—let us not grow so wise, or rather so foolish—as to neglect it!

In looking back from this ordinance, we see it to be not only a most effectual memorial, but also *a most instructive symbol*. Of what does this Supper consist? Simply of bread and wine. The bread must be broken and what better emblem of suffering can you have than that? The bread, itself, if rightly viewed, appears to be a mass of suffering. The seed is cast into the ground which has been cut up by the sharp plow. It lies buried for a while in the cold soil. When it rises, it has to endure, first, the frost and all the trials of the wintry weather, and then the heat of summer. And when it ripens, it is cut down with a sharp sickle. The sheaves press upon one another—they are thrown upon the barn floor and the precious grain is threshed out by severe beating. Next, it must be taken to the mill, to be crushed between great stones. And when it is utterly bruised into fine flour, it must be kneaded and made into dough. Then it must be baked in the oven and it has not finished its long process of suffering till, at last, it is laid upon the table and broken in pieces, and then further broken with the teeth in order to enter into men and become their nourishment. So you see that the broken bread is an admirable emblem of that precious body of our Lord Jesus Christ into which all sorts of griefs were condensed till the "Man of Sorrows" was utterly consumed by them.

And look, too, at the wine in the cup. Does not that also indicate pain and suffering? Have you ever seen the vine—especially in the wine-producing countries—how it is cut down, till, in the winter, it seems to be nothing but an old dead stump? How sharply do they prune it and cut it back if it is a good vine! And when, at last, it bears its clusters, the grapes are gathered and thrown into the winepress and crushed beneath the trampling feet of the laborers. And the freely-flowing juice of the grape is the picture of Christ's Sacrifice—the yielding up of His life—the pouring out of the precious blood of Jesus!

Now take the two emblems separately. You cannot make the Lord's Supper with the two joined together. You must have them both, but you must have them apart, for, when the blood is separated from the flesh, then death ensues. So, on the Table, you have not only two tokens of intense suffering, but you have in the two, separate from each other, a most marked and instructive symbol of death. This is just what the Lord

intended that it should be. And when we come here, we can hardly keep from remembering His death, for it is so clearly set forth before us! I do not know what the Roman "mass" sets forth, with all its mummery and mockery—what that can have to do with Christ, I cannot tell! But here you have, as Christ instituted the ordinance, a fair token and symbol of His broken body and of His shed blood and, therefore, of His death.

You also have, in this Supper, something more than this, and that is, *a most pleasing and happy exhibition of the result of that death*. Our Divine Master died. "Woe, woe," we cry, "that Heaven's Darling should lie dead in the tomb!" Yes, but look what comes out of His death! Men are now called to feast with God! Our Lord Jesus, by His death, has provided this sacred viand upon which hungry souls may feed to the fullest and they are invited to come and take of that which is provided—the good cheer of Heaven, the bread that strengthens man's heart and that wine which safely makes glad his spirit. Yes, man is no longer an outcast. No longer does he wish for the swine's husks to fill his belly, even if they cannot satisfy it, but he sits at the Table and a feast of fat things is prepared for him—necessities and dainties—bread and wine provided for him in Christ! And that is plainly set forth to all who care to see it in this Supper. Nor is this all.

There is, in this supper, *a personal and yet united confession and testimony to Christ*. It might have seemed difficult to blend these two, for religion is a personal matter. If Christ is to save me, I must personally feed upon Him, and yet, religion is also a social matter. If Christ is to save me, it must be in connection with the whole of His Church which He has redeemed with His most precious blood. Now here, at the Table, eating is an individual act—no man can eat or drink for his fellow men and thus, each man sets forth that he does, from his own heart, of his own accord, by his own faith, receive Christ to be his Savior. Yet inasmuch as no one man, alone, can celebrate the Lord's Supper, but there must be two or three at the least, so the great fact is set forth that we are not saved alone, but saved as members of one body—the Church of God which He has redeemed at so great a cost!

See, then, how the unit is lost in the mass. No, not lost—it is still there and yet it is no longer separate—and this Supper sets forth all that. Come, therefore, Beloved, to this ordinance which has such richness of meaning in it that the few words I have spoken do but touch the surface of the subject! Come, I say, and think of your Beloved. He has died—He has died for you! That dear body of His, black and blue with the cruel stripes, and crimson with its own blood—that life poured forth, though it was for all His people, yet was especially for you, my Brother—for you, my Sister! You did not see Christ die, but if your faith is in a right condition, you may see Him die, as it were, emblematically. You may see His death vividly set forth, after a striking fashion, in those emblems on the Table. God give you Grace to see it and, in response, to love Him more who died on Calvary for you! Oh, if you had seen Him die, the horror of that scene would have overcome you and, instead of sweet thoughts of devotion, as you fancy might be the case, you would probably have been overwhelmed with terror!

But now, as through a glass, in the emblems of the body and the blood of Christ, you may see Him under a softer light. The horror may not oppress you, but you may sit in that pew and see Him who died for you—see Him with a holy joy that He could have loved you and given Himself for you! It is you who are to think of Him. It is you who are to discern the Lord's body. It is you who are to eat and drink worthily, with all your heart, setting forth Christ's death. It is you who are to represent Him—you, with all your Brothers and Sisters, but you, none the less, as truly as if you were alone. "As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death"

That is the backward look of this ordinance—may God's Spirit enable you to give that look at this moment!

II. And now, dear Friends, secondly and briefly, bow your ear a little and listen to THE PRESENT VOICE OF THIS ORDINANCE TO YOU. What does it say at this hour?

It says to me—and my heart shall hear it—that *Christ's death must still be kept to the front*. I am to "show the Lord's death till He comes." Whatever I forget, I am to remember that. And this Supper is instituted on purpose that I may do so. O my Heart, you must keep a dying Christ always before you! Christ to the front for myself! Christ to the front in my teaching! Christ to the front in all my prayers! Christ to the front everywhere! O Memory, leave no other name but His recorded on my heart! Whatever else may come or may go, my Heart, you are told that you must still remember His death and keep it right in the forefront of everything!

But over the table I hear a whisper come, "*You still need this memorial.*" We are not only to remember Christ, we are to, "do this," in remembrance of Him. This ordinance is intended to help our memory. Is it possible that we can forget our Lord's death? Ah, if it had not been possible and *probable*, that we should forget it, there would have been no need of this Supper! It is ordained because we are naturally forgetful, we are ungracious enough to let even the best things slip. We forget not our earthly beloved ones who have been taken from us—the dear infant child has its name inscribed on the tablets of its mother's heart, the husband has not forgotten his wife—but yet we grow unmindful of our Lord, and hence He left us this sweet forget-me-not. He says to us, as it were, "No, My beloved, I will not let you forget Me. I will give you something that shall frequently remind you of Me. Come often to My Table and there constantly think of Me afresh and anew."

What else does this ordinance say? It says, "*In this Supper I have fellowship with the centuries that have gone before and with those which will follow.*" When our Lord said to His first disciples, "This do in remembrance of Me," He really gave that command to each one of us who believe in Him. But He also gave it to all the saints who have gone before us and to all who will come after us. Does it not charm you to think that you are eating as Paul did, and as James and John did—that you are in the fellowship of the martyrs and confessors, the Fathers and the Reformers, and that we, in this ordinance, enter into the great cloud of *witnesses* and take our part with them? I look upon this Supper—which some seem to regard as an unimportant ceremony—as a thing most au-

gust and sacred, seeing how many hands have combined to break this bread and how many lips have partaken of this cup. So will it be in the future when you and I sleep with our fathers. If Christ shall not come for a long, long while, this ordinance will still be observed by the faithful. If His coming should be delayed for 10,000 years—which God forbid!—yet still this Supper table would be spread and loving hearts would gather around it to keep this memorial alive on the earth “till He comes.” Do you see what this communion really is? It is a bridge of diamonds! It springs from our Lord's death with one grand arch and it spans the intervening space “till He comes.” Blessed are they that are treading that glorious bridge and marching on, washed in the blood of His death, till they shall wear the white robes of His victory in the day of His appearing!

I think I hear another voice coming out of the depth of the cup. It says, “*He will come. He will come.*” And, oh, blessed assurance, He must keep His promise! This Supper is His pledge and it would be a cruel mockery of us if He never came. He *must* come! My Brothers and Sisters, it is nearly 19 centuries since Jesus said to His disciples, “In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” And He will come! Do not grow weary or, if you do faint with the long watching and waiting, do not grow doubtful. He will come! Your fathers thought that He would come in their time. Some of them fancied themselves very wise and tried to interpret the prophecies which never will be explained until they are fulfilled—and they lost themselves in endless mazes of conjecture. Do not so, but, still, do not fling away your faith because you cast aside your speculation! Believe and hope, and patiently wait, and look, each day, for the returning Christ, for He may come before tomorrow's clock strikes at noon! He may come before the midnight hour shall fall upon the hush of this great city. Before the word I am speaking shall leave these lips and reach your ears, He may appear, for, “of that day and that hour knows no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven.” But it is ours to stand watching, waiting and hoping, for this Supper tells us that He will surely come again!

One more message comes to me from this broken bread and that is, that *it is His first coming that makes us ready for the second.* Is it not so? “You do show the Lord's death till He comes.” You keep before your mind's eye the fact that He came once to die in order that you may feel joy in the fact that He is coming again, not to die, but to reign forever and ever! I think I hear the countless trumpets and see the dead rising, and behold the King attended by ten thousand times ten thousand kings! Kings, did I call them? They seem to me like stars! No, like suns, for “then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.” Their Lord has come and His saints are gathered around Him. Caught up into the clouds, the living ones are with Him and the dead have risen and joined them! Oh, the splendor of that tremendous day! Though we know not when that day shall be, we know that He will come—the angels gave the promise to the men of Galilee—and it shall be fulfilled. “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven,

shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven." In the clouds of Heaven, with great pomp, will He appear and, as we come to this Communion Table, we must think of that glorious appearing of our Lord!

III. Now, lastly, I have to speak about THE PROPHETIC GLANCE OF THIS ORDINANCE. I have partly referred to that, already, for one thought in our text blends with another.

The prophetic glance reveals to us the fact that *Christ will come again*. We are to celebrate this Supper "till He comes." Then, He *will* come! Fall not asleep, you virgins, for at midnight the cry shall be heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom comes." O you who serve Him, begin not to mistreat your fellow servants and to be drunk, for He will come and He may soon be here! By this Supper are we assured that He will come. "But," perhaps you say, "His saints have waited for Him nearly 2,000 years." What is that? Two thousand years? Think of those who waited 4,000 years before Christ came here to die! Now, I reckon that to wait 2,000 years for our Lord's Second Advent is a trifle compared with waiting 4,000 years for His First Advent, for, you see, on that first coming depended the salvation of all His people! The ancients might well ask, "Will He come to die?" O my Brothers and Sisters, if Abraham and the Patriarchs and the Prophets had been dubious about His coming to bleed and die, I should not so much have wondered! Four thousand years passed and yet He had not come—might not each man have put his hands upon his loins for fear that he would not come—that there would be no redemption—no pouring out of the great price by which men should be set free? Four thousand years to wait for that! Why, now, if we have to wait 40,000 years for His Second Advent, it need not be such an anxious time of waiting because we may expect Him to come in His Glory—we may expect Him to come to be admired in all them that believe! We may expect Him to come to reign forever and ever! We may be sure that He who slew the dragon will come to divide the spoil! He that routed Death and Hell will come to lead captivity captive and to reign forever and ever, King of kings and Lord of lords! You are not waiting in the night, for the Day-Star has risen. You are not waiting in the thick darkness—the Dawn has broken upon you. Christ has appeared once! You are redeemed by His blood, you are children of the living God! Patiently wait, then, for He will most surely come, and every hour brings Him nearer.

What does this ordinance further say to me? Why, surely, that *Christ's coming will be better than ordinances*. If, when He comes, there will be no more Lord's Suppers as we observe them now, and if it is, as it certainly is, a rule of the Kingdom to always go from good to better—and from better to best, as God never brings forth the best wine, first, and afterwards that which is worse, but it is always something better, and better, and better—then what must Christ's coming be? Brothers and Sisters, communion with Christ in the ordinances is very, very sweet! Oh, sometimes, we have had such pleasure, such delight, such rapture at the Table of our Lord, that we could hardly have endured any more!

At such times I have sympathized, a little, with Peter when he wished to build three tabernacles and to remain on the Mount of Transfigura-

tion! It is very easy to get up to a great height, but, alas, we soon get down again. I wish that we could always do, in spiritual things, what I have done, today, by God's Grace, in temporal things. I am so lame and it was so great a pain for me to get up here, this morning, that I said, "God willing, if I once get up to my platform and preach, I will not go down, again, till I have preached the evening sermon." So I have remained upstairs all day. When I was once up, I stayed up! Now mind you, do that in spiritual things! You know, if you go down, you lame folk, you may not be able to get up, again, so stay up when you are up, and try to continue enjoying the Presence of your Lord and Master.

But, if Lord's Suppers and communion with Christ in outward ordinances are so sweet and we are to go on to something even better when the Lord, Himself, comes, then what excessive delight it will be! Oh, to catch a glimpse of Him! If the feet of His servants upon the mountains are beautiful, what must His own dear face be when He shall be down in the valleys among us? Oh, if the sound of His Gospel is as silver bells, what shall be the utterances of His own dear lips when His words shall be as lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh? Ah, me, there is something coming for you, Believer, of which you know but little as yet! Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into your heart to know them—yet God has revealed them to you by His Spirit. You know them, to some extent, but not wholly as yet, for here we see in part and understand only in part, but there we shall know even as we are known. Be of good comfort, Brothers and Sisters—get all the sweetness you can out of this Supper while it lasts, but do not forget that there is something better than this yet to be revealed. This ordinance is only like a candle, or a little star—when Christ comes, you will not need it, for He is the Sun!

Further, does not this Supper, as it looks into the future, tell us that *the time is coming when we shall be rid of all infirmities*? What is the need of this Supper, but that we have such weak, frail memories? When it shall be taken away, it will be a token that we have good memories—memories that will miss nothing, but will hold by that which is good and blessed forever and forever! When this Communion is no longer to be observed, it will be a happy sign that we have come to our perfection!

Here I will close, but I seem, in closing, as if I said to you, "This is a kind of preface." In my old Puritan books, I often find a preface written by some other hand to introduce the author's writing. Well, this is my preface to introduce you to this marvelous book—the Communion, the Feast of Love, the Lord's Supper. There is no teaching anywhere like it! I have been in the habit of coming to the Lord's Table every first day of the week now for many years—I have never omitted it except when I have been too ill to move. Has it lost its freshness? Oh, dear, no! It is always a standing sermon containing more teaching than volumes of men's sermons. I do not know how they get on who have the communion only once a quarter or once a year. Paul said, "As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup." He should have said, "as *seldom* as you drink it," according to the habit of some! There is no law about the frequency of its observance, except the sweet Law of Love which seems to say, "If this is a window where Christ looks out, then let me often approach it. If this is a

door through which He comes to my heart, then let me stand often at this door." "Often"—frequently—I think that at least once in the week it is well for us to come to the Table of our Lord.

But there are some of you who have never come to this Table. If you are not God's people, do not come—it would do you no good—it would rather do you harm to partake of these emblems. If you are not believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, do not come to His Table—you would be hypocrites or intruders. But if you are sincere believers in Christ, how can you stay away? "This do," He says, "in remembrance of Me." Suppose your Lord were to come and you had never done as He bade you? What would you say to Him? "It is such a simple matter," you say. Yes, in some senses it is. Therefore, attend to it! If it were a matter in which your soul was concerned, so that you could not be saved without it, you say that you would attend to it. Would you? What wretched selfishness that would be! Is this all that you are to live for—that you may be saved? Are you really worth saving, such a miserable creature as you are? You seem to me to be too poor a thing to be worth redeeming. If you are what you should be, you are believing in Christ and you are saved—and now you say, "What can I do to show my gratitude to Him who has redeemed me?" Your heart expands, your spirit is enlarged and if there is anything, little or great, which Christ commands as a proof of love to Him, you are delighted to do it! Do you not sometimes wish that He would give you something very difficult to do—some difficult enterprise? Have you never envied the men that died, burning at the stake, for Him? Oh, it must have been grand to have thus proved one's love to Him! But He says, "If you love Me, keep My Commandments"—and this is one of His Commandments, "This do in remembrance of Me."

Now come, dear Friends, to this Communion Table, seeking your Lord and Master, and may you find Him and your hearts be made glad! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
MATTHEW 26:17-30; 1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-34.**

Matthew 26:17-19. *Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where will You that we prepare for You to eat the Passover? And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover.* Note their prompt obedience—"the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them." In this respect, they set an example we shall do well to follow.

20. *Now when the even was come, He sat down with the twelve.* This was the memorable night when the Jewish Passover was to melt into the Lord's Supper, just as the stars of the morning dissolve into the daylight.

21. *And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.* This saying of our Lord must have startled His disciples! They had all made great professions of affection for Him and, for the most part, those professions were true. But this sentence must have fallen like a bombshell among them! "One of you shall betray Me."

22. *And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and began, every one of them, to say unto Him, Lord, is it?* They did not doubt their Lord's declaration. They knew it must be true—and it produced in them deep emotion—"They were exceedingly sorrowful." It also worked in them earnest self-examination. They did not, any one of them, say, "Lord, is it Judas?" Perhaps there was not one of them who could have thought so badly of Judas as to suppose that he would betray his Lord. They had such esteem for him that they had made him their treasurer. It is always wise for us to turn the glass of critical examination upon ourselves—we cannot do any good by suspecting our brethren. Suspicion stings like an adder, but we may do ourselves great service by suspecting and examining ourselves. Self-suspicion is near akin to humility and truthfulness—it was so with all but one of these disciples who began to say to Christ, "Lord, is it I?"

23, 24. *And He answered and said, He that dips his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born.* So, you see, dear Friends, that a man may get very near to Christ—yes, he may even dip his morsel in the same dish with his Lord, and yet he may betray Him, even as Judas did. We may be very high in office. We may apparently be very useful—I have no doubt that Judas was exceedingly useful to the 12 and to the Master—and yet, for all that, we may betray Him! God grant that we never may! Far better that we perished at our birth than that we should live to be traitors to our Lord!

25. *Then Judas, which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, You have said.* And if he had not been a hopeless reprobate, this unmasking of Judas ought to have driven him to repentance. A man may secretly indulge in his heart a wretched design and, when discovered, he may loathe it. But, alas, there was nothing in Judas which could respond to the Grace of God.

26-28. *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* Go into any Romish church and watch the priest's performance at the altar, and see whether there is the least likeness between that mummerly and this Divinely-appointed ordinance! I can hardly imagine two things which are so widely apart! How did the Lord's Supper ever grow into the "mass"? It must have taken long years of moss and ivy and lichen and all kinds of clinging things to overgrow the original, natural column which the Savior set up and to turn it into that mangle-mangle of which the Romanists and Ritualists think so much! The only safe rule is to keep close to Scripture in everything, for, if you add a little, somebody will add more—and if you alter one thing, the next person will alter another and, by-and-by, you will not know what the original was! I have seen a peasant, in Italy, wearing a coat of which I believe neither man nor angel could tell which was the material of which it was originally made, for it had been patched so often. And, in like

manner, if we did not know what was the original of the "mass," it would be impossible for us, now, to tell, for it has been so patched and mended that it is not at all like the original! Let us, Beloved, keep strictly to the letter of God's Word and also to the spirit of it, lest we err from the Truth of God as so many others have done.

29, 30. *But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.* Was it not brave of our dear Lord to join in singing a hymn at such a time as that and under such circumstances? He knew that He was very soon to die—He was going out to His last dread conflict—yet He went to it singing a Psalm! It was to His Passion that He was going—to Gethsemane's agony and bloody sweat. Yet He led the way there with a sacred song upon His lips. "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives." Now let us turn to Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, at the 11th Chapter. We shall there see how this Supper of the Lord had been changed, even in the few years since the death of the Master.

1 Corinthians 11:20, 21. *When you come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, everyone takes before others his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunk.* They seem to have brought their own provisions to the assembly and to have made a feast, thereof, and they even thought that was an observance of the Lord's Supper! They differed in social position and, consequently, one had little and another much, and some even went to excess so that they were actually "drunk." Paul might well rebuke such unseemly conduct!

22. *What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in! Or despise you the Church of God?* "Do you think that, as a nominally Christian assembly, you are constituted merely that you may eat and drink? 'What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise you the Church of God?'"

22. *And shame them that have not?* "Making the poor who come to the gathering feel their poverty by observing the superiority of your provisions to their own."

22, 23. *What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.* "And therefore you ought not to have gone astray. I told you how to observe this ordinance, so you have willfully erred. This is what I delivered unto you."

23-27. *That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do you, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily. That is, from wrong motives, without sincere faith and devotion to God.*

27-29. *Shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.* You notice that I introduced the word, "condemnation," instead of, "damnation." That word does not correctly give the meaning of the original—it is not damnation, but condemnation, or judgment, as is clear from that which follows.

30. *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.* There is no doubt that God visited upon the Corinthians, in the way of chastisement, their lack of reverence at His Table. Many were weak and sickly among them, and many died. They were not lost if they were believers in Christ, but the Church at Corinth sustained a great loss through their departure, and I have no doubt that God still exercises a singular discipline over His own people. They that are outside are, to a large extent, left to sin as they please. Their punishment will fall upon them hereafter—but the child of God cannot be allowed to do so and he shall be chastened for his sin. The Lord still says to His spiritual Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." A father may let another man's child alone, but his own boy shall not transgress without smarting for it! Such conduct as is here described does not bring damnation, for there is no damnation to them that are in Christ Jesus—but it does bring the chastening with which God visits His children when they walk contrary to Him.

31. *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.* But when a Church has lost its conscience and gets into such a state as this Corinthian Church fell into, then, as it does not judge itself, God judges it and chastens it severely.

32. *But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* Perhaps somebody thought, just now, "I do not want to be in the Church of Christ if it gets special chastening." That is one among many reasons why I do want to be in the Church of Christ, for, "we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

33, 34. *Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hungers, let him eat at home; that you come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"— 947, 356.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY
TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

THE LORD'S SUPPER

NO. 2872

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1904.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON A LORD'S-DAY EVENING IN THE AUTUMN OF 1861.

*“For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.”*
1 Corinthians 11:26.

This solemn ordinance has been instituted and perpetuated to commemorate the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, but there is no ordinance to commemorate His life. One reason for this is because His death implies His life—when you commemorate His death, you testify that He lived. Another reason is that the Christian's life, better than any ordinance, is the proof that Christ lived and the testimony to this world how He lived. A Christian should so act that worldlings would be compelled to ask, “By what power, by what energy, is he actuated to live in a style so superior to that of his fellows?” The answer he should always be prepared to give is something like this, “I live thus because Christ so lived and it is no more I who live, but Christ who lives in me. The love of Christ compels me, so that I am sweetly and blessedly compelled to live, not unto myself, but unto Him who loved me and gave Himself for me.” The proof that Christ came into the world should be that His followers are holy! Let their character be blameless and harmless, their conduct so devoted and so full of self-sacrifice that it shall be a constant memorial of that Redeemer whose name they profess. If the mind of Christ is in His people, it will make them so far superior to other men that it must be inferred that some superior energy is in them and that superior energy is none other than the love of Christ.

They should also so live that if any ask them how Christ lived, they may be able to say—not in words, for that might encourage pride, but in effect—“He lived as I live.” It has been well said that ungodly men do not read the Bible, but they read it as it is translated into the lives of Christians. The actions of Believers are, to the worldling, the means of judging what our religion really is. Men of the world do not sit down and study our creeds, but they trade with us in the common business of life—and if we trade dishonestly, they judge that our creed is wrong and that our religion is not true. They do not wade through our Bodies of Divinity to balance our arguments and test their value by the rules of logic—they have a shorter and more practical test than that. If our religion makes us upright in our conduct towards others and compels us to fear God in all

that we do, then they pronounce our religion to be good. But if, on the contrary, we profess that we believe in Christ and yet can habituate ourselves to foul and degenerate behavior, they at once conclude that our religion is a thing of nothing. Brothers and Sisters, I repeat it, that Christ did not institute a memorial of His life because He would have *you* be the living memorials of Himself. He has not left us any ordinance in which His acts, His words, His thoughts can be set forth before the eyes of men in visible signs—He has done better than that for He has made you to be His signs and ordinances! “You are My witnesses,” says the Lord. If the Spirit of God is in you, you are the testifiers to the world of the holiness and the purity of the Character of your Lord!

Our text tells us that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ as a memorial of His death. I am going to speak, first, *concerning that of which the ordinance is a memorial—Christ's death*. Then, *to point out how the ordinance itself shows forth the Lord's death till He comes*. And then, thirdly, to show how we, in this ordinance, rather than the ordinance itself—that *we, in the ordinance, do show the Lord's death till He comes*.

Allow me to observe, however, that the retrospect gives us only one aspect of this ordinance, for it also distinctly holds out a very blessed prospect. We are taught, as often as we celebrate it, to look for our Lord's Second Coming. Our text contains a very strong and a very lively anticipation of His Second Advent and of His *Personal* advent, too. Many persons say that Christ is certainly coming again, but that He is coming spiritually. This way of putting the matter seems to me to be a subterfuge. A man who is already here cannot be said to be expected to come. And it is certain that Christ is, at this moment, *spiritually* present with His people. His own declaration is, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” He is never absent, *spiritually*, from His Church. He still walks among the golden candlesticks. I cannot see, therefore, how it can be consistent with the ordinary meaning of language to say that He is to come spiritually.

My Brother, you believe that Christ is to come spiritually. Suppose that is true, what will be the result? Why, the Gospel will be better preached, more sinners will be converted and may I not also add that the ordinances will be better observed? Do you think that if Christ should come spiritually into this world, as you say He will, this ordinance would be taken away? “No,” I think I hear you say, “certainly not. If Christ shall come spiritually, Believers will be more attentive to His commands than they ever have been—they will be still more strictly obedient to His Word and will.” Just so, but my text says they are to show His death, “till He comes.” That seems to me to infer that, when He comes, the ordinance will be no longer observed. When He is here in Person, I can see adequate reasons why the memorial of His First Advent should be dispensed with. But if His Second Advent is not an absolute reality, I can see neither Scriptural nor logical reasons why this ordinance should cease to be observed at His *spiritual* coming, whatever that expression may mean!

It is well for us to always be “looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” There are

some who say that Dr. Watts did not believe this Doctrine, but he has expressed it most triumphantly in his paraphrase of Scripture where he writes—

***“Nor does it yet appear
How great we must be made.
But when we see our Savior here,
We shall be like our Head.
A hope so much Divine
May trials well endure,
May purge our souls from sense and sin
As Christ the Lord is pure.”***

I. First, I have to try to show you WHAT THE LORD'S SUPPER SETS FORTH. It sets forth “the Lord's death.”

There is no ordinance to set forth His birth. The Roman Catholic Church invented a feast day and called it Christ-Mass and other churches have imitated the custom—but there is no ordinance, delivered unto us by the Lord Jesus, or His Apostles, to commemorate His Nativity! Nor do I find, in the Scriptures, any record of an ordinance to commemorate His circumcision, or His first preaching, or His riding in triumph into Jerusalem, or even any ordinance to commemorate His Ascension into Glory. We generally regard the keeping of the first day of the week as a commemoration of Christ's Resurrection and of His appearance to His disciples when He showed them His pierced hands, feet and side. But even that can scarcely be called an ordinance. So, of all that Christ did or suffered, there is no ordinance enjoined upon us but that which relates to His death. Now, why is this?

It is, *first, because it was for His death that Christ was most despised.* Therefore, for His death let Him be most honored! It was the Cross of Christ that was His shame—it was to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness. And it is here that the enemies of Christ always begin their attacks. They deny His Divinity because He died. They mistrust His power to save on the very ground for which we are able to trust to it—because He died. Usually, the battle against Christ and His Church rages most fiercely around His Cross. His adversaries, led by the great master-spirit of evil, all seem to say, “Fight neither with small nor great, save only with that great Doctrine of the Atonement, for that is as a king in the hosts of Israel.” Those who preach the accursed crusade against Christ have, for their watchword and rallying cry, “Against His Cross! Against His Cross!” Therefore it is, most blessed Master, that You have provided this ordinance to be, as it were, a shield to Your own Cross, so that, if every minister should cease to preach Your atoning death, the silent bread and the voiceless wine should, louder than a thousand thunders, tell the world that Jesus died and that only through His broken body and His poured-out blood, sinners receive eternal life!

Christ's death, too, is chosen for special celebration *because it is the most important part of all that He did or suffered.* We would not depreciate His life, His Baptism, His work, or His Resurrection, but His death is the center of all. All the Doctrines of the Gospel revolve around Christ's death as the planets revolve around the sun! Take away the sun from the

solar system and you have dislocated everything. All the stupendous wheels would cease to move. Remove Your Cross, O Christ, and the keystone of the arch of the Truth of God is gone! Take away Your death, O Jesus, and it is death to all that You have taught, for all that You teach derives life from the fact that You have died! O my dear Brothers and Sisters, whatever errors may creep into the Church, they will be important only as they mar the luster of the Cross! I think it is the bounden duty of every Christian to be ready to die for the Truth of God. You know that our forefathers readily gave their lives for the defense of Believers' Baptism. Still, not in the least depreciating Believers' Baptism, I say that if it is worthwhile for one to die for that, it is worthwhile for tens of thousands to die, in one tremendous hecatomb, in defense of the fact that Jesus died! As this is the chief point of the adversaries' attack, so must we always regard it as the most important bastion of defense! Here, Christian, turn your eyes the most frequently. Here let your thoughts dwell the most intensely. Here lies the source of all your hopes! Here you shall find the wellspring of all your joys! Think it not unimportant, then, that Christ has given to His death so solemn and yet so simple a memorial.

I think the Master also appointed this ordinance *because His death is, after all, the most comforting thing in the whole Gospel system*. Where do you go, you of the weeping eyes, when your heart is breaking—where do you go for comfort but to the place where comfort was not—namely, to the Cross of the dying Savior? Where do you go, poor breaking Heart, when the woes of this life swell and gather till your soul is near to bursting—where do you go but to that spot where misery reached its climax? It is strange that the masterpiece of misery is also the masterpiece of comfort. The darkest spot in the whole world is yet the source of all our light! The dying of the Savior gives us life! His wounds heal us! His agonies bring us peace! His tortures yield us ease! The Good Shepherd knew that if His sheep desired to have green pastures, they would find them at the Cross, so He appointed this ordinance to bring them there. Well did He understand that if they would lie down beside the still waters, they must come to that place where the blood flowed from His blessed brow, and hands and feet, and side.

You have said with the spouse, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth," and He does it in this ordinance. You have sometimes asked Him to bring you into His banqueting house and that His banner over you might be love. But that banner has never floated from any mast but the Cross and, therefore, He has brought you there. You have asked that you may sit under His shadow with great delight and that His fruit may be sweet to your taste. This is His fruit—His broken body and His shed blood—so He brings you here. You have said, "I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs there." Your Lord knows that you cannot do this except you view His Cross as that palm tree, springing up in a desert land and bearing all manner of delightful fruits. You will need no further arguments, Brothers and Sisters, to convince you of the wisdom and tenderness of Christ in bequeathing to you this most comforting ordinance that so His death may be held in perpetual remembrance!

II. Now I go on, in the second place, to show you HOW THE BREAD AND WINE IN THIS ORDINANCE SET FORTH THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

You can hardly fail to notice how the ordinance is adapted *universally* to keep in memory the fact it commemorates. You recollect what happened to the woman who looked back after she came out of Sodom. The Lord would have us "Remember Lot's wife," so He turned her into a pillar of salt. But that memorial is only to be seen by those who pass that particular spot. Now, suppose that the Master had said to His disciples, "Erect for Me a bronze column. Let it be in the form of a cross and write upon it that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried"? It would not have appealed to our observation anything like so forcibly as this ordinance, which is not restricted to any time or place. This memorial has been seen in the darkness of the catacombs of Rome, where only a tiny taper afforded light to the worshipping assembly. This memorial has been seen among the heather on the Scottish hillside where the lightning flash lent its kindly beam to the minister as he read the Sacred Word. This memorial is seen, today, in the far-off isles of the sea. From North to South, from East to West, this is the standing memorial of Him who died! Better than storied urn, or animated bust, or rare marble, or precious metals, or jewels unrivalled for their worth is this blessed memorial because it can be seen everywhere, in every land!

This is also an admirable memorial seeing that it is *perpetual*. Monuments of brass wear out. The teeth of Time devour the rugged granite, itself. Though you build, for a king, a monument like the pyramids of Egypt, yet shall his name be forgotten and even Pharaoh may lack a wise man to decipher the inscriptions on his tomb and recount the story of his mighty acts. Not so is it with this blessed ordinance—it can never wear away, it is always new. I may say to it, "O sacred Eucharist, you have the dew of your youth!" This memorial is as fresh, more than 1,800 years after its institution, as it was when, in the upper room, the disciples first celebrated it in anticipation of their Master's approaching death! So, when centuries have followed centuries, and Time himself shall have become bald and his scythe shall have lost its edge—when yon sun shall have grown dim with age and the moon shall be pale with fading weakness—even then shall this ordinance be as fresh and as new as ever! It is perpetual because the command of our King cannot be repealed! It is never to be set aside till the need of testimony shall have passed away—till Christ Himself shall come to reign among men!

And, oh, what a *simple* memorial this is! Priest of Rome, go to your saucy and put on your millinery—your red, your blue, your silver, your scarlet and your fair white linen—play the harlot, for such you are before the eyes of men in all your wanton fineries! Prove yourself to be the true descendant of her of Babylon by the gaudiness of your apparel! But know, O priest, that we need none of your enchantments for the right observance of this ordinance! You sons of toil, you can come here with your garments still covered with the dust of your labor. What need we to fulfill to the letter our dear Master's own injunctions? What but a piece of

bread and a cup of wine? Oh, how shamefully have men mimicked this ordinance! How they have invented strange devices to make that appear wonderful which was wonderful enough in itself, because, like everything sublime, it was simple and majestic in its own simplicity!

This simple ordinance has sometimes made me smile at the useless artifices of the foes of Christ. I have smiled at the thought that our Master has given us a memorial so simple that we can observe it even when our adversaries are most opposed to us. I have broken the memorial bread and sipped the wine in Venice, beneath the Austrian sway, where, to have held a public Protestant service would have involved imprisonment! But how could they have stopped us? There were four of us in our own inn—might we not do there as we pleased? No one knew why we needed a small piece of bread and a cup of wine—and we four sat around the table and I avow that it was as much the Lord's Supper as it is when thousands of us assemble here to keep the sacred feast!

If we were in Rome itself, in a room at the Vatican, though the Pope himself were in the next room, we might observe this blessed ordinance and he would never know that we had done so unless we chose to tell him! How could he deny us bread? That would be scant hospitality! And how could he deny us wine? And having bread and wine, we need no altar and we need no priest. Wherever two or three Christians are met together, there may they celebrate the Supper of their Lord! It is as valid without a minister as with one and just as really the Lord's Supper though there are no ordained presbyters or learned Doctors of Divinity to preside at the table! Blessed memorial of the death of Jesus, they cannot put an end to you! We can laugh to scorn all the priests and the soldiers of Rome. If we had built a memorial pillar, they might have pulled it down. The sons of Moab might have stopped up our wells and cast down our towers, but who can destroy this simple ordinance? Persecution would no more avail to put an end to the Lord's Supper than would the swords of Pharaoh's soldiers have availed to put an end to the plague of flies! The craft or skill of man can never put an end to the simple memorial of bread and wine—all that he can do is but to parody or pervert it.

I think, too, that this is a very *blessed* memorial. The broken bread sets forth the broken body of our Lord and the wine, being separate from the bread, shows how His blood flowed from His body. The sign itself most touchingly sets forth the refreshing qualities of the blood which flowed from His head, hands, feet and side. The point I want to emphasize is that Christ has instituted a memorial of His death which requires, to carry it out, Christian hearts and, therefore, hearts full of love to Him and faith in Him. If you wish your name to be remembered, you may say, "It is my desire that men should keep my birthday." So they may and, in a hundred years' time, the recollection of the fact of your birth will have dwindled down into a mere fable! How many institutions we still have, the origin of which we do not know? But suppose you could have an institution kept up only by those who love you and suppose, in addition, that you had the power to always preserve in the world some hearts that

would love you? What a blessed memorial that would be! In coming to the Table of our Lord, we meet not as a company of men who have no regard for Christ, no compelling love to kindle our passions to a flame! Why, His very name makes our hearts leap for joy!—

**“Sweeter sounds than music knows
Charm me in Immanuel’s name.”**

His death is, to us, the most delightful topic of meditation. We come not to the Table of our Lord as the slaves of Pharaoh were flogged to build the pyramids, but we come cheerfully, joyfully, delighted to remember Him, feeling it to be less a duty than a privilege and far more a pleasure than merely a service. This Supper is, virtually, the outward and visible sign of ten thousand times ten thousand broken hearts that have been bound up, tearful eyes that have been made to flash with holy joy, aching consciences that have been eased and hearts that could sooner cease to beat than cease to love! So it is, indeed, a blessed and choice memorial of our Savior’s death which can never be forgotten by His loved ones.

III. Now I come to my last point, and that is, perhaps, the most practical—HOW YOU AND I ARE TO SHOW OUR REDEEMER’S DEATH IN THIS SUPPER.

Some people are very particular about the way in which the Lord’s Supper is administered, but, as long as everything is done decently and in order, I think that should be enough for us. I was staying, once, with a gentleman—a Dissenter—who had become more than a little formal. He was telling me that he had done a great deal of good in his parish and, among other excellent things, he recounted one with an air of enthusiasm which made me laugh. He said, “When I came here, these people used to bring the wine for the sacrament in a black bottle and, as I am sure that I could not celebrate the Lord’s Supper if the wine came from a black bottle, I have provided something better.” I thought it would have been a great deal better if he had asked the people whether they had brought black hearts, for a black bottle does not signify much—but a heart that is not right in the sight of God is the thing that needs to be taken away. If you and I have our hearts right, we need not mind how simple the mode in which the ordinance is administered!

But now, what are you and I to do in observing this ordinance? We are to show the Lord’s death. Then, if we are to show it, we must show it to somebody. To whom? Why, first, *to ourselves*. My soul, be not content unless, in the bread, you discern the Lord’s body for yourself. Do not eat and drink, as the Apostle says, “unworthily, not discerning the Lord’s body.” Take heed, O my Soul, that you are not satisfied with eating the bread unless, by faith, you realize that the body of Christ was offered up for you—unless your faith can so participate in the merit of that Sacrifice that the eating of the bread becomes to you a lively picture of your participation in the results of Christ’s death! Mind, too, that the wine sets forth His blood to you. Brothers and Sisters, these symbols are but as the veil before the Holy of Holies—you must look beyond the symbols to that which is within the veil—or else, of what use are the signs to you?

The bread is nothing, the wine is nothing—*that which the bread sets forth is everything!* Feed on that! That which the wine portrays is everything—see to it that you are a partaker of that!

What multitudes of professors are quite content with the outward sign! I fear that the Lord's Supper, through being so grossly misused, has deceived many. See how eagerly they send for a clergyman when they lie dying! Men who have scarcely ever entered a church or chapel in their lives—men who fear not God and have no saving interest in the death of Christ—desire to have this bread in their mouths at the last! Let that dying impenitent know this bread shall be a swift witness against him! Not being born of God and having no right whatever to this ordinance, he ate and drank unworthily and so ate and drank condemnation to himself! If any of you have imagined that this ordinance can save your souls, let me correct that error at once! It may *ruin them*, but it cannot save them! You must get right away to Christ, right away from this ordinance. It is not as unrenewed sinners, but as saints—as Christ's disciples, as His saved ones—that you are to partake of this feast! You must come to Christ first, as a sinner, just as you are.

I have read, or heard, sermons which proved that the minister was not at all clear which was Christ—the bread upon the Communion Table or the Savior upon the Cross. There is a sermon upon this text—"Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest"—in which the preacher invites his hearers to come to the Lord's Table. That is the very worst place to which they could come! They must first *come to Christ* and then, after they have found acceptance in Him, they may come to His Table. But they must not be invited to His Table until they have come to Him and trusted in His atoning Sacrifice! The Lord's Supper is a curse, not a blessing, to unbelievers, so let none of us think of feeding upon Christ in the sign until we have Christ in reality in our hearts.

Next, we are to show Christ's death *to others*. Some of you will be spectators while the rest of us are observing this ordinance. As we shall, in one great host, break bread together, we shall say to you, "We do, each of us, believe that Jesus died for our sins, according to the Scriptures. We have put our confidence in His death as making reconciliation for us before God. We personally avow our own vital faith in Him and we declare to you, whatever may be your judgment concerning Him, that He is all our salvation and our desire." The very poorest among the communicants will be a preacher. When you, dear Friend, take the bread and the wine, you will preach a sermon. I believe that the word used here has in it, in the Greek, the idea of preaching. You will say, by partaking of this ordinance, "I believe in Jesus Christ, in His broken body and His poured-out blood." I hope that will be an appeal to the consciences of you who will be looking on at the ordinance, asking you whether you also believe in Christ—and though the appeal will be a silent one, I pray you to answer, "Yes," or, "No," to it. As you see us partake of the bread and the wine, imagine that you hear a voice coming up from the Communion Table and saying to each one of you, "Soul, Soul, when will you, too, believe

in Jesus? When will you cast yourself on Him, that He may be your All-in-All?"

Nor, by this ordinance, do we set forth Christ's death only to ourselves and to others, but also *to God Himself*. We do, as it were, plead the merit of Christ's broken body and shed blood every time we observe this ordinance. We bring before God, not a sacrifice, as though the one Offering needed to be repeated—but a memorial of the finished and perfect Sacrifice which was once and for all offered for the sins of men. Brothers and Sisters, it is a solemn thing to think that every time we come to the Communion Table, we bring before the Eternal Father the memorial of the death of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son!

We bring that memorial, too, before the holy angels hovering, as they undoubtedly are, over every Christian assembly. We say to each of them, "He who was seen of angels" is our hope! Tell the glad tidings through all the golden streets that the death of Christ is still remembered in this lower world! Speed on your swift wings to Heaven and let it be known in your glorious dwelling place that there are men and women, saved by the precious blood of Jesus, meeting to commemorate His death."

And, Brothers and Sisters, in this ordinance we show Christ's death *even to the devils in Hell*. There is nothing which they fear so much as the death of Christ. The breaking of the bread and the pouring out of the wine are like the flaunting of a victorious banner in the face of the beaten foe. It is the flashing before the eyes of Satan of the sword that smote him in the days of old and that will make him tremble again even now! Earth and Heaven and Hell are gathered around us as we meet at the Table of our Lord and we poor, puny men become a spectacle unto the three worlds. We are said to be men wondered at, but how much more wonderful is that which is visibly set forth in this ordinance—the passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ!

O my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I pray you to see to it that you now show His death to your own conscience. Does it accuse you? Then, show it the wounds of Christ and it shall be well with you. Does the Law of God condemn you? Show it your bleeding Master and it will at once absolve you. Show Christ's death to your unbelief and, surely, it will vanish away. Show Christ's death to your heart and, surely, it must melt with love to Him. Show Christ's death to the weeping eyes of your repentance and the tears shall be wiped away and you shall see your pardon bought with blood! Show Christ's death to the weak, Leah-like eyes of your faith and it shall strengthen them till they shall see even the hidden mystery and discern the substance which, by mortal eyes, cannot be seen. Show Christ's death to your wretched and miserable spirit that has been troubled and burdened with the cares of this world and it must leap for joy, and cast all its burdens away! Show the death of Christ to your old sins which have been coming back to you, today, and it will drive them all away. Show Christ's death, in fact, to the eyes of your heart, the eyes of your emotions, the eyes of all your powers of body and soul—and thus you shall be like he who said, "I shall see Him," though you shall not need to add, as he did, "but not now." You may say, "I shall behold

Him," but you will not need to spoil it by adding, as Balaam did, "but not near," for Christ shall bring you into His banqueting house and His banner over you shall be love!

Sinner, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and remember that He said, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." Saint, come to the Table of your Lord and feast upon the emblems of His dying love, remembering that blessed are they who believe on Him, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told them by the Lord.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ROMANS 8:18-39.**

Verse 18. *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* Paul made "the sufferings of this present time" into a matter of simple arithmetic and careful reckoning. He added them all up and saw what the total was. He seemed to be about to state a proportion sum, but he gave it up and said that the sufferings were "not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed." Did they stand as one to a thousand? No, otherwise they had been worthy to be compared! Did they stand as one to ten thousand—or one to a million—or one to a million of millions? If so, they would still have been worthy to be compared—but Paul saw that there was no proportion whatever between them. The sufferings seemed to be but as a single drop and the glory to be as a boundless ocean!

"Not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." That glory is not yet fully revealed. It is revealed *to us*, but not yet *in us*. What, then, shall we do in the meantime? Why, wait with patience and bear our appointed burden until the time comes for us to be relieved of it—wait, however, with hope—wait, too, as we must, quietly enduring the pains and pangs which precede so glorious a birth! In this respect, we are not alone, as the Apostle goes on to say—

19-22. *For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. We live in a world that is under a curse—a world that was made subject to bondage through human sin. What does this cold mean? What do these fogs mean? What do the general mourning and sighing of the air all through the winter mean? What do the disturbances, convulsions and catastrophes that we hear about on all hands mean? It is the creation groaning, travailing, waiting—waiting till there shall be a new Heaven and a new earth, because the former things shall have passed away.*

23. *And not only they, but ourselves, also, which have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.* Our soul has been delivered from the Curse. The redemption of the soul is complete, but not yet that of the

body. That must suffer pain and weariness and even descend into the tomb, but its day of manifestation shall surely come! At the appearing of our Lord from Heaven, then shall the body itself be delivered and the whole creation shall also be delivered, so we wait in a travailing condition—and we may well be content to wait, for these pangs within us and around us all signify the glorious birth for which we may wait in hope.

24, 25. *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for it? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.* This is our attitude and our condition now—waiting for the glory which is to be revealed in us and accepting the sorrow which is appointed to us as an introduction to the joy which is to come to us, mysteriously, through it. But while we are waiting, we are not without present comfort.

26. *Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered.* You must, I am sure, as children of God, often have felt that Spirit within you groaning in prayer what you could not express. How often have you risen from your knees feeling the utter inadequacy of words to express the desires of your heart! And you have felt that you had larger desires than you have been able to interpret. There have been mighty pangs within you telling of the Presence of this wrestling Spirit.

27. *And He who searches the heart knows what is the mind of the Spirit.* When you do not know your own mind, God knows the mind of the Spirit and that is the very essence of prayer. He “knows what is the mind of the Spirit,”

27. *Because He makes intercession for (or, in) the saints according to the will of God.* Whatever the Spirit of God prompts us to pray for, is according to the mind of God, for it is not possible that the Holy Spirit should ever be otherwise than in perfect accord with the Divine Father. The eternal degrees, if we could read them, would convey to us the same Truth as the impulses of the Spirit in our heart. And this is the true explanation of prayer—that what God intends to do, His Spirit leads His people to ask Him to do and thus there is no conflict between the eternal Predestination of God and the earnest entreaties of His people. They are, in fact, the outcome of that very Predestination.

28-30. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.* These great Truths of God must never be separated. Any one of these things being true of us, it is most certain that the rest are also true. Now, my dear Brothers and Sisters, you cannot read God's foreknowledge, neither can you enter into the secrets of Predestination, but you can tell whether you are called, or not. You can know whether you are justified by faith, or not. And if you get hold of those links, you have got a grip of

that endless chain which is firmly fastened to the granite rock of eternity past and which is also fastened to the rock of the glorious eternity which is yet to be revealed!

31-33. *What shall we then say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things? "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? God that justifies?"* For so we think it ought to be read. That is another question. Can God lay anything to our charge after having justified us? Will He contradict Himself?

34. *Who is he that condemns?* There is only One who can, for there is only one Judge, and that Judge is Jesus. So, the Apostle puts it again in the form of a question—shall He condemn us?

34. *It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.* Shall He condemn us? It is altogether impossible!

35. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? What a long list of ills! They seem to make up a Jeremiah's roll of sorrow. Can they separate us from the love of Christ? They have all been tried—have they ever succeeded?*

36. *As it is written, For Your sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.* But did they succeed in separating saints from the love of Christ even in the days of martyrdom?

37-39. *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. "Therefore, comfort one another with these words."*

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER NO. 2942

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 1905.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 2, 1877.

*“For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.”
1 Corinthians 11:26.*

IT seems to me that the Lord's Supper should be received by us often. When the Apostle says, in our text, “As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup,” and our Lord said, in instituting the ordinance, “This do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me,” I will not say that their words absolutely teach that we should frequently come to the Communion Table, but I do think they give us a hint that if we act rightly, we shall often observe this Supper of the Lord. Once or twice in the year can hardly be thought to be a sufficiently frequent memorial of one so dear. In the early Church, it is possible that they broke bread every day—the expression, “breaking bread from house to house,” may signify that. From the records preserved in the Acts of the Apostles, it appears that when the saints came together on the first day of the week, they usually broke bread. If there is any rule as to the time for the observance of this ordinance, it surely is every Lord's day. At any rate, let it be often. Do not, dear Friends absent yourselves long from the Table, but since your Lord has instituted this Supper as a necessary and admirable reminder of His death, take care that you celebrate it often.

This Supper is, according to the verse before our text, to be received by all Christians. “This do you, as often as you drink it.” It is not to the Apostles, nor to a few men who shall dare to call themselves priests, but to the members of the Church at Corinth and, by implication, to the members of all Christian Churches, that the Apostle wrote, “For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.” Though it is but half a dozen of the very poorest and most illiterate Christians who meet together to break bread, they are helping to proclaim Christ's death till He comes. It is the duty and the privilege of all the people of God—not merely of some of them—to observe this ordinance!

It is to be observed by eating and drinking, not by eating alone, as in the Roman Catholic church! “As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.” It is most strange that the Papists should have taken away the cup from the “laity” so-called, since our Lord never said to His disciples concerning the bread, “Eat you all of it,” but, as if He foresaw that this error would arise, He did

say concerning the cup, as He presented it to His Apostles, "Drink you all of it." If you leave out the cup, you have marred the ordinance and, as I shall have to show you presently, you have robbed it of a great part of its meaning. In the Roman Catholic church—Roman Catholic, did I say? Why there is another church, nearer home, that is twin sister to it and is getting very much like it! And there, too, it is taught that looking at the cup does the spectators good. It is not necessary that you should "communicate," but if they see the "priest" lift the cup, it will do them great good. This is a new way of blessing souls. Salvation used to be by the hearing of the Word, but now, forsooth, it is to be by seeing fine sights! But the Apostle says, "As often as you eat this bread, and *drink this cup*"—not as often as you look on as spectators, but as often as you actually become partakers in this symbolic feast, "you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."

You notice that our translators have put this sentence in the indicative, but it is probable that the marginal reading is more correct and that it may be read thus, "As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, show you the Lord's death till He comes." *Endeavor* to do it—*realize* that you are doing it—let your feelings be appropriate to the meaning of the ordinance—"show you the Lord's death till He comes." As often as true Believers meet together to eat this bread, and drink this cup, they do show, both to themselves and to all who look on, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Just in passing, notice that it is bread that they eat and it is wine that they drink—nothing is said about transubstantiation here! But "as often as you eat this bread"—and it is *bread* and nothing but *bread*—"and drink this cup," which still remains but a cup and its contents just what they were before—"you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."

This will suffice upon the words of the text. And, now, the doctrine that I want to draw from it is that at all times when we come to the Communion Table, we show or proclaim the death of Christ. That is the great end and objective of the Lord's Supper—to set forth—to yell out anew—to proclaim afresh the death of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I. First, let us consider HOW THIS ORDINANCE DOES PROCLAIM THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

It is all very simple. There is nothing but bread broken and eaten, and wine poured out and afterwards drunk. How can this proclaim the death of Christ? Well, it does. It has done so ever since it was instituted and there are multitudes of Believers who delight to see that death set forth by it!

First, *it sets forth the painfulness of Christ's death*. It is death that is represented by these emblems, for there is the bread and there is the wine, both separate from one another. When the flesh and the blood of a person are together, they do not present to us the image of death. But the bread, which represents the flesh, altogether separate from the wine, which represents the blood, is the picture of death and death in a violent form—death by wounding, by bleeding. The separation of the life-blood from the body is the form of death which is manifestly set forth here to

all onlookers. To my mind the very bread, as we break it, seems to say, "Thus Christ becomes our food." Bread has to pass through many tortures before it becomes food to us. The wheat was sown in the ground. It was buried, it sprang up, it was exposed to cold winds and to hot sunshine before it ripened—and then it was cut down by a sharp sickle. After being cut down, it was threshed, then it was ground into flour, then the dough was kneaded into bread which was baked in an oven and cut with a knife—all of which processes may be used as *images of suffering*. So the broken bread which we eat at the Communion sets forth the suffering of Jesus. And the juice of the grape also sets forth suffering, for the clusters from the vine are flung together into the winepress and trod by the feet of men, or otherwise pressed until their life-blood spurts forth. Even so was the Savior pressed in the winepress of Jehovah's wrath till His blood was poured forth on our behalf. This Supper sets forth to all who choose to see it, the painfulness of Christ's death.

It sets forth, next, that *it was a death of a peculiar kind, a death for others*, just as that bread is for us to eat and that cup is for us to partake of. So we say, by this ordinance, to all who look on and especially to ourselves, "When the Lord Jesus died, He died for all His people." We here declare that we believe in Substitution—that Christ died, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." And that He, "His own Self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." That is the teaching of this Supper, that Christ's death was a painful death and a death on behalf of others.

This Supper also shows that *we believe the death of Christ to be acceptable to God*. Why do we spread this Table here in the place where we customarily meet for worship? Is this also an act of worship? Assuredly it is and one of the highest kind! But we should not dare to put these memorials of the death of Christ before the Father if we did not know that the Father had accepted Him. But "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him" and He was pleased with the Sacrifice which His Son offered. He smelled a sweet savor of rest in the death of His dear Son. Therefore, when we worship Him in the most humble manner and after the most solemn fashion, we say to the Lord, "We know that You have accepted the Atonement offered by Your dear Son and we set Him forth before all mankind as the accepted Sacrifice before His Father's face." And I think that we also mean to say by this ordinance, that *Christ's Sacrifice is complete and perfect*. We would not wish to show it to others if it were not worthy of being looked at! If it were incomplete, we might well keep it in the background until Christ had finished it. But because the cry, "It is finished," rang out from the lips of the dying Sufferer of Calvary, we rejoice to set forth His death to all who come this way! Behold and see that He has not partly paid the price, but He has paid it all! Look here—He has so finished His atoning work that He has spread a feast to which His servants may come and rejoice with exceeding joy! If the Sacrifice were not finished, it would not yet be feasting time. But it is complete and, therefore, do we proclaim it forth after this fashion.

Another great Truth of God that we teach to everybody who sees us at the Communion Table is this—*Jesus Christ has died and we live upon His death*. This bread and this wine are the emblems of His broken body and His shed blood and, therefore, we eat them and drink them, and so say to you that Christ's dying is our life. Whenever we want to get spiritually stronger, we always feed upon the Truth that Christ died for us. Do any of you deny the Doctrine of Substitution? We tell you that it is the very essence of our being—that, henceforth, it has become the wellspring of life to us! We could not be happy—we could not have any peace—if that were taken away from us! My heart speaks now in words of truth and soberness and says to you, "There is no Truth which I dare to deny, but, concerning this Truth of God of the Substitutionary Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, it would be absolutely impossible for me to doubt it." Tortures and racks may tear away the strings that are bound about my heart, but they can never make me relax the hold that I have of Jesus Christ my Lord! No, the Lamb of Calvary, bleeding in our place, has become essential to our very being and we cannot, we must not, we will not becloud that blessed Doctrine of His Substitutionary Sacrifice! Is it not all-in-all to us?

We also say to dear friends who may look on at this feast that *the death of Jesus Christ has now become to us the source of our highest joy*. We are not about to celebrate a funeral. When we come to this Table, we do not come in mournful guise. I know that it has pleased the authorities of certain churches to make men kneel before what they call the altar, but why have they to kneel? Is there any passage of Scripture in which there is even the shadow of any teaching which looks that way? At the Passover, the Israelites stood with their loins girt and their staves in their hand. Why was that? Because they were expecting to go out of Egypt and were not, then, out of the land of bondage. He who is under the Law, when he eats his Passover, must eat it with his loins girt and with his staff in his hand. But how did the disciples eat the Lord's Supper? Why, reclining in the easiest posture possible! It was a most solemn supper, but it was a supper. It was the ordinary meal consecrated by the Lord to the great purpose of setting forth His death! And to make us kneel to receive it is, to my mind, to take away a great part of the teaching of it! We should sit at the Communion as easily as we possibly can—as we would at our own table—because "we which have believed do enter into rest"—and part of the teaching of the Lord's Supper is that now, in Christ, we have perfect peace and we rest in Him as we feed upon Him. This ordinance is a feast, not now a subject for sorrow, but a theme for delight!

And once more, Beloved, when we come to the Lord's Table to proclaim Christ's death, *we show it as the bond of Christian union*. The point of union among Christians is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am afraid that it will be many long years before we shall get all Believers to agree concerning Baptism. I hope right views of that ordinance are spreading, but it does not seem to me to be a point where all Christians are likely yet to unite. But, concerning our Lord's death, all who really

are His people are agreed! If we are in Him, we rejoice in that grand foundational Truth, "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," and we delight to think that by His death He has redeemed us from death. So, dear Brothers and Sisters, if you cannot meet your fellow Christians on certain doctrines because some of you are strong men in Christ and others are but babes—and the babes cannot crack the nuts or eat the strong meat upon which swine feed—you can all unite in Christ! He is like the manna which suited all the Israelites in the wilderness—young or old, they could all feed on the manna and so can all the saints feed on Christ! And when we sit at the Communion Table, we say to all the world, "We are all one in Christ Jesus. We do not come to this Table as Baptists, or Episcopalians, or Methodists, or Presbyterians—we come here simply as those who form one body in Christ—they who agree to show forth to all mankind the death of our adorable Lord."

II. Secondly, let us consider WHY THE LORD HAS TAKEN MEANS TO SHOW THIS TRUTH.

There are a great many important Truths in the Bible and every Truth of God ought to be kept in remembrance, but it is not concerning every Truth that the Lord has appointed an ordinance to keep it in memory. The Doctrine of Election is one that we firmly believe, but we have no special token, type, or symbol to set it forth.

It is the death of Christ which is set forth by this memorial Supper. Why was that chosen? I answer, *because it is the most vital of all Truths*. Concerning the sacrificial death of Christ there must not be tolerated any dispute in the Christian Church. That must forever stand as a settled Doctrine of the Gospel. The atoning death of Jesus Christ once put away, you have taken the sun out of the Church's Heavens. Indeed, you have taken away all reason for the very existence of the Church of Christ! I think it was Dr. Priestley, a Unitarian, who had a brother who was a sound Calvinistic Divine and who came and visited him. And he agreed to let him preach for him one Sabbath morning, on condition that he promised not to preach on any controversial subject. The good man gave the promise, but rather regretted, afterwards, that he had done so, yet he managed to redeem his promise and also to clear his conscience, for he preached on the next Sabbath morning from this text—"Without, controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh," from which he proved that the Godhead of Christ is a Truth about which no controversy could be allowed. We put the Doctrine of His Substitutionary Sacrifice in the same category—these is no true Christianity without it! You have given us merely the shell and the husk if you take away this great central Truth of the Gospel—God's Justice vindicated by the death of His dear Son and, on that ground, free pardon published by the Grace of God to the very chief of sinners who believe in Him! This Doctrine, which some despise and decry, is the very essence of the Gospel of Christ! We have no question with regard to the truth of it, neither do we speak with bated breath concerning it, for our Lord Jesus

instituted this Supper in order to keep this Truth of God before men's minds because it is the point above all others that is vital to the Gospel.

Another reason is *because so many combat this Doctrine*. It has been the Hougomont of the great Waterloo which has been fought against Christ. All His adversaries rally against this Truth. When any man becomes unsound upon other points, if you probe deeply enough, you will find that he has become unsound upon the Doctrine of the Atonement. The Substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ is the one thing which His enemies are aiming to overthrow. They cannot endure it! They profess to be greatly offended by our frequent use of the word, *blood*, yet that word is one of the most conspicuous words in both the Old and the New Testaments, so we will still say, "Without shedding of blood is no remission," and, "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." This Communion Table sets forth the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, and so brings His atoning Sacrifice before men's minds—and thus His Church, so often as she observes this ordinance, proclaims Christ's death in the teeth of all opposers—and this she means still to do "till He comes"!

No doubt the Lord also instituted a symbol for the maintenance and propagation of this Truth *because it is a most blessed one to sinners*. Poor souls, there is no comfort for you till you know that Christ died in your place. Your conscience, if it is really awakened, will never be pacified with ceremonies! Nor will it be contented with moral precepts which you cannot carry out. Nor will it be lulled to sleep with the idea of your own religiousness ever saving you. Your awakened conscience makes you ask, "How can God be just and yet pardon *me*?" And it is the martyred body of your Lord that answers that question—

***"Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find.
The holy, just, and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind."***

But when you come to see Christ on the Cross dying instead of you, then will comfort come into your mind, O distracted seeker—but not till then! Therefore is it that God bids His ministers preach Jesus Christ and Him Crucified and, therefore is it that as often as we come to this Table, we proclaim His death because sinners need that beyond everything else.

And, Beloved, there is another reason, I think, why this Truth of God was selected to be set forth in this memorial Supper, namely, *that it might certify the Truth to your own soul*. What arrow will ever pierce the heart of sin unless it is dipped in the blood of Jesus? When I see sin punished on Christ, I see the evil of it. When I see Christ dying for my sin, I see the great motive for my dying for my sin. When I behold His griefs and pangs on my behalf, I see a reason why I should make abundant sacrifices in order that I may glorify Him. Beloved, the death of Christ is the great sin-killer and he who truly knows it and understands it, will feel its sanctifying power!

At the same time, *this Truth greatly glorifies God*. When do you ever praise God so well as when you, a poor guilty sinner, stand at the feet of the Cross and see that Christ died there for you? The sweetest songs in

all the world are those that are sung around the Cross by sinners saved by Sovereign Grace. And each one sings unto the Lord, "Wash me in the fountain and make me whiter than snow. Then shall every part of my being praise You and my whole nature shall break forth in ecstatic joy magnifying and blessing the name of the Lord who is able to put away such offenses as mine through the precious blood of His dear Son." You will thus be enabled to glorify God when you come to this Table and meditate on the great atoning Sacrifice by which your sin is forever put away.

I feel that I can say, without boasting, that my ministry and this ordinance agree well together. I have long preached to you Jesus Christ and Him Crucified. I have fully preached to you His vicarious Sacrifice. And when you come to this Table, you can realize that the Truth which I have preached to you links on to this ordinance. But how anyone can piece together a dry philosophy and this service, I do not know. Having left out the grand fundamental Doctrine of Atonement, how they can make anything but a farce of the Communion, I cannot even guess! I should think they might as well abolish it from their services and let the symbol go when the substance has already gone! But it cannot be so with us, for we feel that God would have His people always think of Jesus! He would have them often speak of Jesus! He would have them continually bear witness to the death of Jesus and, therefore, He makes this Communion to be the sweetest of ordinances to point us, with unerring finger, to Christ on the Cross!

III. Now, thirdly, will you please take notice of THE PERPETUITY OF THIS ORDINANCE AND THE REASON FOR THAT PERPETUITY? "You do proclaim the Lord's death *till He comes*." When He comes, we shall not need these symbols, for we shall have the Master, Himself, with us, but, "*till He comes*" we are to observe this ordinance.

What do I learn from this? Why, dear Friends, that His death will be efficacious "*till He comes*." You are not called to show to the world something that is worn out. You do not come to this Table to set forth to the people who will look on something whose force is spent. Oh, no! You can still sing—

***"Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood
Shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Is saved to sin no more!"***

And every time any of you who are unconverted, but are seeking the Lord, see this Table spread, you should say to yourselves, "Those people believe that there is still efficacy in Christ's blood, or else they would not keep up the observance of that Supper." Yes, we do believe just that, and we believe that Jesus is able to save you now if you come to Him—able at once to speak peace and pardon to your heart if you do but trust Him!

Another thing I learn from our text is that as this Supper is to be celebrated "*till He comes*," *it shows that there will always be a Church of Christ to celebrate it*. There always has been a Church of Christ since He founded it. In the darkest Popish days, Christ always had His little

Church to observe this ordinance. In the catacombs at Rome, in the mountains of Bohemia, in the Vaudois valleys, in the wild glens of Scotland and in almost every land, in the simple breaking of bread and the pouring out of wine Believers still remembered Christ's death even though they met together at the peril of their lives! And right on down to these brighter days in which we can meet two or three at a time, or hundreds or thousands at once to break bread and to drink wine in remembrance of our dying Lord, there has always been a Church of Christ and there will always be a Church of Christ! So do not despair however dark the days may yet be. Neither Rome nor Hell, itself, can put out the candle which has been lit by the Lord! There will be a Church of Christ "till He comes."

It is true that there will always be people to oppose this Doctrine and one reason why you are to continue to observe this ordinance is because there will always be some people who will deny Christ's substitutionary death. Dear Friends and fellow-helpers in the Lord, it seems such a sweet thing to me to think that all the communicants at this ordinance tonight will be helping to preach a sermon upon our text! I alone must do the talking, but you who will presently gather around the Communion Table will unite in this act, by which we shall all say, "Christ died on Calvary's Cross. Christ died for us!" And all the other Truths that I have been mentioning to you—by the very eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine, you will proclaim again that there are some who believe in the bleeding Savior—some who still believe in Him as dying in their place! Let others deny it if they will, you will maintain that testimony.

Beloved, this ordinance is to be perpetual, *because Christian hearts will always need it*. There were some people, a little while ago, who were getting so wonderfully perfect (in their own estimation) that I thought, at the time, they would soon give up the observance of ordinances. I read of one of them who said that he did not pray any longer, for his mind was so perfectly sanctified and conformed to the will of God that he did not need to ask anything of God! Poor fool—that is all I can say of a person in such a state of heart as that! When any man gets beyond the need of prayer, he has urgent need to begin his Christian life over! And it is the same with those who have got beyond the need of ordinances. Christ knew that we should never, in this life, be able to do without outward ordinances. He knew that His people would be forgetful, even of Himself, so He gave us this double "forget-me-not"—this sweet memorial of His death, that as often as we observe it, we may observe it in remembrance of Him.

Moreover, *the world, itself, will always need this ordinance*. There will never come a day when the world will not need to have the Crucified Christ set before it. There will never be an hour in which there will not be breaking hearts that need consolation, wandering souls that need reclaiming and others who are seeking self-salvation, who will need to be taught that salvation lies in Another—and is to be found only in the bleeding Lamb of Calvary. May God help us to maintain this testimony

for the world's sake, for the poor sinner's sake, for our own sake and for Christ's sake "till He comes."

IV. I have done when I have made one more remark, which is this. If what I have said about this ordinance is true, then, LET US ATTEND TO IT. If in this way we set forth Christ's death—if our coming to the Communion Table calls attention to that great fact—if we unite in this act of fellowship in testimony to the death of Christ, let us attend to it.

What shall I say to some of you who, I trust, have Christ as your Master, but who have never yet obeyed this command of His? Let me ask you whether He has ever given you exemption from the observance of this ordinance and let me also ask you whether, as He thought it wise to ordain this ordinance, you ought not to think it wise to observe it? Did He institute it in order that you might neglect it? Has He instituted any ordinance which it is right for His people to neglect? Do you know how much you have already lost through your disobedience to your Lord's command? You tell me that it will not save you. I know that. And you know as well as I do that you should not come to the Communion Table if you thought it would save you, for none are invited to come but those who are already saved! But I should like you to look at this matter in the way in which a poor young man spoke of the other ordinance instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ.

He had not all his wits, but the Grace of God had been at work within him and, as he lay dying, his chief regret was that he had not been baptized. His sisters said to him, "Well, but you know, Isaac, that baptism will not save you." He answered, "I know that very well, for I am already saved. But," He added, "I expect to meet the Lord Jesus Christ very soon and I should not like Him to say to me, 'Why did you not do that little thing to please Me?'" There is much force in that remark. The smaller the thing is, the greater reason is there why we should attend to it directly, lest we should be supposed to have said, "I would not do even that little thing to please Christ." If coming to the Communion Table would save you, of course you would come out of sheer selfishness! But if your religion is nothing but selfishness, may the Lord have mercy upon you and give you a far better one! It is the privilege of those who are saved to show their obedience to Christ and their love to Him by coming to His Table. Do you think that you can look Him in the face and say, "My Lord, You have instituted this ordinance to be observed in remembrance of You, but I have never observed it"? May He not look upon you and say, "It is but a small thing and it is for your soul's good—can you not do that for Me?" You ought to question whether you are in a right state of heart if you can be negligent of this command of your Lord.

But I must also speak to those who do observe the ordinance in a fashion, but who do not enter into the true spirit of it. Those who come rightly to the Table proclaim Christ's death "till He comes," but I am afraid that there are, at all Communion Services, some who do not think aright concerning Christ's death. I always feel very sad, when I am presiding at this ordinance, if I find my thoughts wandering away from the last dread scene upon the Cross. I would rather not be at the Table of

my Lord than be here thinking of something else beside His sufferings and death. What can be the use of the outward ordinance if inward and spiritual Grace is lacking? Beg the Lord to restrict all your thoughts to the Cross. Make this your prayer, "Bind the Sacrifice with cords, even with cords to the horns of the altar," and let that Altar be the broken body of your Lord upon the Cross. Of Him let me think, and in Him let me rest all through the Communion Service, and let me see to it that I do reverently, humbly, heartily proclaim His death "till He comes."

Come then, Beloved, unworthy as you are, come to His Table! Come trembling because of your sin, but rejoicing in His Sacrifice and grateful for His great love! Come and trust Him over again! Come and give yourselves up to Him once more. Come and renew your vows of affection and devotion. Come and put your finger into the print of the nails and thrust your hand into His pierced side. No, more than that, say what the spouse does as she begins the song of songs, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Your love is better than wine." Seek to get near to Him, to come into close contact with Him and when you do so, hold Him fast and do not let Him go, but call together your friends and Christian Brothers and Sisters and say to them, "Here is the Master! Come with me and let us together have sweet fellowship with Him." If, tonight, at the Communion Table, I might thus lay hold of the great Angel of the Covenant, I think I should feel inclined to hold Him till the break of day, as Jacob did at Jabbok. And if He should make my sinews shrink, yet would I bless His name for condescending to tarry and wrestle with me! If you can get into contact with Him, make this your resolve, that you will hold fast and will say to Him, "I will not let You go, except You bless me."

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
PSALM 22:1-9; MATTHEW 27:33-44.**

Psalm 22:1. *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?* What a dolorous cry! How terrible it must have been to have heard that cry! How much more terrible to have uttered it! For the dear Son of God, the Well-Beloved, with whom the Father is always pleased, to be forsaken of His God was, indeed, unfathomable grief!

1. *Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring?* It seems as if the Savior's voice and almost His mind had failed Him, for He calls His prayer, "roaring," likening Himself to a wounded beast. When any of You cannot pray, or think You cannot, remember these words of your Lord! If He, the Ever-Blessed Son of God, speaks of His own prayer as a, "roaring," what must ours be? You know that Isaiah spoke of his own prayer as being like the chattering of a crane or a swallow, or the mourning of a dove, as if there were no articulate utterance about it. But to the ears and eyes of God, there is music in a sigh and beauty in a tear. As our Lord had to pray like this, do not wonder if we, sometimes, should feel that God has forsaken us. If there were such dark clouds for Christ, there may well be some for us also.

2. *O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You hear not; and in the night season, and am not silent.* If we remember Gethsemane and think how Jesus prayed there, even to an agony and a bloody sweat, shall we wonder if, sometime, our prayers seem to be put on one side and we do not immediately receive answers of peace to them? Yet, You see, our Lord kept on crying to God both day and night.

3. *But You are holy, O You that inhabits the praises of Israel.* Settle it in your hearts that whatever God does, He is holy. Never harbor a thought against Him, never imagine that He is hard, or unjust, or unfaithful. That cannot be, so if the worst comes to the worst, never let your faith have any question upon this point.

4, 5. *Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You did deliver them. They cried unto You, and were delivered: they trusted in You, and were not confounded.* Look back and see how God helped our ancestors. Recall how, in the past ages, the Lord always was the Deliverer of all those that trusted in Him. Was a righteous man ever finally forsaken of God? Since the world began, has not the Lord, sooner or later, appeared to deliver His children? It is wonderful to hear our Divine Master pleading in this fashion! But most wonderful of all is that next verse—

6. *But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.* There is a little red worm which seems to be nothing else but blood when it is crushed. It seems all gone except a blood-stain and the Savior, in the deep humiliation of His spirit, compares Himself to that little red worm. How true it is that, “He made Himself of no reputation” for our sakes! He emptied Himself of all His Glory and if there is any glory natural to manhood, He emptied Himself even of that! Not only the glories of His Godhead, but the honors of His Manhood He laid aside that it might be seen that, “though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor.”

7, 8. *All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head saying, He trusted on the LORD that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him.* Or, as the passage is quoted in Matthew, “Let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him.”

9. *But You are He that took Me out of the womb: You did make Me hope when I was upon My mother's breasts.* This is a very amazing thing. I do not think we remember as we ought that for years after our birth, we could do nothing to help ourselves, yet we were taken care of even then. He who has passed safely through his infancy need not be afraid that God will not help him through the rest of his life. And if we should live so long that we come to a second infancy, the God who carried us through the first will carry us through the second! He has already done so much for us that we are bound to trust Him for all the future. Now let us see, as I reminded You just now, how this passage is referred to in the Gospel according to Matthew.

Matthew 27:33, 34. *And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say a place of a skull, they gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink.* This was a stupefying draught which was usually given to prisoners

about to die in order to mitigate their pain and, therefore, Christ would not drink it, for He was determined to suffer even to the bitter end. He did not come to have any mitigation of His agony when He was offering His Atonement for us. And so, “when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink.”

35. *And they crucified Him, and parted His garments, casting lots that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots.* This is a point upon which we cannot say much, but, to the peculiarly sensitive soul of Jesus, it must have been a great part of His shame thus to be stripped of every garment and hung up before the sun.

36, 37. *And sitting down they watched Him there; and set up over His head His accusation written: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.* By their own confession, He died for being a King and He died for being too greatly good, too royal in His love. He, being King of kings, died that you and I might live forever and be kings and priests unto God.

38, 39. *Then were there two thieves crucified with Him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads.* Not only they that sat there, such as the scribes, and Pharisee, and soldiers, and they that hung there, the thieves that were crucified with Him, but the passers-by reviled Him, indulging in a sneer.

40-43. *And saying, You, that destroy the Temple, and build it in three days, save Yourself. If You are the Son of God, come down from the Cross. Likewise also the chief priest mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others: Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the Cross and we will believe Him.* That is the cry of the mockers today. If we will but give up the Atonement, men say that they will believe in Christ. His Character is so excellent that they will accept Him as an example, (so they say), but they will not have His Godhead, nor His precious blood! This proves that they are enemies, for they use the same language as His bitterest foes did when He hung upon the Cross. As for the scribes, they were learned in the Psalms and, therefore, they quoted what we have already read.

43, 44. *He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth.* Thus the Master passed through bitter trial and ignominy for our sakes.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—282, 284.

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

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THE WITNESS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

NO. 3338

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON JANUARY 23, 1913.

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

***“For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup,
you do show the Lord's death till He comes.”
1 Corinthians 11:26.***

THE center of our holy religion is the Cross. The central thought of the whole of Christianity is Christ and the great point in Christ's history is His Crucifixion. We preach Christ—but more—we preach Him Crucified! Beloved, this, which is the keystone or the whole arch of our religion, should be more constantly in our minds than it is. It should more frequently occupy our meditations. It should engage more incessantly our tongues—we should sing of it more often, we should pray more in the shadow of it and we should live more under the control of the impulses its suggests. In the Cross of Christ let each one of us glory and, like the Apostle, say, “God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

In order to keep in our mind's eye what, alas, we so easily forget—the death of our blessed Lord—He has been pleased to institute the Supper which we are about to celebrate. Beneath yon fair white linen cloth we have memorials of His passion, full of instruction to those who rightly view them. If any in this place should ask, “What mean you by this service?” our ready answer shall be according as it is written—“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till He comes” (1 Cor 11:26). We eat bread and drink wine, not out of any foolish superstition that these can be transmuted into the very flesh and blood of Jesus Christ—a superstition which would be a disgrace to a Bushman—a superstition which is a disgrace to those who hold it in this enlightened land, and not a disgrace only, but a vast sin—a black delusion which is given to them that they may believe a lie—whereby they involve themselves in the doom of Hell! We hold no such folly. Because we are rational and because we are spiritual, both our reason and our spiritual nature revolt against anything so atrocious as to believe that the body of Christ—the absolute flesh and blood—can be eaten and drank, or that if it could be done, it ought to be done, or that it could confer any spiritual benefit upon those who could perform so cannibal and revolting an act! We believe in the real Presence, but not in the corporeal Presence. We believe that Jesus Christ comes to us *spiritually* and refreshes us, and in that sense we both eat His flesh and drink His blood. But as to

any such literal feast as some believe in, we reject the thought with horror and with contempt!

The great meaning of "The Lord's Supper," as we call it, is that we show the Lord's death till He comes. We *show it to ourselves* and we show it, or represent it, to others—to unbelievers who may *chance to look on*. The former of these is, perhaps, the more important. In coming to eat of the bread and drink of the wine at this Supper—

I. WE SHOW THE LORD'S DEATH TO OURSELVES.

Not, indeed, that this is the exclusive manner of exhibiting the passion which our dear Savior endured, or the decease which He accomplished, for there are, it must be admitted, other methods of showing the Lord's death. *One is by this Book*, this Inspired Volume which contains the record of His Crucifixion—which explains it—which enforces upon men the duty of putting their trust in the merit of Him who died. Wherever this Bible is opened there is a showing of Christ's death! Why, the whole Book is full of it! There is a crimson line of atoning Sacrifice running from Genesis to Revelation—

***"Here I behold my Savior's face
Almost in every page."***

Every distinct Book of Inspiration is like a mirror reflecting the image of Jesus—"as in a glass, darkly," it is true, but still sufficiently clear even for these dim eyes of ours. All the Scriptures are the swaddling bands of the Child, Christ Jesus, as said Augustine of old—If you would see Jesus, you must search for Him in Holy Scripture and, by the light of the Holy Spirit, you will not go far until you find Him!

The Lord Jesus Christ's death is also shown forth *in public ministry*. There are some who are so fond of painted windows because, they say, they preach by painting. Brothers and Sisters, we paint by preaching! That is the only difference and to paint by *preaching* is an infinitely better thing than to preach by painting! All the methods that are adopted to show forth Christ's death throughout all the world are utter vanity compared with the ministration of the Gospel. It is not possible for the preacher too much to magnify His office. It is God's predestinated channel of Grace to the sons of men. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God"—and as we speak, God helping us—Christ is set forth, manifestly Crucified among you! How many in this place have seen Jesus by what they have heard spoken of Him? The eye of the mind has seen Him. 'Twere of little use for the eyes of sense to do so. Thousands saw Christ with their natural eyes and perished in their sins! But to see Him with the eyes of the spirit—this it is that saves. The preaching of the Gospel paints Christ to the mind's eyes, not to the natural eyes, so it is the best way of depicting Him, for it exactly meets the vision that it is intended to impress!

Still, over and above the showing of Christ's death in the printed Word and the Word preached, there comes in this emblematical Supper in which we show Christ's death after a manner I will try to explain. We show to ourselves as we come here *that Christ was* really Incarnate and

so could die. My Soul, as you take that bread into your fingers, remember that it is a thing to be handled and to be touched—a material substance. And so, God, the Infinite, took into union with Himself actual flesh and blood, such as you have in your own body! A strange thing that a pure Spirit should condescend to tabernacle in flesh—and yet it is so written—“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth.” Oh, matchless mystery! He who fills all things became an Infant of a span long! He who is Eternal and Omnipotent became a humble working Man, putting on the garment without seam, suffering, toiling and at last yielding up His life! As each drop of wine shall pass your lips and you recognize it as a *material substance*, you show to yourself, O Believer, that Jesus Christ became Incarnate. Think of this! Take care that you do not make a God out of the manhood, nor a man out of the Godhead. Rest assured that as certainly as Christ was God, without diminution of His splendor, so certainly He was also Man, pure Man with a Manhood like your own, even as He, Himself, said—“Handle Me and see; a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see I have.” See, then, Brothers and Sisters, your next of kin—a sufferer like yourselves—and let the bread and wine remind you of Him!

Then next, the Supper *reminds you of your Lord's sufferings*. There is the bread broken. The wine, the juice of the grape, crushed out with pain and labor—poured out. Now remember that Jesus Christ, though not a bone of Him could be broken, was broken in spirit—“Reproach has broken My heart; I am full of heaviness”—He poured out His soul unto death. Let the bread and the wine remind you of the bloody sweat in the Garden—of the anguish unto death which He endured in dark Gethsemane among the olive trees. Let them bring to your recollection, Beloved in the Lord, the scourging at the hands of Pilate and of Herod. Imagine you see Him standing patiently there, giving up His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair—hiding not His face from shame and spitting. That bread broken and that wine poured out should remind you of the journey along the *Via Dolorosa*, as He went fainting beneath the burden of His Cross. They must remind you of the Cross and the nails, the grief of being forsaken, the anguish of thirst, the bitterness of scorn, the torment of fever and, at last, death itself. I do not say that, perhaps you will be able to make the whole scene pass before your minds, but I bid you try to do so. Drive away every other thought as Christ drove the buyers and sellers out of the Temple. Charge your soul to stand with His Virgin Mother at the foot of the Cross and pray that His blood may fall upon you, drop by drop, that you may be so enchanted by what you see, withal so dreadful, but yet so full of bliss, that you may not dare for a moment to let a stray thought come in! This and this only, think of! Think of Jesus Incarnate and of Jesus suffering!

But the bread and the wine show more than this. What do I see? Bread, the flesh. Wine, the life, the blood. Flesh and blood, then, when

separated, are both dead so that the cup and the bread together distinctly signify the actual death of our Lord. There is no such thing as a Lord's Supper with the bread, alone, nor with the cup, alone, nor with the bread and wine mingled! They must both be distinct. Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. And until the blood has been poured forth, the flesh still remains and retains its life. But put the two, distinctly, and you get the idea of death as clearly as you can have it. Now, Beloved, I want you to come close up to this Truth of God, that the Lord of Glory actually died. For our Savior there was no passing into Heaven by a chariot of fire. It is not said of Him, as of Enoch, that "He was not, for God took Him." He must die! You dread death. You look forward to it frequently with trepidation. But Christ passed absolutely through it and the Human Soul and the Human Body of our Savior were torn from each other. He actually descended into the abodes of the dead! He bowed His head to the great enemy and yielded up the ghost. Had He not so died, there had been no ransom paid for you, for God's Law demanded a life. The sentence was, "The soul that sins, it shall die." Christ has actually died—and let this Supper bring home the thought most sweetly to yourselves that Jesus died!

We have not yet shown Christ's death wholly to ourselves. *The spreading of that bread* and wine on yonder table is a showing to ourselves *that God has made a provision for human needs*. A hungry man coming to that Table thinks at once of eating and drinking. He perceives that if it is placed there, it is placed there for use. Bread and wine in the cupboard may be stored, but bread and wine on the table are evidently for use. Now, child of God, catch that thought and hold it. Jesus Christ has come into the world, not to withhold, but to give! Not to reserve, but to distribute! Not to keep to Himself any good thing, but to bestow all that He has upon His people! Come, then, with all your great necessities—come to the Savior, for He freely presents Himself to all Believers! Great Sinner, do you need great pardon? Jesus will give it to you! He puts on the Table the cup. Do you need, Christian, great comfort? Come and take it—it is put on the Table! Jesus keeps open house for all comers who come by faith to Him. Have you the faith to come and trust Him? Then all that Jesus is and has you may be and have! Especially you that are His friends, you that have leaned upon His bosom—do not stint yourselves, for He does not stint you. You are not straitened in Him—if straitened at all, it is in yourselves. Jesus puts upon the Table for us, Himself, and, being put there, it is as good as an open invitation by a loud voice, saying, "O, you hungry, come and feed! O, you thirsty, come and drink!" There is nothing in Christ which He will deny to His people! Christ has nothing in Heaven or on earth which He will keep back from the Believer that dares to come and ask for it! Come, then! Come boldly! The Lord give you access unto this Grace!

And do we not show the Lord's death a little further when, *after having spread the Supper, we come to eat it?* Then we say to ourselves, "Just as I must eat this bread, or it will not nourish me, so must I take Jesus Chr-

ist, personally, by a distinct act of faith and take Him to be mine. And as this bread, after I have taken it, incorporates itself with me so that there is no distinction between this bread and my body, but it helps to build up the structure of my body, so when I take Christ and trust Him, He becomes one with me and I become one with Him and my life is hid with Him. And He says that because He lives I shall live also." Now, is not that a wonderful lesson to teach by so simple an action? You eat, you drink, the food becomes assimilated into yourselves. You come to Jesus, you trust Him and Christ becomes one with you and you become one with Him, so that henceforth you can say, "It is no more I that lives, but Christ that lives in me" and, as for Jesus, He calls you a member of His body! He calls you a branch from His stem! He calls you the spouse and He, Himself, your Bridegroom! Oh, sacred union effected by the act of reception which is the act of faith!

And now, beloved Believer, as you first lived by receiving Grace, you can only grow in that life by still receiving it! Do not come to this Table and say, "What can I bring?" No, but come and say, "What can I take away?" Do not say, "Am I worthy?" That question never ought to be asked. You are not worthy! But come, unworthy as you are, and take what Jesus has provided for unworthy sinners! "Well," says someone, "but we are to take heed lest we eat and drink being unworthy." No, you are not! There is no such text in all the Bible! You see, you have left out a syllable. What it does say is about eating and drinking *unworthily*—and that is with respect to the way of eating it. If you come to this table lightly—if you come to it irreligiously, profanely—if you come as they did at Corinth, to merely drink. If you come to get money by it, as some did in years gone by, to qualify themselves for office or to obtain charity—that would be to eat and drink unworthily! But, unworthy as you are, if your—

***"Hope is fixed on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness,"***

then come, for such as you the Table is spread!

And when you do come, I do pray you yet once more, *do not let unbelief keep you back from enjoying all that is to be enjoyed*. You know a very hungry man does not stand on many manners. If he is told to eat everything that is set before him, then his hunger does not permit him to stand on niceties, but he eats all he can get. And so may you. Yes, and you may carry away what you will, too, with you. You may come and get a feast tonight and the sweet remembrance of it in days to come will be permitted to you. Believe that Christ does not refuse you anything. When you pray, do not ask as if you were getting something out of a hard-hearted Being, but come to One whose delight it is to give—whose very Glory it is to scatter His mercies among His beloved ones—

***"Come, make your needs, your burdens known!
He will present them at the Throne
And angel bands are waiting there,
His messages of love to bear."***

Thus, you see, in the bread and the wine, in the bread and wine separated, in the bread broken and the wine poured out, in the two emblems put on a table—and in these two being so partaken of that they become united with the fabric of our body—we set forth the whole mystery of the death of Jesus Christ to ourselves. May the Spirit of God help us to truly do this!

Observe now that—

II. WE ARE TO SHOW CHRIST'S DEATH TO OTHERS.

As often as we eat this bread and drink of this cup, we do this. We *show to others the fact that Jesus died*. I think historians have taken it as one of the best proofs of a fact when some rite has been instituted to commemorate it. A pillar with an inscription is not always a certain index to truth. Our own Monument, for instance, had a record on it that London was burned down by the Catholics—who had no more to do with it, certainly, than the Muslims did! The inscription in that case was not a record of fact! Yes, and a pillar might be erected to record an event which never occurred at all. But, as a general rule, large bodies of men will not agree together to continually celebrate events which never occurred. Nobody doubts, I suppose, the siege of Londonderry, when the prentice boys meet every year to make a noise and disturbance. They at least bring before the historian's mind the certainty that such an event did occur, for it is still thus recorded. Now, our Lord gave us this simple method of breaking bread and drinking wine to be our way of setting up our pillar—our mode of keeping up a great historical fact—that there was a Man who lived in Judea, who professed to be the Son of God, who was the King of the Jews, who lived a humble life and died a marvelous death! There is no fact in history so well attested as this! So that those who have given up the Inspiration of Scripture have seldom touched either the life or the death of Jesus, but have conceded both to be facts. And now this very night, perhaps, in fifty thousand places, at this moment, this commemorative act of eating bread and drinking wine is about to be performed in this one country of England. Now that is something by way of record, and by this act we help to perpetuate to all generations the fact that Jesus died!

But we do a great deal more than this to others. We assert by coming here, tonight, and eating this bread and drinking of this cup, *that we believe that this Man, Jesus of Nazareth, was the Son of God and the Savior of men, and that we go in with Him for everything that is involved in the story of His life and death*. That is to say, if it is a shame for Christ to die upon the Cross, we are willing to bear part of the shame. If it is thought to be foolishness to believe in a Crucified Man—we are fools and come here to avow it. If it is said to be a stumbling block to many that Jesus of Nazareth should be the Son of God—we come to declare that it is no stumbling block to us! We accept Him as Divine! We trust in Him as the Propitiation for our sins! Beloved, when you shall take that bread, you take part with Christ. You take lot with Him and, mark you, He often goes up the bleak side of the hill—and you will have to do the same with

the snow between your teeth! And He often lodges in huts and hovels—yes, He has not where to lay His head! He has handfuls of the world's filth thrown at Him and but little of its gold laid at His feet. He is despised and rejected of men—and if you will keep Him company, you must expect to be despised, too, and to be as ill-treated as He was—for the servant is not above his Master, nor the disciple above his Lord! Whoever follows David must go to him in the wild goat tracks of Engedi, or dwell with him in the Cave of Adullam. He that would be David's man must share David's needs and David's disgraces or else he cannot share his crown. Believers, have you counted this cost? You professors who come to this Table and who say to the onlookers, "We go with Christ! We are enlisted under His banner! We have given ourselves to Him"—have we counted the cost?—

***"Have you counted the cost? Have you counted the cost?
You followers of the Cross?
And are you prepared for your Master's sake
To suffer all worldly loss?
And can you endure with the virgin band,
The lowly and pure in heart,
Who wherever the Lamb does lead,
From His footsteps never depart?"***

Oh, that so counting the cost, you may continue with Him till life's journey is over! Thus, you see, you not only assert that Christ died, but you communicants assert that He died for *you* and that you are one with Him and will take shares with Him when He comes into His Kingdom!

You do even more than that. *You explain the meaning of Christ's death by the mere fact of coming to this Table.* "How," you ask, "is that?" In eating the bread and drinking the wine, you set forth a sacrifice—a libation of blood and a slaughter of flesh—and you say to all the world, "Our trust for salvation rests in a Sacrifice! We have no hope of being saved by anything that springs of ourselves—we look wholly out of self and entirely to the Sacrifice which was offered up on the Cross." While some of you sit down to the Table, others of you will be onlookers. I do pray, as you look on, if you have never known this Truth of God before, learn it now. All your hope of ever entering Heaven must lie quite out of yourselves and be concentrated in Another—in God's only and own dear Son! While I am stating this fact, which is so well known to you that it sounds commonplace, I feel as if I could burst into a flood of tears to think that it should grow so commonplace and yet be not believed! Does God become Man and die, and will you not trust Him? Does my God, that made the heavens and the earth, of whom I read that without Him was not anything made that was made—does He become a Man and suffer that sinners might live? And is it nothing to you, is it nothing to you and will you prefer the tawdry pleasures of this world to the solid bliss which He can give you? And will you dash yourselves upon the bosses of Jehovah's buckler and run upon His glittering spear and ruin yourselves forever rather than close in with Christ and kiss the Son lest He be angry? I can under-

stand why it is that you do not love my Lord, for once I was so foolish, myself, but oh, it is brutish—it is worse than that, it is devilish to despise a dying Christ! I know not whether I have not maligned the devil in using his name in such a matter as that, for surely, had Jesus died for devils, they would not have been such devils as men are who, hearing of a Savior and believing the story of His passion, yet turn a deaf ear to it and give their souls up to Madame Wanton, or to base-born Mammon, or to some other carnal thing which will but delude and destroy them!

There are some of you I shall never see again. I charge you before the Eternal God, as we shall meet at His Last Judgment Seat, think of this—that if it is worth God's while to come here and be Incarnate, and so to suffer to make Atonement, it is not a thing for you to trifle with! But if you do, you will find that the stone which you refused will grind you to powder in that day when, like some cliff that is loosened from its socket, long quivering there, it shall come rolling down upon the heedless traveler to crush him and utterly destroy him! God save you, my dear Hearer, stranger to me, and stranger to yourself, and stranger to my God! And though you may remain a stranger to me, yet may you begin to know something of yourself, tonight, and something of my Master, of whom I will say this one thing—If you did but know Him you would love Him—

***“His worth if all the nations knew,
Sure the whole world would love Him too.”***

Thus, then, do we show the fact of our participation in Christ's death and the meaning of it.

Does not the voice of ages and of generations after generations speak to you now in the constancy and frequency of this celebration? And do you not perceive that we move forward to the boundary which shall realize the Church's hope? “We do show the Lord's death till He comes.” Then He is coming! He is coming! I know not when, no, nor know the angel of God that is nearest to the Eternal Book when God unfolds the leaves. But He is coming! As when the earthquake comes, with divers signs and prodigies that make men start, and yet they know not what it is, He comes! As the lightning flash that is seen from east to west, He comes! As the thief that steals silently through the shadows of the night and robs the sleeper, so He comes! The Man that wore the crown of thorns is coming with a crown about His brow more glorious than all the coronets of earth. He is coming! The Son of Mary is coming to wear no more the garment without seam, but wrapped—

“With rainbow wreath and robes of storm.”

He is coming! The Man that did hang upon the Cross will sit upon the Great White Throne—

***“On cherub wings and wings of wind,
Appointed Judge of all mankind.”***

And you said tonight—you said it and I heard you—that you crucified Him and you said that yours were the hands that drove the nails and made the hammer fall. You sang just now—

“Tis I have thus ungrateful been.”

Now you have confessed it! You who have trusted in Him will confess it and yet, thank God that out of a fault springs your salvation! But you who have not trusted Him, what will you say to Him in that day when He shall come to judge the world? You shall look on Him whom you have pierced and you shall weep and wail because of Him! Oh, that you would look at His wounds now and trust Him, for if you do not, you shall look on them, then, and you shall say, "I made those wounds." And that thought will shake you as when a lion shakes its prey. That thought will melt your bones as though they were but ice in the heat of the sun! And your loins shall be loosed and your soul shall sink in dismay. I pray you—I beseech you by the love you bear to yourself, and to your soul that can never die—look unto Jesus and be saved! Look unto Him now! You must look one day—look tonight! You must look, either with repentance and faith, or else with terror and despair! Choose which it shall be. Choose now! Young men and women who have stepped in here tonight, I pray God that you may have Grace to decide for Jesus now. Old men and fathers, maidens and matrons, may you also have Grace to say, "I will take Him as my Savior, not as my Judge"—

***"But if your ears refuse
The language of His Grace,
And hearts grow hard like stubborn Jews,
That unbelieving race.
The Lord in anger dressed,
Shall lift His hand and swear,
'You that despise My promised rest
Shall have no portion there.'"***

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
EZEKIEL 36:16-38.**

Verses 16-20. *Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before Me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. Therefore I poured My fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: and I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them. And when they entered unto the heathen, where they went, they profaned My holy name, when they said to them, these are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of His land. All through Scripture we are told that God has great regard to the honor of His holy name. "The Lord your God is a jealous God." And this is no small blessing to us, for it has so happened that when there has been no other reason for mercy, God's regard to His own name has found Him a reason for dealing mercifully with His unbelieving, undeserving people! See how He had scattered His chosen people. He had sent them away into captivity, justly, on account of their sins. But it came to pass*

that wherever they went, whether it was into Persia or Babylonia, the people said, "These are Jehovah's people! These are Jehovah's people and they are gone forth out of His land." What was the consequence of this?

21. *But I had pity for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, where they went.* He had pity for His own name! He had a reverence and esteem for His own renown and standing, even among these heathen nations!

22, 23. *Therefore say unto the house of Israel, thus says the LORD GOD; do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the heathen, where you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which was profaned among the heathen which you have profaned in the midst of them: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD says the LORD GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.* Brothers and Sisters, what must God think of a nation like ours which has come to be called by His name, albeit it so little deserves that great honor? What, I say, must He think of the fact that if there are any vices yet unknown, white men will teach them to the heathen? And when the heathen have heard the Gospel, the great sources of doubt are the white men—Englishmen! Full often the greatest oppressors will spring out of our own nation! Certainly we hold the belt for drunkenness and where our fellow countrymen go, the name of Christianity is rendered base among the heathen! The Muslims say of such a man, "He has been drunk and turned a Christian." I will grant that much that is said is said unwisely, untruthfully and slanderously in exaggeration, for these men are no Christians! They know not the Lord. It is not a Christian country—it is a heathen country, as some of us know, not only by what we read, but by what we see and hear! Can you walk the streets without hearing blasphemies more black than might be heard in any streets under Heaven? This is a heathen country, but yet it has somehow come to be thought to be a Christian country and, therefore, its conduct is bringing dishonor upon the name of the Most High! Oh, that He would have pity upon that name and interpose, and once more establish the Truth of God and set up a throne of righteousness and turn the hearts of the people to Himself in this country! Oh, that it were so, for His great name's sake! He cannot bless us for our own sakes, for we deserve nothing but His wrath—but, oh, that He would once again have pity upon His holy name that is profaned—and bless this, our land! The Lord goes on to say concerning His people—

24. *For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.* Now, this stands true of Israel after the flesh. It will assuredly be fulfilled in the latter days. But it stands even more certain concerning Israel, the true Israel, of whom the natural Israel is but the type. Now, we read one form of that New Covenant made with God concerning His elect, comprehending all that have believed in Christ, or ever shall believe in Him. This is the Covenant that He makes with us in these days—

25, 26. *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you an heart of flesh.* Here is, first of all, full justification. "From all your filthiness will I cleanse you." And here is, next, regeneration—"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." These are unconditional promises of that Covenant which He has made with His redeemed in the Person of Christ Jesus, their Covenant Head! See how majestically it is worded—"I will" and, "You shall." There is not an "if" or a "but" all through it!

27. *And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments, and do them.* Here is sanctification! Here is final perseverance! Blessed promises of the Covenant of Grace!

28. *And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers: and you shall be My people, and I will be your God.* That is the greatest promise of all! If a man were to preach a series of sermons upon this text during every day in the year, he could never exhaust the fullness of its meaning. "You shall be My people, and I will be your God."

29. *I will also save you from all your uncleanness: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.* And, spiritually, how true this is—that whenever God saves us from sin, He also saves us from every form of famine. No heart was ever left to hunger and thirst in vain when it was cleansed from its sin! Our needs come out of our sins, but when we walk with God, He lays no famine upon us in spiritual things.

30. *And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that you shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen.* "Then," when I have blessed you thus—when I have fully saved you, when I have brought you up from all the places where I have scattered you, when I have enriched you and indulged you with *my* love—

31. *Then shall you remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.* Repentance is not the root of Grace, but the lily-like flower of it. It is not a thing for the early morning of Christian life, alone. Repentance will go side by side with faith all through the ways of righteousness till we get to Heaven Gate! It is when we have most of mercy that we have most loathing for sin—

***"Law and terrors do but harden
All the while they work alone.
But a sense of blood-bought pardon
Soon dissolves a heart of stone!"***

32. *Not for your sakes do I do this, says the LORD GOD. Be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.* There is no man saved for his own sake. There is no man redeemed for his own sake. It is for God's own Glory's sake. There is no

motive so high—there is none so worthy of God, as the making known to all generations and all realms the majesty of His love and the faithfulness of His Covenant.

33-36. *Thus says the LORD GOD: In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be built. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I, the LORD, build the ruined places, and plant that, that was desolate; I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it.* Now, as He will do this, I doubt not, in Palestine, in due season, so does He always make the most desolate places to be built when His people live near to Him. Let us have courage, Brothers and Sisters, about London, about England, about the world! It is very wicked, but if we will keep close to God, we are able to overcome this wickedness in Christ's name. Let us have comfort about these evil days in which the most of men seem to be departing from the Gospel. We can "hold the fort" till Christ comes—let us but have courage! God will give us yet to see better and brighter days. He was thought to be a good citizen who never despaired of his country and he is a good Christian who never indulges a dreary thought about the ultimate triumph of Christ and the coming of His Kingdom—"for Yours is the Kingdom," even now, "and the power and the glory," and so shall it be, forever and ever!

37. *Thus says the LORD GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.* There must be the spirit of prayer and supplication poured out first. We shall see Israel restored to her land when Israel is restored to the Mercy Seat—and we shall see great prosperity as a Church and the blessing of God will rest upon our nation when once God's people go up to the top of Carmel with their faces between their knees and cry, and cry, and cry again, expecting that yet the heavenly shower shall end this long drought of the curse—and the blessing shall come. "I will yet be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them."

38. *As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men; and they shall know that I am the LORD.* And that is the great end of it all—to make men know that the I AM is—that the true and real God is still potent among the sons of men and does His will both here and among the armies of Heaven. Unto His name be glory forever and ever!

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

THE FEAST OF THE LORD

NO. 3501

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 1916.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 6, 1871.**

***“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you do show the Lord’s death till He comes.”
1 Corinthians 11:26.***

I THINK we cannot too often explain the meaning of the two great Christian ordinances—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—for it is essential to our profiting by them that we understand them. If we do not know what they mean, they certainly cannot convey to us any blessing whatever. They are not mere channels of Grace in themselves, apart from our understanding being exercised and our hearts being moved by them. Very soon the best ordinance in the world will become a mere form and will even degenerate into superstitious practice unless it is understood—and we must not always take it for granted that the meaning of the simplest emblem is understood. Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little, must still be the motto of the Christian minister! We must explain, explain and explain again, or else men will satisfy themselves with the outward form and not reach to the teaching which the forms were intended to convey. Our text deals with the Supper of our Lord, and we will read it again. “As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He comes.”

The first point of the text is *what we do*—we “show.” Then, *what do we show, and how?* And then, *who shows it*—“you do show the Lord’s death.” And then, *when?*—“as often”—“till He comes.” First, then, when we come to the Lord’s Table—

I. WHAT WE DO.

We “show.” That word has two or three meanings. They all melt into one, but we shall get at it better by dividing it. It is meant here, by showing Christ’s death, that *we declare it*. When the emblems are placed upon the table—bread and wine and we gather around it, we declare our firm belief that Jesus, the Son of God, descended into this world and died as a Sacrifice for sin upon the Cross. It has been found that if a great event is to be kept in mind in succeeding ages, there must be some memorial of it. Men by degrees forget it and even come to be dubious as to whether such an event did occur. Sometimes a stone has been set up—a monument—but this has not always been most effective. God, when He would have the children of Israel remember that He brought them out of Egypt

with a high hand and an outstretched arm, did not bid them set up a monument, but He ordained a ceremony which was to be practiced on a certain day. It was called "The Passover," and the slaughter of the lamb and the eating of it became a yearly declaration by the people of Israel that they believed that God brought their fathers up out of the house of bondage. So effective has this been that men have often used the same device. When the Jewish people escaped from the plot which was laid by Haman, through the wisdom of Mordecai and Esther, they ordained the keeping of the feast of Purim, that they might have in perpetual memory the goodness of God towards His people.

And you know how, in our own English history and in the history of other countries, certain rites and ceremonies have been ordained in order that there might be a perpetual memorial, a declaration made that such-and-such a thing did occur. Now that more than 1800 years ago Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, died upon Calvary by Crucifixion, we do here proclaim and declare! We set forth again to a world that is skeptical and denies the fact which is its brightest hope—we set forth our confident belief that so it was—and as long as this ordinance shall be celebrated, there shall be a standing proof in the world that that was the case!

But to set forth means more than to declare, it signifies, in the next place *to represent*. There is in the Lord's Supper a representation of the death of Christ. Men, when they have found an event to be interesting and remarkable, have often devised ways of representing it to the people that they might understand it.

With regard to our Lord's death, there are some who hang up pictures on the wall—they think the use of the crucifix and so on to be proper. I find no teaching of that kind in the Word of God! I do find that too often such things lead to idolatry. And what shall we say of these miracle plays which, even in these modern times, have been carried out in which the death of our Lord Jesus Christ is travestied? They seem to be shocking to the Christian mind! But here, in a very simple manner, you have God's own appointed way of representing to ourselves and to onlookers the death of our Lord. This is the Christian's "show"—we *show* the death of Christ here by a Divine Appointment. I shall, farther on, show how it is so, and that the breaking of bread and the pouring forth of wine—the use of those two emblems—is a most telling, most suggestive, most instructive method of representing the death of Christ. There are two other ways of representing it—the one, the pencil of the Evangelist which has drawn the death of Christ in the Word of God. The other is the preaching of the Gospel. It is the preacher's business to set forth Christ Crucified—evidently crucified among you. The three ways that God has ordained of representing the death of Christ are the Word read, the Word preached, and this blessed ordinance of the Supper of the Lord.

To "show." This means to declare, to testify—and it also means to represent. But it has another meaning—it means also *to hold forth*, to

make manifest, to publish, to call attention to. Now it has been a matter of fact that when the Jesuit missionaries went to China and converted a great many to what they called “the Christian faith,” they never mentioned the fact that Christ died. For years they concealed it, lest the people should be shocked! Now we, on the other hand, put that first and foremost! We have no other Christianity than this—that Christ died and rose again—and we cannot come to the Lord’s Table without showing it. The Jesuit could, because it would puzzle the wisest man to see the death of Christ in the “Mass.” He might sit and look at a hundred “Masses” before he knew what it meant. But the moment we gather around this Table and break bread, and pour out wine, whoever asks us, “What do you mean by this ordinance?” the answer is prompt—the way-faring man, though a fool, need not err in this—“We set forth to you that Jesus died.” “God forbid that we should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We are not ashamed of a crucified Savior! We have heard of some in these days who are always preaching a *Glorified* Christ. We wish them such success as their ministry is likely to bring, but for us, we preach a Crucified Christ—“Christ and Him Crucified,” for it is here, after all, that the salvation of the sinner lies! Christ Glorified is precious enough—oh, how unspeakably precious to a soul that is saved!—but first and foremost to a dying world it is Christ upon the Cross that we have to declare! And, therefore, when we come to the Communion Table we do three things. We assert the fact that Jesus died—we represent that fact in emblem, and then we thus press it upon the attention of men. We desire them to observe it. We ask them to mark it. We tell them that this is the sum and substance of all the Gospel that we were sent to preach—“God has set forth Christ to be a propitiation for our sins.”

Thus I have opened up the meaning of the word to, “show.” This is what we do. Now the second point is, my Brothers and Sisters—

II. WHAT WE SHOW, AND HOW.

It is said in the text, “As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death.” How do we show it? What do we show? Well, first of all, we show that *God has set forth Christ for men*. The Table is spread—there is bread on it—there is the cup upon it. What for? Not for beasts. Here is the food of men! It is set there for men. It is intended that the bread should be eaten, that the wine should be drunk. Everybody who sees a table spread knows at once that there are preparations for a meal or a festival. Now God has set forth Christ for men. There is in Christ what man needs. As bread meets his hunger, as the cup meets his thirst, so Christ meets all the spiritual needs of mankind. And the soul that would live, and the soul that would rejoice, must come to God’s provision for his living and his rejoicing—and that provision is to be found in Jesus Christ Crucified! God set forth Christ of old. Even in the Garden, He set Him forth in the first promise. He continued to set Him forth by all the Prophets, and in this last day every veil has been taken away by an open Bible inviting all comers! God has set forth the

Bread of Life to the sons of men! And you tonight will show that fact. When you see that Table uncovered, you have a representation. God has made a feast of fat things for the sons of men in the Person of Jesus Christ. The feast consists of bread and wine. Now in this we represent Christ's human Person, Christ's Humanity. That He is no myth, but real flesh, is taught by the bread being on the Table—that He was no phantom, but that real blood coursed through His veins as through ours—that the Lord of Life and Glory was, like ourselves, a real Man, in humanity in all respects like ourselves, sin alone excepted! There shall be no phantom feast upon the Table, and the materialism that is there is meant to show that he was a Man, *a real Man*—

***“Who once on Calvary died,
When streams of blood and water ran
Down from His wounded side.”***

But the next thing we show forth is *His death*. We have His Person—then we have His death—observe how. According to the Romish Church, the most of the people are only to participate in the bread—the wafer. Now such persons never show Christ's death at all, for the text says, “As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you show Christ's death.” It is only by the *two that you show His death at all*. The bread represents the body, but the cup must represent the blood, or else you have no token of His suffering—no emblem of His death. Cannot the two be mixed together? No, for if the blood and flesh are together, you have the living man! It is when the blood flows—when the lifeblood ebbs from the body, and the body is bloodless, that then you have the wine as a token of death! And the separation of the two—the use of the two emblems—is absolutely necessary to set forth death. The more you think about this, the more you see in it. The emblem is the simplest in the world, but yet the most instructive. Take either one of the elements—the bread, how it typifies Christ's suffering! Here was the wheat bruised beneath the thresher's flail. Then it was cast into the ground. It sprung up and ripened and had to be cut down with the sickle. Then it had to be threshed. Then ground in the mill. Then was it baked in the oven. A whole series of sufferings, if I may use the term, it had to pass through before it became proper food for us! And so must our Savior pass through innumerable sufferings before He could become food for our souls, and Redeemer of our spirits. As for that which is in the cup, it was trodden beneath the foot in the winepress—its juice was pressed forth. So in the winepress of Jehovah's Wrath was Christ pressed before He could become the wine that makes glad both God and man! Both emblems represent suffering, each one separately, but put together they bring forth the idea of death, “and as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death.”

But more than this! We show that God set forth Christ—we show His Person as a real Man, we show His sufferings and His death—but next we show *our participation in the same*, for it is not, “as often as you *look* at this bread,” or, “as you *gaze* upon this cup,” but, “as often as you *eat*

this bread and *drink* this cup.” Christ saves us not until we receive Him by an act of faith. The bread satisfies no hunger while it rests upon the table, and a drink from the cup quenches no thirst until it is really drunk! So the precious blood of Jesus Christ our Savior must be received by our faith. We must believe in Him to the saving of our souls. Now how simple a matter is eating! It matters not, unless a man is dead—he needs little teaching to know how to eat. It is as simple as a natural act—he puts food into his mouth. It is just so here. There is the Savior and I take Him—that is all. It seems to me to be even a more complex act to eat than simply to trust in Jesus, yet is it a very simple thing. The idiot can eat. No matter how guilty a man, he can eat. No matter how dark and despairing his fears, he can eat. And O, poor Soul, whoever you may be, there shall be no lack of wit or merit that shall keep you back from Christ! If you are willing to have Him, you may have Him! The act of trusting Christ makes Christ as much your own as the eating of the bread! Suppose some difficulty were raised about whether a piece of bread was mine. Well, the legal question would take a long time to decide. I cannot produce the document, nor find the witnesses to prove it is mine. But there is one little fact, I think, which will settle it—I have eaten it! So if the devil, himself, were to say that Christ is not mine, I have believed on Him and if I have believed on Him, He *is* mine just as surely as when I have eaten a piece of bread there can be no question about its being mine! Now we set forth, tonight, by eating bread and drinking of the cup, the fact that Jesus Christ is our Savior—and we take Him by simple faith to be our All-in-All.

But there is still more teaching. The bread and wine are being eaten and drunk, are assimilated into the system—they minister strength to bone, sinew, muscle—they build up the man. And herein is teaching. *Christ believed in is One with us*—“Christ in us the hope of glory.” We have heard persons talk of Believers falling from Grace and losing Christ. No, Sir, a man has eaten bread—he ate it yesterday. Will you separate that bread from the man? Will you trace the drops that came from the cup, and fetch them out of the man’s system? You shall more easily do that than you shall take Christ away from the soul that has once fed upon Him! “Who shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?” He is in us a well of water springing up into Everlasting Life! See then how large a letter Christ has written to us with these pens—how in this bread and this wine, eaten and drunk, He has taught us wondrous mysteries—in fact, the whole Christian faith is, in brief, summed up here upon this Table!

And now we must remark upon what it is we show forth, and how we do it. *We do this very simply*. Certain churches must go about this business in a very mysterious manner—a great deal of machinery is needed—a plate becomes a *paten*, and a cup becomes a *chalice*, and a table, ah, that has vanished and turned into an altar! The whole thing is turned topsy-turvy until it is very questionable in the Church of Rome whether

there is any supper at all—for if you introduce the altar, you have put away the table and done away with the whole thing! It is another ordinance, and not the ordinance which Christ established! One would suppose that when the Apostles first went out to preach, if the religion of the Romish Church is that of the Scripture, they would have needed, each of them, a wagon to carry with them the various paraphernalia necessary for the celebration of their services! But here, wherever there is a piece of bread, and wherever there is a cup, we have the plain, but instructive emblems which our Savior bade us use. “He took bread and broke it. “He did drink of the cup, and passed it to His disciples, and said, ‘Drink you all of it.’”

Let us keep this ordinance in its pure simplicity. Let us never add anything to it by our own devising by way of fancying that we are honoring God by garnishing His Table. Let us plainly show Christ’s death, and as we do it plainly *we should also do it festively*. Is it not delightful to reflect that our Lord has not ordained a mournful ceremony in which to celebrate His death—it is a feast! You would suppose by the way that some come that it is a funeral—but it is a feast, and joy becomes a feast! And when, according to the example of Christ, we recline at our ease in the nearest approach to the posture in which the Oriental lay along at the table, and when we come with joyful heart, blessing the Lord Jesus that though our sins put Him to death, yet His death has put to death our sins, then it is that we celebrate His death as He would have us celebrate it—not as an awful tragedy, in which we try to provoke our indignation against the Romans or the Jews—but as a hallowed festival in which the King, Himself, comes to the Table, and His spikenard gives forth a sweet smell and our spirit is refreshed!

And once more, this way of showing Christ’s death is one of *communion*. Now one person cannot do it—many must come together. You must eat and drink together to celebrate this, your Lord’s death. And is not this delightful, for in this cup we have fellowship with Him and with one another? We, being many, have one bread! We, being many, have one cup—one family at one table with one common Head—the Lord Jesus, who is All-in-All to us. Oh, I bless His name that whereas He might have ordained a way of our showing His death which would have been mournful, or a way which would have been solitary, He has selected that which is joyful and that which is full of good fellowship, so that saints below and Himself can meet together in the festival of love and show His death until He comes in the breaking of bread and the pouring forth of wine! Thus I have tried to show what it is we show, and how we show it. Now thirdly—

III. WHO ARE TO SHOW IT? Who shows it? “As often as *you* eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death.” The, “*you*,” then, includes all the saints of God—all who come to the Table, who eat this bread and drink this cup—and truly a very pleasing thought arises from this. Here is a way of showing Christ’s death in which all who love

Christ have a share! You cannot all show it from the pulpit—gifts are not equally distributed—but you all alike share in this showing of His death! In this special way, which He, Himself, celebrated for our example, and which He expressly delivered to His servant, Paul, that it might stand on record! Now if Paul himself were here, he could not show Christ's death alone at the Lord's Supper. He must ask some of his poorer Brothers and Sisters to come with him. If the minister of a Church should be full of the Holy Spirit, yet could he not show forth Christ's death here in this peculiar way. He must say to his brethren, "Come, Brothers and Sisters—it says, 'you'—"as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup." Here we are tonight, as we sit here, all brought into a blessed equality in the act of using the same outward sign and of performing the Master's will in the same way!

"But," says ones "does every man who comes to the Table, and eats and drinks, show Christ's death?" Notice how the verse which follows my text puts a bar to that. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread." It must be taken for granted that the man has *examined himself*—that he comes there as a true Believer in Jesus—that he comes with the full intent to show Christ's death! And if he does that, such a man is showing Christ's death. I am very earnest, dear Brothers and Sisters, as it has been a long time since I have met with you—having been kept away so long by sickness, though I have been with my Brothers below stairs—I am anxious that we should, indeed, show Christ's death tonight. Let us do it ourselves. I find that the text may either be read in the indicative or in the imperative mood. It is either, "*you show* Christ's death," as our version has it, or it may be, "*show you* Christ's death"—it is an exhortation. Oh, let us take care that we show it to ourselves. "Show it to ourselves?" asks one. Yes, it is meant for you. This is a primary meaning of the text. When you take that bread, don't think of the bread, and stay there, but say to your own soul, "My Soul, think you of Jesus. My Heart, go away, now, to Gethsemane. Come, you stray thoughts! Come, you passing vanities, be gone! I must go away to where my Savior bled and died—

***"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing
Which, before His Cross, I spend."***

I have come here to show His death. Let me see Him. I will ask Him to permit me in spirit to put my finger into the print of the nails, and to put my hand into His side. Oh, go not from this Table satisfied with the outward emblem—press into the inner court—pray the Master to manifest Himself to you as He does not unto the world! For here is the main business—show His death to your own heart till your heart bleeds for sin! Show it to your own faith till your faith feels it is all-sufficient! Show it to others! You will be sure to show it to others if you show it to yourself, for as others look on and mark your reverent behavior, if they cannot enter into your joy, they will be reminded of what they have so long forgotten! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let me urge each one of you that no one should

be content without sharing this honor. I feel we all have an honor to participate in showing forth the death of Christ. Let us not, in sharing the honor, bring condemnation on ourselves. But I must hasten on. The fourth point is—

IV. WHEN ARE WE TO DO IT?

The text says “often”—“as often as you eat this bread.” The Holy Spirit might have used the words “when you eat,” but He did not. He teaches us by implication that we ought to do it often. I do not think there is any positive law about it, but it looks to me as if the first Christians broke bread almost every day—“breaking bread from house to house.” I am not sure that that refers to Communion, but in all probability it does. This much is certain, that in the early Church the custom was to break bread in memory of Christ’s Passion on the *first day of every week*, and it was always a part of the Sabbath’s service when they came together to remember their Lord in this way. How it can be thought right to leave the celebrating of this ordinance to once a year or once a quarter, I cannot understand! And it seems to me that if Brothers and Sisters knew the great joy there is in often setting forth Christ’s death, they would not be content with even once a month! But I leave that.

The other mark of time in the text is “till He comes.” Then this service is to end. There will be no more Lord’s Suppers when Christ appears, because they will be needless. Put out the candle—the sun has risen! Put away the emblem—here comes Christ, Himself! But until He does come, this will always be a most fitting ordinance. I pleased myself with a thought I met with the other day. Our Lord Jesus Christ sat at the table and ate with His disciples, and He took the cup and He sipped it, and he passed it around. It is being passed round still. It has not got round the table yet, it is being passed on! For 1,800 years it has been passed from hand to hand! They have not all drunk yet and you remember He said, “Drink you all of it”—all of you! Did He speak to all His elect that were to be born—to all the countless companies yet to come? I think He did, and it is going around and, by-and-by, when all the people of God have participated in Christ, it will cease. The cup will never be emptied till then—

***“Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved, to sin no more.”***

When the last has drunk of it, what then? It will come back into the Master’s hands and then will be fulfilled that word of His, “I say unto you I will not henceforth drink of the juice of the vine till I drink it new in My heavenly Father’s Kingdom.” And it is going around, Brothers and Sisters—that cup of glorious Christian fellowship of love to Christ, the cup that is filled with Jesus’ blood—it is passing around, and when it has reached His hands, then we shall need no more the outward ordinance!

But until then it is clear from the text that it is to be kept up. And I have a little dispute with some of you here present. You love the Lord, but you have never been baptized. You love Jesus, but you have never

come to His Table. Now let me say you are in opposition to Christ! He says, "Do this till I come." You don't do it. "Oh, but I am only one," you say. To your measure of ability you have helped to make the Lord's Supper obsolete. Can you see that? If you have a right to neglect it, so have I—if I, so have all my brethren. Then there is an end to it. My dear Brother, Sister, you are doing the best you can to make Christ forgotten in the world! I pray you by His own dying example and His express command, "This do you in remembrance of Me"—if you have believed Him, keep this, His commandment. If you have not believed in Him, then keep away! You have no right to take it! But if you have believed, I beseech you stand not back for shame or fear, but eat and drink at His Table till He comes!

Time has gone too fast for me, and I must close. There is one lesson, however, that I cannot leave out. Until Christ comes. We are taught our interim employment—what is to occupy us until Jesus comes! Beloved Brothers and Sisters, until Jesus comes we have nothing left but to think of Him. Till Jesus comes, the main thing we have to do is to think of and set Him forth a Crucified Savior. There is no food for the Church but Jesus! There is no testimony to the world but Jesus Crucified! They have sometimes told us that in this growing age we may expect to have developed a higher form of Christianity. Well, they shall have it that like it, but Christ, Himself, has left us nothing but just this, "Show My death till I come." The preacher is to go on preaching a dying Savior. The saint is to go on trusting that dying Savior, feeding on Him and letting his soul be satisfied as with marrow and fatness. There is nothing left us to occupy our thoughts, or to be the subject of our joy, as our dear dying Lord! Oh, let us feed on Him! Each one, personally, as a Believer—let us feed on our Savior! If you have come once, come again. Keep on coming till Christ, Himself, shall appear. As long as the invitation stands, let us not slight it, but constantly come to Christ Himself and feed on Him.

In conclusion, let every ungodly person here know that he has no part nor lot in this matter. Your first business, Sinner, is with Christ Himself. Go and put your trust in Him! Oh, go this night! You may never have another night to go in. And then when you have believed, then obey His command in Baptism, and *then* also come to His Table and show His death until He comes. The Lord bless you for Christ's sake. Amen.

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

Verses 1, 2. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John: Who bore record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. John was one who was of the same spirit as his Master. He lived in very intimate communion with his Lord and, therefore, to him*

the choicest Revelations were made. The Lord does not reveal His secrets to uncongenial minds. He that will do His will shall know of the Doctrine, and He shall know all secret things. Oh, if we lived nearer to God, if we walked more in the love of Christ, how much more we might know and see! Or, if we saw not visions, yet there are inward perceptions to the heart which God would grant us if we lived more in the light of His Countenance.

3. *Blessed is he who reads, and they who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep these things which are written therein for the time is at hand.* It is not a book to be put on the shelf. There is practical teaching in it. It is not intended to lead us into vagaries of speculation, but it is meant for practical purposes. We are to keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand.

4, 5. *John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come: and from the seven spirits which are before His throne. And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.* Think, dear Friends, how this benediction may be fulfilled. “Grace be to you,” he says, “and peace.” And what are to be the fountains and springs of this peace? It is to come from God, first, from Him who is. All that God is, is a fountain of peace and Grace to us. And from Him who was—all that He has ever been, the eternal past, the changeless purposes, the Divine predestination of the Infinite. There are springs of peace and Grace here. And from Him who is to come. All that God will ever be, all the manifestations of His power, His justice, His love, which the ages are yet to see—all these are wells of Grace and peace to God’s own people. I want you to think of this. And when your minds are disturbed and you have need of peace, and when your heart is sinking and you have need of Grace, come to God for both of these things, regarding Him as He who is, who was, and who is to come! And there are seven spirits which are before His Throne. The Holy Spirit, in whatever way He operates in any of His Divine works—in all these He is the Comforter, the source of Grace and peace to us. You need not be afraid of the Holy Spirit, even though He is the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning, for He will burn up nothing in us but what ought to be consumed, and will judge nothing but what ought to be judged and to be condemned—so that peace may come to us from the seven spirits which are before the Throne of God—but especially Grace and peace from Jesus Christ as the Faithful Witness. Whatever He bears witness to, it is full of Grace and peace to Believers, and He, Himself, is the first begotten from the dead. Oh, His Resurrection! What a wondrous fountain of Grace and peace that is to us! And then His Divine Sovereignty—His rule over all Providence and Nature, the Prince of the kings of the earth—what Grace and peace may every one of you who love Him find there! At the thought of this, the Divine writer turns from His benediction to a doxology.

5, 6. *Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood. And has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father: to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.* Brothers and Sisters, the very best work which we ever do on earth is to adore. You are blessed in prayer, but you are seven times blessed in praise! When you get to the doxology, it is the benediction made more sublime. The benediction takes wings and mounts into a celestial atmosphere when you begin to adore and magnify Him that loved you, and washed you from your sins! There is one thing that adoration does—it helps us to see—and when you close your eyes in adoration, you see more than when you have them open in any other way! I am sure of this, for the next line is—

7. *Behold He comes with clouds.* John sees Him. He adored Him—

***Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,
Whom though we have not seen Your face,
Unceasing we adore.***

In that adoration we behold You. “Behold He comes with clouds.”

7. *And every eye shall see Him, and they, also, who pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen.* What is more, adoration helps us to hear as well as to see! It supplies us with new senses. John hears this voice.

8. *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.* Happy man who thus, in reverent worship, hears God speaking to Him in answer to his voice to God.

9. *I John, who also am your brother.* How sweet this sounds. This is a man that has seen and heard God! This is a man who is full of visions, who has beheld the broken seals and the poured out vials—the man that is familiar with the Infinite! “I, John, who also am your brother.”

9. *And companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.* That is a wondrous linking, is it not, in this verse?—“the kingdom and patience.” You must have the Cross and the crown together. We get the Kingdom of Christ, but not without the Passion of Christ! There is the Cross marked on all the treasure trove that we find in Christ. It is not genuine if it is not marked with the Cross. “The kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.”

10, 11. *I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s-Day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.* What evidence we have here of the Divinity of Christ, for we shall see, as we read on, that it is Christ who is speaking here. And just now it was the Father, who in much the same words said, “I am Alpha and Omega.” We cannot always draw the line between the voice of God and the voice of the God-Man, Christ Jesus, and we need not wish to do so, for Holy Scripture does not draw us up rigid, but it would have us believe it, all the same. Yet it is always accurate, always true, where it has shades of definition, for, after all, Christ is so truly God that whether it

speaks of Him absolutely as God, or of Him as God and Man, Mediator, it matters little to us.

11-12. *And, What you see, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me.* It is so natural in us to want to see the place from which the voice proceeds.

12-16. *And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks One like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were as a flame of fire. And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace: and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shines in its strength.* I will not stop to explain those details. The picture is too sacred. Let it stand before you in its Glory, and listen to these words.

17. *And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.* Oh, how the, “I,” dies when Christ is manifested! How we sink! And yet our joys shall rise unutterably, immeasurably high! “I fell at His feet as dead.”

17. *And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the First and the Last.* There is where your comfort comes from—not from what you are, but from what He is! You are the last, but He—here is the point—He is the first and the last!

18, 19. *I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen. And I have the keys of Hell and of death. Write the things which you have seen.* Come, lay aside your fears. Your fears disqualify you from holding the pen. You have scarcely dared to look. I am sure you will not dare to write until I strengthen you.

19, 20. *And the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches—the messengers, the ministers of the seven churches.*

20. *And the seven candlesticks which you saw are the seven churches.* God bless our reading to our rich instruction.

—Adapted from the *C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

PREPARATION NECESSARY FOR THE COMMUNION NO. 2647

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1899.

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK,
ON A LORD'S-DAY EVENING IN THE AUTUMN OF 1857.*

*“Let a man examine himself, and so let him
eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.”
1 Corinthians 11:28.*

WE do not hold it right to admit all persons indiscriminately to the Lord's Supper—we believe the Lord's Table is the place of communion—and we would have none there with whom we cannot have true Christian fellowship. We can commune with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ, however different may be their views upon some points of doctrine. So long as we find it possible to have fellowship with them, we believe it to be our duty to welcome them to the Supper of our Lord. When, through unholiness of life, lack of piety, or unsoundness in the fundamental Truths of the Gospel on the part of those who apply to us to be received as communicants, we feel that we cannot commune with them, we hold it to be our bounden duty, as God has given us authority in His Church, to prevent those from drawing near unto the Table who would but commune unworthily and so eat and drink unto themselves judgment—as the Word in the 29th verse should be translated. Among our Baptist Churches, fashioned, we trust, somewhat nearer to the Scriptural order than certain others we know of, we do exercise at least some measure of discipline. We require from those who are members of the Church and who are, by reason of that membership, entitled to commune, that they should, at their reception, give us what we consider satisfactory proofs of their conversion. And we require of them, afterwards, that their conduct should be consistent with the Law of Christ. Otherwise, we would not, in the first place, receive them, or, having received them, we would not be long before, by the Scriptural process of excommunication, we would remove from our midst those members whose lives and conversation were not in accordance with the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

But, my Brothers and Sisters, do what we may—though we fence the table with the utmost diligence—and though we continually warn you not to deceive us. And not to deceive yourselves, seeing that you cannot deceive God—yet are we perfectly aware that the greater part of the guarding of the Table must rest with yourselves. We believe it to be our bounden duty, as God shall give us Grace, to take care, so far as we can,

that unworthy persons are not received at the Lord's Table. Yet man being mortal, is fallible and erring, so we cannot judge you and we must leave the greater part of your examination, before you come to the sacred Table of the Master, with yourselves. Remember, dear Friends, that no recognition by the minister, no reception by the deacons or elders of a Church will excuse you for coming to the Lord's Table if, when you come, you are not a really converted person. It is true that you cannot come there unless the Church, itself, consents to your coming—but the Church takes upon itself none of the responsibility of your fitness. It says to you, "You may come to the Communion Table, but if you have deceived us, on your own head is the sin! And if you are not what you profess to be—true believers in Christ—your unlawful observance of the ordinance must be accounted for, at the Last Great Day, among the rest of your transgressions."

And I do now, most solemnly and earnestly, as the Pastor of this Church, in the name and on behalf of this Church, warn all men and women now about to draw near unto this Table that if they are not God's children and have no faith in Christ, they stop before they, with sacrilegious hands, touch the elements of this sacred Supper! We would have them know that it can be of no service to them, but will increase their sin and add to their guilt if they, after such a warning as this, come to the Master's Table without having examined themselves and without being thoroughly persuaded in their hearts that they have been born of God—let that thought have due weight with all intending communicants—and if some of them even withdraw from the Table as the result of this fencing of it, I shall rejoice that they have had the honesty to do what is right.

I. Now, Beloved, turning from that point for a little while, I would remind you that THERE IS A PREPARATION NECESSARY FOR RECEIVING THE LORD'S SUPPER ARIGHT.

In certain churches, among persons who are only nominally religious—mere formalists and ceremonialists—it has been customary to set apart a whole week for preparation. And you may remember how Mr. Rowland Hill, in his *Village Dialogues*, tells of Mistress Too-Good, who, after spending a whole week in preparation for the Lord's Supper, found that it was not to be administered till the next Sabbath—whereupon she fell into a great passion and cursed and swore because she said that she had wasted a week! I doubt not that there have been some who have made a kind of hypocritical preparation which would have been better omitted. I do not exhort you to do any such thing! But if a right thing is abused, that is no reason why we should not use it properly. Everyone of us, before we come to the Supper of the Lord, ought to have prepared our hearts, under the help of the Holy Spirit, for a right participation. We are not to rush to our Master's Table as a horse runs into the battle, not knowing where it is going! We are not to come to this sacred Feast as we go to a meal in our own houses. We are not to partake of the emblems of the body and blood of Christ as we would sit down at our common tables to eat and drink.

We are to come here with devout solemnity and due preparation. Nor may we expect to receive a blessing, in the reception of the Supper,

unless we have properly prepared ourselves for it before we come here. Alas, this is too much forgotten—and men think they may draw near to God without making any preparation whatever! Not so was it with the ancient saints. When Jacob was going to build an altar and to sacrifice to the Lord at Bethel, he felt it necessary to bid his family to put away all their strange gods from among them. When God was about to appear on Sinai, He commanded the people to purify themselves because He was coming near to them. And not only was it so in olden times, but it should be so now. We should not draw near unto God with hasty and careless steps, but we must remember and obey Solomon's injunction—"Keep your foot when you go to the House of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they consider not that they do evil." As Moses took his shoes off because the place whereon he stood was holy ground, so ought we, my Brothers and Sisters, to put away all carnal thoughts and all worldly things when we approach this most sacred circle—a circle even more hallowed than that which surrounded the burning bush, for this surrounds the cross of Calvary, the death place of our Lord and Master—

***"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the Cross I spend,
Life, and health, and peace possessing,
From the Sinner's dying Friend!
Here I'll sit forever viewing
Mercy's streams in streams of blood!
Precious drops my soul bedewing,
Plead and claim my peace with God!
Truly blessed is this station,
Low before His Cross to lie
While I see Divine compassion
Floating in His languid eyes!
Here it is I find my Heaven,
While upon the Cross I gaze.
Love I much? I've more forgiven—
I'm a miracle of Grace!
May I still enjoy this feeling,
In all need to Jesus go
Prove His wounds each day more healing,
And Himself more fully know."***

Let me press upon your consideration two or three thoughts with regard to what is necessary in a proper preparation for the Lord's Supper. First, I think, *before coming to the Lord's Table, every professing Christian should occupy himself, in some measure, in contemplation and meditation.* We ought not to come here without due consideration of what we are about to do. We ought to consider, in the first place, that we are coming into the more immediate Presence of God. It is true that during Divine service in the House of God we are especially in the Presence of the Most High, but when, at eventide, we eat and drink the Supper of the Master, we get nearer to Him than we do in any of our other religious exercises, with the solitary exception of the ordinance of Believers' Baptism. This Communion service has about it something so humbling, so tender, so full of fellowship—bringing us so near to Christ—while Christ is so near to us, that we ought not to come to it without feeling that we are entering

into the immediate courts of the Most High! And, surely, if the contemplation of God makes the angels veil their faces with their wings, it should make us come to this Table with great reverence and solemnity of spirit.

We ought, in the next place, before we come here, *contemplate the authority upon which we celebrate this ordinance*. If any of you come to this Table because I administer the ordinance, or because your parents partake of it, or because, according to the old orthodox doctrine of the Baptist Churches, this is regarded as being a Divine ordinance, you have made a mistake! It is your duty, in the reception of the Lord's Supper, or the observance of the ordinance of Baptism, to consider the authority by which you do it and to be certain that, in coming here, you are doing God's will and that you are performing that which God has commanded you. If you come not to the Communion as to a Divine ordinance, you come not to it aright. If you merely partake of it as a matter of form, instead of knowing that God has commanded the form and that His Son, Jesus Christ, is embodied in it, you have not the preparation which you ought to have in coming here.

Again, before coming to the Communion, *it behooves you to consider the great distance there is between you and God*. Even though you now have very blessed and hallowed fellowship with the Lord Jesus, remember that in this Supper, there is a memorial of *your guilt*. It is true that you see here how your sins were taken away by the broken body and the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, but let the very bath in which you were cleansed remind you of your sinfulness! And, oh, my Brothers and Sisters, when we sit here, let us not eat and drink in a showy manner, as if we were doing some praiseworthy act, but let us do it as if we felt that we were not fit to sit on the lowest seat of the Church of Christ. God grant that this may be a time when we shall humble ourselves and cast ourselves in the very dust before Him! We might, instead of being at the Table of the Lord, have been sitting on the ale-bench. We might have been drinking the cup of devils and holding communion with Belial—but Grace, Free Grace, has brought us here! Let us abase ourselves in the Presence of God. Let us humble ourselves before Him and, while we feed, by faith, on our Master's body, let us feel as if our own proud flesh were cut away and humbled by the very communion we hold with Christ, our Redeemer.

Then, Christian, this should be a further subject of contemplation before you come here—*you should have a right idea of the Savior, whose body and blood are here typified to you*. I think we should not come to this ordinance unless we have, for some time at least, devoutly considered the broken body, the shed blood, the sufferings, the agonies, the death and the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us all, before we sit at this Table, remember whose death it is we commemorate here. We should view the Savior as the Son of God and then as the Son of Man, born of the Virgin Mary. We should view Him as He walks along His way of sorrow. We should seek, by earnest contemplation, to view Him prostrate in the Garden, to see Him plowed with bloody furrows at Gabbatha and to behold Him dying amid terrible tortures upon the hill of

Calvary. Unless, my Brothers and Sisters, we have done this, or are enabled by God's Spirit in a special manner to do this, now, we must not expect to derive any benefit from the mere eating of the bread and drinking of the wine. You might eat your bread and drink your wine at home. You might be taking your ordinary suppers. You might break your crusts and drink from your cups in your own houses. But of what use would all of this be? They would not be the Lord's Supper and neither shall *this* be the Lord's Supper to you unless your hearts are occupied with a devout contemplation of the Presence of God, of your own nothingness before Him and of the glorious Sacrifice and Atonement of Jesus Christ evidently set forth before you.

In the next place, *not only contemplation, but supplication should form a part of our preparation for this Supper.* If we acted aright, we would never come, even to the *hearing* of a sermon, without prayer! Were our hearts in a proper spiritual condition, we would never leave our houses to go to the House of Prayer without first supplicating God to help the minister and to help us! We would never leave the tents of Jacob without asking that the pillar of cloud might be manifestly seen resting upon the tabernacle of Israel. We would, when we come up to God's sanctuary, breathe a prayer the moment we enter it, crying out for the Holy Spirit to rest upon us during this day. And certainly, if we ever neglect prayer before holy duties, it should never be omitted before this sacred Supper! O my Brothers and Sisters, I fear that many of us have lost the sweetness of this ordinance because we have forgotten to pray for a blessing upon it! It was but this very day that I found myself preparing to come to this place without having, first of all, sought fellowship with Jesus—and I felt grieved and vexed within my spirit that I should have been so guilty as to have forgotten the solemnities to which I was about to attend! And, by His Grace, I sought at once to spend some time in silent meditation and prayer to God. So should every Church member do likewise.

Oh, what blessed communion services would we have then! We would not go away from the Table of the Lord barren and cold, as we often have done, blaming the minister because we think he has not spoken with sufficiently affecting words and has not distributed the sacred elements in a profitable manner. Whereas the fault has been in ourselves and not in the minister—and we have been eating and drinking unworthily. And, as the judgment upon that wrong state of heart, we have found the Lord's Table, itself, to be barren instead of proving it to be the King's banqueting house and a feast of fat things to our souls!

II. Now, Beloved, I ask you to notice that MY TEXT GIVES US THE BEST PART OF PREPARATION, WHICH IS SELF-EXAMINATION. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup."

How many of us have thus examined ourselves? I fear many of us have come here without any self-examination whatever. Well, then, let us begin at once to examine ourselves and, during the little interval between this service and the time of the administration of the Supper, perhaps it might not be amiss if you were to read over the hymn which we sometimes sing, from which you can see what are the questions incumbent

upon you to ask yourselves in self-examination and what are the marks of those who have the right to sit down at the Table of the Lord—

***“The sacred Word declares them such,
Whose hearts are changed by Sovereign Grace,
Who place their confidence and hope
In Jesus’ blood and righteousness.
Who know the Truth and in the ways
Of holiness direct their feet.
Who love communion with the saints
And shun the place where scorners meet.
With past attainments not content,
Increasing purity they seek.
By whom uprightness is maintained
In all they do, and all they speak.
These are the men whom God invites,
For them the Church sets wide her door,
Whatever their birth or rank may be,
The bond, the free, the rich, the poor!”***

This hymn suggests some solemn questions which none of us ought to have ventured here without having answered. And I think many of us can easily answer them. My Brothers and Sisters, *have we not been changed by Sovereign Grace?* Can we not, each one, say, “By the Grace of God I am what I am and I am not, now, what I was once”? Can we not, unless we are awfully deceived, say, with unfaltering lips, “We know whom we have believed and we are persuaded that we have been born again”? If we *cannot* say so—O my Friends, if any one of you cannot say so, I charge you, before God, before Jesus Christ and the elect angels—if you cannot say that you believe and know that you have been born again, do not come and profane this Table of the Master by *daring* to sit with the saints while you are unrenewed and not begotten again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!

How many of you are among those whom the hymn next describes?—

***“Who place their confidence and hope
In Jesus’ blood and righteousness.”***

I know that, by God’s Grace, it is so with many of us. I have no other hope! No rock, no refuge for my weary spirit is there beside the Atonement of Jesus Christ. I trust you can say so, too, my dear Friends. But if you cannot. If you are resting anywhere else but in Jesus. If you have any dependence upon rites or ceremonies or good works, I again solemnly command you by the Judge of the quick and the dead—venture not to this Table to receive the Lord’s Supper—for, in so doing, you would but eat and drink unworthily, not having faith in Jesus and confidence in His precious blood.

Can you say, also, as the hymn does, that *you know the Truth and that in the ways of holiness you direct your feet?* I fear we must all confess that we cannot say this as much as we would desire. Let us, however, still make it a point of self-examination. Come, Friend, it is now a month since the last time you sat down at this Table—what have you done during this time? How have your steps been directed? How has your speech been ordered? What about your acts towards God? Towards man? Make this a time of turning over the pages of your diary for the last month. Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us examine ourselves and so let us eat of

this bread, and drink of this cup. It cannot be an unprofitable exercise which is commanded in our text, so let us obey it! Let us now question ourselves. Are we truly the Lord's? If He should say to us, as He said to His disciples, "One of you shall betray Me," what would we say? Let us, each one, ask the question now, "Lord, is it I?" Have we, like Judas, been plotting against the Master? Have we been robbing the Lord's treasury, depriving Him of what we promised in our vows? Not giving Him the time and service which we solemnly pledged to give Him?

Let us look again at our hymn. *Have we broken the communion of saints during the last months?* Have we not, by anger and wrath and bitterness, injured our own spirituality when we have been talking against the children of God? Have we not felt that we have broken the sacred link which united us with them? Have we washed the saints' feet this month? Have we not rather bemired and befouled them by going astray, ourselves, and leading them astray, too? Have we humbled ourselves during the last month? Have we taken the towel and girded ourselves, as Jesus did, to do menial work for the Church? Has there not been too much pride creeping into all our services? Has it not marred all our deeds and spoiled our best endeavor? And how about prayer? Have we not been sadly negligent in that holy exercise? And with regard to love to our Master, have not our hearts been too often cold towards Him, who had His heart set open for us, that all the blood therein might be spilt in one great torrent for our sakes?

O Friends, I cannot suggest all the questions that you have need to ask yourselves in such an examination as our text enjoins! Begin from the last Communion evening and go through the Sundays, through the Mondays, and Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, and all through the weeks—and then surely both you and I will have work enough to do, during the next hour, to examine ourselves! Ah, we ought to have done it *before*, that we might be able, now, to apply ourselves more solemnly to Communion rather than to self-examination. But now I entreat you once again, as I am bound to do, to be faithful to my God—if you are lovers of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you are faithful to the Truth of God. If you have been really converted—if you have partaken of the Holy Spirit—I invite you to the Master's Table and may the Spirit of God rest on you! But, as an honest minister, I warn you who are not what you should be from coming to this Table. Oh, if any of you have been mere professors and hypocrites, I charge you not to come here! As in your dying day you shall remember your deeds of formality and hypocrisy, I beseech you, do not dare to touch that bread with unhallowed lips, nor sip that wine! Do not take them unless you feel that you have God's Spirit within you and are really united to the Lamb!

I fear there are some of you who have, for many months received these emblems, who would this night, for the first time, leave them untasted if you really knew yourselves! There are some in this Church, I grieve to say, with whom I can hold but very little fellowship by reason of the hard words they sometimes utter against certain of us because of some little difference of opinion. And there are many others with whom we can have no communion at all because their lives are so unholy and their conduct

is so un-Christian that, though they are sound enough in the faith, we can but wonder that they know so much of the Truth and yet have so little of the spirit of Christ in them. Ah, dear Friends, it is not all gold that glitters, and all *professors* are not *possessors*! There are some in Christ's Church everywhere and God forbid that I should flatter this Church—there are some even here—who are enough to tear the church in two by their bitterness, and wrath, and evil speaking! There are others who are enough to bring down God's rod upon us for their unholy living—yes, and the very best of us, the Johns and the Enochs—have they not cause to humble themselves on account of their manifold shortcomings and misdoings? Let all professors of religion examine themselves lest it should be found that they have been deceiving themselves and others—have trusted in themselves that they were righteous when they had not passed from death unto life!

Ah, Friends! I cannot speak with the solemnity I would desire to command on such an occasion as this. I cannot bar this table, God forbid that I should do so!—from any one of you—come and welcome all you who love the Lord Jesus! But although I cannot force back any of you who are not converted. Though I cannot thrust you away if you have the right to come, because you are members of this Church or of some other, I do, as far as human power can have any influence with you, solemnly warn you not to come to the Communion unless you are really regenerated by the Holy Spirit! I would rather have six members in my Church, who are living souls in Zion, than 600 mere professors. O Lord God, sift and fan this Church yet again! If any are only chaff, drive them out of it, or make them Your wheat, that they may be housed in Your barn and not be burned up with unquenchable fire! O Lord, make each of us sincere! Impress upon our minds the solemnity of this act and when we draw near unto this Table, may it be especially under Your smile and with Your benediction, through Jesus Christ our Lord! To God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be glory forever and ever! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
PSALM 116.**

I knew a godly woman who, when she was very sick, would always say, "Read me the 116th Psalm." It is deservedly a great favorite with many experienced Christians. May the Holy Spirit apply it to our hearts as we read it!

Verse 1. *I love the LORD, because He has heard my voice and my supplications.* It is a great condescension on God's part to listen to us. You know what a comfort it is to find a sympathetic listener who will let you tell out your griefs. It is not wise to tell them to everybody, but there are some who have an ear into which it is both pleasant and profitable to pour the story of our woes. Because God had listened to the voice of His servant's supplications, David therefore said, "I love the Lord." Nothing will make us love God better than the assurance that He hears our prayers. We could not love a deaf God, so, when Jehovah does attend to

our voice and our supplications, we feel drawn more closely than ever to Him.

2. *Because He has inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live.* That same blessed experience which is a reason for love is also an argument for continued prayer. “As He has heard me, He shall still hear me. As He has listened to me, He shall listen to me again—at least, it shall not be for lack of my cries that He does not listen.” That expression, “He has inclined His ear unto me,” seems to me to mean, “He has stooped down to me to catch my faintest words. He has been favorable to me. He has smiled as He has heard my broken prayers and cries. He has inclined His ear unto me. It was not a mere hearing such as His Omniscience might warrant me to expect—it was such a favorable hearing as only Infinite Love would have given to me and, oh, if He is so favorable as to hear, can I be so ungrateful as not to pray?” Here was the case that David had laid before the Lord.

3. *The sorrows of death compassed me.* Just as the dogs surround the poor stag and shut him in the fatal circle.

3. *And the pains of Hell got hold upon me.* They set their teeth into him as the dogs do into the stag.

3. *I found trouble and sorrow.* He was in a double grief—he had trouble outside and sorrow within—it was troubled sorrow and sorrowful trouble, wormwood mingled with gall.

4. *Then called I upon the name of the LORD.* That was the very best time to pray. Satan does his utmost to prevent our praying when we are in extremities, but, oh, dear Friends, if Jonah prayed in the whale’s belly, where can you and I be where we may not and cannot pray? If we sat down upon the very doorstep of Hell—yes, if the Pit opened her mouth to swallow us up, we might still pray! And the mercy is, that while we are on praying ground we are also on the ground of Grace where God can meet with us! “Then called I upon the name of the Lord.”

4. *O LORD, I beseech You, deliver my soul.* It was a short prayer—an eager, earnest petition—full of passionate importunity. There was no dictating to God how the deliverance should be worked. “I beseech You, deliver my soul. Do it in Your own way. Do it in the way that will bring most glory to You. If You do not deliver my body, yet deliver my soul. If my goods must go. If all I have must melt away, yet, O Jehovah, I beseech You, deliver my soul!” This is one of the best prayers in the whole Bible. It is very much like the publican’s prayer, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

5. *Gracious is the LORD, and righteous.* That is a strange combination which the ungodly cannot understand. It is a riddle never to be read except at the Cross! “Gracious is the Lord, and righteous.” That is what every troubled conscience wants to know—how God can be just and yet can pardon sin—but we who have believed in Jesus do know! It is our joy to say, “Gracious is the Lord, and righteous.”

5. *Yes, our God is merciful.* I always feel inclined to mispronounce that word, or to divide it into two, and read it, “Our God is mercy full,” for so He is—He is brimming over with mercy!

6. *The LORD preserves the simple.* The sincere—sometimes the ignorant—those who do not pretend to know. Or, the simple, those from whose heart the Lord has driven out all guile, making them to be simple-minded. They are such fools (as the world calls them) as to be believers in the Lord Jesus Christ—and that is to perform the highest act of wisdom on the part of man! They are such simpletons as to believe the old, old Bible, and to cling to the great atoning Sacrifice, and to let the novelties of modern thought blow away like the down of the thistle in the summer breeze! “The Lord preserves the simple.” How did David know that? Listen.

6. *I was brought low and He helped me.* There is no way of knowing a general doctrine so good as that of having a particular experience of it! “I was brought low, brought to be a simpleton, brought so very low that I was obliged to pray a simple prayer—brought so very, very low that I was obliged to have a simple faith in God—for I had nobody else to believe in and nobody else to trust. ‘I was brought low, and He helped me.’” What a help that is—a help in which God virtually does it all—for our poor weakness, with its best attempts, would rather hinder than help.

7. *Return unto your rest, O my soul; for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.* Poor dove, you are dropping into the water. Your wings can scarcely sustain you—come back to Noah—“Return unto your Noah, O my soul!” That is the Old Testament reading of it and the New Testament rendering is, “Return unto your Jesus, O my soul, for He is your true rest! Get back to Him, ‘for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.’ In past times, when you were dwelling with Him in close communion, it was better with you than it is now, that you have wandered from Him. Return, return, poor prodigal, for there is every inducement to bring you back! In your Father’s house there is bread enough and to spare. He never stinted you. ‘The Lord has dealt bountifully with you’ and He is dealing bountifully with you even now in giving you the opportunity to come back, in giving you the power to pray and in permitting you to go to the blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat.”

8. *For You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.* Just now he prayed, “Deliver my soul.” He has received the answer to his petition, for he says, “You have delivered my soul from death.” He said nothing, then, about his eyes, but God gives exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. He did not say anything about his feet, but the Lord gave him a blessing for them, also—“You have delivered my feet from falling.” Oh, for an all-over blessing, a blessing from head to foot—from the eyes that stream with tears to the feet that are slipping away from under us! A blessing that begins within by delivering the soul and then works its way into the very countenance and makes it resplendent with joy and thankfulness and gets into the daily life, helping us to march boldly along the slippery way! Glory be to God! He has given this deliverance to many of us!

9. *I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.* “I will not care who sees me so long as He sees me. I will court no presence but His Presence, ‘I will walk before Jehovah.’” It is grand walking under a constant sense of the Lord’s inspection and a delightful consciousness of His

smile! This is like Enoch's walk and you know how it ends, for Enoch could not die for the life of him—he walked so near to God that he did not pass into Heaven by the ordinary road—he “was not, for God took him.” And we, too, though we may die as to these bodies, know that we shall never die as to our souls, for He has given to us who have believed in Jesus, eternal life! And we can never die or be separated from Him.

10. *I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted.* “I believed.” Come, Friends, can you all say that? It is a blessed thing for you if you can say that when the sorrows of death compass you and the pains of the grave lay hold upon you. That is glorious faith which says, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” “I believed, therefore have I spoken.” Faith is not a dumb Grace of God—it will make its voice heard.

11. *I said in my haste, All men are liars.* You see, he had once spoken in the power of the flesh. It was well, therefore, that he should now speak in the power of faith. “I said in my haste, All men are liars.” But it was true for all that, for they will fail us if we trust them instead of the Lord. Yet, in another sense, they are not all liars, so David retracts the hasty words which might have a double meaning and might imply what he did not intend, or what he should not mean. See how quickly he turns away from this unpleasant subject! Note what comes next.

12. *What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me?* “There,” he seems to say, “put all men away, I have done with them. If they are all liars, let us say no more about them, but let us turn to God.” When you, dear Friends, are disappointed with men, do not sit down and worry—you should have known what to expect before you began with them—and now you have found it to be so, turn it to good account. David feels that he has received everything from God, so he says, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?” Well, what can he do? His own poverty comes rushing over his sight, again, and the answer to his question is—

13. *I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.* “I ask, ‘What shall I render?’ and I reply, ‘I will take.’” That is what you and I also must say—

***“The best return for one like me,
So wretched and so poor,
Is from His gifts to draw a plea,
And ask Him still for more.”***

You have given God all you have when you have given Him your weakness, your sin, your emptiness—that is all that is truly yours—and then it is that you render to Him that which He asks for, that He may put away your sin, that He may fill your emptiness and glorify Himself in your weakness.

14. *I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people.* If you have made any vows, mind that you keep them. It is often better not to vow, but when the vow is made, let it be diligently paid.

15. *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.* It is very painful for us to witness, but it is precious to God. We think that they have ended their usefulness when they reach that point, but God estimates their very death to be precious! Tread very softly when you go to the bedside of a departing saint—you may brush against an angel's

wing, for the room is full of them—the place whereon you stand is holy ground! Troops of angelic messengers are there to do their Master's bidding in the last hours of His child—which are about to become his first hours in Glory! Besides, the Master, Himself, is there—He is never absent when His children are dying. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

16. *O LORD, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid.* "Born in Your own house, of one who belonged to You—a home-born slave—and glad to glory in that fact! Born in Your house, bought with Your money and yielding up myself joyfully to You—I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid."

16. *You have loosed my bonds.* Why, we thought he was going to say, "Your Grace has, like a fetter, bound my wandering heart to You." Just so—that is the liberty which he enjoys—"You have loosed my bonds." We are never so free as when free-will has had its deathblow and we have come under the power of Sovereign Grace. And now there is another free-will, born of Grace, and with its full consent we give ourselves up to God, saying, with David, "O Lord, truly I am Your servant; You have loosed my bonds."

17. *I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.* Now David has grown into a priest, offering sacrifices. He has also grown into a singer, praising the Lord with thanksgiving, and he has grown into a preacher—"And will call upon the name of the Lord." The very man who found the pains of Hell laying hold upon him is now engaged in the holiest exercises!

18, 19. *I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the LORD'S house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise you the LORD.* Or, "Hallelujah!" I cannot close this reading without remarking how often my ears are shocked with the blasphemous way in which this thrice-holy word is dragged into the mire—"Hallelujah fiddles!" "Hallelujah lasses!" and I know not what. "Hallelujah"—praise unto Jehovah—is one of those words which never ought to be pronounced except with the utmost solemnity! Although there should be mixed with it the most rapturous joy. Let us take heed lest we be found guilty of taking the name of the Lord, Jehovah, our God, in vain, by using that word flippantly. But let us solemnly feel in our hearts and say with our lips, "Hallelujah—Praise the Lord!"

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY
TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

EXAMINATION BEFORE COMMUNION NO. 2699

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1900.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 2, 1881.

*“But let a man examine himself, and so let him
eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”
1 Corinthians 11:28.*

IT can never be too clearly understood that spiritual ordinances are only for spiritual persons. Baptism and the Lord's Supper belong to Believers and to none but Believers. It is an evil thing for any church to give either the one or the other of those two ordinances to those who are destitute of “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” There would have been no necessity for Paul to say, “Let a man examine himself,” if the Lord's Table were free to all. If every man might come to it, then every man might come simply because he was a man, and he would have no occasion to examine himself at all. The very fact that there is an examination, presupposes that there are some persons who have no right to “eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” And our own personal examination is in order that we may discover whether we have a right to participate in this ordinance or not. Therefore, let every man clearly understand that the Lord's Table is for the Lord's people. As in a man's house, his table is for his family, so, in God's House, His Table is for His family, and if we do not belong to the family of God, we have no right to draw near to His Table at all!

I fear that there are some unconverted people who imagine that they have performed a meritorious action when, on certain days in the year, they have, as they say, “taken the sacrament.” But, my Friend, if your heart is not right with God, you were a thief and a robber when you came to His Table and took what He provided for His children alone! You did not come in by the Door, that is, Christ, but you climbed up some other way, and you were really sinning against God in that very act which you supposed to have some merit in it! Unless you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Unless you have been born again by the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit. Unless you truly belong to the household of faith, as you have no part in the spiritual mystery, so you have no right to the outward and visible sign by which that mystery is set forth. All this is implied in our text, “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is not meant for the conversion of sinners. It is not intended to lead men to salvation, but it is intended for

those who are already saved, those who are converted. I *have* heard of unconverted persons coming to the Lord's Table and the solemn impressions experienced there have led them to repentance and faith in Christ. We must always remember that God works how He pleases and, in such cases as those, He overlooked the communicants' great mistake and even in the midst of their error He worked according to the Sovereignty of His Divine Grace. Yet this is no excuse for ungodly persons venturing to come to the Communion Table, for they will be eating and drinking condemnation to themselves! And if it should please God to forgive the transgression and to save their souls, this will be an exception, and a surprising work of Grace, for it is not according to the Law of the Master's House. If any of you think that by being baptized and coming to the Lord's Table, you will thereby be saved, you "err, not knowing the Scriptures." You have no right to either ordinance till you have first come to Christ and are saved. But when you have passed from death unto life, when you have been washed in the Savior's precious blood, then is your time to come forward and, by being buried with Christ in Baptism, acknowledge your conversion and, by sitting with your fellow Believers at His Table and meditating upon His wondrous Sacrifice, of which the bread and the wine are the significant symbols, feed the spiritual life that God has imparted to you.

Having given you this plain warning, I now come to my text, which teaches us, first, *the objective of the examination commanded in it*—"Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." Secondly, it points out to us *the matter of that examination*. And, thirdly, *the duty that follows after the examination*—"Let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

I. First, our text teaches us **THE OBJECTIVE OF THE EXAMINATION COMMANDED IN IT**—"Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

The distinct objective of the examination is *that the communicant may eat and drink at the Lord's Table*. In some churches, there is a practice which is called, "fencing the tables," defending the Table of the Lord against the approach of improper characters. This is a very right and necessary thing to do, but some ministers have so guarded the table that very few have dared to come to it—and those who have come have often been persons who had more conceit than Grace, while the better part—the truly humble and broken-hearted ones—have been frightened away! It would appear, from the exhortations of these ministers, as if Paul must have said, "Let a man examine himself, but never let him eat of this bread, nor drink of this cup. Let him so examine himself that he shall come to the conclusion that he has no right to sit at the Table of the Lord and, therefore, shall go his way feeling that he is utterly unworthy of that high privilege." Beloved Friends, this is not my objective in preaching from this text, nor should it be yours in obeying it. Examine yourselves with the hope and the strong desire that you may be permitted to come to the Lord's Table. Do not let the examination take so morbid and melancholy a form that you almost look out for causes of self-suspicion, but

the rather, especially as many of you have known the Lord for years, let your examination be made in order that you may come aright to the table, that you may come there in a right spirit, and not that you may be compelled to stay away. "Let a man examine himself," and then, in the spirit of self-examination, let him eat of this bread, and drink of this cup.

Distinctly remember that the qualification for a place at the Lord's Table is *not* perfect sanctification. If it were, I am afraid that there would not be a soul here so qualified. And if there should be one who declared that he had attained to such a state, I should expect that he would prove to be the biggest hypocrite in the place! Recollect, also, that the qualification for coming to the Lord's Table is not the full assurance of faith. There might be some genuine believers in Christ who would not be able to commune if that were the qualification, but, happily, it is not. The least grain of true faith in Christ qualifies you! You are not to examine to see whether it is full noontide with your soul—have you even a little twilight? Have you been quickened into new life so much as to have a holy hunger and thirst for more of the Christ who is already yours? If so, you may come to His Table. Do not arrange the examination in such a way as to exclude yourselves unnecessarily. I will not, if I can help it, put it in such a style as to exclude one of you who ought to be admitted. On the contrary, my soul longs that the whole of you might truly feel and say, "Yes, we do love the Lord, and we are anxious to come and obey His command, and thus show His death in remembrance of Him."

Well, that is the first great objective of this examination—not that you may be made to stay away, but that you may come, if you are really entitled to sit at the Table of your Lord!

Note, next, that another objective of this examination is *that every man may know that the responsibility of his coming to the Lord's Table rests wholly with himself*. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him come." Not, "Let a man go to his minister and be examined." Or, "Let him go to his priest and make confession." No, no! "Let a man examine *himself*, and so let him eat." I can give no man a certificate which really entitles him to come to the Communion Table. In my office as pastor, it is my privilege to receive members into this Church. But, by so doing, we never mean to imply that we thereby certify that they are really converted. That is a matter which must rest with each man and his judgment of himself, if he is a wise man, will not be the opinion of his minister, but the verdict of his own conscience in the sight of God. Come to this Communion Table, Brothers and Sisters, as individuals! Come, each one, feeling, "I alone am responsible to God for what I am about to do. Taking the Word of God as my guide, I judge myself to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, I am about to sit at this table."

I think that of all abominations, the idea of sponsors, either in Baptism or the Lord's Supper, is the most detestable. No man can be a sponsor for another! Everyone of you must individually stand before God and no godfathers or godmothers can, without telling a lie, promise for you that you shall keep God's holy Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life. It is not in their power, neither is it in the power of

any minister to give you the right to come to the Lord's Table or to the other Christian ordinance—"Let a man examine himself." Take the responsibility upon yourself, each one of you, for so the Apostle puts it, and this will help you to come aright to the Table of the Lord. You are bidden to examine yourself, in order that you may come under an overwhelming sense that it is your own act and deed—that you are not here because your mother came or your father came—that you are *not* here because you are entitled to come by virtue of your church membership, but you are here, each woman, each man, each one of you, for himself or herself, having searched your own heart and asked God to search it, to see whether you ought to come, or not!

In the next place, the objective of this examination is *that everyone may come to the Lord's Table most solemnly*—not flippantly, thoughtlessly, heedlessly—but that each communicant may say, "I am going to eat of that bread and drink of that cup in resemblance of my dear Lord whom I really know and trust. There is no mockery or mere formality in this act. I come in downright earnest, bringing my heart with me, for I have looked into my heart, I have examined myself, and I take upon myself the responsibility of saying, 'Lord, You know all things. You know that I love You.'" So this examination means that you are to come to the Lord's Table with deep solemnity.

And, surely, it also means *that every communicant must come most humbly*, for the result of any true examination of ourselves must be deep humiliation of spirit. As for myself, I must confess that I am not what I want to be, and I am not what I ought to be. I can only come to the table declaring myself to be an unworthy one in whom the Grace of God is indeed magnified. That He should ever have put me among His children and permitted me to call Him, my Father, will be a wonder to me throughout eternity! See, then, the blessed result of this self-examination when it lays you low at the foot of the Cross, and makes you come to the Lord's Table, not boasting, "I have a right to be here," but humbly and gratefully saying, "I do indeed adore the Grace of God which has made it possible that such an one as I am should be allowed to sit down with the family of God at His banqueting table of love."

Another result of the examination which is aimed at is *that we may come to the Lord's Supper intelligently*, knowing why we come and what reason we have to come, and on what footing we come. Examining yourself you will discover your soul-hunger and learn that you come to be fed. Examining yourself, you will discover spiritual life and understand that you come that it may be nourished by your meditation upon the Person of your Lord. You know, in holy ordinances, almost everything depends upon the right understanding of them. There is no efficacy in water, whether it is applied by immersion or by aspersion—the value of the ordinance depends upon the conviction which the man has when he is baptized—that it is the will of his Lord that he should thus confess his faith. There is nothing efficacious in that bread or that wine. The bread has no more virtue in it than there is in any other bread which the baker ever made. The wine is, in itself, no more a means of Grace than any

other wine that ever was pressed out from the vintage. It is the thought that shall be excited by that bread and that wine that will be the benefit—it is the mind seeing through the visible sign that which is inwardly signified. Hence it is that our Lord calls us to this self-examination, that our intellect may be stirred and our mind may be prepared, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, to understand the meaning of that which He puts upon the table for us to feed upon.

And, just once more, this examination is intended *that we may come to the table with an appreciative joy*. Let me explain that rather long word. You know if you come to the Communion Table saying, “I do not know whether I have a right to be here,” you cannot enjoy yourself. If I were sitting at a man’s table, and I said to myself, “I am afraid I have made a mistake. I do not believe he ever invited me,” I should feel very uncomfortable while I was there, and I should be wonderfully glad when the dinner was over. But if, as I sat at the table, I said, “I know the gentleman invited me. I have his invitation with me and he is smiling upon me, for he is glad that I am here.” That is how I like to feel at the Lord’s Table—to know, after examination, that I am in my right place. Then I soon forget all about my right to be there and all I think of is that which is on the Table, and about my Lord who has invited me, and how I can enjoy the sweetest communion with Him, and partake of the dainties which He has put before me.

I want you, Brothers and Sisters, to examine yourselves till you come to this conclusion, “We are not perfect, but we believe in Jesus. We are not yet fully assured, but we have a humble hope in Him. We are not the strongest of His warriors, but we have His life in us—we do know Him, and trust Him.” Then you will feel, “The Good Shepherd feeds the lambs as well as the full-grown sheep of His flock, so we may come to Him for all we need.” Then you will have nothing to think about as to yourself, but all you will have to do will be to say, “My Lord here gives me His flesh to eat, and His blood to drink, after a spiritual fashion. In these outward types, I will now feed upon Him. The fact that God took our nature upon Himself shall be as food to my soul. The equally blessed fact that being found in fashion as a Man, He took my sins upon Himself and suffered in my place shall be like generous wine to me. I will drink it down! I will feed upon it! I will live by it!” Then you will have joy and gladness in your soul and this supper will be what it really is—no funeral feast, but a banquet of delight for all the friends of Christ! “Let a man examine himself” with the view that he may so eat and so drink when he comes to the Table of the Lord.

II. Now, very briefly, I must dwell upon the second point which is this—THE MATTER OF THE EXAMINATION. “Let a man examine himself.” Listen, Brothers and Sisters, while I ask you a few questions which will help you to examine yourselves.

First, then, *here is a spiritual feast*. Am I spiritually alive to partake of it? Dead men have no right to come to a banquet. Am I, then, spiritually alive? Have I ever been quickened and renewed in heart and life? Has the Holy Spirit brought me into the spiritual world? If so, have I an appetite

for this sacred feast? Do I hunger after Christ? Do I long for the Water of Life? Then I may come to this table, for here my Lord supplies the needs of those who are the living in Zion. The dead cannot feed on the richest dainties—corpses can neither eat nor drink. And dead sinners may not come to this festival for the living. But, if there is even a spark of spiritual life in you, though you are faint and sick, come along, for you have a right to come!

The next question is—Here is a feast, but am I a friend of the Lord who is the Host at this table? The Lord Jesus invites all His friends to come to His banquets. Am I, then, His friend? And is He mine? Have I ever taken Him to be my Savior and am I trusting in His precious blood for my salvation? And then, in return, do I love Him and love His cause, and love His people? Do I commune with Him as friend communes with friend? Do I talk familiarly with Him? Am I on intimate terms with Him? Does He know me, and do I truly know Him? If so, I need not be afraid to come to His Table, for every friend of His is welcome there. Ask yourself these three questions. Am I alive? Have I a spiritual appetite? Is Christ my friend?

Next, this feast is meant to set forth the death of Christ. That fact suggests another question. Do I really believe in His death? Of course, I believe that He died, but do I really, *myself*, trust Christ's death to save me? Do I believe that by His dying, He offered to God such an Atonement for the sins of men that whoever believes in Him is justified from all things? And have I, by faith, appropriated to myself His Atonement so that I am thereby justified in the sight of God? If so, I may come to His Table, for I am only doing, then, in outward sign, what I am really also doing in my inward spirit.

Further, *our Lord Jesus bids us "do this" in union with all His people.* That suggests the question—Am I one of His people, and one with them? Do I really love them? The Apostle Paul says, "We being many are one bread"—"one loaf"—and "one body." Is our union as close as this? I think, Brothers and Sisters, that if you have any malice or ill-will towards any of your fellow Christians, or towards anyone else, you ought not to come to the Lord's Table while you are in that condition of heart. You remember that Christ said, "If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you; leave there your gift before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

The same rule applies to those who would be guests at this sacred feast. It is a hard thing for men to sit at the same table and all the while to be, as it were, eating one another's hearts out. No, no—there must be true love among the brotherhood—and if I have not love to all the people of God, I have no right to come to the Table of the Lord. Once more, *this cup is the New Covenant in Christ's blood.* That Truth of God leads me to ask another question—Am I in covenant with God in Christ Jesus? Have I accepted the Covenant of Grace? Have I yielded myself up to God by bringing to the great Father the Sacrifice of Christ which is the seal and ratification of the Covenant? Do I regard myself, at this moment, as one

of the covenanted ones to whom the promises of God belongs? If so, I may certainly drink of the cup of the Covenant!

Moreover, *Jesus bids us observe this ordinance in remembrance of Him.* Now, a man cannot remember what he never knew. Here, then, is another question—Do I know Christ? Have I ever seen Him with the eye of faith? Did I ever behold Him hanging on the tree and feel the burden of sin roll off my shoulders as I witnessed His amazing sufferings? In a word, do I really know Christ? Do I speak with Him in prayer? Do I commune with Him and tell Him my griefs and sorrows? Or, am I a stranger to Him? A stranger to Christ may not eat of this feast, but he who is acquainted with the great Lord who sits at the head of the Table may freely come and eat and drink that which is set before him.

These are some very plain and simple questions which I beg you to put to yourselves. And if you do not know Christ, if you do not love Him, if you do not love His people, if you are not trusting in His blood, if you have never been born again, if you have nothing of the Grace of God in you, get far away from His Table, I pray you, for you would only be eating and drinking condemnation to yourselves if you partook of the emblems of Christ's broken body and shed blood! But if you have the least evidence of a work of Grace within your soul. If you have the feeblest faith—as long as it is true faith—if you are really resting in Jesus for salvation, come and welcome to His Table—

***“How happy are Your servants, Lord,
Who thus remember You!”***

III. This brings me to the third head, which is THE DUTY AFTER THE EXAMINATION—“Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”

If you can satisfactorily answer all the questions I have given you, it is your *duty* to come to the Table of your Lord and to eat of the bread and drink of the cup! I know some professing Christians—I hope they are really Christians, it is not my place to judge them—but the commands of Christ seem to be very trifling and inconsiderable things with them. What would you think of anyone who said that he was a disciple of a certain teacher, but he did not care to observe his teacher's commands? Why, you would say that he was trifling with his master! Now, the Lord Jesus Christ spoke thus plainly concerning one of the two ordinances which He instituted—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Yet we have met with a number of His professed followers who say, “Well, that Baptism is not a saving ordinance.” Who said that it was? Would you attend to it if it were? Then, if you only mean to do what will pay you, your obedience will be selfish and of small value! Are you really a disciple of Christ? It should be the delight of a disciple to do what his Master bids him, whether there is any visible benefit to him in it, or not. It is not for you or me, Beloved, to question or quibble at anything which our Lord has commanded, but promptly to obey it.

Another person says, “Well, I never come to the Communion Table, but I am just as good as those people who do.” My dear Friend, I will not quarrel with you about your own goodness, but I generally find that those who think that they are good are not as good as they think they

are. However, if the Lord Jesus Christ has given you this plain command, "This do in remembrance of Me," I ask you, believing it to be commanded by Christ, how can you call yourself His servant when you refuse to do what He bids you? I am not putting the question too strongly. You know that I have no faith in the saving power of ordinances. Do I not, as clearly as I can speak, constantly warn you against that error? Still, if it were only the picking up of a straw, and if Christ had commanded it, I do not see how a man could be sure that he was the servant of Christ if he did not pick up that straw when his Master told him to do it! The less the thing is in itself, the more does it become the test of our obedience. If these ordinances were essential to salvation, then everybody would observe them with the view of being saved by them, but, inasmuch as they do not save, and were never meant to save, but are, in fact, only the *privileges of those who are saved*, the observance of them becomes a test of a man's true discipleship, for it makes it clear whether he will obey Christ or not.

"Well," says one, "I have examined myself and I do not feel that I have a right to come to the Lord's Table." Then, do not come, my Friend, as you are. Still, it is your duty to get into such a state that when you again examine yourself, you shall be able to say, "Now I have a right to come," for, if you have not a right to come to the Lord's Table, then you have no right to enter Heaven! If you are not fit to commune with the saints on earth, you certainly are not fit to commune with the saints above! So look to that matter at once, I pray you. And look to it very carefully.

After examination, it appears from the text that it *is the duty of every man who has examined himself to eat of the bread and drink of the cup*. It is very noteworthy that the Holy Spirit should have moved the mind of Paul to put it in this shape—"let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." Especially observe that he mentions the cup. "No," says the Roman Catholic priest, "it is not for you. When I go up to the altar, as a priest, I drink the wine in that cup. It is not for you, you must not meddle with it. The cup does not belong to the laity."

What shall I say to such a man? With what burning words shall I express the indignation that I feel against the apostate church that dares to withhold what Christ has so freely given? "There," says He to His disciples, "all of you drink of that cup"—but in comes a man who pretends to be a priest, and he says, "You shall not touch it." By that mark, as by many more, can the beast and the antichrist still be discovered this day, even as of old! Still does the cry ring out from Heaven, "Come out of her, My people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues," for plagues must come upon the arrogant priesthood that dares to take away from God's people that which Christ puts on His Table, and of which He says, "Drink you all of it."

It is your duty, as Christians, to see to it that you eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, after you have examined yourselves and proved that you are really on the Lord's side!

I will not prolong this exhortation further than to remind you that it is not only our duty to eat and drink, but "*so to eat and drink as to discern*

the Lord's body. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." "So." That is one of the biggest little words in the English language! You remember one text where it is very big—"God so loved the world"—measure that word if you can—"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here, in our text, is another instance in which the word, "so," is very big, indeed. After examination of himself, a man is "so" to eat—in the spirit which that examination produces, which I have shown you is one of solemnity, humiliation and earnest delight in Christ—"so let him eat," so as to discern the Lord's body, which means just this. I take that bread, and I say, "This represents to me the great Truth of God that God was made flesh, and dwelt among us and that, today, He is one with men as well as one with God. I eat that bread and I feed spiritually on that Truth."

Then I take the cup and I say, "This cup represents to me the blood of Christ, and I see in this cup the symbol that He died, 'the Just for the unjust,' to bring me to God. I take this wine to represent the blood of His Atonement, the great fact that He died as my Substitute. And as I drink the wine and it goes into my inward parts, I take the precious Truth of Substitution—Christ dying instead of me—and I put it into my very soul to nourish, to cherish and to delight me."

Now that is the way to discern the Lord's body and that is the way, "so," to eat of that bread, and to drink of that cup, as to be spiritually profited! May God, the Holy Spirit, help you to enter into the spirit of the ordinance, and to observe it as Christ ordained it, for His dear name's sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
MATTHEW 26:17-39; 1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-34.**

Matthew 26:17, 18. *Now on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover? And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.* See here the blending of Christ's humiliation and His Godhead. The Master had no room of His own in which He could keep the Passover. He had not even where to lay His head, yet such was His power that He had only to send messengers to one whom He knew, though perhaps the man did not know Him—and as soon as ever the message was delivered, the large upper room, furnished and prepared, was at once freely tendered for the celebration of the supper! Jesus Christ, even in His lowest estate, had the hearts of all men beneath His control.

19-21. *And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover. Now when the evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.* This was a very unpleasant thought to bring into the midst of those who were gathered there for the memorial feast,

yet it was most suitable for such a message to be spoken at the Passover, for at its institution, the Lord said to Moses, "With bitter herbs they shall eat it." And here was something bitter enough. I hope we shall have our Master's Presence at the Communion Table, yet it will be well for our joy to be sobered with such a painful thought as this—there may be a traitor with us even here.

22. *And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and began, each one of them, to say unto Him, Lord, is it I?* The habit of self-suspicion, rather than suspecting somebody else, is a good one. If there is anyone in this place who is going to commit a gross sin, why may it not be myself? The natural tendency of each one of us is to say, "I shall never do such a thing as that, I am sure." Ah, me, if Grace were truly reigning in our heart, we would, each one, be suspicious of himself and not of others, and the question of each one would be, "Lord, is it I?" Not one of the Apostles asked, "Lord, is it Judas?" or, "Is it So-and-So?" But everyone of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?"

23, 24. *And He answered and said, He that dips his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born.* Remember, this "woe" applies not only to Judas Iscariot, but to anyone else who betrays Christ. Oh, if, under the pressure of persecution, or if being bribed by some present pleasure, or if through our own natural fickleness we should betray our Master, woe unto us! May the Lord, by His almighty Grace, keep us from committing such a sin as that! If we do betray our Lord, it would have been better for us that we had not been born.

25, 26. *Then Judas, which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, You have said it. And as they were eating.* While yet the paschal supper was proceeding. "As they were eating"—

26. *Jesus took bread, and blessed it.* Or, as the marginal reading says, "gave thanks for it"—

26. *And broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body.* That is to say, "This represents My body." Our Lord could not possibly have meant that the bread was His body, for there was His body sitting whole and entire at the table—and they would have been astonished beyond measure if they had understood Him literally! But they did not do so, for they were well used too the Oriental custom of leaving out the word for, "like," and just saying, "It is so-and-so." Besides, Christ had also said, "I am the Door," "I am the Way," "I am the Good Shepherd." And there is also that striking sentence, "I am the Rose of Sharon." No idiot ever understood these passages literally! And those are more foolish than idiots who render literally these words—"This is My body." They are wickedly, wantonly and willfully foolish in thus misrepresenting our Savior's meaning!

27. *And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it.* That is, "Drink from it, everyone of you." Was this the institution of the Lord's Supper? Yes, but what do the Romanists say? Why, that the people may not drink of the cup and so they keep it away

from them! But our Savior says to this representative company of all His disciples, “Drink you all of it.”

28, 29. *For this is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you. I will not drink of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s Kingdom.* “In that joyous day, that day of days when the battle will have been fought, and the victory won forever—then will I pledge you in My Father’s Kingdom, and keep the feast with you forever!

30. *And when they had sung an hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.* Oh, how brave it was on the Master’s part to sing a Psalm just before He went out to be betrayed and to be crucified! Our second reading is also concerning the Lord’s Supper. Turn to the first Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter 11, verse 20. The Corinthian church, as I have often explained to you, was one that had no pastor. They had what is called “open” worship—everybody speaking who pleased, and there being no kind of government or discipline. They fell into every sort of conceivable disorder, and even the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper was utterly degraded among them. Here is what Paul wrote to them.

1 Corinthians 11:20, 21. *When you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper. For in eating, everyone takes his own supper before others, and one is hungry, and another is drunken.* They had such low notions of the communion that they seemed to think that if they ate together, each one bringing his own provision, they would be celebrating the Lord’s Supper! But Paul would not agree to that. What did he say?

22. *What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise you the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.* They may not have meant to do so ill, but they had fallen into all sorts of disorder and Paul, therefore, first rebuked them, and then explained to them the right observance of the ordinance.

23-27. *For I have received from the Lord that which I also delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, Take, eat: this is My body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood; this do you, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He comes. Therefore whoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.* Note carefully the wording of this verse; it is not, “Whoever, being unworthy, shall eat and drink.” It is not an adjective, it is an adverb and relates, not so much to the person, as to the way in which he came to the communion. Those who came to the Lord’s Table in a half-drunken fashion. Those who regarded it merely as a common meal. Those who came there under false pretences. Those who came there not thinking of Christ’s body at all—they would all be guilty of not discerning the Lord’s body, and so of prostituting His ordinance, robbing it of its dignity and solemnity by coming there in such a condition.

28, 29. *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily.* We are all unworthy to come to the Table of our Lord. Who among us can possibly be thought to be worthy to come to such a feast as this? But the Apostle is writing concerning those who came there carelessly, or without thought, or with a wrong motive. Years ago, you know, nobody could hold certain government or municipal offices without taking what was called “the sacrament.” That was making the Lord’s Supper a picklock to office! That was, indeed, to eat and drink it unworthily! Such, also, as come merely for the sake of getting alms, or out of custom or formality, but leave their hearts behind them, eat and drink unworthily and shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord”—as guilty as they were who actually crucified the Savior. “For he that eats and drinks unworthily.”

29. *Eats and drinks “condemnation” to himself.* For that is how the Word of God should be rendered.

29, 30. *Not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.* God is always carrying out a system of discipline in His Church. To a large extent, He lets the world, for the present, sin as it pleases, but in His own family He uses the rod. And when the Lord’s Supper is dishonored, there is no doubt that the sickness and sleep here mentioned will follow. “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” Many even die—not that they are lost—not that this sickness is sent as a curse, but as fatherly chastisement. And the death of many of its members is often a chastisement to the church which is thus weakened by losing its best helpers.

31-34. *For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat: tarry one for another. And if any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that you come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—282, 581, 683.

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
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*“But let a man examine himself, and so let him
eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.”
1 Corinthians 11:28.*

THERE are two symbolical ordinances in the Christian Church—and only two—Believers' Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These have been so misinterpreted, perverted and abused that the wish has sometimes crossed the minds of spiritual persons that they had never been instituted. We do not wonder that there should be a denomination of Christians who have given them up, though we think that in this matter they have not acted according to the Word of God. We ourselves retain them for this reason only, because we believe that our Lord Jesus Christ ordained them—and we desire to observe them exactly as Christ ordained them. And only thus shall we find them instructive and helpful to our souls.

Baptism, the immersion of the Believer in water, is the token of his death, burial and resurrection with Christ. It sets forth the fellowship which he has with his Lord as the Apostle tells us—“Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him”—not that the plunge into the water confers any Grace upon the person who is baptized, but it is the *type*, the *emblem*, the instructive *symbol* of the new birth—which new birth consists in passing, by death and resurrection, into newness of life. You all know that we are only born once. A thing can only have one true beginning. Hence, Baptism is never to be repeated. Once done, it is done forever.

The other ordinance is the Lord's Supper and, as Baptism, sets forth, typifies, (mark you, *nothing more* than typifies), and is the emblem of the new birth, so the Lord's Supper is the emblem of the spiritual feeding of that new life. Now, though a man is born only once, he eats a great many more times than once and drinks a great many more times than once. Indeed, to eat and to drink often are necessary to the maintenance of our life. If we neglected to do so, we would soon find ourselves in an ill case. Hence, the Supper of the Lord, representing, as it does, the spiritual feeding of the new-born life upon the body and blood of Christ, (and only representing it, mark you—not really doing it in any carnal sense), is oftentimes to be repeated. We find that the early Christians very frequently broke bread together. I think they did so almost every day. It is recorded,

by some of the early fathers, that the first Christians seldom met together, on any day of the week, without commemorating the death of Christ. Augustine mentions this and he seems to have taught that at least once in the week—on that blessed day which celebrates the Resurrection of our Lord, Christians should meet for the breaking of bread. I think that the oftener we meet for this purpose, the better it is for us. The Holy Spirit specifies no particular time—we are not under a law which binds us to this period or to that. Our Lord leaves it very much to our own loving hearts, but the words that Paul quotes, “This do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me,” certainly imply that we should often “do this” in remembrance of our dear Lord and Savior.

A simple feast, even of bread and wine, a feast often celebrated, would be liable to be trifled with and misapplied. Hence, as Paradise of old was guarded by cherubim, with a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life, so stands this simple Supper of the Lord guarded with a flaming sword, of which my text is a portion—“Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.”

Now, with this thought upon our minds, let us go to the text, itself, and observe how we are bidden to examine ourselves before we come to the Table of the Lord. We will speak, first, concerning *the necessity for this examination*. Next, *the person who is to perform it*. Then, *the vital points of the examination*. And, lastly, *the spirit in which we should come to the table after we have examined ourselves*.

I. First, then, THE NECESSITY FOR THIS EXAMINATION.

The sense of that necessity will be very strongly impressed upon us if we remember that many *have profaned the Table of the Lord*. Hence it is incumbent upon us to examine ourselves lest we should do the same. Years ago—our grandfathers remember it well—men had to “take the sacrament,” as it was called, before they could be made mayors of towns, or hold certain offices in the municipalities and, in that way, the Communion Table became a passport to secular office. I tremble as I think how the laws of this land compelled men—though they ought never to have yielded obedience to such laws—to eat and drink judgment or condemnation to themselves as they profaned this holy ordinance! Others have made it, as I fear that some still make it, a means of obtaining alms—coming to the Communion Table because those who are members of the church are helped in the time of their poverty, or there is a distribution of alms money among the needy communicants. Ah, dear Friends, however poor you may be, it would be better for you to starve than to get help in this way if you are not really the Lord’s people! If any of you have acted thus, I charge you, before Almighty God, to do so no more! If we have any suspicions that we have ever done such a thing, we may well examine ourselves concerning that matter and sincerely repent if we have so sinned against the Lord.

Others come to the Communion as a piece of sheer superstition, really believing, poor deluded souls, that when they take the wafer into their mouths, they actually eat the flesh of Christ. Such a monstrous doctrine as that is only fit for cannibals—it is not a Doctrine of Christianity! What a profanation of the ordinance it is to come to it with such a notion as

that! If any of us have the slightest idea that to partake of what is called “the sacrament”—though there is no such name as that for it anywhere in Scripture—confers Divine Grace, let all such thoughts be banished from our minds at once!

It is not a converting ordinance, nor a saving ordinance—it is an establishing ordinance and a comforting ordinance for those *who are saved*. But it never was intended to save souls, neither is it adapted to that end and if it is so misrepresented, it is apt rather to be the means of damning than of saving the soul, for he that so eats and drinks may, in very deed, be eating and drinking damnation to himself!

I fear that there are others who come to the Communion Table out of mere form. I find that it is the custom of certain persons to do this always on Christmas day and on Good Friday, though what particular sanctity there can be about those two days, I am sure I cannot tell. I see little enough of holiness about them and a great deal of sheer superstition. But let all of us be careful that we never come to the Communion simply because it is the first Sabbath in the month, or even because it is the day of our Lord’s Resurrection and because, as church members, we feel that we ought to come there. I mention these things—although I hope, to the most of you, they are unnecessary—because they are necessary to a certain class of persons who, in one or other of these ways, thoughtlessly profane the Table of the Lord.

But, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we need to examine ourselves because it may be that though free from these evils which I have mentioned, we have come to this solemn feast without due solemnity, without serious thought, without the proper preparation of heart or the right observance of the ordinance. We have come very often to the Communion Table, yet there has been but little real heart-fellowship with Jesus. There has been bread upon the table and in our mouths, but we have not discerned the Lord’s body. There has been wine there, but we have not looked through the sign to the blood of which it is only the symbol. If it has been so with any of us, we have, to that extent, eaten and drunk unworthily—and I know not how much of deserved chastisement God may have laid upon us on that account—but the Apostle’s words have often been fulfilled since his day, “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”

This examination is necessary, next, *because the purpose of this ordinance requires that we should be in a fit condition for its observance*. What is the objective of this ordinance? “This do in remembrance of Me,” says the Lord Jesus. But you cannot remember what you do not know! how can you remember an unknown Christ? By coming to the Communion Table, you are supposed to let men see, as they look on at this ordinance, that you believe that Christ lived and died to save sinners. But suppose that you do not believe it—that you do not, at any rate, in your heart savingly believe it? Then you are not a fit person to proclaim that Truth of God to others by means of this ordinance. The Lord Jesus Christ does not want His enemies to remember Him—He wants His friends to cherish His memory and to keep the fact of His death prominently and permanently before the eyes of the world.

It must be His friends who must do this! Besides, this ordinance is one special means of communion between Christ and His people, but what communion can there be between you and Christ if you are a son of Belial? If you love sin and continue to live in sin, what possible fellowship can you have with the holy Christ? Will He have communion with a man who comes to His Table drunk? Or who comes from dishonest actions all week? Or who has been singing a lascivious song, but now turns to join with those who laud and magnify the name of the thrice holy God? Imagine not that Jesus Christ will welcome such as you are to His Table! If you do come, it will be at your most imminent peril! It can do you no good—it will be a curse rather than a blessing to you! So, let us examine ourselves because those who come to the Table of the Lord ought to be of such a sort that the purposes and objectives for which the ordinance was instituted may be realized in them.

But let us especially examine ourselves *because, if we come not aright, we shall incur very severe penalties*—the penalties which I have already mentioned to you. Let me again read to you these solemn word, “Therefore, whoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” And then follows the sure penalty upon true Believers who, nevertheless, come in an unfit state to the Table. I have read it to you before, but I will read it again—“He that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” Put off your shoes from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground! Rush not into the sacred place, but come with that gracious timorousness—no, rather with that holy boldness which becomes a sinner who has been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ and is robed in His spotless righteousness!

And, dear Friends, once more, there is a necessity for us to examine ourselves *because we must know that there are, among us, some who are doubtless partaking of the Lord’s Supper unworthily*. We have known, to our great sorrow, of some who have been harboring an unforgiving spirit, yet who have dared to come to the Communion Table. When I have really known that this has been the case, I have prevented the wrongdoer from sitting down with us, but, unknown to me, and to other ministers, it HAS often have happened that persons have come professing to be Christians, yet all the while not manifesting the true spirit of Christianity toward some offending Brother or Sister. You remember how even the loving Apostle John writes, “If a man says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?”

Then, alas, there are some, who, by coming to the Communion, profess to be Christians, yet who, nevertheless, are all the while living in shameful sin which they dare not have discovered. This is one of the greatest sources of sorrow to true ministers of Christ and it has made us often wring our hands with agony and weep bitter tears before the Lord, when we have seen trees looking fair and green, but which, inwardly, as Bunyan said, were “so rotten that they were only fit to be tinder for the devil’s tinderbox.” Their profession was a false one, for, all the while their

moral character was unsound. There was a rottenness about them which no one discovered till, upon some fatal day—fatal to their own reputation, but good for the Church’s purification—they were exposed and driven out with shame. Judas was found out at last. Ananias and Sapphira were at last found out and cut off from among the people of God—and the unclean and unholy among the early Christians were excommunicated from the assembly of the saints.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, if, to your own personal knowledge, this has been the case with others, forgive me when I ask—Is there not at least the possibility that it may also be the case with you? At any rate, you will do well to examine yourselves and if, after having honestly examined, you can say, “No, that is not the case with me,” then bless God that you can truthfully say so. Take no credit to yourselves, but give to God’s Grace the whole of the praise. Still, do look thoroughly to this matter. “Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith.” I, as a minister, am bound to examine myself because there have been eminent preachers of the Gospel who, nevertheless, have lived unhallowed lives. No preacher may dare to say, “My office screens me from this test.” Deacons and elders of the church, you must examine yourselves because you have known church officers who have brought disgrace upon the offices that they have filled. And you Sunday school teachers, open-air preachers, tract distributors and the like—and you members of the Church—however useful you may be and however highly you may be respected by your fellow members, I beseech you, nevertheless, shirk not this duty, but let each one examine himself before he comes to sit down at the Table of the Lord.

II. Now, secondly, I am to speak about THE PERSON WHO IS TO PERFORM THIS EXAMINATION—“Let a man examine *himself*.”

Let not anyone say, “I was examined by the proper officers of the church before I was admitted into church membership, so I do not need any further examination.” Now, mark, it is the duty of every church, in receiving members, to judge all applicants by their fruits. “By their fruits shall you know them,” is our Lord’s own test. We must have a credible profession of faith, supported by a life that is consistent therewith, but that is all upon which we can form a judgment. We cannot examine the heart and we cannot infallibly judge the life. How very often have we been deceived in these matters! If anyone were to suppose that a certificate of church membership is to excuse him from the duty of personal self-examination, he is grievously mistaken. No, dear Friend, *you* know what your secret thoughts are and what your private actions are and, therefore, it is to *yourself* that this duty is committed—“Let a man examine *himself*.”

“Well, but,” someone may say, “my friends—my private friends—are quite satisfied concerning my spiritual condition. I have been talking to my godly mother. I have been conversing with my praying father. I have had sweet fellowship, just lately, with a good old Christian friend—and they all seem perfectly satisfied with me.” I am glad they are but Paul says, under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, “Let a man examine *himself*.” There is no greater error under Heaven than to try to shift the re-

sponsibility of our own personal religion on to friends or to so-called “priests.” There can be no more gigantic imposture than the supposed sponsorship of infants! It amazes me that anybody can dare to say, on any child’s behalf, that it shall renounce the pomp and vanities of this world, and all else that is mentioned in the Church Catechism. But it would be an equally gigantic imposture if we were to establish a sponsorship for grown-up people! Both of them are wicked and neither of them can be carried out—we cannot guarantee the Christian character of other people—the Apostolic rule must remain, “Let a man examine *himself*.” Look you well to the state of your own souls and, to this end, go to God in prayer and say, as David did, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

III. Now, thirdly, WHAT ARE THE VITAL POINTS IN THIS EXAMINATION? There are a good many, but I have arranged them under five heads for the sake of brevity and to help your memories.

First, my dear Friends, *examine yourselves concerning your knowledge*. There are some who are too ignorant to come to the Table of the Lord. They may have taken their M.A. degree at Oxford or Cambridge, they may even be Doctors of Divinity and yet be too ignorant to come to the Lord’s Table. What knowledge is necessary for coming aright to the Table? I answer—*Saving knowledge*—a *living* knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ who said, “This do in remembrance of Me.” You cannot remember a person you never knew, so you must be acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ if you would observe this ordinance as He instituted it. There is the bread upon the table. Have you ever known what it was to be *spiritually* hungry? Do you know that Jesus Christ is the only Food that can relieve the hunger of your spirit? Have you learned to know Him through feeding upon Him by faith? Then you are a fit person to partake of the bread on the Communion Table because you are a person who understands what it signifies—you who have been satisfied by feeding upon Christ.

There is also the wine cup upon the Table. Were you ever *spiritually* thirsty? Did you then see how the Lord Jesus Christ, by His atoning Sacrifice, has fully met all the needs of your soul? Have you really partaken of Jesus Christ and has your heart been refreshed, revived and cheered by the application to it of the precious blood of Jesus? If so, you understand the meaning of that Communion Cup and you are a fit and proper person to partake of it. But if you have never known this spiritual hunger and thirst—if you have never realized your own spiritual needs—and if you have not known what it is for Christ to supply those needs—I charge you to stay away from this Table until you do know these things! Otherwise you will be eating and drinking in utter ignorance and the mere physical acts will be of no service whatever to you. May the Lord give you to know Him whom to know is eternal life! And when you do know Him, then come to His Table, for you will not then eat and drink unworthily.

Then, next, *examine yourselves concerning your faith*. Knowledge is all in vain without faith. And the knowledge of which I have been speaking is a knowledge that is closely allied with faith. Are you trusting alone in

the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ? I have asked myself that question many scores of times and I do not recollect that I ever had any hesitancy about how to answer it. I know that I am trusting in Jesus! If I am really living—if there is any truth in my own consciousness—I am sure that I have trusted my soul for time and for eternity wholly to the keeping of that Savior who lived, died and rose again for sinners! Well, that being so, I have a right to come to the Communion. Christ wants Believers at His Table—they are His own children. If you are believing in Him, He invites you to come and you will be welcome if you come! You will not eat and drink unworthily, dear Friend, if you apprehend, by faith, that Christ's flesh is meat, indeed, and His blood is drink, indeed. You will come to the Table in the right manner.

In the third place, I want you to *examine yourselves concerning your repentance*. In the emblems upon the Communion Table, you can see something of what it cost your Lord to redeem you from sin, death and Hell. The bread, representing the flesh of Jesus, is separate from the wine, which represents His blood. And the separation of the blood from the flesh indicates death—a bleeding away of life in the most acute anguish. It cost your Lord untold agony to redeem you from going down into Hell, so can you ever imagine that any man is a fit person to participate in the emblems which set forth that agony if he has never felt, in his own soul, any agony on account of sin? What right has an impenitent person to come where the death of Christ, on account of sin, is especially set forth? A heart that has never been broken because of sin—shall it come and remember the broken body and broken heart of Jesus? A heart of stone that has never been melted—shall it come and remember His precious flesh that was melted in the agonies of Calvary? If your eyes have wept no tears of repentance, how can you properly remember Him whose veins wept blood to redeem His people from their sins? It is a contrite heart and a broken spirit that Christ wants here! Only with such persons will God deign to dwell and only with such will Christ commune, either at His Table or anywhere else. See to it, then, that you have genuine repentance.

The next vital point for self-examination is love. *Examine yourselves concerning your love*. I think, Brothers and Sisters, that none of us can worthily eat of this bread and drink of this cup unless we truly love our Lord. So I venture to put the question to each one of you here. I know not your names, but the name that is used by our Lord Jesus will do for you. He says, "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?" You answer, "Yes." Do you? Then I will put the question again. "Simon, son of Jonas, Jesus says to you, 'Do you love Me?' And yet a third time I may put it, "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?" 'Tis Jesus with the pierced hands and with the pierced feet who speaks, and He says, "Do you love Me?" This is the test of whether you may come to His Table, or not. Can you answer, "Yes, Lord, You know all things, You know that I love You." Sometimes my friends hardly know it, for I am not always as consistent as I should be. Sometimes, Lord, I have even to question it myself, but You know that, deep down in my heart, notwithstanding all my coldness and forgetfulness, all my wanderings and all my faults—You know that I do love

You.” Come along, Brother! Come along, Sister! You will not eat and drink unworthily if this is true concerning your love to your Lord!

There is one other matter which is vital, and that concerns obedience. *Examine yourselves concerning your obedience*, for, unless a man obeys the commands of Christ, he does not prove that he really loves Christ. If we truly love Him, we shall keep His commandments. If Paul had said that no one had a right to come to the Communion unless he was perfect, I certainly could not come and I feel sure that there is no one in the whole world who would have the right to come. Perfect? Ah, perfect weakness! And if anybody says he is perfect in any other sense than that, he must be possessed of perfect folly! But the obedience that we must have is of this sort. Do you desire to be perfectly obedient to your Lord? Do you, in your heart, desire to be rid of every sin and to forsake every false way? Is there any sin that you would harbor and indulge? Then you are not truly obedient! But can you, on the other hand, say, “Lord, I would be purged from every evil of every kind and I desire to obey You in all things. No matter how it may grate upon my feelings, or how contrary it may be to my wishes, where You bid me, I will go, and what You command me, I will do—your Grace helping me”? Is that what you say? Then you may come to the Communion, for Jesus Himself welcomes you! But if you will not give up sin—if you have even one pet sin that you are still determined to keep, you are a traitor to Christ and you have no more right to come to His Table than Judas Iscariot had!

IV. Now, in closing, I want to speak a few words concerning THE SPIRIT IN WHICH, AFTER THIS SELF-EXAMINATION, WE OUGHT TO COME TO THE COMMUNION TABLE.

Ought we not to come, dear Friends, each one of us, *in the spirit of holy wonder*? This is the Lord’s Table and I am coming, with the Lord’s redeemed people, to eat and drink at it—what a wonder that I am here! I never come to the Communion without being astonished at the amazing Grace of God to me and especially as I think of this great church which God has been graciously pleased to gather in this place. How much I owe to Him! How constantly am I struck with the marvels of His mercy to me! And each one of you, my fellow Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, has some peculiar reason for feeling the same kind of wonder in your own case.

Next, we ought to come to the Communion *with a sense of self-abasement*. Brothers and Sisters, we ought to think little of ourselves everywhere, but when we come to the Table of our Lord, we ought to shrink to nothing—yes, to less than nothing! In the wilderness, man did eat angels’ food, but angels never ate such food as this! Yet we are permitted to come and partake of it. So, let us sink, and sink, and sink, and sink, and sink, and sink, and sink till we are lost in wonder, love and praise that we should ever be permitted to come to this sacred feast!

Let us come, at the same time, *in a spirit of strong desire*. I believe that in a sermon people always get something good when they come desiring to get something good. A hungry congregation will be sure to be fed! And if we come to the Communion Table feeling, “My Lord and Master, I desire to meet with You. The bread alone will not satisfy me—I need to feed

spiritually upon Your flesh. The wine will not quench my soul's thirst—I need spiritually to receive Your blood into my inmost soul. I desire, with all fervor of holy ardor, to put my finger into the print of the nails and to thrust my hand into Your side!" If you come to the Communion in this spirit—longing for Christ—you shall have Him! Open your mouths and pant for Him, and the living waters shall quench your soul's thirst.

Then come to the table *with a believing hope*. Perhaps you have not seen your Master's face lately—you have been sorrowfully walking in darkness. Come to the Communion hoping that He will look through the lattice and reveal Himself to you. Do you not know that the two ordinances are windows of agate and of diamonds to the opened eyes of His people? Perhaps your loving Lord will look again through one of those windows while you are sitting at His Table. So, come expecting Him! Come with your heart wide open to receive its rightful Lord and Master and, with your eyes of love looking up to Him, surely, if the eyes of your love look up to Him, the eyes of His love will look down upon you! If you come to His Table, singing, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His; He feeds among the lilies"—if you come passionately desiring to enjoy His company—then you may also come with the full confidence that His company will be given to you!

I have only one thing more to say. Come to the Communion Table resolved that if in the ordinance you do not find your Lord—if in the breaking of bread, He is not manifested to you and if, in the pouring forth of the wine, you get no taste of His love—you *will still trust in Him*. Do not depend on outward signs and visible evidences, but say, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' And if His Table should yield me no spiritual meat, I will still cleave to my Master. And if He will only let me be as a dog beneath His Table, I will eat the crumbs that fall there and so shall I live, for in every crumb of His mercy there is life everlasting!"

As for you who, perhaps, have never thought upon this subject, I have to say just this to you, and then I have done. Remember that religion does not begin with ordinances. While I have been speaking to professing Christians concerning the Communion, I hope that none of you have been thinking of it as a saving ordinance. You, as sinners, have to exercise faith in Christ before you have anything to do with Believers' Baptism—you have to come to Christ, Himself, before you are qualified to come to the Lords Table. As soon as you have, by faith, received Jesus Christ, Himself, as your Lord and Savior, the tokens and emblems of His death will become instructive to you. But until Jesus Christ is wholly yours, hands off all these holy things! For, as uncircumcised Philistines would have had no right to be at the Paschal Supper, so have those who are not renewed in heart with that circumcision that is made without hands, no right to come to the feast of Christian love which is reserved for the followers of the Crucified! Come to Jesus, to Jesus only, and put your trust in Him! God grant that you may do so, for Christ's sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
MATTHEW 26:17-30; 1 CORINTHIANS 11:18-34.**

Matthew 26:17-26. *Now on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where will You that we prepare for You to eat the Passover? And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover. Now when the evening was come, He sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me. And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and began, every one of them, to say unto Him, Lord, is it I? And He answered and said, he that dips his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, you have said. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it. So the Jewish Passover melted away into the Lord's Supper. Indeed, so gently did the one dissolve into the other that we scarcely know whether this incident, relating to Judas Iscariot, occurred during the Passover or the Supper. According to one account, it would seem to be one and, according to another account, the other, but, indeed, the one ordinance was almost imperceptibly merged into the other. I want you carefully to notice, as we read this narrative through, whether you can see, here, any trace of an altar. Look with both your eyes and see whether you can find any trace of a priest offering a sacrifice. Watch diligently to see whether you can perceive anything about kneeling down, or about the elevation or the adoration of "the host." Why, even the Roman Catholic church knows better than to believe in what it practices! Most of you have seen copies of the famous painting by Leonardo da Vinci, himself a Catholic of the old school. How does he picture those who were at the institution of the Lord's Supper? Why, they are all sitting around a table, with the Lord Jesus in their midst! I wonder that they exhibit and still allow to be in their churches, a picture like that, which, painted by one of their own artists—most effectually condemns their base idolatry in which a wafer-god is lifted up, to be adored by men, who must be besotted, indeed, before they can prostitute their intellects so grossly as to commit such an act of sin! What a rebuke to that idolatry is conveyed by this simple statement—"As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it."*

26. *And broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said. Take, eat, this is My body.* The Romanists do not even break the bread. They have a wafer so as to avoid anything like an imitation of the example set by our blessed Lord and Master. He took a piece of the bread which was provided for the paschal feast—the ordinary unleavened bread—and He broke it and gave it to His disciples, and said to them, "Take, eat, this is My body." Not, of course, the literal body, which was there at the table—this was the emblem of His body about to be broken on the Cross on the behalf of all His people!

27. *And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it. "Every one of you, take your own personal share."* This, also, the Papists have perverted by denying the cup to the laity.

28-30. *For this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.* It was a social feast, somewhat funereal and tintured with sadness, for Jesus was about to go from them to die. Still, it was a joyous celebration, closing with a hymn. At the paschal feast, the Jews always sang Psalms 113 to 118. Probably our Lord sang all these through. At any rate, Christ and His Apostles sang a hymn and I always like to think of Him as leading the little company—going to His death with a song upon His lips, His voice full of melody and made more sweet than ever by the near approach of Gethsemane and Calvary. I would like always to sing, whenever we come to the Communion Table, after the fashion in which they sang that night—"When they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives." Now let us read what the Apostle Paul writes concerning the Lord's Supper.

1 Corinthians 11:18-22. *For first of all, when you come together in the church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When you come together, therefore, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating everyone takes before the other his own supper and one is hungry, and another is drunk. What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise you the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.* These Corinthians fell into a great many errors. Everybody was a speaker and said whatever he pleased. And they had no proper order or rule. Among other evils—when they met together to observe the Lord's Supper, they brought their own food with them, thinking that eating thus together was keeping the sacred feast. So the richer ones feasted to the full and the poor went almost without anything. "One is hungry, and another is drunk," says the Apostle, and he tells them that this was not the right way of observing the Lord's Supper. Yet it is evident that the idea which was in their mind was that of feasting together. They had exaggerated it and carried it to a grievous excess, but that was the idea they had concerning it. Certainly, there was no altar, or priest, or anything of the sort. Now the Apostle tells them how the ordinance should be observed.

23-25. *For I have received of the Lord that which also I deliver unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.* How wonderfully simple it all is! There is nothing here of the paraphernalia of a "sacrament." It is a simple memorial festival, that is all.

26, 27. *For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.* He shall be guilty with respect to that body—not with respect to the *bread* against which he cannot sin—but with respect to that *body which is represented by the bread*, and with respect to that *blood which is represented by the cup*. See with what holy solemnity this humble feast is fenced and invested? There is a Divinity which hedges the simple ordinance of Christ lest men should trifle with it to their eternal ruin!

28, 29. *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.* “Judgment” or “condemnation” is the word in the original, not, “damnation.” That is not a fair translation, neither does it express the Truth of God. He that eats and drinks unworthily condemns himself in so doing—he comes under judgment for that act. This is the kind of judgment that falls upon Christians if they come unworthily to the Lord's Table—

30-32. *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* Believers who are rendered sick, or who even die because of their offense against the Lord's ordinance, are not therefore condemned to Hell! Far from it—it is that they may not be so condemned that God visits them. “When we,” the people of God—“are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned *with the world.*”

33, 34. *Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that you come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.* By due attention to the Apostle's injunctions, they would be able to rightly observe the ordinance. And we, also, may learn, from what Paul wrote, how we may worthily come to the Table of our Lord.

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

PREPARATION FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER NO. 3391

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 1914.

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

*“Let a man examine himself, and so let him
eat of that bread and drink of that cup.”*
1 Corinthians 11:28.

“Let a man examine himself.” That is, any man—every man who intends to eat of that bread and drink of that cup. The word is indefinite that it may be understood to be universal. No man is to come to that Table, no woman is to draw near without the previous self-examination. No age will excuse us, for there have been aged hypocrites, as well as young deceivers. No office will exonerate us from this examination, for there was a Judas even among the Apostles. The highest degree in the Church of God may consist with the most rotten formality. We are to examine ourselves each time we come. Each man is to do so. No one is to shirk the personal duty. Everyone is to undertake it as in the sight of God. Brothers and Sisters, you members of the Church about to come around this Table, give heed to the mandate of the Holy Spirit, by the inspired Apostle! “Let each one here examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread.”

“Let a man *examine* himself.” The word is forcible. Let him make inquisition into his own soul as to whether all is right or not. Let him search diligently, tracing out every symptom that looks unfavorable, if, perhaps, that symptom may reveal the truth. Let him dwell upon every dark side or ill-looking spot, if, perhaps, those dark signs should mean more than is apparent on the surface. We are not to trifle with ourselves by making a superficial survey. Let a man examine himself as does the dealer in precious metals when he thrusts the ore into the fire, knowing that only the gold will come out, while the dross will be consumed. Put yourself into a crucible! Heat the furnace of examination seven times hotter than before, for since your heart will, if possible, escape from knowing the truth, be resolved that it shall know it, and the worst of it, too! Let a man review, test, prove, search, try! In all the strongest words that I could find that mean the fullest scrutiny, would I put the language of the Apostle, “Let a man examine himself.”

“Let a man examine *himself*.” He need not be so particular to examine those that surround him. If there should be unworthy communicants at the Table, his communing will not thereby be damaged. Though some may have intruded where they ought not to be, yet if your heart and mind shall come near to Christ in actual fellowship, we shall not have the less indulgence from our Lord because a Judas happened to be there.

“Let a man examine himself.” Let it be personal work. I know there is an examination through which the Church member among us passes, when such as are experienced in the faith ask, “What do you know of these things? What is your faith touching this and that? Have you believed? Have you repented?” Such an examination, however, must never content you. I pray you never feel that it is any certificate of genuine discipleship to have been seen by the Elders, or to have had the pastor satisfied of your conversion. We are poor, fallible creatures—we cannot profess to search the heart—no, we never did profess it! It is but your outward life and your profession that we are called upon to judge at all. You must not go by our examination, but, “Let a man examine himself.” You are to look into your own heart, with your own eyes and ask to have them enlightened by the Holy Spirit! You are to hold the balance, yourselves, and weigh your soul therein. You are not to be satisfied with a second-hand judgment, or with another man’s search! Take the candle yourself, Man! Go through every corner and every crevice. Sweep out the old leaven and so keep the feast in simplicity of heart. “Let a man examine himself.”

“And so,” says the Apostle, “*let him eat of that bread.*” That is to say, *the examination is to be seasonable.* It is to come always at the time of the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine. It should always be the prelude to communion. Examination should preface enjoyment. You should see whether you ought to be there and have a right to be there and, that ascertained, then you should come—but not till then! Is it not a very significant circumstance that the very first time our Lord took the bread and broke it, and instituted this Supper, there was at that very time a self-examination going on—and they then made an appeal to the Lord, Himself, at the conclusion, for each one said, when the question was asked as to who it was that would betray Him, “Lord, is it I?” “Lord, is it I?”—not at all an unsuitable question to be passed round tonight, when we shall break bread, and hear it said, “One of you will betray Me.” Ah, Brothers and Sisters, I fear there are many more than one here among professors who will betray Him! Perhaps there are scores, if not hundreds, among so large a mass of professing Christians who will not prove, after all, to be genuine! Then let the question, though it stirs the anguish of your souls, pass round among you, “Lord, is it I?” “Lord, is it I?” Nor let any man eat of this bread, or drink of this cup till he has humbly in his soul sought to put it to his conscience, that he may investigate this matter whether he is Christ’s or not!

Now, dear Brothers and Sisters, for a few minutes we shall *look at the matter about which we are to examine ourselves.* And then *we shall press upon you this examination, by giving you a few reasons for it.* May God grant us a blessing in this searching business!

I. CONCERNING WHAT WE ARE TO EXAMINE.

You will observe that the text does not tell us, “Let a man examine himself as to this or that particular, and so let him eat.” He is to examine himself, but the Apostle does not say about what. The inference is that he is to examine himself about this Supper. He is to examine himself as

to whether he has a right to eat of this bread and to drink of this wine. The Supper gives us the clue, then, as to what we are to examine ourselves upon. I shall see before me, presently, broken bread and the wine cup filled with the red wine. These two things are the emblems—the bread of the body of Christ, which was bruised and made to suffer for our sake—the wine of that precious blood of Christ by which sin is pardoned and souls are redeemed.

I have no right to touch these emblems *unless in my soul I believe the facts that they represent*. Shall I not begin to question myself, then? *Do I accept, as a certain fact that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us?* Do I believe that God descended from the highest Throne of Glory and became a Man born of woman? Do I believe that He suffered in human flesh, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God? Do I believe that in His blood, which was “shed for many,” there is a virtue for the putting away of sin and making Atonement to Almighty God, and that so sinners may be accepted in the Beloved? Unless I believe these things, I am clearly a hypocrite, a terrible hypocrite, if I dare to come to this Table at all! I am perverse among the perverse to thrust myself in to touch the emblems when I do not accept the facts which those emblems set forth! Now, every man here can easily examine himself by that test, but I hope the most of us here would say, “We do believe those facts.” Yes, but do you believe them as facts that are forcible in themselves and fraught with consequences? Do you apprehend them in their amazing weight and their stupendous bearing upon the judgment of God and the destiny of men? God made flesh—God Incarnate—Jesus, Immanuel, suffering to put away the sins of His people—The Christ of God presenting salvation to every soul that trusts in Him! Why, this is news such as never stirred even Paradise, itself, before! It is the best, highest and most wondrous news that angels ever heard! We ought to so hear and accept these facts in that same spirit that characterized them when they transpired, in order to duly discern their importance, or we have no right to come here!

Furthermore, Brothers and Sisters. Every man who eats of the bread and drinks of the wine sets forth in emblem by the eating of the bread *that the flesh of Christ is his, and by the drinking of the wine that the blood of Christ is his*. Because he has possession of these things, he, therefore, comes to eat as men eat their own bread, or to drink as men drink their own wine. Now, dear Hearer, the question asked of you is this—Have you an interest in the body and the blood of Christ? “How can I know my interest therein?” asks one. You may know it thus—Do you fully and alone rely upon Jesus Christ for your salvation? Do you implicitly trust the merits of His agonies? Do you, without any other confidence, cast yourself fully upon the great atoning Sacrifice and transactions of Calvary? If so, that faith gives you Christ! It is the evidence that Christ is yours—you need not be afraid to come and take the wine when you so manifestly have the thing that is signified thereby. You may come—you are invited to come—you cannot stay away without sin if Christ, indeed, is yours!

The question may assume another form. This Supper was instituted *that we might remember Christ in it*. A question, then, for each one—Can you remember Christ? Will coming here help you to remember Jesus Christ? If not, you must not come. How can you remember what you do not know? And how shall you remember at all aright, One in whom you have no part nor lot? To remember Christ as a mere person in history is of no more use than to remember Julius Cesar, or Napoleon Bonaparte! To remember Christ, who loved you and gave Himself for you—this is the choice remembrance that will be beneficial to your spirits. Beloved, I am quite certain that sometimes in what is called, “the Sacrament,” there is little or no recollection of Christ. Men and women come to it with no idea of remembering Him. They think that there is something in the thing, itself—some holiness in eating the bread and drinking the wine—some Grace bestowed by the priestly hands that administer the emblems of the Passion. But oh, it is not so! This is not to receive the Lord's Supper—this is but Popish idolatry! This is not the true worship of the child of God! You come to the Table to remember Him! And only as far as those signs help you to remember Him—to trust Him, to love Him—only so far do they become a means of Grace to you! There is no latent moral virtue in material substances! No regeneration lurks in water! No confirmation in Grace streams from prelatric hands! There is no sanctity in lawn sleeves! There is no holiness in bread and nothing devout in wine! These are just outward and visible signs. The holiness, the sanctity, the Grace must lie in your own hearts as you lovingly receive these symbols and draw near with true spirits to the Lord who bought you with His blood! Ask yourselves, then—do you remember Him? Would these things help you to remember Him? If not, you have no business here.

It may be that some child of God here tonight is not fit to come to the Table. You may be startled, perhaps, at that remark, but I venture to suppose such a thing possible! And if it should happen to turn out to be the case, I pray that Brother or Sister to take the admonition home! Is there any Brother whom you have offended, whose forgiveness you have not sought, or is there anyone who has offended you, to whom you have not rendered forgiveness? I think that what our Lord said about coming to the altar and leaving the gift before the altar until first we have been reconciled to our brother—though this is no altar at all—may be with all righteousness supposed concerning this Table! How can you expect fellowship with Christ with an unforgiving heart? How can you love God, whom you have not seen, if you do not love your brother, whom you have seen? If it is so hard for you to forgive, how hard will it be for you to *be forgiven*? An unforgiving spirit shuts you out of Heaven. Why, Man, you cannot even perform the lowliest act—you cannot pray! You, cannot say, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” And if you cannot pray, much less can you commune! Oh, see to that, and let each man and woman examine themselves upon that!

In pressing this subject upon you, may I be permitted to say, very earnestly, that the right way to examine ourselves before coming to this Ta-

ble is *by the rule which is laid down in Scripture*. Examine yourselves by the tests and proofs of the Spirit which are spoken of in God's Word. Just as you would examine another, impartially—

**“Nothing extenuate,
Nor anything set down in malice”—**

so must you examine yourselves. Alas, we have one rule for others and another rule for ourselves! How mistakenly quick-sighted are we to discover the imperfections and infirmities of others of God's people, while our own glaring sins scarcely give our conscience a twinge! We go about with great beams in our eyes, all the while wondering why our Brothers and Sisters cannot see the mote that is in theirs! Judge yourselves! Judge yourselves and let the severity of your judgment upon your fellow Christians be now turned upon yourselves! It will be much more to your profit and much more according to the rules of Christian charity. God grant we may, none of us, be afraid of the strictest rules of Scripture in their sternest form. Alas, Brothers and Sisters, we often stop short in our self-examinations just when they might be of use to us, like the patient who tears off the plaster just when it begins to work, or ceases to receive the medicine precisely when it has reached a point in which it would be useful! Press home, press home, the grave questions and anxieties that lurk within you! Never be afraid to be probed to the quick and to be cut to the core. Make no provision for self-deception! Ask the Lord to lay bare your hearts, right bare, before His Omniscient eyes. And as you are thus examining, do not flinch, do not mince matters, do not trifle, do not be partial, but judge yourselves truly and thoroughly, lest, after all, you should be mistaken! And lest, after coming to this Table, you should be banished from the Marriage Supper of the Lamb!

Thus much upon the points which are in debate—about which we are to examine our fitness to come to this Table. Allow me now, as best I can—

II. TO PRESS THIS VERY IMPORTANT SUBJECT UPON YOU, WITH SOME REASONS WHY THERE SHOULD BE SUCH A SELF-EXAMINATION.

I might say, Brothers and Sisters, that such an examination should be used *because self-knowledge is always valuable*. The old Greeks, whose wonderful sayings often verged upon Inspiration, used to say, “Man, know yourself!” It is ill for a man to be acquainted with foreign countries and to know nothing of his own—to understand other men's farms and to let his own run to waste—to be conversant with other men's health and to be dying of a secret disease! To study other men's characters, but to allow his own character to be obnoxious in the sight of God. Know yourselves! Nothing will pay you better than to search your own hearts and to know yourselves. Of all stock-taking, this is one of the most beneficial. It will often be the death of pride when a man finds out what he really is. Self-righteousness will fly before such a searching, as owls fly before the rising sun! Know yourself and you are on the road to knowing Christ, for the knowledge of self will humble you, will make you feel your

need of Jesus and may, in the hands of God the Holy Spirit, lead you to the finding of the Savior! Oh, Men and Women, how is it that you have so many acquaintances, such a large circle of friends and yet do not make acquaintance with yourselves? While you will read much of literature, you read not your own hearts! You commune with others, yet you commune not with yourselves and do not know yourselves. I pray you examine yourselves, if for no other reason than because such lore is among the most precious that a man can gain!

Examine yourselves, again, you professed Christians, *because it is a marvelously easy thing for us to be deceived and to continue to be deceived.* Of course, every man likes to be flattered. Whether he believes it is so or not, this is a universal truth, and any man—I care not who he may be—is very easily to be persuaded that all is right with him. Satan, too, will help your natural tendencies, your partiality to yourselves. He only wishes to lull you to sleep and to rock you in the cradle of delusion. All things around a man conspire to help him to delude himself. The notion of Grace which is commonly entertained, the popularity of religion, the ease with which a man can join a church, the littleness of persecution in these days—all these things help to make it a very easy passage by which a man may glide along, until even when he dies he may still believe that he is on the road to Heaven, while all the while he has been going post-haste to Hell! Oh, since it is so easy to be deceived, and it is your soul that is in jeopardy, I beseech you examine yourselves!

Besides, my dear Friends, *you know how some are deceived.* Charge your memories a minute. Do you not know some among your own acquaintance that are deceived? Ah, you readily remember them! But do you know that there were persons sitting in other parts of the Tabernacle who were thinking of *you* while you were thinking of them! You said of such a one, “Ah, I have watched her at home. I know that noisy tongue of hers, she is no Christian.” And that very woman was just whispering to herself, “Ah, I know him. I have traded at his shop. I know those short weights of his—he is no Christian.” Ah, you do not want God to condemn you—if you were only allowed to speak, you would condemn yourselves! But if such is the case, that we so readily can find out that others are deceived, is not the question one that is worth the asking, “May we not be deceived, ourselves?” Oh, let it come home. May not the preacher be deceived? May not Elders and deacons, who have been in honor these many years, be, nevertheless, rotten at heart? May not members of this Church who have been at this Table from the very beginning, almost from their childhood have, after all, had but a superficial godliness that will not stand the fire, that shall try every man's work, of what sort it is? Therefore, I beseech you, since many are deceived, examine yourselves and so come to this Table.

Further, remember that it is important for professing Christians to do this, beyond all others, because, perhaps, there is no greater bar to the reception of Grace in all this world *than the belief that you have Grace already.* It were a mercy if some here present had never joined the Church.

Sad that I should say it, but it is so. It were a mercy to themselves that they had never professed to be Christians, because now, if we preach repentance, they say, "I repented years ago." If we talk of faith in the Savior, they say, "I have faith—I joined the Church and avowed my faith." If we speak of Christian knowledge—they have Christian knowledge—though it is the knowledge that puffs up. They have the imitation of all the Graces and, as it is sometimes very difficult to know which is the real gem and which is the paste gem that imitates it, so these people live so much like Christians, in many respects, that it is hard even for themselves to discover that they are not rich and increased in goods, but are naked, and poor, and miserable! If I were out of Christ, I would wish to be out of the Church. If I had no faith in Him, would that I had no profession of Him! If there is any soul in any place that is least likely to be saved, it is an unregenerate soul inside the Church, participating in Christian ordinances and dead while it lives! Search yourselves, then on this account.

And let me add another solemn word. Search yourselves *because within a short time, at the very longest, you will be upon the bed of death and there, if not before, there will be deep searching of heart.* When the outward man decays and the flesh is melting away, you will need something more than profession to lean on. Sacraments, and going to places of worship will prove but poor things to bear you up in the midst of the billows of death! How must a man feel when he puts out on that dread sea with his lifebelt and finds it will not bear his weight! When he leaps into his lifeboat that he had hoped would bear him safely to the haven, and finds that every timber is strained and that it leaks—and he sinks into the flood. Oh, find out your mistakes while yet there is time to rectify them! I beseech you by the living God, whose face of fire you shall soon see, prepare yourselves for His judgment as well as for the judgment of your own conscience in the hour of death, for every man must be weighed in the balance! No mere pretender shall pass the gates of bliss. Destitute of faith, it matters not how bright your profession—you shall be banished from His Presence! If it is not Grace-work and heart-work, you may have eaten or drunk in His Presence and He may have taught in your streets, but He will never know you! If you have never confessed your sins in secret to the great High Priest. If you have never laid your hand upon that precious head that bore the sin of His elect. If you have never seen in solemn transfer your iniquities passed over to Him—and if your faith has never recognized that transaction and rejoiced in it—oh, beware, beware, beware, for in the last tremendous day your professions shall be but a painted pageantry for you to go to Hell in! Yes, worse than that, among the firewood of your burning that shall flash most furiously with devouring fire, will be the hollow sticks of your base profession, your bastard godliness, your counterfeit graces, your glitter that was not golden, your profession that was not based upon possession!

Oh, dear Brothers and Sisters, for these reasons let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread.

But now, supposing this to be all done and we have come to this answer, "I am not in Christ. I am not a Christian. I have not believed"? Then, away, away, away from this Table! But where shall I send you? I will send you to the Cross. Though you may not come to the Table, you may come to Jesus!

But suppose your answer should be, "I am very unworthy and sinful, but still, I have believed in Jesus, though I yet see much in myself that is evil." Dear Brothers and Sisters, that is not the question! Preparation for the Lord's Supper does not lie in perfect sanctification, but in true faith in Jesus! If, then, you have made sure of this, have done with the examination—I mean for tonight—because after you have examined yourself, it does not then say, "Keep on," but, "So let him eat," and I do not like that examination to stick in the throat so that you cannot digest the dainty morsels of the Savior's precious body. It is done! You have examined and you know Him! You have believed in Him and trusted that He is able to keep you. Now, then, take care that you eat! I mean not merely eat with the mouth and drink with the throat, but now take care to pray that you may have real fellowship with the Incarnate God, gratefully magnifying the Grace that has made you to differ and cheerfully accepting the precious Person who is the ground of your reliance, of the life of your soul!

God grant you now, having passed the door and shown your entrance ticket as true Christians, to sit and eat bread in the Kingdom of God!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
MATTHEW 6:1-24; 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-16.**

Verse 1. *Take heed that you do not do your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise you have no reward of your Father which is in Heaven.* The motive which leads a man to give will form the true estimate of what he does. If he gives to be seen of men, then when he is seen of men he has the reward he sought for—and he will never have any other. Let us never do our alms or good works before men, to be seen of them.

2-5. *Therefore when you do your alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when you do alms, let not your left hand know what your right hand does, that your alms may be in secret: and your Father which sees in secret, shall Himself reward you openly. And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.* I have heard very great commendation given to certain Easterns, because at the hour of the rising of the sun, or the hour when the sound is heard from the summit of the mosque, wherever they may be, they put themselves in the posture of prayer. God forbid I should rob them of any credit they deserve, but far be it from us ever to imitate them! We are not to be ashamed of our prayers, but they are not

things for the public street! They are intended for God's eyes and God's ears, only.

6, 7. *But you, when you pray, enter into your closet and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father, which sees in secret, shall reward you openly. But when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.* It is not very easy to repeat the same words often without it becoming a vain repetition. A repetition, however, is not forbidden, but a "vain" repetition. And how greatly do they err who measure prayers by the yard! They think they have prayed so much because they have prayed so long, whereas it is the work of the heart—the true pouring out of the desire before God—that is the thing to be looked at. Quality not quantity! Truth, not length. Oftentimes the shortest prayers have the most prayer in them.

8, 9. *Be not you, therefore, like they: for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him. After this manner therefore pray you.* And then He gives us a model of prayer which never can be excelled—containing all the parts of devotion. They do well who model their prayers upon this.

9-13 *Our Father which are in Heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.* Our Savior now makes a remark upon this prayer and on one particular part of it which has stumbled a great many.

14, 15. *For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* There are some who have altered this and pray in this fashion, "Forgive us our debts as we desire to forgive our debtors." It will not do! You will have to desire God to forgive you, and desire in vain if you pray in that fashion! It must come to this point of literal, immediate, completed forgiveness of every offense committed against you if you expect God to forgive you. There is no wriggling out of it. The man who refuses to forgive, refuses to be forgiven! God grant that we may, none of us, tolerate malice in our hearts. Anger glances in the bosom of wise men—it only burns in the heart of the foolish. May we quench it and feel that we do freely, fully and heartily forgive, knowing that we are forgiven!

16. *Moreover when you fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.* Simpletons praise them—think much of them—and they plume themselves thereon and think themselves the very best of men. They have their reward.

17, 18. *But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that you appear not unto men to fast, but unto your Father which is in secret, and your Father, which sees in secret, shall reward you openly. Yet*

have I heard persons speak of certain emaciated ecclesiastics as being such wonderfully holy men. "How they must have fasted! They look like it. You can see it in their faces." Probably much more likely produced by a fault in their digestion, than by anything else! And if not—if we are to suppose that the skinniness of a man, his person, is to be the token of his holiness—then the living skeleton was a saint to perfection! But we are not beguiled by such follies as these. The Christian fasts but he takes care that no one shall know it. He wears no ring or token even when his heart is heavy. Full often he puts on a cheerful air, lest by any means he should communicate unnecessary sorrow to others! And he will be cheerful and happy in the midst of company, to prevent their being sad, for it is enough for him to be sad, himself, and sad before his Father's face.

19-21. *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* There is many a way of sending your treasure before you to Heaven. God's poor are His money-boxes—His bankers. You can pass your treasure over to Heaven by their means. And the work of evangelizing the world by the labors of God's servants in the ministry of the Gospel—you can help this, also. There is much need for your plenty. Thus also you can pass your treasure over into the King's bank and your heart will follow it! I have heard of one who said his religion did not cost him a shilling a year—and it was remarked that very probably it would have been expensive at the price. You will find people form a pretty accurate estimate of the value of their own religion by the proportion which they are prepared to sacrifice for it.

22. *The light of the body is the eye. If, therefore, your eye is single.* If your motive is single—if you have only one motive—and that a right one—the master one of glorifying God—if your eye is single.

22, 23. *Your whole body shall be full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body shall be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!* When a man's highest motive is himself, what a dark and selfish nature he has! But when his highest motive is his God, what brightness of light will shine upon all.

24. *No man can serve two masters.* He can serve two persons very readily. For that matter, he can serve twenty, but not two *masters*. There cannot be two master principles in a man's heart, or master passions in a man's soul. "No man can serve two masters."

24. *For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.* Though some men's lives are a long experiment of how far they can serve the two.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-16.

Verse 1. *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.* The Church at Corinth

consisted of persons of large education and great abilities. It was one of those churches that had given up the one-man system, where everybody talked as he liked—a very knowing Church, and a Church of Christians, too. But for all that, Christian babies! And though they thought themselves to be so great, yet the Apostle says that he never spoke to them as to spiritual men—he kept to the simple elements—regarding the carnal part as being too much in them as yet to be able to drink down spiritual things.

2. *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for up to now you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able.* How grateful we ought to be that there is milk and that this milk does feed the soul—that the simplest Truths of Christianity contain in them all that the soul needs—just as milk is a diet upon which the body could be sustained without anything else. Yet how we ought to desire to grow that we may not always be upon a milk diet but that we may be able to digest the strong meat—the high Doctrine of the deep things of God. These are for men, not for babes. Let the babes be thankful for the milk, but let us aspire to be strong men that we may feed on meat.

3. *For you are yet carnal: for where as there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal and walk as men?* A united Church, you may conclude, is a growing Church—perhaps a grown Church! But a disunited Church, split up into factions where every man is seeking position and trying to be noted—such a Church is a Church of babes. They are carnal and walk as men.

4. *For while one says, I am of Paul: and another, I am of Apollos, are you not carnal?* Instead of that, they should all have striven together for the defense of the common faith of Jesus Christ. No greater symptom of mere infancy in true religion than the setting up of the names of leaders or the preference for this or that peculiar form of Doctrine, instead of endeavoring to grasp the whole of the Truth of God wherever one can find it.

5, 6. *Who, then, is Paul? And who is Apollos but ministers by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increase.* Let God, then, have all the glory! Be grateful for the planter and grateful for the waterer, yes, and grateful to them as well. But still, let the stress of your gratitude be given to Him without whom watering and planting would be in vain!

7, 8. *So then neither is he that plants anything, neither he that waters, but God that gives the increase. Now he that plants and he that waters are one.* They are pursuing the same design! And Apollos and Paul were one in heart. They were true servants of one Master.

8, 9. *And every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are laborers together with God: you are God's husbandry, you are God's building.* The Church is built up. God is He who builds it up—the Master of the work, but He employs His ministers under Him to be builders.

10-13. *According to the Grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds thereon. But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest. For the day shall declare it because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is.* It is very easy to build up a Church quickly. It is very easy to make a great excitement in religion and become very famous as a soul-winner. Very easy. But time tries everything! If there were no other fire than the mere fire of *time*, it would suffice to test a man's work. And when a church crumbles away almost as soon as it is got together—when a church declines from the Doctrines which it professed to hold, when the teaching of the eminent teacher is proved, after all, to have been fallacious and to have been erroneous in practical results, then what he has built comes to nothing! Oh, dear Friends, what little we do, we ought to aspire to do for eternity. If you shall never lay the brush to the canvas but once, make an indelible stroke with it! If only one work of sort shall come from the statuary's workshop, let it be something that will live all down the ages! But we are in such a mighty hurry—we make a lot of things that die with us—transient results. We are not careful enough as to what we build with. May God grant that this truth may sink into our minds! Let us remember that if it is hard building with gold and silver, and harder still building with precious stones, yet what is built will stand the fire! It is easy building with wood—and still easier with hay and stubble—but then there will be only a handful of ashes left of a whole lifework if we build with these.

14-15. *If any man's work abides which he has built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.* If he meant right—if he endeavored to serve God as a worker, though he may have uttered many errors and have been mistaken—(and which of us has not been?)—he shall be saved, though his work must be burnt.

16. *Know you not that you are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?* Do you know it? He says, "Know you not?" but I might leave out the, "not," and say, "Know you that you are the Temple of God?" What a wonderful fact it is! Within the body of the saint, God dwells, as in a Temple. How some men injure their bodies or utterly despise them, though they would not so do if they understood that they are the Temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in them.

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF DIVINE CHASTENING NO. 2746

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1901.

DELIVERED BY C H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK,
ON A THURSDAY EVENING, IN THE AUTUMN OF 1859.

*“When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord,
that we should not be condemned with the world.”
1 Corinthians 11:32.*

THERE had been great irregularities in the Corinthian Church with regard to the Lord's Supper. They had made that solemn festival a scene of gluttony. Each person had brought his own provisions with him and while the rich were feasting on dainties, the poor often had scarcely anything to eat. The Apostle Paul tells them that on that occasion they did not come together for a feast of carnal things. He says, “In eating everyone takes before others his own supper, and one is hungry, and another is drunk. What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise you the Church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.”

Now, on account of these irregularities, God was pleased to visit the Church at Corinth with many sore afflictions. A great many of the members were smitten with sickness and some were even taken away by death. Little did the Church at Corinth understand the reason for this plague, this visitation of God upon their members, but the Apostle explains it to them. He says, “For this cause”—note the 30th verse—“many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.” There is a constant judgment going on in the Church of God. If we would judge ourselves and walk orderly and worthily in God's sight, then we shall not be judged—the plagues will not come upon us. But when we are judged, what are we to say with regard to that? Is that a proof that God hates His Church and that He has cast His people away? And especially, too, if any die as the result of their iniquities, is that a proof that they perish eternally? “Oh no” says Paul, “they are judged now, in this world—they are chastened now of the Lord, that they should not be condemned with the world.”

What a great mystery is Providence, even to us who believe in a future state! We throw down the gauntlet of defiance to the infidel. We declare and with the best reason on our side, that it is utterly impossible for men to understand how there can be any justice in the dispensations of God in this world, or how there can be any justice in God at all, if there is not

a time to come in which the great mysteries of this life shall all be set right. We defy any man who disbelieves in the immortality of the soul, to account for the fact that the most godly are those who suffer the most, and that, often, those who have the greatest happiness in this world are the men who least deserve it and are the most wicked! If there is not a future state of rewards and punishments. If the just man shall not reap the full reward of all his sufferings and griefs, and if the wicked shall not receive punishment for all his sins, how can God be just—and how can the Judge of all the earth do right?

There is also another mistake into which we may very readily fall. It is very easy for us to judge of the characters of men by their position in this world—and so to judge in a manner entirely apart from the facts. Some will have it that if a man is exceedingly prosperous, it stands to reason that he must have been good. “Surely God would not have rewarded him,” they say, “unless there had been something worthy about him.” This is what is inculcated upon our children. How often does the father pat his child upon the head and, pointing to an alderman who is growing exceedingly fat with riches, tell his son that he must be a good boy and then he, too, will become as great? Or, taking him by the house of some exceedingly rich man, how often does the father tell his child that if he shall be good—which is, I suppose, but a brief, pithy expression, to signify if he shall be obedient and keep the Laws of God—then he shall be rich? And so, in fact, it is thought impossible to make a child understand that a man may be rich and yet wicked—that he may be happy in this world and have much of visible blessedness and yet, after all, be a stranger to God and be the very reverse of good! We, I trust, in our riper years, are free enough from such a mistake as that.

Yes, Friends, we must never judge of men’s inward condition by their outward position. A rich man may be gracious and a poor man may be wicked—and we may turn the truth in the other direction and declare that many are the poor who have Divine Grace within, and many are the rich who are but fattening for God’s slaughtering-day at the last! It is a well-known fact, which has, doubtless, led to both the errors which I have mentioned—the error of thinking that God is unrighteous and also the error of judging men by their outward state. I say it is doubtless a fact that many of the true children of God are exceedingly troubled in this world, while, full often, the wicked escape. Why is this? Our text explains it. It declares that “we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

I. THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE CHASTENED OF THE LORD—THEY ARE MORE CHASTENED THAN ANY OTHER MEN. They are chastened every morning and they are plagued all the day long. Why is this? God must be right in acting thus—what is His reason? I will give you a few reasons. First, the righteous are more chastened than other men because their sins are worse than those of others. Secondly, they are more chastened than other men, that God may make them an example of His hatred against sin. And then, they also receive extraordinary chastening

because of God's extraordinary value of them and His determination to wean them from their sins and cure them of their iniquities.

I say, in the first place, that God chastens His people more than others, and we may find a reason for this in the fact that *their sins are worse than those of other men*. I do not mean that they are outwardly worse—I will defend the character of the people of God from any such aspersion as that! I do not mean that the people of God are worse sinners than others, judged by the Law, weighed in the scales of the Justice which will try all men. It is in another respect that they are worse—not in the light of the Law of God, but in the light of the Gospel.

They are worse, partly because the righteous have more of the Light of God than other men. In proportion to the Light of God against which we sin, is the greatness of our iniquity. A sin which a Hottentot might commit and which God would wink at because of his ignorance, He would never pass by in His own children, because His children know better. They have spiritual discernment. They are not so foolish as to put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Their conscience has been enlightened and besides, they have the Word of God and the indwelling of the Spirit—and when they sin, they sin against greater light and knowledge than other men have. Hence it is that their sins stand in the very first position with regard to guilt. And what wonder, therefore, that God should sorely chasten them?

On this thought I will not lay greater stress, but pass on to observe that the sins of the righteous are worse than those of other men from the fact of the greater mercy which they have received. It is impossible for any man to sin so grievously against God as the man who is God's favorite. He who lies nearest to our bosom is capable of grieving us the most. Why is it that the sin of Judas was so great? It was because Judas was an Apostle and he had been a friend of Christ. Jesus might have said to him, "It was not an enemy that reproached Me; then I could have borne it. Neither was it he that hated Me that did magnify himself against Me; then I would have hid Myself from him. But it was you, a man My equal, My guide and My acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together and walked unto the House of God in company." Christ feels a blow from an enemy, but a stab from His friend is "the unkindest cut of all."

What? When Christ has chosen us out of the world and has redeemed us with His precious blood. When God has taken us into His family, when He has wrapped the righteousness of Christ about us, like a robe, and has promised us an eternal dwelling place at His right hand—shall we sin, do you think, and shall not our sin be counted to be a heinous offense, indeed, because of the love at which we kicked and the great mercy over which we stumbled? A husband feels an unkind word from his wife far more than from anyone else because he loves her better than he loves others and, therefore, she has the greater power to grieve him. And Christ cares little for all the railing of a wicked world, but if His Church speaks slightly of Him—if she offends Him—then is He cut even to the heart! If we take anyone into our friendship, we entertain at once a jealousy of him. If he speaks evil behind our back, we say, "If you

had been an enemy, I would never have noticed it. You might have said just what you chose, and I would never have rebuked you. But you professed to be my friend and if you say anything against me, I cannot bear it. This wounds me sorely and, therefore, I must rebuke you for it.”

One good old writer says, “When the Lord takes a man to His private chamber and admits him into His secrets, He at once becomes jealous of him—He will not permit him to sin so deeply as others. ‘Oh,’ He says, ‘have I made you My friend? Have I walked with you? Have I permitted you to lean your head upon My bosom and will you go away and break My Laws, and rebel against One who has been so loving to you as to admit you into the secret place of His Tabernacle? Then, surely, your sin is great, indeed, and I ‘will chasten you for it.’” Beloved, if you will set your sins in this light, you will at once perceive that it is no wonder that God chastens you! Ah, Brothers and Sisters, when we think of the great mercy of God to us—of His overflowing kindness, both in Providence and Grace—when we meditate upon the fond affection which has cradled us from our youth up, and the strong protection that has guarded us from all harm, surely we must think that offenses against God, committed by us, are worse than the sins of other men who have never tasted of such mercies as those which we receive daily! This, also, is another proof of the greatness of the sin of God’s people as compared with the sin of others—and is a reason for His chastising them.

Besides, my Friends, the sins of God’s people are worse than those of other men from the ruinous effect of their example. When a worldling is seen drunk, there is sin, of course—but when a Church member is seen reeling in the streets, how much worse it is! The world makes this a grand excuse for itself. It is under the shadow of the imperfections of the Church that wicked men find shelter from the scorching heat of their conscience. If they can detect a minister in sin. If they can discover a deacon or an elder indulging in iniquity. If they can quote a justification for sin from the lips of a Church member, how content and pleased the wicked are! They did, as it were, but walk in their transgressions before—but when they find a Church member in the same path, then they run greedily in the way of iniquity! I say, Brothers and Sisters, our sins deserve twice the afflictions of other men if we rebel because they do more mischief. And often, you know, judges have to estimate transgressions not merely by their guilt, but by the influence of the example of the criminal—and so, God will the more heavily chasten His people because if they sin, they do so much damage to the morals of mankind and bring so much dishonor upon the name of the Lord their God! For all these reasons I am sure I am right in saying that the sins of God’s people are, in God’s esteem, worse than the sins of other men and, perhaps, this is one reason why He always chastens them, even when He lets the wicked go unpunished for a while. This is not, however, the grand reason. I come to another.

Why does God chasten His people while He permits so many others to go unpunished? I take it that another reason is that He *may give a manifest and striking example of His hatred of sin*. When God chastens all

ordinary man for iniquity, His justice is seen. But when He lays His rod upon His own child, then at once you discover how much He hates iniquity. When Brutus condemned traitors, Rome could see his justice, but when his two sons are brought up and accused of the crime, and he says—"Lictors, do your duty. Strip and beat them." And after they have been scourged, when he bids them take them away and treat them as common malefactors, then all Rome is startled with the inflexibility of the justice of Brutus! So, when God smites His own children—when He lays the rod on those who are very dear to Him, when He makes them public examples—then even the world itself cannot withhold its admiration of the justice of God.

When David—the man after God's own heart—was smitten so sorely for one sin, God's justice was more fully manifested than in the punishment of a hundred ordinary men. There were many men, throughout Jerusalem, ten times worse than David, but they escaped Scot free. Not so David, because David was much loved of God and, therefore, he must be chastened that the whole world might see that God hates sin, even when it nestles in the breasts of His own beloved children. Never was there such a proof of God's hatred of iniquity as when He put His own Son to death! And next to that, the chastisement of His own well-beloved children is the most forcible proof of His hatred of iniquity. I take it that this is a second reason why the righteous are so much chastened.

But then the best reason is *because of the high value which God sets upon His people*. Our text says, "We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." God has a great esteem for His people and He will not let them perish. But He knows right well that if He allowed them to go unchastened, they would soon destroy themselves and lose their interest in His love. This He never can permit, for that were contrary to His oath and contrary to His Covenant. Therefore does He chasten them. So, whenever you are a chastened child of God, you may draw comfort from it. Samuel Rutherford, in writing to Lady Kenmure, who was in deep affliction, having first lost her two children and then her husband and mother, said, "Your Ladyship must certainly be a special favorite of Heaven, for if you were not, surely the Lord would not take all this pain to make you fit for Heaven. If He did not love you very much, He would not be so jealous of your love. For I take it," he said, "this is the reason why He took away those who were dear to you—because He would have every atom of your love and, therefore, would not permit anything to be spared to you upon which your heart was set."

As for the wicked, let them have what they please—let them set their hearts upon their riches, it is their only treasure—let them give their love to their lusts and to their carnal pleasures. God wants not their love—the love of the wicked is not pleasant to Him—He wants not their praises. What have they to do with loving and praising Him while they are reveling in their iniquities? But with regard to the righteous, God loves them—He wants their love and He will have it—and He will chasten them until He gets it. He will make them even as a weaned child, taking away the breasts of this world from their lips, and putting bitterness into their

mouths till they begin to loathe this world and long for a better—long to leave their present state and to be with Him who is their All-in-All!

Besides, with regard to the wicked, God says of them, “Let them go on sinning, let them fill up the measure of their iniquities.” A reprobate may be many years in sin before he is discovered or punished. You have known and seen, of late, in the commercial embezzlements of our time, how long a wicked and ungodly man may go on in sin. Year after year he is embezzling money, yet he is not found out. There are a thousand opportunities for discovery, but, somehow or other, his wickedness is masked and it seems as though Providence itself helped him to conceal his iniquity. But if you are a child of God, don’t you try it, for you will be found out the first time! Mark that—an heir of Heaven can never go on long in villainy. God will straightway set him up as an object of scorn before men—and why? Because the Lord loves us and He does not want us to fill up the measure of our iniquity. He desires to stop us at once in our sin and, therefore, you will find this is a fact verified in your observation—if a child of God commits but a small act of dishonesty, it is certain to be found out—but an ungodly man may heap up his iniquities and yet go unpunished for many and many a day!

No, I will go further than that! Many a man has pursued a life of fornication and uncleanness and has *never*, at least as far as we can see, been punished or chastened. His life seems to have been a continued round of gaiety. He has gone from mirth to mirth, and from merriment to debauchery. He has been the envy of his fellow men, for the strength of his body and for the vigor of his health. He has even come to die and has gone to his grave softly, without a band in his death, or a pang in his last hour—and why is this? Simply because the Lord said, “Let him alone; he is joined to idols; let him go.” God did not care to cast stumbling-blocks in his path. He was running his downward way and God left him alone. “There,” He said, “let him work his own damnation. Let him run the downward road. I will not stop him.” And, like the swine possessed with devils, that man has run violently down a steep place into the sea of damnation and has never discovered his lost state till he has perished in the fiery waters of Hell!

But you will not find the child of God go on like that. David grossly sinned once, but it was not long before he was chastened for it. Another man might have lived for years in adultery and yet not been punished. Not so with the Believer—he must be chastened at once. God will keep His people free from the growth of iniquity. As soon as the first weed springs up, He lays the hoe to its roots. But as for the wicked, their sins may grow till they are great. “Let them alone,” says God. “In the day of harvest, I will say to the reapers, ‘Gather them into bundles, and burn them.’” So, you see, it is God’s love to His children, His anxious desire that they may not perish, which often brings them into chastisement on account of sin which, otherwise, they might have escaped. If, then, we are often chastened and sorely vexed. If we are God’s children, let us see the loving reason for it and conclude that “we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

II. And now, having explained the Lord's chastisement of His people, I shall occupy but a very few minutes in showing that GOD, BY THUS CHASTENING US, SPARES US FROM BEING CONDEMNED WITH THE WORLD, dwelling simply upon the fact that though the righteous are chastened here, they can never be condemned in the next world.

We are often charged with preaching immoral Doctrine when we say that the righteous man can never be condemned—that he that believes in Christ can never be punished on account of his sins. Whatever charge may be brought against us, we are not ashamed to repeat our statement, for thus it is written, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The sufferings which God's people feel here are not punishments, but chastisements. If I have ever used the word "punishment" in relation to Believers, it must be understood in its restrictive sense.

God has punished Christ, once and for all, for all the sins which the elect have committed, or ever can commit. And *it is not consistent with the justice of God to punish the same offense twice in two different persons.* The sufferings of the righteous here are not punitive, they are corrective—they are intended to be chastening. It is not the sword of the judge, it is the rod of the father, which falls upon the Believer. The father may sometimes give his child a sterner and more severe punishment for an offense than even a judge might award. A judge might dismiss a child with a censure for some fault, but the father, when he gets him home, will see him well whipped for it and so, full often, the chastisement of God, in this world, may even seem to be heavier than if it were punitive! Yet we may always remember this for our comfort—that God is not condemning us with the world. When He is smiting us, He is not using the rod with which He will break in pieces the wicked! He is not terrifying us with the awful thunders which shall one day make all Hell quake with fright! He is but putting on an expression of anger that He may cleanse our hearts—and is but using the rod with the hand of love, that He may purge us of that folly which is bound up in the heart of His people.

I have said that a Christian shall never, in the world to come, be condemned for his sin, and it is assuredly true, for the first reason, that God cannot punish twice for one offense. It is also true for the second reason, that *God cannot condemn those whom He has justified.* That were to reverse what He has once done and so to prove Himself a mutable being! He cannot first give us the witness of forgiveness and afterwards the witness of damnation for guilt. It is not possible for Him to first kiss us with the kiss of His love and then, afterwards, to cast us into Hell. God will not play fast and loose with His children, first justifying them through His Grace and then, afterwards, condemning them through their sin. I say that were to contradict Himself.

God cannot, in the third place, condemn His children *because they are His children, and He is their Father.* Having taken men into such a relation to Himself as to make Himself their Father, God has in that very act put it beyond His own power to utterly condemn and cast them out. He is Omnipotent—He can do anything as far as His power is concerned—but

He cannot belie the instincts of His heart. Now, no father can forget his child—it is not possible—and it is not possible for God, after He has once forgiven and has sealed that forgiveness in the glorious privilege of adoption—it is not possible for Him to answer the cry of, “Abba, Father,” with the sentence, “Depart, you cursed!”

And, again, it is impossible for God to condemn those whom He has justified for the reason that if He did so, *all His promises and the whole tenor of the Covenant would be violated*. It was to save from their sins all those who believe in Him that Jesus died. If, then, these are not saved, everyone of them, His death must be in vain. If those whose sins He carried shall be, at last, cast into Hell, then Christ’s project of Redemption has never been fully carried out. To suppose a universal Atonement is to suppose that the design of God has been partly frustrated—that Christ has attempted to do something greater than He will really effect. But here is our solid resting place—that the Covenant stands secure and that, in Christ, every stipulation of it is firm—and through Him every single article of it shall be carried out. Now, the complete salvation of all the elect is one part of it and, therefore, chastened though they may be in this world, that is no contradiction to the fact that they shall “not be condemned with the world” hereafter.

I am going to close my discourse with a picture. The Last Great Day is coming. Do you see, yonder, the gathering storm? Do you mark the black clouds as, one after another, they accumulate? For whom is that tempest coming? Can you take a glimpse into the treasure house of God and see His hailstones and coals of fire? Can you discover His lightning, as they are stored up against the Day of Wrath? For whom are these reserved? You shall hear, by-and-by.

Look yonder in another direction, the very opposite. What does that deluge of descending rain mean? What does the rolling of that awful thunder mean? I see, in the center of that storm, a Cross. What do all that terrible display of tempest and of hurricane mean? Why, yonder, there is no sound as yet of storm! It is gathering, but it has not burst. It still gathers but, as yet, not a drop of rain descends. The lightning is bound up in bundles which are not yet loosed. Why is it that, yonder, all is the stillness of a storehouse and a mighty preparation for war, while, over there, that war is going on and all the bolts of God are launched? It means this. God has separated His people from the world. Over yonder His wrath is spending itself, the black clouds are letting out their floods, thunder is poured forth and lightning is flashing—where? Upon the head of the mighty Savior, the dying Jesus!

The wrath must be spent somewhere and so, in all its fury, it is manifesting itself around Christ! And yonder pilgrims who are just caught by a few drops that skirt the terrible tempest, are those for whom that tempest is being endured by their glorious Substitute. Yonder tried and afflicted ones, scared by the lightning and alarmed by the troubling of the tempest—these are the men who have a share in the Substitution of Christ. I say the afflictions of God’s people are like the trickling on the skirts of that great tempest—they are the few drops on the margin of the

storm which spent itself on Christ. These men, who in this world suffer afflictions—righteously endure them and patiently suffer them for Christ's sake—are those who shall have no storm hereafter—for look, the storm is now gone. All is cleared away and, instead, the sun shines out in its glory above their heads! Angels are descending and on angelic wings they are borne upward to a Temple and to mansions prepared for them in the Presence of their Father.

But look at yonder men and women—they are dancing merrily! Though all overhead is black, not a drop of rain has yet fallen. Mark how they are marrying and giving in marriage, for not a bolt has yet been launched. Who are these? Alas, poor wretches, these are the men for whom the Judge is treasuring up wrath against the Day of Wrath. For them He is reserving fire and brimstone, hot coals of juniper and terrible destruction. They look askance on yonder pilgrims slightly wetted with the storm. They make a mock of yonder poor converted ones, trembling as they hear the rolling thunder. They say, "We hear no tempest! It is all a delusion, there is no storm!" Yes, Sinners, but the day is coming when you shall discover your mistake! You have your portion here, but Believers are happier, as they are all saved for the great hereafter. You have no bands in your death—it is that you may have the tighter bands in Hell! You have few afflictions here—it is that they may be doubled to you hereafter! You go merrily through this world, you carry the lamp of joy with you—it is that your blackness may be the more terrible and your darkness the more awful when you are excluded from earthly joys—and shut up forever in the outer darkness, where there will be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth!

It is pleasant to pass through a country after a storm has spent itself—to smell the freshness of the herbs after the rain has passed away and to note the drops after they have been turned to diamonds in the sunlight. That is the position of a Christian. He is going through a land where the storm has spent itself, or if there are a few drops, the written page of the Covenant cheers him on and tells him this is not for his destruction. But how terrible is it to witness the approach of a tempest—to see the preparation for the storm, to mark the birds of Heaven as they flutter their wings, to see the cattle as they lay their heads low in terror, to discern the face of the black sky, the sun which shines not and the heavens which give no light! How terrible to stand on the verge of a horrible hurricane—such as occurs, sometimes, in the tropics—to know that we cannot tell how soon the wind may come in fury, tearing up trees from their roots, forcing rocks from their pedestals and hurling down all the dwelling places of man!

And yet, Sinner, this is just your position! There are no hot drops as yet fallen, but a shower of fire is coming. There are no terrible winds blowing on you, but God's tempest shall surely come. As yet, the floods are dammed up by Mercy, but the floodgates shall soon be opened. The bolts of God are yet in His storehouse, but, lo, judgment comes, and how awful shall be that moment when God, robed in vengeance, shall come forth in fury! Where, where, where, O Sinner, will you hide your head, or

where will you flee? Oh, that the hand of Mercy may now lead you to Christ! He is freely preached to you, and you know your need of Him! Believe in Him! Cast yourself upon Him and then the fury shall be over and you need not dread to go into eternity, for no storm awaits you there, but quiet, and calm, and rest, and peace forever!

**EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON:
RUTH 1.**

Verse 1. *Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.* That was a bad move on their part—better poverty with the people of God, than plenty outside of the covenanted land.

2. *And the name of the man was Elimelech.* Elimelech? It means, “my God is King.” A man with such a name as that ought not to have left the kingdom where His God was King! But some people are not worthy of the names they bear.

2. *And the name of His wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem Judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.* That is generally what happens. Those who go into the country of Moab continue there. If Christians go away from their separated life, they are very apt to continue in that condition. It may be easy to say, “I will step aside from the Christian path for just a little while,” but it is not so easy to return to it. Usually something or other hampers—the birdlime catches the birds of Paradise and holds them fast.

3, 4. *And Elimelech, Naomi’s husband died, and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.* Which was about ten years too long! Probably they did not intend to remain so long when they went there. They only meant to be in Moab for a little while, just as Christian people, when they fall into worldly conformity, only purpose to do it once, “for the sake of the girls, to bring them out a little.” But it happens to them as it is written here—“and they dwelled there about ten years.”

5. *And Mahlon and Chilion died also, both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.* That seemed to be her great grief—that she was left. She would have been content to go with them, but she was left to mourn their loss.

6. *Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab.* It is often the case that when our idols are broken, we turn back to our God. It is frequently the case that the loss of earthly good leads us to return to our first Husband, for we feel that then it was better with us than it is now. Naomi had also another inducement to return.

6. *For she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited His people in giving them bread.* Have any of you professors gone a

long way off from God? I wish you knew what plenty there is in the Great Father's house and what a blessed feast there is for these who live with Him! There is no famine in that land! There is plenty of gladness, plenty of comfort, plenty of everything that is joyful to be found there. You need not go to Moab and to her false gods to find pleasure and satisfaction.

7-9. *Therefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house; the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead, and with me. The LORD grant you that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them: and they lifted up their voice, and wept.* Separation was painful to them, for they loved their mother-in-law, a most unselfish person who, even though it was a comfort to her to enjoy their company, thought it would be for their good, in a temporal sense, that they should abide in their own country.

10-14. *And they said unto her, Surely we will return with you unto your people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will you go with me? Are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also tonight, and should also bear sons; would you tarry for them till they were grown? Would you stay for them from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth cleaved unto her.* What a difference there often is between two persons who are under religious impressions at the same time! The one would like to follow Jesus, but the price is too much to pay, so there is a kiss somewhat like that of Judas, and Orpah goes back to her people, and to her idols. But how different was the other case! Ruth was, as it were, glued to Naomi! She "cleaved unto her." Stuck to her and could not be made to go back with her sister.

15-17. *And she said, Behold, your sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return you after your sister-in-law. And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave you, or to return from following after you: for where you go, I will go; and where you lodge, I will lodge: your people shall be my people, and your God my God: where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more, also, if anything but death parts you and me.* That was bravely spoken and she meant it, too.

8. *When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left off speaking unto her.* That is a striking expression, "When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her." O you dear young friends who want to be Christians, how glad we are when we see that you are steadfastly minded to go with the people of God! There are so many who are quickly hot and quickly cold—soon excited towards good things and almost as speedily their ardor cools and they go back into the world.

Do ask the Lord to make you steadfastly minded! This is one of the best frames of mind for any of us to be in.

19. *So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, When they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi?* They seemed all to turn out of doors to have a look at these two strangers and especially at Naomi, for she was so different from what she had been when she went away. “And they said, Is this Naomi? Some said, “Is this Naomi?” questioning. Others said it with surprise as a thing incredible, “This Naomi! How can she be the same woman?” It was very rude of them to turn out, just like people without sympathy do on Ramsgate Pier, to see the sick passengers land. Nobody seems to have said, “Come into our house to lodge,” but all questioned, “Is this Naomi?”

20. *And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi.* “Call me not ‘pleasant.’”

20. *Call me Mara.* That is, “bitter.”

20. *For the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.* It was a pity for Naomi to say that, yet I fear that many of us have done the same. We have not borne such sweet testimony to the Lord as we might have done, but have sorrowfully moaned, as this poor woman did.

21. *I went out full.* Why, then, did you go out?

21. *And the LORD has brought me home again empty.* Ah, but He has brought you home again! Oh, if she would but have noticed the mercy there was in it all, she might still have spoken like Naomi! But now she speaks like Mara—bitterness. Her husband and her two boys—all her heart’s delight—were with her when she went out. And now that they are gone, she says—

21. *Why then call you me Naomi, seeing the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?* Yet it is a sweet thing to be able to trace the hand of God in our affliction, for nothing can come from that hand towards one of His children but that which is good and right! If you will think of those hands of which the Lord says, “I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands,” you may rest assured that nothing can come from those hands but what Infinite Wisdom directs and Infinite Love has ordained!

22. *So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.* That is, at the time of the Passover. Let us hope that they received a blessing in observing the ordinances of that time and that they were thus helped to get back to the only right and happy state of heart.

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY
TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

HELPS

NO. 777

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

***“And God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”
1 Corinthians 12:28.***

IT appears, according to the Apostle Paul, in regard to the diversity of gifts which proceeded from the selfsame Spirit of God, those who gave assistance to the early Church did so in different ways. He tells us, “God has set some in the church, first apostles.” These were to go from place to place founding churches and ordaining ministers. There were next, “secondarily, prophets,” some of whom uttered prophecies and others were gifted in their explanation. Then came, “thirdly, teachers,” who were probably either pastors settled in many churches teaching the Word, or else evangelists journeying about and proclaiming the Truths of God.

Then came, “after that, miracles, then gifts of healing.” And the Apostle does not forget to mention another class of persons, called “helps.” Now, who these people precisely were I suppose it would be very difficult, at this period of time, if not quite impossible, to tell. Some have thought that they were assistant ministers who occasionally aided settled pastors both in the pastoral work of visiting and in occasionally preaching the Word. Others have thought that they were assistant deacons, and perhaps even deaconesses, an office that most certainly was recognized in the Apostolic Churches.

Others, again, have supposed these “helps” to have been attendants in the sanctuary who took care that strangers were properly accommodated, and managed those details which always must be superintended by somebody in connection with any gathering of persons for any public object whatever. But whoever they were, or whatever may have been the particular functions they discharged, they appear to have been a useful body of people and worthy to be mentioned in the same verse as Apostles and teachers, and even to be named with miracle-workers and those who had the gifts of healing!

It strikes me that they were not persons who had any *official* standing but that they were only moved by the natural impulse and the Divine life within them to do anything and everything which would assist either teacher, pastor, or deacon in the work of the Lord. They were the sort of Brethren who are useful anywhere—who can always stop a gap and who are only too glad, when they find that they can make themselves serviceable to the Church of God in any capacity whatever. We have a goodly brigade of “HELPS” in this Church, and I want now to stir them up! And while I am speaking to them, perhaps a word or two of comfort may come, as it were, from round the corner to some who need the assistance which

these Brethren give, and for whose help, indeed, those of whom we speak lay out their lives.

John Bunyan, that master of Christian experience, as well as of Christian allegory, has, it seems to me, described that part of the work of these “helps” which is most valuable and which is most required. He describes Help as coming to Christian when he was floundering about in the Slough of Despond. Just when the poor man was likely to have been choked, having missed his footing in the slough, and when he found that with all his struggling, he was only sinking deeper and deeper into the mire, there suddenly came to him a person of whom Bunyan says nothing more throughout his whole allegory, whose name was Help. Help put out his hand and, saying some words of encouragement to Christian, pulled him out of the mire, set him on the King’s Highway and established his goings.

There is a period in the Divine life when the help of judicious Christian Brethren is invaluable. Most of us who know the Lord at all know quite as much as we wish to know about that awful Slough of Despond. I myself did lay in it for five years, or thereabouts, and I think I know pretty well every part of it. In some places it is deeper than in others, and more nauseous. But, believe me, a man may reckon himself thrice happy when he gets out of it, for when one is in it, it seems as though it would swallow him up alive! Dear, very dear to us, must ever be the hand that helped us out of the depth of the mire where there was no standing! And while we ascribe all the glory to the God of Grace, we cannot but love most affectionately the instrument He sent to be the means of our deliverance.

On the summit of some of the Swiss passes, the Canton, for the preservation and accommodation of travelers, maintains a small body of men, sometimes only two or three, who live in a little house at the top and whose business it is to help travelers on their way. It was very pleasant when we were going through a pass in the mountains of Northern Italy to see, some three or four miles from the top, a man coming down who saluted us as though he had known us for years. He carried a spade in his hand, and though *we* did not know what was coming, he evidently understood better than we did what was going to occur.

By-and-by we came to deep snow and the man went to work with his spade to clear a footway, and when he came to a very ugly piece of road some of the party were carried along on the man’s back. It was the man’s business to care for the travelers and before long there came one of his companions with wine and refreshments which were generously offered to the weary ones. These men were “helps” who spent their lives on that part of the road where it was known their services would be required. And when travelers reach the spot, these men are ready to give their assistance in the nick of time. They would have been worth nothing at all down in the plains. They would have been only an encumbrance if they had met us in any other place—but they were exceedingly valuable because they were just where they were required—and came exactly at the moment when they were wanted.

Now, my Friends, “helps” are of no use to a man when he can help himself. When he has no difficulties, an offer of assistance is an intrusion.

There is just one point, such a juncture as the passing of the summit of the mountain, where help will be exceedingly precious to him. And it seems to me that the period of a man's experience which Bunyan describes by the Slough of Despond is just that season when you, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, may render invaluable aid to the Christian minister by coming to the rescue of those who seem as though they would be swallowed up.

This brigade of "helps," if I understand Bunyan right, are stationed all round the borders of the Slough of Despond and it is their business to keep watch all round and listen for the cries of any poor unenlightened travelers who may be staggering in the mire. Just as the Royal Humane Society keep their men along the borders of the lakes in the parks in winter time—and when the ice is forming bid them be on the watch and take care of any who may venture upon it—so a little knot of Christian people, both men and women, should always be ready in every Church to listen for cries of distress, and to give assistance wherever it may be required.

Such seem to me to be the sort of "helps" we want. Such, perhaps, these ancient "helps" may have been.

I. I want, first of all, to GIVE A FEW DIRECTIONS TO THESE "HELPS" AS TO HOW THEY MAY HELP POOR SINNERS OUT OF THE SLOUGH OF DESPOND. After some little experience I have had in helping others, I would recommend one particular course at the outset. When you meet with someone who is despairing and thinks he cannot be saved, get him to state his case. This should always be the *first* thing.

When Help went to Christian he did not at once put out his hand to him, but he said, "What are you doing there? How did you get there?" It does men good to state their spiritual case to others. Confession to a priest is a piece of abomination, but sometimes the communication of our spiritual difficulties to another will be, in itself, a most helpful exercise to ourselves. You will know how to deal with them and they will know the better what you want when they put their necessities into words. I have occasionally found that the mere act of stating a difficulty has been the very means of at once removing it.

Some of our doubts will not bear the light of day. Many spiritual difficulties are there which, if a man did but look them fully and squarely in the face long enough to be able to describe them, would vanish even during the investigation! Let the youngster state his case. Get that young man alone, dear Brother—get him to sit down quietly with you, and say to him—"Now, what is it you are distressed about? What is the point that puzzles you? What cannot you understand? What is it that dejects and dispirits you?" Let them state their own case.

Next to this, enter, as much as lies in you, *into* their case. This may seem to you, perhaps, an unimportant direction, but, depend upon it, you will be able to give very little help, if any, if you do not follow it. Sympathy has very much to do with our ability to comfort others. If you cannot enter into their distress, you will scarcely be able to lift them out of it. Try to bring yourselves down to "weep with them that weep," as well as to "rejoice with those that rejoice." Do not sneer at a difficulty because it seems

small to you. Remember that it may be very great to the person who is troubled by it.

Do not begin to scold and tell the young man that he ought not to feel as he does feel, or to be as distressed as he is. As God puts His everlasting arms underneath *you*, so you must put the outstretched arms of your sympathy underneath your younger and weaker Brethren that you may lift them up. If you see a Brother in the mire, put your arms right down into the mud, that, by the Grace of God, you may lift him bodily out of it! Remember that you were once just where that young Sister of yours is now. Try, if you can, to bring back your own feelings when you were in her condition.

It may be, you say, that the stripling or the damsel is very foolish. Yes, but you were fools yourselves once, and then you abhorred all manner of meat and your soul seemed to be drawing near to the gates of death. Now you must use Paul's language—you must "become a fool for their sakes." You must put yourselves into the condition of these simple-minded ones. If you cannot do this, you need training to teach you how to be a help—as yet you do not know the way. Let them state their case and then endeavor to feel their difficulties as your own.

Perhaps your next work ought to be to comfort these poor Brethren with the promise. Help, in "Pilgrim's Progress," asked Christian why he did not look for the steps and told him that there were good steps all the way through the mire. But Christian said he had missed them. Now, you can point these poor sinking ones to the steps, Brethren, if you are well acquainted with the *promises of God*. Have them on the tip of your tongue, ready at any time. We have heard of a certain scholar who used to carry miniature copies of all the classic authors about with him so that he seemed to have almost a Bodleian in his pocket.

O that you would carry miniature Bibles about with you! Or, better still, that you had all the Word of God constantly with you in your *heart* so that you might be able to speak a word in season to them that are weary! Whenever you come across a poor distressed soul, what a blessed thing for you to be able to say to him, "Yes, you are a sinner, it is true. But Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Perhaps he will tell you that he cannot do anything—and you may answer that he is not told to do anything but to *believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ and he shall be saved. He will say, perhaps, that he cannot believe—but you can remind him of the promise, "Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"—that is, those who seek Him earnestly by prayer.

Some texts in the Bible are like sundry stars in the sky—those constellations in the heavens which are so conspicuous that when the mariner once sees them he can very soon tell where he is! He determines the latitude and longitude of his own position by gazing intently on one of these celestial bodies. Some brilliant passages of Scripture appear to be set in the firmament of Revelation as guiding stars to poor bewildered souls. Point to these! Quote them often! Rivet the poor sinner's eyes upon them—this will be one of the best ways of helping him. Oh, if there is a poor despairing one here to-night, let me quote to him three great and

mighty promises of our God—"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." "He retains not His anger forever because He delights in mercy." "Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." These three texts are specimens of promises by which you "helps" can assist sinking sinners.

After this, dear Friends, try to instruct those who may want your help more fully in the plan of salvation. The Gospel is preached every Sunday in hundreds of pulpits in England, and yet there is nothing so little known or understood in this country as "the truth as it is in Jesus." Sometimes the preacher cannot, even with all his attempts, make plain the simple Gospel. You, perhaps, may be able to do it because you just happen to suit the comprehension of the person in hand. God is my witness how earnestly I always endeavor to make clear and plain whatever I say, but yet my peculiar modes of thought and expression may not be suitable to the cases of some in such an audience as this.

Some one person may be able to meet cases which I cannot. If my Brothers and Sisters, the "helps," will be constantly active, they may often *explain* where I only confuse. That which may not have been understood as the preacher put it may be comprehended when it is stated afresh by them. If you will only put the same thing in another shape, the sinner will say, "Ah, I see it now. I could not understand it from him, but I can understand it from you!" Do, if you would help souls, point them to the Savior! Do not bother them about any irrelevant matters, but just talk to them at once about the precious blood—that is the main thing. Tell the sinner that whoever trusts in Christ shall be saved. Do not point to the wicket gate as Evangelist did—that is not the way! Point the sinner to the Cross!

Poor Christian would never have been in the Slough of Despond if he had had a proper person to direct him. Do not scold Evangelist, but just undo the mischief he did by always pointing the sinner to Calvary. Would you supplement this? I recommend you to tell the troubled conscience your own experience. Many have been able to get out of the Slough of Despond in this way. "What," says the young man, "did you ever feel as I do?" I must say I have often been really amused when I have been talking with young enquirers to see them open their eyes with astonishment to think that I had ever felt as they did, whereas I should have opened mine with far greater astonishment if I had not! We sit down, sometimes, and tell our patients all their symptoms. And then they think we must have read their hearts, while the fact is that our hearts are just like theirs, and in reading ourselves, we read them.

We have gone along the same road as they have, and it would be a very hard thing if we could not describe what we have ourselves experienced. Even advanced Christians find great comfort in reading and hearing of the experience of others if it is anything like their own. And to young people it really is a most blessed means of Divine Grace to hear others tell what they have gone through before them. I wish our elder Brethren were more frequently "helps" in this matter, and that when they see others in trouble

they would tell them that they have passed through the very same difficulties, instead, as some do, of blaming the young people for not knowing what they cannot know, and upbraiding them because they have not “old heads on young shoulders,” where, I am sure, they would be singularly out of place.

Once more, I think you will very much help the young enquirer by *praying* with him. Oh, the power of prayer! When you cannot tell the sinner what you want to say you can sometimes tell it to God in the sinner’s hearing. There is a way of saying in prayer, with a person, what you cannot say directly to his face and it is well, sometimes, when praying with another, to put the case very plainly and earnestly—something in this way: “Lord, You know that this poor young woman now present is very much troubled, but it is her own fault. She will not believe in Your love because she says there is no evidence of it. You have shown it in the gift of Your dear Son but she still persists in wanting to see something of her own upon which she may rest—some good frames or feelings. She has been told many times that all her help lies in Christ and not at all in herself, and yet she still keeps on seeking fire in the midst of water and life in the graves of death. Open her eyes, Lord! Turn her face in the right direction and lead her to look to Christ, and not to self.”

Praying in this way, you see, often puts the case very plainly. There is a real power in prayer—the Lord still hears the cry of His people. As certainly, Beloved, as ever the electric fluid bears the message from one place to another—as certainly as the laws of gravitation move the spheres—so certainly is prayer a mysterious, but a real power! God *does* hear prayer! Some of us are quite as certain of this as we are that we breathe—we have tried it and proved it. It is not *occasionally* that God has heard it, but it has become as regular a thing with us to ask and have as it is for our children to ask for meat at the table and receive it at our hands.

I should hardly think of attempting to *prove* that God hears my prayer, either to myself or anybody else. It has become so much the habit of my life to know that God hears prayer that I have no more doubt of it than I have of the fact that if I lose my balance I shall fall, and that the power of gravitation affects me in walking, in sitting still, in rising up, and in lying down. Exercise, then, I beseech you, this power of prayer and you shall often find that when nothing else will help a soul out of its difficulty, prayer will do it. There are no limits, dear Friends, if God is with you, in your helping others through the power of prayer.

These directions—and they are not very many—I want you to keep in your memories as you would the directions of the Royal Humane Society with reference to people who have been in danger of drowning. I dare say some of you have already practiced them so long that you know them well enough.

II. Having spoken thus on how to help, I shall now describe THOSE WHO CAN HELP. It is not everybody who can help in the way I have been describing. I want to enlist a little brigade of spiritual firemen—that is, I want to gather a company of “helps” to assist persons who may be slipping and floundering about in the Slough of Despond.

The first essential for a true “help” is that he should have a *tender heart*. There are some people who seem to be prepared by Divine Grace on purpose to be soul-winners. I know a Brother whom I did once venture to compare to a hunting dog in this matter, for no sooner did he suspect that there were anxious souls than he was on the alert! And did he but *hear* of a number of converts, away he went! He seems dull and heavy at other times, but then his eyes flash, his heart, his whole soul is stirred up to action and he becomes like a new man! Among converts and enquirers he is all alive—his soul takes fire directly—and amidst the diversities of gifts that proceed from the same Spirit, his gift evidently is to help souls.

Such a man was Timothy, of whom Paul says, “I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state.” You know in common life there are some people who seem to be born nurses. Others there are, to be sure, who cannot nurse at all! If you were ill you would never have them about you even if they would come for nothing and pay *you* for having them! They mean well, but somehow or other they would stomp across the room every time they moved and would be sure to wake you up! And if there were any medicine to be taken at night it would taste all the worse if they gave it to you. But you have known a real nurse—perhaps your own wife—you never did hear *her* walk across the room when you were ill and you never would, even if you had an instrument to your ear like a microscope to the eye magnifying the minutest thing! She steps so softly that you might almost sooner hear her heartbeat than her footstep.

Then, too, she understands your tastes exactly and always knows what to bring you. Whoever heard of a nurse more fit for her work than Miss Nightingale? She seems as if she could do nothing else, and as if God had sent her into the world on purpose—not only that she might be a nurse, herself—but that she might also teach others to nurse. Well, it is just the same in *spiritual* things. I have used a homely illustration to show you what I mean.

There are some people who, if they try to comfort you when you are distressed, go so awkwardly to work about it that they are sure to give you a great deal more trouble than you had before. They really *mean* well, and try to do their best, but they cannot do what you want done. It is not their skill—they are not “helps”—they would take a great crowbar to do the thing which a little picklock would easily effect. And they go about everything in such a strange, clumsy style that you can see they were not made for the work. The true “help” to a distressed soul is a person, who, though his head may not be very big, has a large and warm heart. He is a man, in fact, all heart.

It was said of John that he was a pillar of fire from head to foot. This is the kind of man the soul wants when it is shivering in the cold winter of despondency. Such men I know—may God train many more and give us all more of the gentleness that was in Christ—for unless in this way we are naturally fit for the work, we shall never be able to do it. The “help,” moreover, needs not only a large heart, but a very *quick eye*. There is a way of getting the eye sensitively acute with regard to sinners. I know

some Brothers and Sisters who, when they are sitting in their pews, can almost tell how the Word is operating upon those who sit near them.

Some people cannot do this, others can. And besides this they know just what they ought to say to their neighbors in the seat when the sermon is over. They understand *how* to say it and whether they ought to say it in the pew or going down stairs, or outside—or whether they ought to wait till some time in the week. They appear to have an instinct which tells them just *what* to do, *how* to do it, and *when* to do it. Oh, it is a blessed thing when God thus sets watchmen along the borders of the Slough of Despond! Then, if they have quick ears, they listen, and by-and-by they hear a splash over yonder in the Slough, and though it may be very dark and misty, they go to the rescue! Nobody else hears the cry but those who lay themselves out to listen for it.

We also need for this work men who are quick of foot, to run. Why, there are some of you who never speak to your neighbors about their souls! You have a sitting here and you never think of speaking a word to those who sit next to you. I thank God there are some of you who will not let a stranger go out without a good word concerning Christ. I pray you persevere in the good habit and the Lord will bless you, for while there is much to be done in such a congregation as this by the preacher, there is yet *more* to be done by these “helps” in getting to the conscience and doing good to the soul.

For a thoroughly efficient “help,” give me a man with a loving face. We do not make our own faces, but I do not think a Brother who is habitually grim will do much with anxious enquirers. Cheerfulness commends itself, especially to a troubled heart. We do not want levity—there is a great difference between cheerfulness and levity. I can always tell a man who looks sweetly at me what I feel, far better than I can tell it to one who in a sort of official way talks to me as though it were his only business to enquire into my private concerns and to find out all about what I am and where I have been.

Go about your work softly, gently, affectionately. Let your cheerful countenance tell that the religion you have is worth having—that it cheers and comforts you—and then the poor soul in the Slough of Despond will hope that it may cheer and comfort him. Earnestly, too, let me recommend you to have a firm foot. If I have to go and pull a Brother out of the Slough, I must know how to stand fast, myself, or otherwise, while I am seeking to pull him out, I may fall in! I must remember that hearing the doubts of others may give rise to the same doubts in my own mind unless I am firmly established as to my own personal interest in Christ Jesus.

If you would be useful, you must not be always doubting and fearing. Full assurance is not necessary to salvation, but it is very necessary to your success as a helper of others. I remember when I taught in the Sunday school, I was trying to point one of the boys in the class to the Savior. He seemed troubled, and he said to me, “Teacher, are you saved?” I said “Yes.” “But are you sure you are?” said he, and though I did not answer him just then, I felt that I could not very well tell him that there certainly was salvation in Jesus Christ unless I had tried Him for myself and been

assured of it. Do try to get a firm foot, dear Brethren, and you will be more useful round the edge of the Slough than as though you were constantly slipping down.

Then, as you have to do business round this Slough, try to know it well. Try to find out its worst parts and where it is deepest. You will not have to go far to do this—you have probably been in it yourself and therefore know something about it—but you can easily gather from one and another where it is worst. Seek, if you can, to understand the mental philosophy of despondency. I do not mean by studying Dugald Stewart and other writers on mental philosophy, but by real heart-felt experience seek to become practically acquainted with the doubts and fears which agitate coming souls. When you have done this I hope the Lord will give you—for you will need it if you are to become very useful—a good strong hand in order to grip the sinner.

Jesus Christ did not heal the lepers without touching them and we cannot do good to other men by standing at a distance from them. The preacher sometimes gets hold of his hearers—he can feel he has them and can do almost anything with them—and if you are to be a “help,” you will have to learn the art of getting hold of the *conscience*, the *heart*, the *judgment*, the *whole man*. When you once get hold of a troubled heart, never let it go. Oh, I pray that you may have a hand like a vice that will never let go of the sinner when once you have hold of him! What? Shall the child of God let the sinner fall back into the Slough? No! Not while the rock on which he stands holds fast, and while he can hold the sinner by the hands of prayer and faith. May God teach you to grip men by love, by spiritual sympathy, by passion for souls so that you cannot let them go.

Once more, if you would help others out of the Slough of Despond, you must have a bending back. You cannot pull them out if you stand bolt upright—you must go right down to the man. There he is! He is almost gone! The mire is well near over his head—now you must turn up your sleeves and go to work. “But the man cannot speak correct English!” Never mind! Do not speak correct English to him for he would not understand it! Speak bad English, which he can understand. It is said that many of the sermons of Augustine are full of shockingly bad Latin, not because Augustine was not a good Latin scholar, but because the dog-Latin of the day suited his turn best to get hold of men.

There is a certain prudery about ministers which disqualifies them for some work—they cannot bring their mouth to utter a Truth of God in such language as fishermen would understand! Happy is that man whose mouth will say the Truth in such a way that the persons he is speaking to will receive it. “But the dignity of the pulpit!” says one. Well, and what is that? The “dignity” of a war chariot lies in the captives dragged at its wheels, and the “dignity of the pulpit” lies in the number of souls converted to God! Do not tell me of your fine jargon, your Johnsonian sentences, your rolling periods—there is no “dignity” in any of these if they go over the heads of your hearers! You must condescend to men of low estate.

You will, sometimes, meet with men and women to whom you really must talk to in a style which does not commend itself to your taste, but which your judgment and your heart will command and compel you to use. Learn to bend your back. Do not, for instance, go into a cottage like a fine lady coming to visit poor people. Go and sit down on a chair and sit on the edge if the rushes are gone. Sit close to the good woman, even if she is ever so dirty, and talk to her, not as her superior, but as her equal. If there is a boy playing marbles and you want to talk to him, you must not call him away from his play nor look down upon him from an awful elevation as a schoolmaster would. But begin with a few playful expressions and then drop a more serious sentence into his ear.

If you would do people good you must go down to them where they are! It is no use preaching fine sermons to drowning men! But go to the edge of the pool, put out your arms and try to pull them out. These, I verily think, are some of the qualifications of a true "help."

III. Let me now close by ENDEAVORING TO INCITE THOSE OF MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHO HAVE BEEN "HELPS" TO GO ON YET MORE EARNESTLY IN THE WORK, AND TO STIR UP THOSE WHO HAVE NOT TRIED IT, TO BEGIN.

Perhaps somebody may ask, "Why should I help others?" and my answer shall be, "because souls want help." Is not that enough? The cry of misery is a sufficient argument for mercy. Souls want it. They die. They perish. They are ready to despair. Help them. There was a story in the papers last week of a man being found dead in a ditch who had been lying there, dead, for six weeks. It was said that somebody had heard a cry of, "Lost, lost," but it was dark and he did not go out to see who it was! "Shocking! Shocking!" you say, and yet just the very same thing may have been done by you! There are some persons here tonight who may not cry, "Lost," because they do not feel they are lost, but they are so. And will you let them die in the ditch of their ignorance?

There are others who *are* crying, "Lost!" and who want a word of comfort. And will you let them perish in despair for the lack of it? My Brothers and Sisters, let the needs of humanity provoke you to activity! Remember, again, how you were helped, yourselves, when you were in a like condition. Some of us will never forget that dear Sunday school teacher, that tender mother, that Christian woman, that kind young man, that excellent elder of the Church who once did so much for us. We shall never forget their tender attention. They seemed to us as visions of bright angels when we were in the thick fog and darkness. Return the debt! Repay the obligation! Discharge what you owe and you cannot do this except by helping others as you were helped yourselves.

Moreover, Christ deserves it. There is a lamb out there that is lost. It is *His* lamb! Will you not care for it? If there were a strange child at my door asking for a night's shelter, humanity might prompt me to take in the poor little creature out of the snow and wind. But if it were the child of my brother or of some dear friend, kindred sympathy would constrain me to protect it. That sinner is your Savior's blood-bought one and is very dear to Him. He is a prodigal, but he is your Father's son, and consequently

your own brother! By the relationship there is, though he discerns it not at present, you are bound! A moral obligation rests upon you to give him your help.

O Beloved, you would not need any other argument if you knew how blessed the work is in itself! Would you acquire knowledge? Help others! Would you grow in Divine Grace? Help others! Would you shake off your own despondency? Help others! It quickens the pulse. It clears the vision. It steels the soul to courage. It confers a thousand blessings on your own souls to help others on the road to Heaven! Shut up your heart's floods and they will become noisome, stagnant, putrid, foul. Let them flow and they shall be fresh and sweet, and shall well up continually! Live for *others*, and you will live a hundred lives in one. For blessedness, commend me to industry and divorce me from idleness!

But, if that is not enough, I think I may say that you are *called* to this work. Your Master has hired you! It is not for you to pick and choose what you will do—He has given you your talents and you *must* do what He bids you. Tonight, then, before you leave this house, try to do some practical service for your Master, for He has called you to it. If you do not, you will probably get the rod of correction. If you do not help others, God will treat you as men do their stewards who make no righteous use of the goods entrusted to them—your talent may be taken from you. Sickness may be waiting for you because you are not active while you are in health. You may be brought to poverty because you do not make a right use of riches. You may be brought into deep despair, yourselves, because you have not helped despairing souls.

Pharaoh's dream has often been fulfilled. He dreamed that that there were seven fat bulls who fed in the meadow, and, by-and-by, there came seven lean bulls who ate up the fat ones. Sometimes, when you are full of joy and peace, you are lazy and idle and do not do any good to others. And whenever this is the case, you may depend upon it that very soon the seven lean bulls will come and eat up the seven fat bulls. You may rest quite assured that those lean days in which you do nothing for your Master—those lean prayers, those lean Sundays will eat up your fat Sundays, your fat graces, your fat joys—and then where will you be?

Besides all this, we are getting nearer Heaven and sinners are getting nearer Hell. The time in which we can win souls by serving Christ is getting very short. The days of some here must be very few and with none of us can they be very long. O let us think of the reward! Happy spirit who shall hear others say, as he enters the celestial regions, "My father, I welcome you!" Childless souls in Glory who were never made a blessing to others on earth must surely miss the very Heaven of Heaven. But they who have brought others to Christ shall have, in addition to their own Heaven, the joy of sympathy with other spirits whom they were the means of blessing.

I wish I could put my meaning into words that would burn their way into your hearts! I want every member of this Church to be a worker! We do not want any drones. If there are any of you who want to eat and drink and do nothing there are plenty of places elsewhere where you can do it!

There are empty pews about in abundance—go and fill them, for we do not want you! Every Christian who is not a bee is a wasp. The most quarrelsome persons are the most useless, and they who are the most happy and peaceable are generally those who are doing most for Christ. We are not saved by working, but by Grace, but *because* we are saved we desire to be the instruments of bringing others to Jesus. I would stir you all up to help in this work—old men, young men, and you, my Sisters, and all of you—according to your gifts and experience.

I want to make you feel, “I cannot do much, but I can help. I cannot preach, but I can help. I cannot pray in public, but I can help. I cannot give much money away, but I can help. I cannot officiate as an elder or a deacon, but I can help. I cannot shine as a bright particular star, but I can help. I cannot stand alone to serve my Master, but I can help.” There is a text from which an old Puritan once preached a very singular sermon. There were only two words in the text, and they were, “And Bartholomew.” The reason he took the text was that Bartholomew’s name is never mentioned alone, but he is always spoken of as doing some good thing with somebody else. He is never the principal actor, but always second.

Well, let this be *your* feeling—that if you cannot do all yourself, you will help to do what you can.

Gather we not, this night, as a meeting of Council to present degrees to such disciples as through many sessions of labor have merited them? I confer upon you who have used your opportunities well the sacred title of “Helps.” Others of you shall have it when you deserve it. Go and win it! God grant that it may be your joy to wear the holy vestment of charity, fringed with humility, and to enter into Heaven praising God that He helped you to be a helper to others.

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GRACE PREFERRED TO GIFTS

NO. 2694

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1900.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 1, 1881.

*“But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet I show you a more excellent way.”
1 Corinthians 12:31.*

THERE are among us many who have recently joined the visible Church of Christ. We have heartily welcomed them and we desire to always entertain, concerning them, a joyous feeling of thankfulness that they have united with us. May they never have to regret it and may the Church of God never have to regret it, either! Dear Friend, now that you have become a member of a Christian Church, you should say to yourself, “What can I do for it? I have not come here merely to confess that I am saved and there to let the matter stop, but I have enlisted in an army that I may be a comrade with other soldiers, and be drilled, and trained, and equipped so that I may know how to march and to go forth to the battle. I have come into the church to be a member of a body. What is my office? Every member has its own special office in the body—it is not there merely for its own comfort, but to be a help to the whole system of which it forms a part. What, then, can I do?” The question which we should each one ask of the Lord is that which Saul asked on the way to Damascus, “Lord, what will You have me to do?”

When that question is once answered and you, dear Friend, know your proper place in the body of Christ, and have taken that place, whatever it may be, I think that your next desire will be that you may be in the best *spiritual* health—that you may be as vigorous as you can be—that, little though you ever may have to place at your Lord's disposal, yet that the best use may be made of that little! Even when we have done all those things that are commanded us, we shall still have to confess that we are unprofitable servants to our great Lord and Master. Yet everyone of us should pray that he may have as much to use for Christ as he can use, and that he may be as well fitted by the Holy Spirit for the Master's service as it is possible that he can be. I would like to give to God the best that I have and, as that must be my whole spirit, soul and body, ought I not to wish that my spirit, soul and body should be at their very best? I believe that many of you, dear Friends, feel just as I do about this matter. And, therefore, I shall not do wrong if I stir up the pure minds of those who have, through Infinite Mercy, given themselves to Christ, and say to them, “Make the most of yourselves. Make the best of yourselves.

‘Covet earnestly the best gifts.’” But when I have said that, I shall have to add a caveat and, possibly, that caveat will rise into a word of encouragement and exhortation—“Yet I show you a more excellent way.”

There are two things in the text. There is, first, *an excellent way*. And, secondly, there is “*a more excellent way*.”

I. First, there is AN EXCELLENT WAY. That is, for each individual Christian to “covet earnestly the best gifts.”

Paul is not speaking here concerning ordinary gifts as we see them in men of the world who are gifted in various ways. He is referring to *spiritual* gifts—gifts which we dare to ask of God, gifts which we may expect the Spirit of God to bestow upon us, gifts which can be used in the Church of Christ and which we desire to possess in order that we may use them to the Glory of God. We have not all the spiritual gifts which were entrusted to the first Christian Church. I do not suppose it would have been wise that we should have had them!

The gift of miracles, for instance, if it had continued in the Church, would have attracted the notice of men rather to the supernatural power of God than to the moral and spiritual power of Christ Jesus our Savior as manifested through the Divine Spirit. This great spiritual battle between right and wrong, which is being fought out in the arena of the world, God never intended to be fought out by mere might and power through the dazzling display of signs and wonders. He resolved to win the victory by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, according to that word unto Zerubbabel, “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts.” He intended to work in a spiritual manner upon the hearts of men and, therefore, He dispensed with the aid of miracles which had been necessary in the first stage of the Church’s growth. You have, no doubt, often seen, in the case of a young tree when it is newly planted, that a stout stake is driven in by the side of it and the sapling is tied to that stake. But when the tree grows bigger and stronger, it needs no such support. So has it been with the Church of Christ on earth. At first it was feeble and needed to be upheld and sustained by the aid of miracles, wonders and signs—but it no longer needs that aid. Or, as you have seen a ship in the Thames being towed out to sea and then, when it is fairly out upon the ocean, it is trusted to its own steam, or to the winds of Heaven, so has it been with the Christian Church. She was towed out of the narrow river of Judaism onto the broad sea of later times and now the Blessed Spirit speeds her on her way without the tug of miracles!

How far the gifts of healing may still remain in the Church, I should not like to be forced to say—either to say that they remain, lest any should be led into fanaticism—or to say that they are utterly gone, lest I should be denying some things which, at any rate, look like facts. God does, I doubt not, still hear the believing prayers of His servants concerning the sick. At least, in certain cases, and still should it be, as I judge, an ordinance to be observed, “Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and

the Lord shall raise him up.” Be that matter how it may, that is not the subject of this evening’s discourse. The spiritual gifts, of which I am to speak, are those about which there can be no question that they *do* remain and are to be had by those who earnestly covet them and diligently seek them.

One of the first of these gifts is *knowledge*. Dear Friends, you who are beginners in the School of Christ, seek after more knowledge of the Word of God, and seek it very earnestly. You were brought to Christ knowing very little except yourself a sinner and Christ a Savior. But now that you are saved, you should try to “comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.” “Search the Scriptures.” Be familiar with the Doctrines of Grace. Seek to be established in the faith and, as the Apostle Peter says, “Be always ready to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”

I wish that all religious professors sought to be more deeply instructed by the Word read and by the Word heard, and by experience and meditation in the things of God. Covet earnestly this spiritual gift of knowledge and give yourselves diligently to the search after it, that you may become fully established in the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What a blessing you will be to others if you have much knowledge of the things of God! How often you will be able to help those who are in spiritual difficulties! How frequently you will be enabled to flash light upon the darkness of the ignorant and to bring comfort to those who are in distress of soul! Solomon said, “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all your getting get understanding,” which I would interpret here as an understanding of the Word of the Lord.

Next to that, dear Friend, covet earnestly *the power to impart knowledge*. It is not everybody who possesses knowledge who can convey it to others. There is a habit, there is a fitness, there is a spirit, there is a mode which men must obtain if they are to be “apt to teach.” I have known some who have attempted to pour the Truth of God into very narrow-necked vessels such as children are, but they have spilled far more than they have poured in! Some are so confused in their proclamation of the Truth that they are misunderstood. Some put the wrong Truth foremost and seem as if they would explain the mysteries of the Revelation before they have taught the simplicities of Matthew and the other Evangelists! They are perpetually putting the cart before the horse. Do not so, Beloved, but ask the Holy Spirit to bestow upon you the gifts of teaching, that you may become to those whom God puts in your way, ready to communicate the Truth of God, breaking the Bread of Life upon which you have yourself first fed.

With that gift of teaching, get, if you can, that other *blessed gift of personal address*, so as to be able to “*button-hole*” people and to speak to them individually about their danger, and the way of escape from it. If you possibly can, do acquire the holy art of soul-winning! It is the finest piece of Christian education that I know of—the power to hunt for men

as hunters seek their game—to track them to their hiding places—to stop up the holes in which they seek to get shelter, and to take them in Gospel nets and bring them as willing captives to your Lord and Master! This spiritual hunting is grand work—may you be well skilled in it! It is a very special gift. Covet it earnestly. I am sure that I greatly covet it. There are some here who have it in a very marked degree. I would that all God's people had this precious spiritual gift!

Then there is what we call “gift in prayer”—the *gift of public prayer*—covet that also, dear Brothers and Sisters. Some excellent members of the church never pray in public and I do not blame them. God forbid that we should do so! Still, I am inclined to think that a very large number of our dumb people would have been able to speak and pray in public if they had only begun earlier in their Christian life. And I also believe that they would be able to do so now if they were not quite so proud. “Oh,” you say, “that is rather a hard word.” Well, Brother, you are afraid that you would break down, are you not? Now, if you would not mind doing so, and would break down two or three times, you would do well enough afterwards. Some of you, possibly, are afraid to pray even in your own family circle because you think that you would not find suitable words. Now, suppose that you were to tell the Lord that you are afraid you cannot use appropriate language, and ask Him to help you? And then suppose you can only utter half a dozen sentences? If your children come and complain that the family prayer was too short, it will be a novel sort of complaint! I have sometimes heard about its being too long—and if ever you hear me complain of anybody breaking down in the Prayer Meeting, I beg you to mark that word, for it will be a remarkable thing for me to say!

On the contrary, I am glad to hear a Brother break down. I wish some of you would do so. Some of our young friends, when they break down, give new life to the meeting. They put real feeling into it, for we are all alive with sympathy towards them. Their breaking down does us far more good than the long, prosy prayers that rather weary us than help us. When some trembling Brother stands up in the meeting—when he pours out the requests of his heart with simplicity and earnestness, and in a way that suits us all—we thank God for him and we feel that we have been as much refreshed by the few minutes of his prayer as we should have been by the best possible discourse. So, dear Friend, covet earnestly the gift of public prayer, for it tends greatly to the edification of your fellow Believers. If you have the gift in any measure, cultivate it and seek to possess more and more of it.

And what a precious gift is that of *preaching the Word!* Thank God that this gift is still preserved in the midst of the Church, for the pulpit, rightly filled, is the tower of the flock. It is the very bastion of the walls of Zion. As long as her watchmen shall stand there and cry aloud in God's name, the foe shall not be able to enter, or to break her peace. There are many men who have this gift who *do not* cultivate it, and do not use it as much as they ought. I say not that all preachers should become regular pastors of the flocks, but we have among us many men of business who

could speak for Christ here and there, in the streets, or in a cottage, or in large assemblies, when they might be called upon, and who ought to endeavor, as much as in them lies, to get the power of speech that they may speak well for Jesus Christ. In this sense, dear Brothers, “covet earnestly the best gifts.”

Another very desirable spiritual gift is that of *wisdom to direct tried souls*. I have known and you have known, some who have been wise in this sense quite early in life. And others we have known—the gift usually comes in this way—who have become wise through experience. They are not easily deceived. They are men of steadfastness. They know what they believe and they know why they believe it. And when a difficult case, which has puzzled many, is brought before them, you are astonished to see what a discerning spirit God has given them, so that they at once indicate the right course to be taken. They can discover the clue of the maze, and those who follow it come to the desired point very speedily. Now, these persons are invaluable in the Church—matronly women, and venerable men—who can speak a word in season to him that is weary, or a word of warning to him that is ready to slip. And who can do it so kindly that no offense is taken at what they say—and who can do it at the right time, and in the right tone and spirit—so that the message is regarded and is not forgotten. I pray God to raise up many in our midst who shall have this very precious gift.

I have sometimes heard people say, in disparagement of certain churches, that “they take in a lot of young people—mere boys and girls!” Yes, and we would like to take in a lot more of that sort. We are always open to receive any quantity of Christ’s lambs, for, in due season they will grow into sheep and so the flock will be perpetuated. I came to London just about the time when good Mr. Joseph Irons, of Camberwell, had finished his ministry. I had read how some people complained that in his early days, he had received a great many young people into his church. And when I came to New Park Street, I had the high privilege of finding these young people turned into old, experienced Believers! And among the first who came to join with us, when the standard was lifted up, was a goodly number of these gracious men and women—nearly all of whom are now with God—they became pillars in the midst of our church and they contributed greatly to its stability and its usefulness. They were some of the boys and girls whom young Joseph Irons received into the Church, only, having been boys and girls perhaps 40 or 50 years previously, they were not very boyish and girlish when I knew them!

What a comfort those who have been long in Christ are to the minister! What a help those who have much of the spirit of their Master are to their fellow members! What a terror they are to the ungodly! The devil himself cannot move these people from their steadfastness, for God is with them and, therefore, they are so strong that they overcome even the Evil One. Alas, it is always true that we have not many fathers! But when we do get some fathers and mothers in Israel, they are a great strength and a great treasure to us, and God is to be thanked for them. I want you young people to mind that, as you grow older, you grew wiser, and to see

to it that you endeavor to live near to God, and to walk before Him, as to get deeper and deeper into the very heart of the Truth of God, so that, in later years, you may have the blessed spiritual gift of wisdom which will enable you to guide others.

Meanwhile, there is a gift which comes to us without our using any direct means to obtain it—a sort of outgrowth from a godly character, namely, *influence*. I will not attempt to define what it is, but you know well enough when you feel it. A man stands up to pray in the Prayer Meeting and a stranger who may be present thinks, “What a delightful prayer that is, yet nobody seems to be affected by it!” Then another person stands up to pray. He is not very fluent and the stranger does not think that his prayer is at all remarkable, but he notices that the people appear to feel the force of it. Why is that? The difference is in the man who presents the prayer—there is an influence exerted by him which the other man does not possess. I believe that there are some men who, if they were very ill and could only be borne from their beds to say half a dozen sentences, would work more good in the hearts of those who heard them than some others would do by half a score of *sermons*!

To quote a living instance—I may venture to do so, for I do not suppose that the Brother whose name I am about to mention will ever know that I did it. When I listened to dear Mr. George Mueller, I thought, “Well now, that is very simple talk. A child from the Sunday school might almost say all that he has said.” Yet I was edified to the highest degree because there was George Mueller’s influence at the back of all that he said. That was the secret of its power. I knew something of his holy life, his power with God in prayer, his faith and the great work which it had enabled him to accomplish. So the simplest sentence seemed to drop into my soul with weight, power and unction, for there was the influence of the good man behind it all! And glad enough was I to sit at his feet and listen to his gracious talk. I do not remember anything he said that was at all striking, or fresh, or new, or original—it was because the man had been with God and had his Lord’s Presence continually with him, that his words came with unction and power!

Now, Brothers and Sisters, this is a spiritual gift which we ought earnestly to covet. Oh, that we might be spiritually like Asher! You know that part of Asher’s blessing was, “Let him dip his foot in oil!” What was the consequence of the fulfillment of that blessing? Why, that, wherever he went, he left an oily mark behind him. “What sort of a minister have you now?” I once asked a person who came from a place where the new minister had been for, perhaps, a year or two, and I had known the previous one—“What sort of a minister have you now?” The answer I received was, “Well, Sir, we have a man of this kind. If he comes into your house for only ten minutes, you know that he has been there.” That is the sort of man I should like to be, and the sort of woman I wish you to be, dear Sister—so that when you go even for a little time into the company of others, they may know that you have been there! Yes, and when you do not go anywhere, when you are lying upstairs sick in bed, may you have such an influence about you that your power shall be felt far

away! And those who have been serving God shall serve Him better and more earnestly, and more joyfully because they remember you—and your influence—by God’s blessing upon it, shall be quickening and strengthening to them. This was the kind of influence which Paul wielded even from his prison at Rome, for many of the Brothers and Sisters, waxing confident by his bonds, were moved to serve God all the better because their fellow soldier was compelled to be absent from the fight.

All these that I have mentioned are *spiritual* gifts, therefore, seek them. Covet them earnestly for they will be a blessing to you, they will be a blessing to others and they will bring glory to God! That is an excellent way for you to walk in.

II. But, in the second place, I have to speak to you, as the Apostle writes to these Corinthians, concerning “A MORE EXCELLENT WAY.” Silver is good, but gold is better. A certain way may be excellent, but another way may be still more excellent. Gifts are good, but Grace is better. Get gifts, spiritual gifts, but also get Grace and, above all, get the best Grace, the noblest Grace, the greatest Grace—that is, LOVE, for love to God and love to your fellow men, and love to the Church of God—this is “a more excellent way.”

Get much Grace, then, first, *because you need it*. I do not know that you need gifts. Perhaps, dear Friends, you are not lacking in gifts. You require some for the service of your Lord, but perhaps you have enough, and it may be that if you had more, they would be an encumbrance to you. But I am sure that you need Grace. A man may be really better off with one talent than with five, but he cannot be better off with one measure of Grace than with five. The more Grace we have, the better, for thus we shall be “rich toward God,” and this kind of riches brings no sorrow with it. You need a great deal more Grace than you think you do. Something is going to happen in which you will need great Grace. Perhaps there is to be more trial for you. Possibly there is to be more *prosperity*—and then you will certainly need more Grace! But, whatever is to come, get more Grace because you will need it.

I must warn you young converts and also all other Believers, that one reason why you will need Grace is because the devil will be certain, sooner or later, to assail you with fierce temptations. If ever there is a railway made to a place where there are no temptations, I suspect that they will have to run a great many trains there—but will there ever be discovered such a country? Never, beneath the cope of Heaven! As long as we are here, we will be tried, and I am always slow to advise people to try to change their trials for any others. I remember the world’s poet speaks of a something that—

**“Makes us rather bear these ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of.”**

The burden which I have to carry, I have carried so long that it begins to fit my shoulders—and I would not like to change it for yours, even though yours may be lighter than mine, for there is an awkward corner about yours that perhaps fits the shape of your back, but it would not so well fit mine! It would be more burdensome to me than it is to you, and

my lead would be more weighty to you than it is to me. We had better let the temptations that we now have be bravely conquered than suppose that by changing our adversaries, we could secure a victory. If you were to get quite alone, as our Savior was in the wilderness, with nothing but the wild beasts round about you, you could not shut out the devil even then! Forty days He had for meditation, prayer and fasting, yet there was the devil waiting to assail Him again and again! So I repeat that not even solitude, if the lonely hours were spent in prayer, fasting and watching, could secure us immunity from temptation—it must and will attack us.

We ought to be very grateful when, for a time, we are free from it, but we still ought to be on our watchtower, for, at any moment, that adversary, whose noiseless flight no ear has ever heard, that relentless foe—who is not to be perceived by the eye, for he is an invisible spirit who may descend from the air of which he is the prince, and alight at our side—may begin to tempt us though we are fresh from our knees, and covered with the dew of communion with God! The mercy is that active and vigilant as Satan is, the Grace of God is more than a match for him! So again I urge you to get more Grace because you need it in resisting temptation.

Next, get more Grace, *because you can have it*. There is no limit! Perhaps, even though you covet earnestly the best gifts, there may be some gifts which you will never receive. A Brother may wish to preach and yet he may never be able to do so. Another may desire to pray in public and yet, perhaps, he may never be bold enough to open his mouth in the assembly. One may long for wisdom that he may guide others, yet it may never be granted to him. But all can have Grace! That is a fountain which is always flowing, a river from which all who will, may drink. There are, in certain places, little ponds by the roadside, and as you pass by you may see notices giving warning that no dogs may be washed there. Go down to the River Thames and see whether you can find any notice of that kind there! There stands a bullock, knee-deep in the stream, and drinks all he wants—and all kinds of creatures come and wash or swim in the water. There is such a plenty of it that nobody is refused. So is it with the Grace of God—it is a vast river which cannot be exhausted and, therefore, the Divine invitation is, “Let him who thirsts come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” So get more Grace, dear Friend, because you can have it!

Get more Grace, *also, because you will then be sure to be useful*. I am not sure that you would be more useful if you had more talent. There are some men who have too many talents to ever be of much use to the church or the world. You may think that this is a strange thing for me to say, but I really mean it. They seem to have such big sails that their boat cannot sail—it capsizes. They need to have bigger boats and more of the ballast or burden of trouble to carry, and then, perhaps, they might bear their huge sails in safety. It is not every gift that makes a man useful, but I am sure that all Grace makes us useful. Gift is often barren, but Grace is always fruitful. You can bury a gift in a napkin, but who can put Grace in a cloth and hide it? Grace is one of the things that cannot be

buried—it is a living thing, a burning thing, and it will make you useful if you have it—therefore, seek to have more and more of it.

Get more Grace, dear Brother, *because so you will assuredly glorify God*. I am not sure that you would always glorify God if you had more gifts. How little glory God gets often out of great gifts! I remember how, when I began to preach the Gospel, I used to wish that Milton had been a preacher. I often thought what a grand thing it would have been if Shakespeare had been a minister. With his wonderful versatility of talent and poetry of expression, I thought he would have been a very powerful preacher. But, afterwards, I almost thanked God that we had not any Miltons or Shakespeares preaching. It is far better to have men of quite another stamp, so that the hearers may not be carried away either with poetical expressions or with an excess of worldly knowledge and ability. Those fishermen, over by the Sea of Galilee, who did not know much except about fish, were more fit to preach the Gospel than were those fine gentlemen at Athens who thought they knew everything that was to be known in all the world! They were too full of worldly wisdom to learn the wisdom that comes down from above. But those fishermen were just simple souls who could believe what they were told, and who could repeat to others what Christ had said to them—and that is the kind of instrument that Christ generally uses in the effecting of His gracious purposes of mercy.

So, Beloved, covet earnestly much Grace, for Grace always glorifies God. There is not a grain of Grace in the world which does not reflect the light of His face from whom it came. Gifts may be prostituted to the vilest purposes, but Grace—the Grace of God—always brings glory to His holy name. Therefore, while you “covet earnestly the best gifts,” “yet I show you a more excellent way.” That is, seek to obtain continually more Grace.

Now, in closing my discourse, let me tell you, beloved Brothers and Sisters, why this is “a more excellent way.” First, you may have gifts and yet you may still be only natural men and women. The highest gifts of preaching that men have ever had, or of poetry by which they could write choice hymns, did not prove that they had passed from death unto life. They might still be in the gall of bitterness and be enemies to God as Judas was. Though they had very remarkable and special gifts as Judas had, for, no doubt, he worked miracles and, in the name of Christ, did many wonderful works. Gifts are but natural things and they are given to the children of the flesh. But Grace is supernatural and whenever it is bestowed upon us, it proves that we are the children of God after the Spirit.

Remember, also, that you may have gifts and yet you may still be under the power of sin. Alas, how many who have the brightest natural gifts are still using them in the cause of Satan! And even some who have spiritual gifts of the kind I have described, yet since they are not gracious as well as gifted, are doing mischief rather than good to the cause of Christ. To my great grief I have known some who had a considerable gift in prayer, and who seemed to have a good knowledge of the Word, yet who,

all the while, were living in some secret sin and, by-and-by, it was found out and they went out from us because they were never really of us. You may have the most brilliant gifts and appear to be notable Christian workers, yet, for all that, you may still be under the dominion of sin. And so it comes to pass that a man may have all gifts, all knowledge and all faith so that he could remove mountains, and he may even give his body to be burned, yet, if he has not love—if he has not *Grace*, he is still under the wrath of God! It must be an awful thing to preach like an Apostle and yet to be cast into Hell like a devil—to be able to instruct others and yet never to enter into the Kingdom of God—to be able to pray in public and yet never have any part or lot in the things of Christ—no union to Him, no salvation by Him.

O Brothers and Sisters, do you understand and realize this? You may have great gifts and yet go to Hell! Therefore, while they are worth the having under proper conditions, they are not one tenth so much worth the having as *Grace* is, for he who has *Grace* is not under the curse or condemnation of the Law, or under the power of sin! *Grace* saves men, but all the gifts in the world, heaped together, cannot do that!

Note, next, that gifts bring corresponding responsibility with them, so they may even make it harder for a man to be saved—but *Grace* saves the man. If I have 10 talents, then I have a tenfold necessity upon me to be diligent in putting them out to interest. When men boast of their talents, what fools they are! It is as though the packhorse should glory in the load he has to carry! Do you think a cab-horse is proud because he has to drag along a four-wheeler and, perhaps, five people? Does he think himself more greatly privileged than an animal that only has to carry his rider? No, yet that is the case of the gifted person, for, the more gifts, the more load, the more weight, the more burden! So a gift is not a thing to be eager after—it is *Grace* that we need, for, the more *Grace*, the more strength of wing to mount with, the more fleetness of foot to run in the ways of God. A gift is but an addition to our load, but *Grace* is strength with which to carry it. Covet the load if you may honor your Master by carrying it for Him, but, far more, covet the *Grace* which shall enable you to bear it to His Glory.

Further, gifts bring many men into danger, but *Grace* never does. Gifted men are often in peril of being proud, but who, who is what he should be, is ever proud of his *Grace*? If it is true *Grace*, it will humble him. Gifted men, especially those who have great intellectual gifts, are very apt to be sophisticated and unwilling to receive the simple Gospel. Some people who have very big heads, and whose hearts are not as large as they might be, are bothered half their lives with doubts that never perplex those who, having more *Grace*, accept whatever they find in the Word of God. It is a great gift, no doubt, to have a clear brain, to have an insight into deep mysteries, and to be able to solve difficult problems. Yet I do not know that I am particularly covetous of it. I would prefer to cry, with Thomas, “My Lord and my God,” though I would rather come to Christ in a different spirit from that of Thomas, for “blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.” Childlike faith is a diamond, but

the faith that comes by reason is often, if it is a diamond at all, a very small one with a great flaw in it and, therefore, not so good for reflecting the brightness of the pure light of the Truth of God!

But Grace does not bring us into any dangers. It neither puffs up nor yet unsettles. Therefore, while you covet the best gifts, covet Grace yet more. Alas, alas, how many have had gifts and have been made top-heavy by them! Their heads have been swimming through the height to which they have attained, while Grace has kept the humble Believer pursuing the even tenor of his way, doing good all his days, enjoying peace with God and receiving an abundant entrance into the joy of his Master whom he faithfully served according to his ability. Remember, also, dear Friends, that some may receive gifts, yet those gifts will not be tokens of God's love to them at all, for He may only have given them with a view to other people. Possibly you hand a porter at your door a parcel of valuables to carry, but that is no proof of your love to him—it is a very handsome present that you are sending to a friend upon his birthday. The love token is to the person who gets it, not to the porter who carries it! I may come here tonight and be nothing but God's porter to bring precious treasures to your souls—and in the case of many a minister, or many a Sunday school teacher—it may be no token of love that God gives them His messages to carry. They are only the go-betweens—the porters—the love token is to those who receive it.

How I dread the thought that I should ever be among you simply like a butcher, as I have seen him stand at his great block of wood, chopping up meat for all who come! Yet, all the while, he does not eat any of it himself. Perhaps he is a serving man, whose wages are scanty, so that he gets but little meat for himself. It is a poor portion if one has to be a butcher and yet is not, himself, able to feed. He is like a cook who scarcely tastes the dainties that she makes and, perhaps, has no care to do so, but only makes them and serves them up for other people. It is a dreadful thing, in spiritual matters, to be nothing but God's go-between—a ship that carries a rich cargo, but the captain of the vessel does not own a sliver of all that is on board. It all belongs to somebody else—he is but the carrier. Oh, remember, you who have great gifts, but no Grace, are only like big ships with high sails, you are only God's carriers and have no part nor lot in the matter! But he who gets Grace is an heir of God. He has the power, the privilege, the right to become a son of God!

Remember, also, dear Friends, that though you covet gifts, and receive them, you will lose them one day. All the wisdom that a man has acquired he may lose in an instant by a crack from a stone on his skull. It is a great thing to have a good education, clear thought and abilities for usefulness. Yet a slight accident in a railway carriage may make a man as helpless as an imbecile, but, blessed be God, all the railway accidents in the world cannot take Grace from us! No, neither on earth, nor in Heaven, nor in Hell is there anyone who can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! If you have Grace, you will keep it, and it will keep you. But neither can you keep your gifts, nor can your

gifts keep you—therefore Grace is infinitely to be preferred to the most excellent of gifts!

Remember, yet again, that gifts cannot comfort a man when he is in deep depression of spirit, when he is sick and especially when he is near to death. Many a man, lying on a sickbed, has found comfort in the Grace which God has given him, but there never was one who found comfort in his gifts. What a mighty preacher Paul was! Yet he wrote thus concerning one thought that crossed his mind—“Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” Ah, we may live for 50 years or more and gather a great church, and do much good, but there is not a speck of the small dust of comfort in it all—for we remember that God may have simply used us as builders use their scaffolds as long as they need them. And when the house is built, they take the scaffold down and put the material away. God may use us in the same way if we have gifts without Grace! But if we have Grace, it will not be so with us. Grace unites us to Christ. It makes us living stones in the building of which He is the Foundation. When we come to be sick, Grace brings us the promises. Grace looks to Christ, Grace gives us hope, Grace gives us the foretaste and pledge of Glory, and especially is it so with that sweet and blessed Grace of love. The man who is full of Grace, though he has not a solitary talent, and is all unknown, yet is a happy and blessed man! In poverty and in obscurity, in sickness and in death, he is blessed because his soul is full of the majestic Grace of Divine Love.

Thus have I set before you, dear Friends, the “more excellent way.” God help you to run in it and may you have much Grace, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 813, 668, 649.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY
TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

LOVE'S LABORS

NO. 1617

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 4, 1881,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Charity bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.”
1 Corinthians 13:7.***

THE grace of charity, or love, of which so much is most admirably spoken in this chapter, is absolutely essential to true godliness. So essential is it that if we have everything beside, but have not charity, it profits us nothing. The absence of charity is absolutely fatal to vital godliness—so says the Holy Spirit in this chapter. When, then, you read the Apostle's high praises of charity, do not say, “This is a fancy virtue to which certain special saints have attained and we are bound to admire them for it, but we need not imitate them.” Far from it! This charity is the *common*, every-day livery of the people of God! It is not the prerogative of a few, but it must be the possession of all. Do not, therefore, however lofty the model may be, look up to it as though you could not reach it—you *must* reach it!

It is put before you not only as a thing greatly desirable, but as absolutely necessary, for if you excelled in every spiritual gift, yet if you had not this, all the rest would profit you nothing whatever. One would think that such excellent gifts might benefit us a little, but no, the Apostle sums them all up and says of the whole, “it profits me nothing.” I pray that this may be understood by us at the very beginning, lest we should manage to slip away from the Truth of God taught us by the Holy Spirit in this place and should excuse ourselves from being loving by the notion that we are so inconsiderable that such high virtue cannot be required of us, or so feeble that we cannot be expected to attain it. You must attain it or you cannot enter into eternal life, for if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is not of His, and the Spirit of Christ is sure to beget the charity of our text which, “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

What does this teach us at the outset, but that a salvation which leads to this must be of God—and must be worked in us by His power? Such a comely Grace of God can never grow out of our fallen nature! Shall such a clean thing as this be brought out of an unclean thing? This glorious salvation unto pure love must be grasped by faith and worked in us by the operation of the Spirit of God. If we consider salvation to be a little thing, we bring it, as it were, within the sphere of human possibility. But if we set it forth in its true proportions as involving the possession of a pure, loving, elevated state of heart, then we perceive that it is a Divine wonder! When we estimate the renewed nature aright we cry, “This is the finger of God,” and right gladly do we then subscribe to Jonah's creed, “Salvation is of the Lord.” If charity is in any man and abounds, God must have the

glory, for assuredly it was never attained by mere natural effort, but must have been bestowed by that same hand which made the heavens.

So then, Brothers and Sisters, I shall hope, when I conclude, to leave upon your minds the impression of your need of the Grace of God for the attainment of love. I would not discourage you, but I would have you feel how great a labor lies before you and how impossible it will be unless you are girt with a strength beyond your own. This shall be your solace—that if it cannot be the outcome of your own effort, yet, “the fruit of the Spirit is love,” and the Spirit is ready and willing to bear fruit in us! Notice then, first, the multitude of love’s difficulties—it has to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things and endure all things.

Secondly, observe the triumph of love’s labor—it does all these four things—it “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” And then, thirdly, this will bring us back to the point we have started from—the sources of Love’s energy and how it is she is able, thus, to win her four-fold victory over countless difficulties.

I. Consider well THE MULTITUDE OF LOVE’S DIFFICULTIES. When the Grace of God comes into a man, he is born at once to love. He that loves is born of God and he that is born of God loves. He loves Him that begat, even God, and he loves him that is begotten of Him, even all the saved ones. He commences to obey the great command to love his neighbor as himself. His motto is no longer that of an earthly kingdom, Dieu et Mon droit—God and my right. He bears another word on his banner, Dieu et mon frere—God and my brother. No sooner is Love born than she finds herself at war. Everything is against her, for the world is full of envy, hate, and ill-will. I would warn the most loving-hearted that they have entered upon a war for peace, a strife for love—they are born to hate hatred and to contend against contention.

As the lily among thorns, so is love among the sons of men. As the hind among the dogs, so is charity among the selfish multitude. Evidently the difficulties of love are many, for the Apostle speaks of them as, “all things,” and as if this were not enough, he repeats the words and sets forth the opposing armies as four times, “all things.” I do not know whether you can calculate this mighty host. “All things” would seem to comprehend as much as can be, but here in the text you have this amount multiplied by four! For, my Brothers and Sisters, you will have to contend with all that is within yourself. Nothing in your original nature will help you. God has put within you a new life, but the old life seeks to smother it. You will find it a severe struggle to master yourself and, if you succeed, you will be a conqueror, indeed!

Besides that you will have to contend with “all things” in the persons whom you are called upon to love. You must have fervent charity towards the saints, but you will find very much about the best of them which will try your patience. Like yourself, they are imperfect and they will not always turn their best side towards you, but sometimes sadly exhibit their infirmities. Be prepared, therefore, to contend with “all things” in them. As for the *ungodly* whom you are to love to Christ, you will find everything in

them that will oppose the drawings of your love, for they, like yourself, by nature are born in sin and they are rooted in their iniquities.

When you have mastered that kind of "all things" you will have to contend with "all things" in the world, for the world lies in the Wicked One, and all its forces run towards self, contention and hate. Every man's hand is against his fellow and few there are who honor the gentle laws of love. They know not that Divine charity which "seeks not her own." The seed of the serpent is at enmity with all that is kind, tender and self-sacrificing, for these are the marks of the woman's seed. Marvel not, my Brothers and Sisters, if the world hates you! And then remember that "all things" in Hell are against you. What a seething mass of rebellions life—all venomous with hate—is seen in the regions of darkness!

The Prince of the power of the air leads the van and the host of fallen spirits eagerly follow him, like bloodhounds behind their leader. All these evil spirits will endeavor to create dissension, enmity, malice and oppression among men—and the soldier of love must wrestle against all these. See, O my Brothers and Sisters, what a battle is yours! Speak of crusades against the Paynim—what a crusade is this against hate and evil! Yet we shrink not from the fray. Happily, though love has many difficulties, it overcomes them all and overcomes them four times!

There is such vitality in evil that it leaps up from the field whereon it seemed to be slain and rages with all its former fury. First, we overcome evil by patience, which "bears all things." Let the injury be inflicted—we will forgive it and not be provoked—even 70 times seven will we bear in silence. If this suffice not, by God's Grace we will overcome by faith—we trust in Jesus Christ, we rely upon our principles, we look for Divine succor—and so we "believe all things." We overcome a third time by hope—we rest in expectation that gentleness will win and that long-suffering will wear out malice—for we look for the ultimate victory of everything that is true and gracious and so we "hope all things."

We finish the battle by perseverance—we abide faithful to our resolve to love. We will not be irritated into unkindness. We will not be perverted from generous, all-forgiving affection and so we win the battle by steadfast non-resistance. We have set our helm towards the port of love and towards it we will steer, come what may. Baffled often, love "endures all things." Yes, Brethren, and love conquers on all four sides. Love does, as it were, make a hollow square and she sets the face of her warriors towards all quarters of the compass. Does God seem, Himself, to smite Love with afflictions? She "bears all things!" Do her fellow Christians misrepresent her and treat her ill? She believes everything that is good about them and nothing that is injurious!

Do the wicked rise against her? When she tries to convert them, do they return evil for good? She turns her hopefulness to the front in that direction and hopes that yet the Spirit of God will bring them to a better mind! And does it happen that all her spiritual foes attack her with temptations and desperate insinuations? She lifts up the banner of patience against them and, by the power of God's Grace, she puts the infernal enemy to the rout, for she "endures all things!" What a brave mode of battle

is this! Is not Love a man-of-war? Is she not invincible? Hear love's heroic cry as she shouts her defiance—

***“Come one, come all, this rock shall fly,
From its firm base as soon as I.”***

If once taught in the school of Christ to turn love to every point of the compass and so to meet every assault against our heart, we have learned the secret of victory!

It seems to me that I might read my text as if it said that Love conquers in all stages of her life. She begins in conversion and, straightway those that mark her birth are angry and the powers of evil are at once awakened to seek her destruction. Then she “bears all things.” Let them mock, Love never renders railing for railing—Isaac is not to be provoked by Ishmael's jeers. She gathers strength and begins to tell others what she knows of her Lord and His salvation. She “believes all things” and so she confesses her faith—and her fellow Christians are confirmed by her witness. It is her time of energy and so she tries to woo and win others by teaching them the things which she believes.

She advances a little farther and, though often disappointed by the unbelief of men and the coldness of her fellow Christians, she nevertheless “hopes all things” and pushes on in the expectation of winning more of them. Her dove's eyes see in the dark and she advances to victory through ever-growing conflict. Yes, and when infirmities thicken upon her and old age comes—and when she can do little else but sit still and bear and believe and hope—she still perseveres and accepts even the stroke of death, itself, without complaining, for love “endures all things.” I do not think I need say more upon the difficulties of love. I am sure that every experienced person knows that these difficulties are supreme and that we require superlative Grace if we are to master them.

Love does not ask to have an easy life of it—self-love makes that her aim. Love denies herself, sacrifices herself that she may win victories for God and bring blessings on her fellow men. Hers is no easy pathway, but hers shall be no tinsel crown!

II. Secondly, let us survey THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE'S LABOR. Her labors are four-fold. First, in bearing all things. The word here rendered, “bear,” might as correctly have been translated, “cover.” You that have the Revised Version will find in the margin, “Love *covers* all things.” “Covers” is the meaning of the word in ordinary Greek, but Paul generally uses the word in the sense of, “bear.” Our translators, therefore, had to choose between the usual meaning and the Pauline usage, and they selected Paul's meaning and put it down in the first place as, “bears,” giving us in the margin the other sense of “covers.” The two ideas may be blended if we understand it to mean that Love bears all things in silence, concealing injuries as much as possible even from herself.

Let us just think of this word, “covers,” in reference to the Brethren. True love refuses to see faults unless it is that she may kindly help in their removal. Love has no wish to see faults. Noah's younger son discovered and declared the shame of his father, but his other sons took a garment and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. After

this fashion does Love deal with the sins of her brethren. She painfully fears that there may be something wrong but she is loath to be convinced of it. She ignores it as long as she can and wishes that she could deny it altogether. Love covers, that is, it never proclaims the errors of good men.

There are busybodies abroad who never spy out a fault in a brother but they must necessarily hurry off to their next neighbor with the savory news—and then they run up and down the street as though they had been elected common criers. It is by no means honorable to men or women to set up to be common informers. Yet I know some who are not half so eager to publish the Gospel as to publish slander. Love stands in the presence of a fault, with a finger on her lips. If anyone is to smite a child of God, let it not be a Brother. Even if a professor is a hypocrite, Love prefers that he should fall by any hand rather than her own.

Love covers all injuries by being silent about them and acting as if they had never been. She sits alone and keeps silence. To speak and publish her wrong is too painful for her, for she fears to offend against the Lord's people. She would rather suffer than murmur and so, like a sheep before her shearers, she is dumb under injury. I would, Brothers and Sisters, that we could all imitate the oyster. A hurtful particle intrudes itself into its shell and this vexes and grieves it. It cannot eject the evil and what does it do, but cover it with a precious substance extracted out of its own life, by which it turns the intruder into a pearl! Oh, that we could do so with the provocations we receive from our fellow Christians, so that pearls of patience, gentleness, long-suffering and forgiveness might be bred within us by that which otherwise had harmed us! I would desire to keep a bath of silver ready for my fellow Christians in which I could electroplate all their mistakes into occasions for love! As the dripping well covers, with its own deposit, all that is placed within its drip, so would love cover all within its range with love, thus turning even curses into blessings! Oh that we had such love that it would cover and conceal all so far as it is right and just that it should be covered and concealed!

As to *bearing* all, taking the words as they stand in our version, I wish to apply the text mainly to our trials in seeking the conversion of the unconverted. Those who love the souls of men must be prepared to cover much when they deal with them—and to bear much from them in silence. When I begin to seek the conversion of anyone, I must try, as much as I can, to ignore any repulsiveness that there may be in his character. I know that he is a sinner, otherwise I would not seek his salvation. But if he happens to be one who has fallen very low in the esteem of others, I must not treat him as such, but cover his worst points. You cannot possibly bring the Samaritan woman who has had five husbands into a right state of mind by “wondering that He spoke with the woman.” Thus the *disciples* acted, but not their Master, for He sat on the well and talked with her—and made Himself her willing companion that He might be her gracious Savior!

He ignored her sin so far as to talk with her for her good. You will not long have begun this holy work before you will discover in the heart you seek to win much ignorance of the Gospel. Bear with it and bring forward

the text which sheds light on that darkness and teach the Truth of God which will remove that error. Before long you will have to contend with hardness of heart, for when a man knows the Truth of God, he is not always willing to receive it. Bear it and be not vexed. Did you not expect the heart to be hard? Don't you know what business you are upon? You are sent to turn men from darkness to the Light of God and from the power of Satan unto God! Be not astonished if these things should not prove to be child's play!

In addition to this, perhaps you will have ridicule poured upon you. Your attempts to convert will be converted into jests. Bear it! Bear all things! Remember how the multitude thrust out their tongues at your Lord and Master when He was dying—be not so proud as to think yourself too good to be laughed at! Still speak concerning Christ and whatever happens, bear all things. I will not attempt to make a catalog of your provocations—you shall make one, yourself, after you have tried to convert men to Christ—but all that you can possibly meet with is included in my text, for it says, “bears *all* things.”

If you should meet with some extraordinary sinner who opens his mouth with cruel speeches such as you have never heard before and if, by attempting to do him good you only excite him to vulgarity and blasphemy, do not be astonished! Have at him again, for charity “bears all things,” whatever they may be. Push on and say, “Yes, all this proves to me how much you need saving. You are my man! If I get you to Christ there will be all the greater glory to God.” O blessed charity, which can thus cover all things and bear all things for Christ's sake! Do you need an example of it? Would you see the very mirror and perfection of the charity that bears all things? Behold your Divine Lord! Oh, what He has covered!

It is a tempting topic, but I will not dwell on it. How His glorious righteousness, His wondrous splendor of love has covered all our faults and all their consequences, treating us as if He saw no sin in Jacob, neither perversity in Israel. Think what He bore when He came unto His own and His own received Him not! What a covering was that when He said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”! What a pitying sight of the fearful misery of man our Lord Jesus had when holy tears bedewed those sacred eyes! What a generous blindness to their infamous cruelty He manifested when He prayed for His bloodthirsty enemies! O Beloved, you will never be tempted, taunted and tried as He was! Yet, in your own shorter measure may you possess that love which can silently bear all things for the elect's sake and for Christ's sake—that the multitude of the redeemed may be accomplished—and that Christ, through you, may see of the travail of His soul.

Now let us look at the second of Love's great labors. You have heard of the labors of Hercules, but the fabulous hero is far outdone by the veritable achievements of Love! Love works miracles which only Grace can enable her to perform. Here is the second of them—Love “believes all things.” In reference, first, to our fellow Christians, Love always believes the best of them. I wish we had more of this faith abroad in all the Churches, for a horrid blight falls upon some communities through suspicion and mis-

trust. Though everything may be pure and right, yet certain weak minds are suddenly fevered with anxiety through the notion that all is wrong and rotten! This unholy mistrust is in the air, a blight upon all peace—it is a sort of smelly mildew of the soul by which all sweet perfume of confidence is killed. The best man is suspected of being a designing knave, though he is honest as the day. And the smallest fault or error is frightfully exaggerated till we seem to dwell among criminals and to be all villains!

If I did not believe in my Brothers and Sisters, I would not profess to be one of them. I believe that with all their faults they are the best people in the world and that, though the Church of God is not perfect, yet she is the bride of One who is! I have the utmost respect for her, for her Lord's sake. The Roman matron said, "Where my husband is Caias, I am Caia." Where Christ is King, she who stands at His right hand is "the queen in gold of Ophir." God forbid that I should rail at her of whom her Lord says, "Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable, and I have loved you." True love believes good of others as long as it can and when it is forced to fear that wrong *has* been done, Love will not readily yield to evidence, but, she gives the accused brother the benefit of many a doubt!

When the thing is too clear, Love says, "Yes, but the friend must have been under very strong temptation. And if I had been there, I dare say I would have done worse." Or else Love hopes that the erring one may have offended from a good, though mistaken, motive—she believes that the good man must have been mistaken, or he would not have acted so. Love, as far as she can, believes in her fellows. I know some persons who habitually believe everything that is bad, but they are not the children of love. Only tell them that their minister or their brother has killed his wife and they would believe it immediately and send out for a policeman! But if you tell them anything *good* of their neighbor, they are in no such hurry to believe you.

Did you ever hear of gossips tattling *approval* of their neighbors? I wish the chatterers would take a turn at exaggerating other people's *virtues* and go from house to house trumping up pretty stories of their acquaintances! I do not recommend lying, even in kindness, but that side of it would be such a novelty that I could almost bear with its evils for a change. Love, though it will not speak an untruth in praise of another, yet has a quick eye to see the best qualities of others and it is habitually a little blind to their failings. Her blind eye is to the fault and her bright is for the excellence. I once read of an old legend—I do not suppose it to be literally true—but its spirit is correct. It is said that once upon a time, in the streets of Jerusalem, there lay a dead dog and everyone kicked at it and reviled it. One spoke of its currish breed, another of its lean and ugly form, and so forth. But One passed by who paused a moment over the dead dog and said, "What white teeth it has." Men said, as He went on His way, "That is Jesus of Nazareth."

Surely it is always our Lord's way to see good points wherever He can. Brethren, think as well as you can even of a dead dog! If you should ever be led into disappointments and sorrows by thinking too well of your fellow men, you need not greatly blame yourself. I met, in Anthony Farrin-

don's Sermons, a line which struck me. He says the old proverb has it, "Humanum est errare," *to err is human*, but, says he, when we err by thinking too kindly of others we may say, "Christanum est errare," *it is Christian to err* in such a fashion! I would not have you credulous, but I would have you trustful—for suspicion is a cruel evil. Few fall into the blessed error of valuing their fellow Christians at too high a rate.

In reference to the unconverted, this is a very important matter. Love "believes all things" in their case. She does not believe that the unconverted are converted, for, if so, she would not seek their conversion. She believes that they are lost and ruined by the Fall, but she believes that God can save them! Love believes that the precious blood of Christ can redeem the bond slaves of sin and Satan, and break their iron chains. She believes that the power of the Holy Spirit can change a heart of granite into a heart of flesh! Love, therefore, believing this, believes that God can save this sinner by her and she, therefore, begins to speak to him, expecting that the word she speaks will be God's instrument of salvation! When she finds herself sitting next to a sinner, she believes that there was a necessity for her to be there, even as Christ must go through Samaria. She says to herself, "Now will I tell this poor soul what Christ has done, for I believe He may save him."

She does not refrain from preaching Christ through fear of failure, but she believes in the great possibilities which lie in the Gospel and in the Spirit of God—and so she deals earnestly with the man next to her. She believes in her own principles. She believes in the Grace of God. She believes in the power of the Spirit of God. She believes in the force of the Truth of God. She believes in the existence of conscience and so she is moved to set about her saving work. She believes all things! Brethren, do you need a model of this? Then I beseech you look to your Divine Master once again!

See Him in the morning when the sheep are counted, missing one of them. So full of faith is He that He can find the lost one, that He leaves the 99 and cheerfully enters the pathless wilderness! See how He bounds over the mountains! How He descends the ravines! He is seeking His sheep until He finds it, for He is fully assured that He *shall* find it! He shall not fail nor be discouraged, for His faith is great in the salvation of men and He goes forth to it believing that sinners shall be saved. I delight in the deep, calm faith of our Lord Jesus Christ! He had no faith in man's goodness, for "He knew what was in man," but He had great faith in what could be done *in* men and what could be worked *for* them, and for the joy that was set before Him, in this He endured the Cross, despising the shame. He had faith that grand things would come of His salvation—men would be purified, error would be driven out, falsehood would be slain—and love would reign supreme. Here is the second grand victory of Love—she "believes all things." Herein let us exercise ourselves till we are skilled in it.

Love's third great labor is in "hoping all things." Love never despairs. She believes in good things yet to come in her fellow men, even if she cannot believe in any present good in them. Hope all things about your

Brothers and Sisters! Suppose a friend is a member of the Church and you cannot see any clear signs of Grace in him? Hope all things about him! Many true Believers are weak in faith and the operations of Grace are dim in them. And some are placed in positions where the Grace they have is much hindered and hampered—let us take these things into consideration. It is hard to tell how little Grace may yet suffice for salvation—it is not ours to judge. Hope all things and if you should be forced to see sad signs in them which make you fear that they have no Grace—remember that some of the brightest Believers have had their faults and grave ones, too.

Remember *yourself*, lest you also are tempted. If you cannot hope that these persons are saved at all, hope that they *will* be, and do all that you can to promote so blessed an end! Hope all things! If your brother has been very angry with you without a cause, hope that you will win him and set about the task. If you have tried and failed, hope to succeed next time and try again. Hope that though you have failed seven times and he still speaks bitterly, yet in his heart he is really ashamed, or at least that he will be so very soon. Never despair of your fellow Christians! As to the unconverted, you will never do anything with them unless you hope great things about them. When the good Samaritan found the poor man half dead, if he had not hoped about him, he would never have poured in the oil and the wine, but would have left him there to die.

Cultivate great hopefulness about sinners. Always hope of them that they will be saved though no good signs are apparent in them! If you have done your best for them and have been disappointed and defeated, still hope for them. Sometimes you will find cause for hope in the fact that they begin to attend a place of worship. Grasp at that and say, "Who can tell? God may bless them." Or if they have long been hearers and no good has come of it, still hope that the minister will, one day, have a shot at them and the arrow shall pierce through the joints of the harness. When you last spoke to them, there seemed a little tenderness—be thankful for it and have hope! If there has been a little amendment in their life, be hopeful about them. Even if you can see nothing at all hopeful in them, yet hope that there may be something which you cannot see and, perhaps, an effect has been produced which they are endeavoring to conceal.

Hope because you are moved to pray for them. Get other people to pray for them, for as long as they have someone to pray for them, their case is not over and your prayers honor our Master. If you get others to pray, there will be another string to your bow. If they are very ill and you cannot get at them, or they are on their dying beds, *still* have hope about them and try to send them a message in some form or other! Pray the *Lord* to visit and save them! Always keep up your hope about them—till they are dead let not your hope be dead! Would you see a model of this? Ah, look at our blessed Lord and all His hopefulness for us! Look how, despairing of none, He went after those whom others would have given up! If you need a proof, remember how He went after you! Will you despair of anybody since Christ did not despair of you?

Wonders of Grace belong to God and all those wonders have been displayed in many among us. If you and I had been there when they brought the adulterous woman taken in the very act, I am afraid that we would have said, "This is too bad; put her away, she cannot be borne with!" But oh, the hopefulness of the blessed Master, when even to her, He said, "Woman, where are your accusers? Neither do I condemn you. Go, and sin no more." What wonderful patience and gentleness, and hopefulness our Lord displayed in all His conversations with the twelve! It was a noble hopefulness in Christ which led Him to trust Peter as He did! After he had denied his Master with oaths, our Lord trusted him to feed His sheep and lambs and set him in the forefront of Apostolic service! He has also had compassion on some of us, putting us into the ministry and trusting us with the Gospel, for He knew what love would do for us and He was certain He could yet make something of us to His own Glory.

The last victory of love is in enduring all things, by which I understand a patient perseverance in loving. This is, perhaps, the hardest work of all, for many people can be affectionate and patient for a time, but the task is to hold on year after year. I have known some men earnestly check their temper under provocation and bear a great many slights, but at last they have said, "There is an end to everything! I am not going to put up with it any longer. I cannot stand it." Blessed be God, the love that Christ gives us endures all things! As His love endured to the end, so does the love which the Spirit works in us endure to the end. In reference, first, to our fellow Christians, love holds out under all rebuffs. You expect that I shall not love you, my good man, but I shall love you! You give me the rough side of your tongue and make me see that you are not a very lovable person, but I can love you notwithstanding all that!

What? Will you do me a further unkindness? I will oppose you by doing you a greater kindness than before! You said a vile thing about me—I will not hear it, and, if it is possible, I will say a kind thing of you! I will cover you up with hot coals till I melt you! I will war against you with flames of love till your anger is consumed! I will master you by being kinder to you than you have been unkind to me! What hosts of misrepresentations and unkindnesses there are—but if you go on to be a true Christian you must endure all these! If you have to deal with people who will put up with nothing from you, take care to be doubly patient with them. What credit is there in bearing with those who bear with you?

If your Brothers and Sisters are angry without a cause, be sorry for them, but do not let them conquer you by driving you into a bad temper. Stand fast in love—endure not *some* things, but *all* things for Christ's sake—so shall you prove yourself to be a Christian, indeed. As to your dealing with the unconverted, if ever you go into the field after souls, be sure to carry your gun with you and that gun is LOVE. You gentlemen who go out shooting partridges and other birds at this time of the year, no doubt find it a pleasant pastime. But for real excitement, joy and pleasure, commend me to soul-winning! What did our Lord say, "I will make you fishers of men." If you go out fishing for souls you will have to endure

all things, for it will come to pass that some whom you have been seeking for a long time will grow worse instead of better.

Endure this among the all things. Those whom you seek to bless may seem to be altogether unteachable. They may shut their ears and refuse to hear you—never mind, endure all things! They may grow sour and sullen and revile you in their anger, but be not put about by them—let them struggle till they are wearied—and meanwhile quietly wait, saying to yourself, “I must save them.” A warden who has to take care of insane persons will frequently be attacked by them and have to suffer hard blows—but what does he do? Strike the patient and make a fight of it? No, he holds him down and pins him fast—but not in anger, for he pities him too much to be angry with him. Does a nurse with a delirious patient take any notice of his cross words, grumbling and outcries? Not she! She says, “I must try to save this man’s life” and so, with great kindness, she “endures all things.”

If you were a fireman and found a person in an upper room, and the house was on fire, would you not struggle with him rather than let him remain in the room and burn? You would say, “I will save you in spite of yourself.” Perhaps the foolish person would call you names and say, “Let me alone, why should you intrude into my chamber?” But you would say, “Never mind my intrusion. I will apologize, afterwards, for my rudeness, but you must first be out of the fire.” I pray God gives you this blessed lack of manners, this sweet casting of all things to the wind, if by any means you may save some! If you desire to see the mirror and the paragon of persevering endurance, look there! I wish you could see it. I wish these eyes could see the sight as I have sometimes seen it. Behold the Cross! See the patient Sufferer and that ribald multitude—they thrust out their tongues! They sneer! They jest! They blaspheme and there He hangs, triumphant in His patience, conquering the world and death and Hell by enduring “all things!”

O Love, You did never sit on a throne so imperial as the Cross, when there, in the Person of the Son of God, You did endure all things! Oh that we might copy in some humble measure that perfect pattern which is here set before us! If you would be saviors; if you would bless your generation, let no unkindness daunt you! Let no considerations of your own character, or honor, or peace of mind keep you back! But of you may it be said, even as of your Lord—

***“He saved others, himself
He could not save.”***

Have I not shown you four grand battles far excelling all the Waterloos, Trafalgars, Almas and Inkermans on record? Heroes are they that fight and win them—and the Lord God of Love shall crown them!

III. I close by noting THE SOURCES OF LOVE’S ENERGY. The time is gone, as I thought it would be, but it has brought us round in a circle to where we started. Only the Holy Spirit can teach men how to love and give them power to do so. Love’s art is learned at no other school but at the feet of Jesus where the Spirit of Love does rest on those who learn of Him. Beloved, the Spirit of God puts love into us and helps us to maintain it!

Thus—first, Love wins these victories, for it is her nature. The nature of Love is self-sacrifice. Love is the reverse of seeking her own. Love is intense. Love is burning. Therefore she burns her way to victory.

Love! Look at it in the mother. Is it any hardship for her to lose rest and peace and comfort for her child? If it costs her pain, she makes it pleasure by the ardor of her affection. It is the nature of love to court difficulties and to rejoice in suffering for the beloved object. If you have fervent love to the souls of men, you will know how true this is. Next to this, love has four sweet companions. There are with her, *tenderness*, that “bears all things,” *faith* that “believes all things,” *hope* that “hopes all things” and *patience* which endures all things.” He that has tenderness, faith, hope and patience has a brave quaternion of Divine Graces to guard him and he need not be afraid!

Best of all, Love sucks her life from the wounds of Christ. Love can bear, believe, hope and endure because Christ has borne, believed, hoped and endured for her! I have heard of one that had a twist—they say that he saw something that others never saw and heard a voice that others never heard—and he became such a strange man that others wondered at him. Oh, that I had more and more of that most solemn twist which comes through feeling a pierced hand laid on my shoulder and hearing in my ears a sorrowful voice—that same voice which cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” I would see that vision and hear that voice—and then—what then? Why, I must love! I must love! I must love!

That would be the soul's strange bias and sweet twist! Love makes us love! Love bought us, sought us and brought us to the Savior's feet—and it shall, from now on, lead us to deeds which otherwise would be impossible! You have heard of men, sometimes, in a mad fit doing things that ordinary flesh and blood could never have performed. Oh to be distracted from selfishness by the love of Christ and maddened into self-oblivion by a supreme passion for the Crucified! I know not how otherwise to put my thoughts into words so that they may hint at my burning nail marks upon your feet—and then may He pierce your heart till it pours forth a life for love and flows out in streams of kind desires, generous deeds and holy sacrifices for God and for His people. God grant it, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

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NOW, AND THEN

NO. 1002

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

***“For now we see through a glass, darkly. But then face to face.”
1 Corinthians 13:12.***

IN this chapter the Apostle Paul has spoken in the highest terms of charity or love. He accounts it to be a Grace far more excellent than any of the spiritual gifts of which he had just before been speaking. It is easy to see that there were good reasons for the preference he gave to it. Those gifts, you will observe, were distributed among godly men, to every man his several portion, so that what one had another might have lacked. But this Grace belongs to all who have passed from death unto life. The proof that they are disciples of Christ is found in their love to Him and to the Brethren. Those gifts, again, were meant to fit them for service—that each member of the body should be profitable to the other members of the body.

But this Divine Grace is of personal account—it is a light in the heart and a star on the breast of everyone who possesses it. Those gifts, moreover, were of temporary use—their value was limited to the sphere in which they were exercised. But this Grace thrives at all times and in all places, and it is no less essential to our eternal future state than it is to our present welfare. By all means covet the best gifts, my dear Brother, as an artist would wish to be deft with all his limbs and quick with all his senses. But above all, cherish love, as that same artist would cultivate the pure taste which lives and breathes within him—the secret spring of all his motions, the faculty that prompts his skill.

Learn to esteem this sacred instinct of love beyond all the choicest endowments. However poor you may be in talents, let the love of Christ dwell in you richly. Such an exhortation as this is the more necessary because love has a powerful rival. Paul may have noticed that in the academies of Greece—as indeed in all our modern schools—*knowledge* was likely to take all the prizes. Who can tell how much of Dr. Arnold’s success as a schoolmaster was due to the honor in which he held a good boy in preference to a clever boy?

Most certainly Paul could discern in the Church many jealousies to which the superior abilities of those who could speak foreign tongues, and those who could prophesy or preach well, gave rise. So, then, while he ex-

tols the Grace of love, he seems rather to disparage knowledge. At least he uses an illustration which tends to show that the kind of knowledge we pride ourselves in is not the most reliable thing in the world. Paul remembered that he was once a child. A very good thing for any of us to bear in mind. If we forget it, our sympathies are soon dried up, our temper is apt to get churlish, our opinions may be rather overbearing and our selfishness very repulsive.

The foremost man of his day in the Christian Church, and exerting the widest influence among the converts to Christ, Paul thought of the little while ago when he was a young child, and he thought of it very often, too. Though he might have hinted at the attainments he had made, or the high office he held, and laid claim to some degree of respect, he rather looks back at his humble beginnings. If there is wisdom in his reflection, there is, to my mind, a vein of pleasantry in his manner of expressing it.

“When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” Thus he compares two stages of his natural life, and it serves him for a parable. In spiritual knowledge he felt himself to be then in his infancy. His maturity, his thorough manhood, lay before him in prospect. He could easily imagine a future in which he should look back on his present self as a mere tyro, groping his way amidst the shadows of his own fancy. “For now,” he says, “we see through a glass, darkly. But then face to face: now I know in part. But then shall I know even as also I am known.”

Here he employs one or two fresh figures. “*Through a glass*”! What kind of a glass he alluded to we may not be able, exactly, to determine. We will leave that question for the critics to disagree about. It is enough for us that the meaning is obvious. There is all the difference between viewing an object through an obscure medium, and closely inspecting it with the naked eye. We must have the power of vision in either case, but in the latter case we can use it to more advantage. “Now we see through a glass, *darkly*.” Darkly—in a riddle!

So weak are our perceptions of mind that plain truths often puzzle us. The words that teach us are pictures which need explanation. The thoughts that stir us are visions which coat in our brains and want rectifying. Oh, for clearer vision! Oh, for more perfect knowledge! Mark you, Brethren, it is a matter of congratulation that *we do see*, though we have much cause for diffidence, because we do but “see through a glass, darkly.” Thank God *we do know* but let it check our conceit, We only know in part.

Beloved, the objects we look at are distant, and we are near-sighted. The Revelation of God is ample and profound, but our understanding is weak and shallow. There are some things which we count very precious now, which will soon be of no value to us whatever. There are some things

that we know or think we know, and we pride ourselves a good deal upon our knowledge. But when we shall become men we shall set no more value upon that knowledge than a child does upon his toys when he grows up to be a man. Our spiritual manhood in Heaven will discard many things which we now count precious—as a full grown man discards the treasures of his childhood.

And there are many things that we have been accustomed to see that, after this transient life has passed, we shall see no more. Though we delighted in them, and they pleased our eyes while sojourning on earth, they will pass away as a dream when one awakes. We shall never see them again, and never *want* to see them. For our eyes, in clearer light, anointed with eye-salve, shall see brighter visions and we shall never regret what we have lost in the presence of fairer scenes we shall have found.

Other things there are that we know now and shall never forget. We shall know them forever, only in a higher degree, because no longer with a partial knowledge! And there are some things that we see now that we shall see in eternity—only we shall see them there in a clearer light. So we shall speak upon *some things that we do see* now, which *we are to see* more fully and more distinctly hereafter. Then we shall enquire how it is *we shall see them more clearly*. And we shall finish up by considering *what this fact teaches us*.

I. Among the things that we see now, as many of us as have had our eyes enlightened by the Holy Spirit, is OURSELVES. To see ourselves is one of the first steps in true religion. The mass of men have never seen themselves. They have seen the flattering image of themselves and they fancy that to be their own facsimile, but it is not. You and I have been taught of God's Holy Spirit to see our ruin in the Fall. We have bemoaned ourselves on account of that fall. We have been made conscious of our own natural depravity. We have been ground to the very dust by the discovery. We have been shown our actual sinfulness and how we have transgressed against the Most High.

We have repented for this, and have fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the Gospel. Day by day we see a little more of ourselves—nothing very pleasing, I grant you—but something very profitable, for it is a great thing for us to know our emptiness. It is a step towards receiving His fullness. It is something to discover our weakness. It is an essential step towards our participation of Divine strength. I suppose the longer we live, the more we shall see ourselves. And we shall probably come to this conclusion—“Vanity of vanities. All is vanity”—and cry out with Job, “I am vile.”

The more we shall discover of ourselves, the more we shall be sick of ourselves. But in Heaven, I doubt not, we shall find out that we never saw even ourselves in the clearest light, but only as “through a glass, darkly,”

only as an unriddled thing, as a deep enigma. For we shall understand more about ourselves in Heaven than we do now. There we shall see, as we have not yet seen, how desperate a mischief was the Fall, into what a horrible pit we fell, and how fast we were stuck in the miry clay. There shall we see the blackness of sin as we have never seen it here, and understand its Hell desert as we could not till we shall look down from yonder starry height where infinite Mercy shall bring us.

When we shall be singing, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,” we shall look at the robes that we have washed in His blood, and see how white they are. We shall better understand, then, than now, how much we needed washing—how crimson were the stains and how precious was that blood that washed those scarlet spots. There, too, shall we know ourselves on the bright side better than we do now. We know today that we are saved, and there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

But that robe of righteousness which covers us now, as it shall cover us then, will be better seen by us. And we shall discern how lustrous it is, with its needlework and worked gold—how much better than the pearls and gems that have decked the robes of monarchs are the blood and righteousness of Jehovah Jesus, who has given Himself for us! Here we know that we are adopted. We feel the spirit of sonship. “We cry, Abba, Father.” But there we shall know better what it is to be the sons of God—for here it does not yet appear what we shall be. But when we shall be there, and when Christ shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. And then we shall understand to the full what sonship means.

So, too, I know today that I am a joint-heir with Christ, but I have a very poor idea of what it is I am heir to. But there shall I see the estates that belong to me. Not only see them, but actually enjoy them. A part shall every Christian have in the inheritance undefiled and that fades not away, that is reserved in Heaven for him, because he is in Christ Jesus—one with Christ—by eternal union, one. But I am afraid that is very much more a riddle to us than a matter of understanding. We see it as an enigma now, but there our oneness with Christ will be as conspicuous to us and as plain as the letters of the alphabet. There shall we know what it is to be a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

There shall I understand the mystical marriage bond that knits the Believer’s soul to Christ. There shall I see how, as the branch springs from the stem, my soul stands in union, vital union, with her blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, one thing that we see now which we shall see in a much clearer light hereafter, is “ourselves.”

Here, too, we see the CHURCH, but WE SHALL SEE THE CHURCH MUCH MORE CLEARLY BY-AND-BY. We know there is a Church of God.

We know that the Lord has a people whom He has chosen from before the foundation of the world—we believe that these are scattered up and down throughout our land—and many other lands. There are many of them we do not know. Many that we should not particularly like, I daresay, if we did know them, on account of their outward characteristics. There are persons of very strange views, and very odd habits, perhaps. And yet, for all that, the people of the living God!

Now, we know this Church. We know its Glory—moved with one life, quickened with one Spirit—redeemed with one blood. We believe in this Church, and we feel attachment to it for the sake of Jesus Christ, who has married the Church as the Bride. But, oh, when we shall get to Heaven, how much more we shall know of the Church, and how we shall see her face to face, and not “through a glass, darkly”! There we shall know something more of the numbers of the chosen than we do now and it may be to our intense surprise. There we shall find some among the company of God’s elect whom we, in our bitterness of spirit had condemned. And there we shall miss some who, in our charity, we have conceived to be perfectly secure.

We shall know better, then, who are the Lord’s and who are not than we can ever know here. Here all our processes of discernment fail us. Judas comes in with the Apostles, and Demas takes his part among the saints, but there we shall know the righteous, for we shall see them. There will be one flock and one Shepherd, and He that on the Throne does reign forevermore shall be glorified. We shall understand, then, what the history of the Church has been in all the past, and why it has become so strange a history of conflict and conquest. Probably we shall know more of the history of the Church in the future.

From that higher elevation and brighter atmosphere we shall understand better what are the Lord’s designs concerning His people in the latter day. And what Glory shall redound to His own name from His redeemed ones, when He shall have gathered together all that are called and chosen and faithful from among the sons of men. This is one of the joys we are looking for—that we shall come to the general assembly and Church of the first-born whose names are written in Heaven. And have fellowship with those who have fellowship with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thirdly. Is it not possible, no, is it not *certain*, that in the next state WE SHALL KNOW MORE OF THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD THAN WE DO NOW? Here we see the Providence of God, but it is in a glass, darkly. The Apostle says “through” a glass. There was glass in the Apostles’ days—not a substance such as our windows are now made of—but thick, dull colored glass. It was not much more transparent than that which is used in the manufacture of common bottles, so that looking through a piece of

that glass you could not see much. That is like what we now see of Divine Providence. We believe all things work together for good to them that love God. We have seen how they work together for good, in some cases, and experimentally proved it to be so.

But still it is rather a matter of faith than a matter of sight with us. We cannot tell how “every dark and bending line meets in the center of His love.” We do not yet perceive how He will make those dark dispensations of trials and afflictions that come upon His people really to subserve His Glory and their lasting happiness. But up there we shall see Providence, as it were, face to face. And I suppose it will be among our greatest surprises—the discovery of how the Lord dealt with us.

“Why,” we shall, some of us say, “we prayed against those very circumstances which were the best that could have been appointed for us.” “Ah,” another will say, “I have fretted and troubled myself over what was, after all, the richest mercy the Lord ever sent.” Sometimes I have known persons refuse a letter at the door, and it has happened, in some cases, that there has been something very valuable in it, and the postman has said, afterwards, “You did not know the contents, or else you would not have refused it.”

And often God has sent us, in the black envelope of trial, such a precious mass of mercy that if we had known what was in it, we should have taken it in, and been glad to *pay* for it—glad to give it house room, to entertain it. But because it looked black we were prone to shut our door against it. Now, up there we shall know not only more of ourselves, but perceive the reasons of many of God’s dealings with us on a larger scale. And we shall there, perhaps, discover that wars that devastated nations, and pestilences that filled graves, and earthquakes that make cities tremble, were, after all, necessary cogs in the great wheel of the Divine machinery.

And He who sits upon the Throne at this moment, and rules supremely every creature that is either in Heaven, or earth, or Hell, will there make it manifest to us that His government was right. It is good to think in these times whenever thing seems loosening, that “the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” It must come out right in the long run. It must be well—every part and portion must work together with a unity of design to promote God’s Glory and the saint’s good. We shall see it there! And we shall lift up our song with new zest and joy as fresh displays of the wisdom and goodness of God, whose ways are past finding out, are unfolded to our admiring view.

Fourthly. It is surely no straining of the text to say that though here we know something of THE DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL, AND THE MYSTERIES OF THE FAITH, by-and-by, in a few months or years at the long-

est, *we shall know a great deal more than we do now*. There are some grand doctrines, Brothers and Sisters, we dearly love, but though we love them, our understanding is too feeble to grasp them fully. We account them to be mysteries. We reverently acknowledge them, yet we dare not attempt to explain them. They are matters of faith to us.

It may be that in Heaven there shall be counsels of eternal wisdom into which no saints or angels can peer. It is the Glory of God to conceal a matter. Surely, no creature will ever be able, even when exalted to Heaven, to comprehend all the thoughts of the Creator. We shall never be Omniscient—we cannot be. God alone knows everything, and understands everything. But how much more of authentic Truth shall we discern when the mists and shadows have dissolved! And how much more shall we understand when raised to that higher sphere and endowed with brighter faculties, none of us can tell.

Probably things that puzzle us here will be as plain as possible there. We shall perhaps smile at our own ignorance. I have fancied sometimes that the elucidations of learned doctors of divinity, if they could be submitted to the very least in the kingdom of Heaven, would only cause them to smile at the learned ignorance of the sons of earth. Oh, how little we do know, but how much we shall know! I am sure we shall know, for it is written, “Then shall I know even as also I have known.” We now see things in a mist—“men as trees, walking”—a doctrine here, and a doctrine there. And we are often at a loss to conjecture how one part harmonizes with another part of the same system, or to make out how all these doctrines are consistent.

This knot cannot be untied, that gnarl cannot be unraveled, but—

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

But, my dear Brothers and Sisters, having kept you thus far in the outer courts, I would gladly lead you into the temple! Or, to change the figure, if in the beginning I have set forth good wine, certainly I am not going to bring out that which is worse. Rather would I have you say, as the ruler of the feast did to the bridegroom, “you have kept the good wine until now.”

HERE WE SEE JESUS CHRIST, BUT WE DO NOT SEE HIM AS WE SHALL SEE HIM SOON. We have seen Him by faith in such a way that we have beheld our burdens laid on Him, and our iniquities carried by Him into the wilderness, where, if they are sought for, they shall not be found. We have seen enough of Jesus to know that “He is altogether lovely.” We can say of Him, He “is all my salvation, and all my desire.” Sometimes, when He throws up the lattice and shows Himself through those windows of agate and gates of carbuncle—in the ordinances of His House—at the

Lord's Supper especially, the King's beauty has entranced us even to our heart's ravishment.

Yet all we have ever seen is somewhat like the report which the Queen of Sheba had of Solomon's wisdom. When we once get to the court of the Great King we shall declare that the half has not been told us! We shall say, "my eyes shall behold, and not another." Brethren, is not this the very cream of Heaven? There have been many suggestions of what we shall do in Heaven, and what we shall enjoy. But they all seem to me to be wide of the mark compared with this one—that we shall be with Jesus! Be like He is, and shall behold His Glory.

Oh, to see the feet that were nailed! And to touch the hands that were pierced, and to look upon the head that wore the thorns! And to bow before Him who is ineffable love, unspeakable condescension, infinite tenderness! Oh, to bow before Him, and to kiss that blessed face! Jesus, what better do we want than to see You by Your own light—to see You, and speak with You, as when a man speaks with his friend? It is pleasant to talk about this, but what will it be there when the gates of pearl open? The streets of gold will have small attraction to us, and the harps of angels will but slightly enchant us—compared with the King in the midst of the Throne! He it is who shall rivet our gaze, absorb our thoughts, enchain our affection, and move all our sacred passions to their highest pitch of celestial ardor! We shall see Jesus!

Once again (and here we come into the deep things), beyond a doubt WE SHALL ALSO SEE GOD. It is written that the pure in heart shall see God. God is seen now in His works and in His Word. Little, indeed, could these eyes bear the Beatific Vision, yet we have reason to expect that, as far as creatures can bear the sight of the Infinite Creator, we shall be permitted to see God. We read that Aaron and certain chosen ones saw the Throne of God, and the brightness, as it were, of sapphire stone—light, pure as jasper.

In Heaven it is the Presence of God that is the light thereof. God's more immediately dwelling in the midst of the new Jerusalem is its peerless Glory and peculiar bliss. We shall then understand more of God than we do now. We shall come nearer to Him, be more familiar with Him, be more filled with Him. The love of God shall be shed abroad in our hearts. We shall know our Father as we yet know Him not. We shall know the Son to a fuller degree than He has yet revealed Himself to us, and we shall know the Holy Spirit in His personal love and tenderness towards us. Beyond all those influences and operations which have soothed us in our sorrows and guided us in our perplexities here below, we shall know the Trinity.

I leave your thoughts and your desires to follow the teaching of the Spirit. As for me, I cower before the thought while I revel in it. I, who have strained my eyes while gazing at nature, where the things that are made

show the handiwork of God! I, whose conscience has been awe-struck as I listened to the voice of God proclaiming His holy Law! I, whose heart has been melted while there broke on my ears the tender accents of His blessed Gospel in those snatches of sacred melody that relieve the burden of prophecy! I, who have recognized in the babe of Bethlehem, the Hope of Israel. In the Man of Nazareth, the Messiah that should come. In the Victim of Calvary, the one Mediator. In the risen Jesus, the Well-Beloved Son—to me, verily, God Incarnate has been so palpably revealed that I have almost seen God, for I have, as it were, seen Him in whom all the fullness of the Godhead bodily does dwell. Still, I “see through a glass, darkly.”

Illumine these dark senses, waken this drowsy conscience, purify my heart—give me fellowship with Christ, and you bear me up, translate me to the third heavens—so I may, so I can, so I *shall* see God! But what that means, or what it is, ah me, I cannot tell!

II. We proposed to enquire, in the second place, HOW THIS VERY REMARKABLE CHANGE SHALL BE EFFECTED? WHY IS IT THAT WE SHALL SEE MORE CLEARLY THEN, THAN NOW? We cannot altogether answer the question, but one or two suggestions may help us. No doubt many of these things will be more clearly revealed in the next state. Here the light is like the dawn—it is dim twilight. In Heaven it will be the blaze of noon. God has declared some things of Himself by the mouth of His holy Prophets and Apostles. He has been pleased, through the lips of His Son, whom He has appointed Heir of all things, to speak to us more plainly, to show us more openly the thoughts of His heart and the counsel of His will.

These are the first steps to knowledge. But there the light will be as the light of seven days, and there the manifestation of all the treasures of wisdom shall be brighter and clearer than it is now. For God, the only-wise God, shall unveil to us the mysteries, and exhibit to us the glories of His everlasting kingdom. The Revelation we now have suits us as men clad in our poor mortal bodies. The Revelation then will suit us as immortal spirits. When we have been raised from the dead it will be suitable to our immortal spiritual bodies.

Here, too, we are at a distance from many of the things we long to know something of, but there we shall be nearer to them. We shall then be on a vantage ground, with the entire horizon spread out before us. Our Lord Jesus is, as to His personal Presence, far away from us. We see Him through the telescope of faith, but then we shall see Him face to face. His literal and bodily Presence is in Heaven, since He was taken up, and we need to be taken up, likewise, to be with Him where He is that we may literally behold Him.

Get to the Fountain-Head, and you understand more. Stand in the center, and things seem regular and orderly. If you could stand in the sun

and see the orbits in which the planets revolve round that central luminary, it would become clear enough. But for many an age astronomers were unable to discover anything of order, and spoke of the planets as progressive, retrograde, and standing still. Let us get to God, the Center, and we shall see how Providence in order revolves round His sapphire Throne.

We, ourselves, too, when we get to Heaven, shall be better qualified to see than we are now. It would be an inconvenience for us to know here as much as we shall know in Heaven. No doubt we have sometimes thought that if we had better ears it would be a great blessing. We have wished we could hear ten miles off. But probably we should be no better off. We might hear too much, and the sounds might drown each other. Probably our sight is not as good as we wish it were, but a large increase of ocular power might not be of any use to us.

Our natural organs are fitted for our present sphere of being. And our mental faculties are, in the case of most of us, properly adapted to our moral requirements. If we knew more of our own sinfulness, we might be driven to despair. If we knew more of God's Glory, we might die of terror. If we had more understanding, unless we had equivalent capacity to employ it, we might be filled with conceit and tormented with ambition. But up there we shall have our minds and our systems strengthened to receive more, without the damage that would come to us here from overleaping the boundaries of order, supremely appointed and divinely regulated.

We cannot here drink the wine of the kingdom—it is too strong for us. But up there we shall drink it new in our heavenly Father's kingdom, without fear of the intoxications of pride, or the staggering of passions. We shall know even as we are known. Besides, dear Friends, the atmosphere of Heaven is so much clearer than this that I do not wonder we can see better there. Here is the smoke of daily care. The constant dust of toil. The fog of trouble perpetually rising. We cannot be expected to see much in such a smoky atmosphere as this. But when we shall pass beyond, we shall find no clouds ever gather round the sun to hide His everlasting brightness. There all is clear. The daylight is serene as the noonday. We shall be in a clearer atmosphere and brighter light.

III. The practical lessons we may learn from this subject demand your attention before I close. I think there is an appeal to our *gratitude*. Let us be very thankful for all we do see. Those who do not see now—ah, not even “through a glass, darkly”—shall never see face to face. The eyes that never see Christ by faith shall never see Him with joy in Heaven. If you have never seen yourself a leper defiled with sin and abashed with penitence, you shall never see yourself redeemed from sin, renewed by Grace, a white-robed spirit.

If you have no sense of God's Presence here, constraining you to worship and love Him, you shall have no sight of His Glory hereafter introducing you to the fullness of joy and pleasure forevermore. Oh, be glad for the sight you have, dear Brothers and Sisters. It is God that gave it to you! You are one born blind. And, "Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind?" This miracle has been worked on you—you can see, and you can say—"One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

Our text teaches us that this feeble vision is very *hopeful*. *You shall see better by-and-by*. Oh, you know not how soon—it may be in a day or two that we shall be in Glory! God may so have ordained it, that between us and Heaven there may be but a step. Another lesson is that of *forbearance* one with another. Let the matters we have spoken of soften the asperity of our debates. Let us feel, when we are disputing about points of difficulty, that we need not get cross about them, because, after all, there are limits to our present capacity as well as to our actual knowledge. Our disputes are often childish. We might as well leave some questions in abeyance for a little while.

Two persons in the dark have differed about a color, and they are wrangling about it. If we brought candles in and held them to the color, the candles would not show what it was. But if we look at it tomorrow morning, when the sun shines, we shall be able to tell. How many difficulties in the Word of God are like this! Not yet can they be justly discriminated—till the day dawns, the apocalyptic symbols will not be all transparent to our understanding. Besides, we have no time to waste while there is so much work to do. Much time is already spent.

Sailing is dangerous. The winds are high. The sea is rough. Trim the ship, keep the sails in good order. Manage her and keep her off quicksand. As to certain other matters, we must wait till we get into the fair haven and are able to talk with some of the bright spirits now before the Throne. When some of the things they know shall be opened unto us, we shall confess the mistakes we made and rejoice in the light we shall receive! Should not this happy prospect excite our *aspiration* and make us very desirous to be there?

It is natural for us to want to know, but we shall not know as we are known till we are present with the Lord. We are at school now—children at school. We shall go to the college soon—the great University of Heaven—and take our degree there. Yet some of us, instead of being anxious to go, are shuddering at the thought of death—the gate of endless joy we dread to enter! There are many persons who die suddenly. Some die in their sleep, and many have passed out of time into eternity when it has scarcely been known by those who have been sitting at their bedsides. Depend upon it, there is no pain in dying.

The pain is in *living*. When they leave off living here, they have done with pain. Do not blame death for what it does not deserve. It is *life* that lingers on in pain—death is the end of it. The man that is afraid of dying ought to be afraid of living. Be content to die whenever the Master's will shall bid you. Commit your spirit to His keeping. Who that has seen but the glimpses of His beaming Countenance does not long to see His face that is as the sun shining in His strength? O Lord! Your will be done! Let us speedily behold You, if so it may be—only this one word—if so it may be.

Do we now see, and do we expect to see better? Let us bless the name of the Lord, who has chosen us of His mercy and of His infinite loving kindness. On the other hand, let it cause us great anxiety if we have not believed in Jesus, for He that has not believed in Him, dying as he is, will never see the face of God with joy. Oh, unbeliever, be concerned about your soul, and seek after Him! Oh, that God would open your eyes now in this very House of Prayer! Blessed for you to know in part. Thrice blessed, I say. For as surely as you know in part now, you shall fully know hereafter! Be it your happy lot to know Him, whom to know is life eternal. God grant it, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 Corinthians 5.

SOME of the Sermon readers may not be aware that we issue a monthly magazine entitled *The Sword and the Trowel*, price 3d. In it will be found interesting descriptions of holy works in all denominations, theological articles, and periodical information as to the various institutions connected with the Tabernacle. It is believed that *The Sword and the Trowel* has the largest circulation of any magazine of its class, with the exception of those which attract readers by religious novels. Such a mode of gaining popularity the Editor will never employ. The volume entitled *Feathers for Arrows* was compiled by us with the view of furnishing fresh illustrations to religious teachers. The first edition of ten thousand was sold at once, and we went to press with a second ten thousand. It is a beautifully bound volume, and a very cheap half-crown's worth. Passmore & Alabaster are the publishers.

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FALLEN ASLEEP

NO. 2659

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JANUARY 28, 1900.

(C. H. Spurgeon Memorial Sabbath).

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 29, 1882.

[Just 10 years before he fell asleep in Jesus.]

**"Some are fallen asleep."
1 Corinthians 15:6.**

Writing concerning the brethren who had seen the Lord Jesus Christ after His Resurrection and of whom "above five hundred" were present at one time, Paul said, at the date when he was writing this Epistle, "the greater part" remained alive, "but," he added, "some are fallen asleep."

We might have thought that God, in great mercy, would have preserved the lives of those 500 brethren to an extreme old age, that, in every part of the globe, there might be extant, as long as possible, *some-one* who would be able to say, "I beheld the Son of God when He was upon the earth. I heard Him preach. I saw Him die on the Cross and then I looked upon Him again after He had risen from the grave." Every one of these witnesses would have been worth his weight in gold to the Christian religion! Wherever such a man lived, he would have been, under the blessing of God, the means of convincing many people of the truth of our glorious faith! Yet, dear Friends, it does not appear that these invaluable brethren were spared the shafts of death. These witnesses of Christ's Resurrection died as other men did. They had no immunity from death and no extreme old age was granted to them, for the Apostle, writing not so very long after the event, said, "Some are fallen asleep."

From this fact I gather that lives which appear to us to be extremely necessary, may not be so regarded by God! Your own observation will, I am sure, agree with mine, that the Lord sometimes takes from us those whom we can least spare. Those who seemed to be the pillars of the Church have been suddenly removed. The fathers among us—those who have been the bravest confessors of the faith—or the most useful servants of the Savior, have been called away. This should teach us—if we are wise enough to learn the lesson—to regard the most invaluable person in our own Israel as being only lent to us by the Lord, for a season, and liable to be summoned to higher service at any moment! Possibly, God takes some men away from us because we think them absolutely necessary. He will not let us trust in an arm of flesh—and if He is so condescending as to use human feebleness and we go and confide in the

feebleness—and suppose that God’s strength is tied up to it—in secret jealousy He removes the instruments that He has used, that men may learn not to glory in their fellow men, or to make idols out of their Christian brethren and fathers!

It is probable that these witnesses of Christ’s Resurrection enjoyed a large measure of reverence from the members of the Christian Church. Had they lived very long, they might have been regarded with a superstitious and almost idolatrous reverence. God intended that His Church should increasingly live by faith, not by sight, so, while she was in her infancy He gave her the prop of miracles and also the support of living witnesses. But when she had somewhat increased in strength, He no longer gave the power to work miracles, but left her to rest upon His Word, alone. And as she further progressed, He, in a few years, took away the earthly witnesses of Christ’s life, death and Resurrection, that the Eternal Spirit, working through the Word, might stand, to all time, as the living and unfailing Witness of the fact that Jesus lived, died and “rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

The lesson for us all to learn is just this—let us not set too much store by any of God’s servants and, especially—let us never reckon that we are essential to the carrying on of His work! The fly upon the chariot wheel was easily to be dispensed with and so are we. Like shadows we have come—like shadows we shall go. We may be missed—I hope we shall all live so that many will miss us when we are gone. But they will brush their tears away and both the world and the Church—and especially the Church—will continue to go on without us! While Jesus lives, whoever may die, we shall never have to say, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!” But still shall the Church of God flourish and increase, for the Spirit of God is with her.

Paul wrote, “Some are fallen asleep.” Of course *all* the witnesses who personally saw Christ have long ago fallen asleep, but, among ourselves, it is also true that, “some are fallen asleep.” And the Truth of God is impressed upon us more and more forcibly every week. I never expect, now, to come to this place on two succeeding Sabbaths without hearing that some one or other of our friends has departed. Our death-rate, for many years, has been wonderfully small, for God seems to have favored us by sparing us to one another. We must not forget that in past days more of our number were young than is the case with us now and, as we all march onwards towards the inevitable river, the deaths will naturally be more numerous among us than they have been. They are beginning to be so, already, and I am continually hearing of one or another of our most useful Brothers or Sisters being “called Home.” Almost every day this Truth of God is impressed upon me—“Some are fallen asleep.” I suppose that all the year round, almost as regularly as the clock ticks, about two a week of our Church members, beside others out of the congregation, are taken up to dwell in the Master’s Presence. So my subject concerns us just as much as it did those of whom and to whom the Apostle wrote.

I. Now, coming to the text, I call your attention, first, to THE FIGURE USED HERE—“Some are fallen asleep.”

In the heathen part of the catacombs of Rome, the inscriptions over the place where their dead were buried are full of lamentation and de-

spair. Indeed, the writers of those inscriptions do not appear to have been able to find words in which they could express their great distress—their agony of heart—at the loss of child, or husband, or friend. They pile the mournful words together to try to describe their grief. Sometimes, they declare that the light has gone from their sky now their dear ones are taken from them. “Alas! Alas!” says the record, “dear Caius has gone and with him all joy is quenched forever, for I shall see him no more.” Heathenism is hopeless to afford any comfort to the bereaved!

But when you come into that part of the catacombs which was devoted to Christian burial, everything is different. There you may constantly read these consoling words, “He sleeps in peace.” There is nothing dreadful or despairing in the inscriptions there—they are submissive, they are cheerful, they are even thankful! Frequently they are victorious and the most common emblem is—not the quenched torch, as it is on the heathen side, where the light is supposed to have gone out forever—but the palm branch, to signify that the victory remains eternally with the departed one. It is the glow of the Christian religion to have let light into the sepulcher, to have taken the sting away from death and, in fact, to have made it no more death to die!

The figure used here is that of falling asleep. It describes first, the act, and then the state. “Some are fallen asleep.” That is the act of death. Having fallen asleep, they remain so—that is the state of death. For a Christian to die, is, according to Scripture, *an act of the most natural kind*, for it is but to fall asleep. What that act really is, in its literal meaning, I cannot fully explain to you, though I know by long personal experience—and all of you know, and will soon know, again, if you are permitted to fall asleep, tonight, and to wake in the morning! Yet you never knew exactly when you went to sleep. You have often wanted to go to sleep, but you could not and, probably nobody has ever gone to sleep while he has tried to do so. But it is when all idea of forcing slumber has gone from us that gradually we pass into a state of unconsciousness. Such, perhaps, is death—the sinking away and becoming unconscious of this world, and asleep to it—though happily conscious of another world and sweetly awake to it. That is the act of falling asleep.

Then, after the act of falling asleep, which is death, comes the *state of sleep in which rest is the main ingredient*. Are Believers, then, asleep? Yes, and no. Never make a figure run on four legs when it was only meant to go on two. Some people, when they get hold of a metaphor, want to make it have as many feet as a centipede—and they seek to draw all sorts of parallels which were never intended to be drawn. The fact is that the saints sleep, first, as to their bodies. There they are in the cemetery—which means the sleeping-place—till dawns the bright illustrious day when these bodies shall wake again. As for their souls, they are asleep as to this world—their memory and their love are things of the past—they are, alike, unknowing and unknown as far as this earth is concerned. As to that other world, we read that they shall be “forever with the Lord.” Our Savior said to the penitent thief—“Today shall you be with Me in Paradise.” And the prayer of Christ for His people was that we might be with Him where He is—not to be asleep—but to behold His glory, the glory which the Father had given Him.

Hence, the word, “sleep,” is not to be regarded as implying that the souls of the departed lie in a state of unconsciousness. It is nothing of the kind! It is unconsciousness as to the things of time and sense, but a blessed consciousness as to another and a fairer and brighter and better world than this! Even while I am in this mortal state, when I am asleep, though I may be unaware of anything that is happening in my bedroom, yet, full often, in my sleep, my mind is soaring on the wings of eagles, mounting up to Heaven, or diving into the depths, conscious of dream-land, and of the spirit land, though unconscious of the present world for the time being!

The meaning of the term is evidently this—as sleep brings to us rest, the blessed ones, who have fallen asleep in Christ, are perfectly at rest. It is delightful for a man, who has worked very hard all day, to forget his toils and fall asleep. Well did Young write, in his *Night Thoughts*, concerning—

“Tired nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep.”

In his sleep, the prisoner in the dungeon forgets his manacles. The slave in the galley forgets his bondage. The poor man forgets his poverty and he who dreads the approach of danger drinks a draught of the waters of Lethe and remembers his fears no more. What a blessing sleep is to this poor, weary frame and to the throbbing brain! The saints in Heaven have a better rest than sleep can give, but sleep is the nearest word we can find to describe the state of the blessed. They have no poverty, no toil, no anguish of spirit, no remorse, no struggling with indwelling sin, no battling with foes without and fears within. “They rest from their labors and their works do follow them.” Oh, what a sweet thing to fall asleep, if this is what it means—to enjoy perfect repose and to be beyond the reach of all influences which make life here to be so sorrowful! “Some are fallen asleep,” that is, they have entered into their rest.

By falling asleep, again, is meant a *state of security*. The man who is in the battle may be wounded and may die, but he who has gone up to his chamber to sleep is supposedly there to be at peace and out of the reach of danger, though that is not always the case. But, in those heavenly chambers where the Lord shall hide away His people, they shall be perfectly secure. They will never have to keep watch against “the arrow that flies by day,” or, “the pestilence that walks in darkness.” They are out of gunshot of the enemy! As Dr. Payson said, when he was dying, “The battle is fought,” so is it with them—the battle is fought and the victory is won forever! Therefore have they ascended to the hilltops of Glory and to the chambers of eternal rest! And there they sleep while we still struggle hand to hand with the enemy, with many a deadly thrust and many an ugly wound. God be praised that there is a place of safety for all the soldiers of the Cross! “Some are fallen asleep,” and so shall we, in due time, if we are fighting under the banner of Emmanuel, God with us!

Now let us learn, from this figure of falling asleep, a little about death and, especially, about a Christian’s death. I learn from it, first, that *the act is not a painful one, nor even a disagreeable one*. As I have said before, I cannot really tell what falling asleep is, for in the very act we, ourselves, pass out of the consciousness of it. But, as far as one has watched children falling asleep, there certainly is no appearance of any

pain, for usually they drop off into slumber very happily—and that is how God's people shall do when they fall asleep in Jesus. Do not regard your departure out of the world as a thing to be surrounded with horror! Do not conjure up hobgoblins, evil spirits, darkness and terror! "The Valley of the Shadow of Death," of which David spoke, I do not think was ever meant to be applied to *dying*, for it is a valley that he *walks* through and he comes out the other side of it! And it is not the Valley of Death, but only of "the Shadow of Death." I have walked through that valley many a time—right through from one end of it to the other—and yet I have not died! The grim shadow of something worse than death has fallen over my spirit, but God has been with me, as He was with David, and His rod and His staff have comforted me. And many here can say the same! And I believe that often those who feel great gloom in going through "the Valley of the Shadow of Death," feel no gloom at all when they come to the Valley of Death itself! There has generally been brightness there for the most sorrowful spirits and those who, before going there, have groveled in the dust, have been enabled to mount as on eagles' wings when they have actually come to the place of their departure into the future state.

The more you think this matter over, the more clearly will it appear to you that there cannot be any pain in death—all pain must be connected with *life*—it is the living who suffer. In death, we forget all pain. That gentle touch, that Divine love-pat that shall end all pain and sorrow is the thing which men usually call death, but which the Apostle rightly calls *sleep*. There is nothing to be dreaded in it! It may be altogether unattended with pain. I believe that full often it is so. To fall asleep is a very natural act and so it is for us to die. A little child has been playing in the field gathering buttercups and daisies all day long, but, at last, tired right out, he drops asleep upon his mother's lap. What could he do better? So, though we may be unwilling to die, the time will come when we shall have finished our life-work or play, whichever you may please to call it—and we shall fall asleep upon the bosom of our God. What better thing could *we* do? There is a dear old friend of mine, now in Heaven and, when he came to this house, one Sunday, I said to him, "Our old friend, So-and-So, has gone Home." The one to whom I spoke was an old man himself, one of our most gracious elders, and he looked at me in a most significant way and his eyes twinkled as he said, "He could not do better, dear Pastor! He could not do better and you and I will do the same thing one of these days. We, also, shall go Home!" Our aged friend, as I told you, has gone Home since that time, and now I may say of him, "He could not have done better." Why, that is where good children always go at night—home! If they ran away, where would they go? When our night comes, beloved children of God, you and I also must go Home—do we feel at all afraid of such a prospect? If so, surely our love to our Heavenly Father, and to our Elder Brother, and to our Home above must be growing somewhat cold.

And then, again, *if we did not die, we would wish to do so*. Certainly, when people cannot sleep, that is the very thing they crave for! There have, perhaps, been times when you have been ready to take something which would help to keep you awake when you have needed to do some

special work, or to watch over some precious sick one. But when night follows night and there has been no sleep for you, you do not want anything to keep you awake, then, but you long for sleep. "Oh, that I could sleep!" you cry. We regard it, always, as a bad symptom when the sufferer says, "I cannot sleep." The disciples said, concerning Lazarus, "If he sleeps, he shall do well," and they spoke wisely, although they misunderstood the meaning of the word, sleep, in that connection. And, surely, we shall do well when we fall asleep in Jesus! It shall become to us the most blessed thing that God Himself can send us. Oh, if we could not die, it would be indeed horrible! Who wants to be chained to this poor life for a century or longer?

There came to me one of whom I may tell the story, for he is now dead and he said that if I would do his bidding, I would live forever here, for he had discovered a great secret by which men need never die. I said to him, "Sir, you seem to me like a man of seventy, and I should say that you are getting on towards death, yourself." He replied, "Oh, no! I expect some little rash will come out all over me, in a few years, and then I shall be quite young again, and start living for another hundred years." He told me that the people would believe his teaching when he had been here six or seven hundred years. And I answered that I thought it was very likely that they would! He offered to share his great secret with me, dear good man that he was, but I replied, "I would not give a button to know it—why should I want to live in this wretched penal colony forever?" He talked to me for some little time and when he found that he could make no impression on me, to consummate his madness, he asked me to go outside my door with him. He lifted up the knocker and rapped two or three times, saying very solemnly, "Too late! Too late! You cannot enter now!" He said that he had shut me out of the blessing of living here forever and so I said to him, "I am very much obliged to you for doing me such a kindness!"

He printed books and gave lectures on the subject, being fully persuaded in his own mind that he would never die. But he has died—I knew he would and I told him so. He said it was my lack of faith which made me talk like that, but he himself was confident that he would never die. Oh, what an awful thing it would be if that man's fad could be a fact! Superstition declares it to be the curse upon "the wandering Jew" that he should never die. God be thanked that such a curse has never fallen upon us! No, unless the Lord should come first, we shall fall asleep in Him—and what a blessed thing it must be to fall asleep on the bosom of Christ! The child may be afraid to be put to bed in the dark, but it never fears to fall asleep upon its mother's breast. And we might dread to be laid to rest, out there in the cold cemetery, all alone, but we do not fear to sleep in Jesus! Such a state as that is a thing to be desired, not to be dreaded!

II. Now let us come to our second point, THE THOUGHTS AWAKENED BY THIS FIGURE—"Some are fallen asleep."

First, thinking about the many who have fallen asleep, let me *ask*—*How did you treat them?* If your conscience pricks you concerning that matter, I want you to act towards the *living* saints in such a way as you would like to have done supposing you never see *them* again. When there

has been an angry meeting or parting—when there have been hard words spoken, or when there have been unkind thoughts—when you could not enjoy true fellowship with some Christian friend, suppose that, the next morning, somebody came to your house and said, “Brother So-and-So is dead?” You would feel deeply pained to think that he had fallen asleep after you had so treated him. People have killed their minister by their unkindness—and there have been, alas, many who have done so! Those who have killed other persons—and there have been many of that sort, who have vexed and worried other people into their graves—may well think, with great sorrow, “Some are fallen asleep, but we did not treat them with the love and kindness we ought to have shown them.” Think over that matter, dear Friends, and see to it that no such regrets shall be possible to you.

“Some are fallen asleep.” Then, *who is to fill their place? Many have already gone from us this year and others keep on going. Sunday school teachers go—who will be “baptized for the dead”—by taking their places in the ranks and filling the gap?* Hear this, you Church members who are doing nothing for Christ! “Some are fallen asleep.” Let that little sentence be a clarion call to you to wake up and go and occupy the vacant positions, that the work of Christ may know no lack in any part of His vineyard! Wake up! Wake up! You who are asleep in another sense—now that so many are being taken away from us—dig up the talent that has been wrapped in a napkin and buried in the earth—and put it out to blessed usury by employing it in the Master’s service!

“Some have fallen asleep.” *Then you and I will also fall asleep before long.* It cannot be a long while for some of you who are getting gray or white. It may be a very short time for some of us who have scarcely reached the middle of life. And even you young folk may soon fall asleep, too, for I have seen a child asleep in the morning as well as at night, and so have you. Oh, let us not live in this world as if we thought of staying here forever, but let us try to be like a pious Scotch minister who was very ill and, being asked by a friend whether he thought himself dying, answered, “Really, Friend, I care not whether I am or not for, if I die, I shall be with God. And if I live, He will be with me.” There is not much to choose between those two blessed states! But let us remember, by the memory of everyone who has fallen asleep, that the time of our own departure is coming, by-and-by, and it may be very soon!

But, as for those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, we need not fret or trouble ourselves about them. To cut their faces, in token of their mourning for the dead, was natural to the heathen—well might they torture themselves in their hopeless grief, for they believed the separation to be eternal! But as for us, when children go upstairs to bed, do their elder brothers and sisters, who sit up later, gather together and cry because the other children have fallen asleep? Ah, no! They feel that they have not lost them, and they expect to meet again in the morning—and so do we! Therefore, let us not weep and lament to excess concerning the dear ones who are fallen asleep in Christ, for all is well with them! They are at rest—shall we weep about that? They are enjoying their eternal triumph—shall we weep about that? They are as full of bliss as they can possibly be—shall we weep about that? If any of your sons and daugh-

ters were taken away from you to be made into kings and queens in a foreign land, you might shed a tear or two at parting, but you would say, "It is for their good, let them go." And do you grudge your well-beloved their crown of glory and all the bliss which God has bestowed upon them? If the departed could speak to us, they would say, "Bless God for us! Do not sit down and mourn because we have entered into His Glory, but rather rejoice because we are with Him where He is." Therefore let us comfort one another with these words.

III. Lastly, Brothers and Sisters, let us think, for just a minute or two, of THE HOPES CONFIRMED BY THIS FIGURE—"Some are fallen asleep."

First, *then, they are still ours.* If they were really dead, we might say that we had lost them, but as they have only fallen asleep, they are still ours! Wordsworth proclaimed a great Truth of God in that simple little poem of his, "We are seven." There were some of the family buried in the churchyard, but the girl still declared that they were seven—and so they were! Did you ever notice, concerning Job's children, that when God gave him twice as much substance as he had before, he gave him only the same number of children as he formerly had? The Lord gave him twice as much gold and twice as much of all sorts of property, but He only gave him the *exact number of children that he had before.* Why did He not give the Patriarch double the number of children as well as twice the number of cattle? Why, because God reckoned the first ones as being still his! They were dead to Job's eyes, but they were visible to Job's faith! God still numbered them as part of Job's family—and if you carefully count up how many children Job had, you will find that he had twice as many in the end as he had in the beginning! In the same way, consider your friends who are asleep in Christ as still yours—not lost, any one of them—and say of them, "Some are fallen asleep."

"Our membership has been diminished," somebody says. Yes, it has been, according to the Church Book and the figures as we reckon them here, but it has not really been diminished. I have, by faith, seen our Brothers and Sisters flying, like doves to their windows, and ascending to Heaven from this place! Every week some of them are going to the land beyond the skies. My soul has often rejoiced as I have thought of the spiritual children whom God has given me. I might almost claim that great promise which was made to Abraham, "Look now toward Heaven, and count the stars, if you are able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall your seed be." For, if they have not reached the number of the stars yet, they are no more to be reckoned than are the stars! As I remember how many of them have already reached the better land, I do not think of them as lost, for they only fell asleep, here, to wake in the Presence of Jesus. Their sleeping bodies shall also wake again when the Resurrection trumpet sounds. No matter what has become of the particular particles of dust of which those bodies were composed, the essence of each individual shall be preserved by Omnipotent power, and out of it shall spring an undying body, remodeled and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body! And the soul shall enter it and that soul shall be here, again, at the coming of Christ, for when He shall come in His Glory, they, also, who sleep in Jesus will He bring with Him! "Therefore," again I say unto you, "comfort one another with these words."

This is our last thought—we *shall again meet those who have fallen asleep*. We said, “Adieu,” to them, and so committed them to God’s keeping. We said, “Good-bye,” that is, “God be with you,” and God has been with them. We said, “Farewell,” and they have fared well. And we shall see how well they have fared to be with Christ, for we shall see them again! I believe that we shall know them, have communion with them and shall admire Christ’s Grace in them, and that it shall be part of our Heaven to come not only “to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant,” but also, “to the general assembly and church of the first-born, who are written in Heaven.”

Now I have finished my discourse, but, how far is there any comfort to some of you in all that I have said? Some of you work very hard—have you any hope of rest in Heaven? If not, I pity you from the very depths of my heart! Some of you fare very hard—have you any hope of better fare with Christ forever? If not, I do indeed pity you, more than I can say! To go from poverty and misery, here, to a place where there shall be no hope for you forever, will be dreadful, indeed! If there were no Hell, I could not endure the thought of being shut out of Heaven, for, to be with Christ, to be with the Father, to be with the Holy Spirit, to miss the company of gracious and just men forever, would be a Hell that might well make men gnash their teeth in torment! Oh, may God save us all through faith which is in Christ Jesus! May we be saved tonight and then it will not matter how soon anyone may say of us, also, “They have fallen asleep,” for all will be well with us forever! God bless you, dear Friends, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
REVELATION 7:9-17; 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-28; 50-58.**

We will read two passages from the New Testament tonight. The first will show us where the glorified saints are and the second will tell us what is to become of their bodies.

Revelation 7:9-13. *After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb! And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto our God forever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me.* In reply, as it were, to John’s question put by the very look of his countenance! Sometimes the Lord Jesus Christ gave an answer to men who had not spoken to Him—and the angelic elder here followed His example and also, in another respect, imitated his Lord by replying to the inquisitive glance of John by asking him a question.

13-17. *Who are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, you know. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes,*

and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. This is to be the future state of all those who are redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus and to whom the saving Grace of God has come! So that, concerning all who have thus fallen asleep, we sorrow not as those without hope, for we know that all is well with them forever!

Now let us read a little of what the Apostle Paul was inspired to write with regard to the resurrection of the body.

1 Corinthians 15:1, 2. *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; by which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain.* What, then, was this Gospel which Paul had preached, and which the Christians in Corinth had received—the Gospel which Paul declared would save them if they truly believed it? Was it a Gospel made up merely of doctrines? No! It was a Gospel formed of facts.

3. *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.* That is the first fundamental fact in the Gospel system. Blessed is the man who believes it and rests his soul upon it!

4. *And that He was buried: and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.* That grand fact of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead is rightly put next to His substitutionary Sacrifice, for it is the very cornerstone of our holy faith! It is one of the essential doctrines which must be received by us, for we cannot truly believe the Gospel unless we accept the great Truth of Christ's Resurrection!

5-8. *And that He was seen of Cephas—that is, Peter—then of the twelve: after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this time, but some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James, then of all the Apostles. And last of all He was seen of me, also, as of one born out of due time.* I suppose, Brothers and Sisters, that we may have persons arise who will doubt whether there was ever such a man as Julius Caesar, or Napoleon Bonaparte. And when they do—when all reliable history is flung to the winds—then, but not till then, may they begin to question whether Jesus Christ rose from the dead, for this historical fact is attested by more witnesses than almost any other fact that stands on record in history, whether sacred or profane! The risen Christ was seen by many persons who knew Him intimately before He died—by those who saw Him put to death and who saw Him when He was dead. He was seen, on various occasions, privately, by one, by two, by 12 of those who had been His companions for years. At other times, He was seen in public by large numbers who could not all have been deceived. These men were so certain that this was, indeed, the same Christ who had lived, and died, that, although it was at first difficult to make them believe that He had risen from the dead, it

was impossible to make them doubt it afterwards! And the major part of them died to bear witness to the fact! They were martyred because they confessed that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead. There is no fact in history, from the days of Adam until now, that is better attested than this great central Truth of God of the Resurrection of Christ! So we accept it and receive it gladly. Paul finishes up his list of witnesses by putting himself down as one of them, although his conversion was, to himself, such a marvelous display of Divine Grace that he was like “one born out of due time.”

9-14. *For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the Grace of God I am what I am: and His Grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I; but the Grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so you believed. Now if Christ is preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain and then your faith is also vain. It is all emptiness! Our preaching evaporates—there is nothing left in it—unless Christ did really rise from the dead! And your faith has nothing in it, either—you are believing in that which is only vanity and nothingness—unless His Resurrection was a fact.*

15-17. *Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom, He raised not up, if it is so that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ is not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins. So that you cannot be a Christian if you deny the Resurrection of Christ! You must give up Christianity altogether and confess that your faith in it was a delusion unless you believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and that, therefore, there is a resurrection from the dead for the sons of men! Let it always be most clearly understood that what Christ is, that His people are! There is an unbroken union between the Head and the members, so that, if He lives, they live. And if He lives not, then they live not. And if they live not, then He lives not. Jesus and those for whom He died are so intimately joined together that they are really and truly one—and nothing can ever separate them!*

18, 19. *Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are, of all men, most miserable. That is to say, if our hope for the future is all a lie, we have been dreadfully deceived and, moreover, if we could lose a hope so brilliant as that has been to us, there would fall upon us a sense of loss so great that no one in the world could be so wretched as we should be! Besides, the Apostles were always in jeopardy of their lives—if they were suffering poverty, persecution and the fear of death by martyrdom, all for a lie—they were, indeed, of all men the most deluded, and the most miserable! But the Corinthians would not admit that and neither will we.*

20. *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits. He must always come first, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*

20-28. *Of them that slept. For since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He has put all things under His feet. But when He says all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. The mediatorial Person of Christ, as God-Man, shall bow before the eternal majesty of the Godhead, "that God may be all in all." Now we will finish our reading with just a few verses at the close of the chapter.*

50, 51. *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. We shall not all die, some will be alive when Christ comes to this earth, again, "but we shall all be changed," if not by the process of death and resurrection, yet by some other means.*

52. *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. Somehow or other, such a change as this must take place before we can enter Heaven, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."*

53-58. *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. That should be the practical outcome of receiving the great Truths of which we have been reading. God grant that it may be! Amen.*

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY
TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

A LEAP YEAR SERMON

NO. 2663

[Although 1900 is not observed as a Leap Year, the last Sabbath in February is the nearest corresponding date to the Leap Year Sunday in 1880, when the accompanying sermon was delivered. It is therefore issued for reading on that day with the earnest prayer that it may be as profitable to those who read it as it was to those who were privileged to hear it.]

**A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1900.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 29, 1880.**

***“One born out of due time.”
1 Corinthians 15:8.***

PAUL thus describes himself. It was necessary that Paul, as an Apostle, should have seen the Lord. He was not converted at the time of Christ's Ascension, yet he was made an Apostle, for the Lord Jesus appeared to him in the way, as he was going to Damascus, to persecute the saints of God. When he looked upon himself as thus put in, as it were, at the end of the Apostles, he spoke of himself in the most depreciating terms, calling himself, “one born out of due time.”

Those who are acquainted with the Greek tongue know what a despicable term Paul here applied to himself—as though he was scarcely a man at all. At any rate, as the very last of the family, “born out of due time,” and not only the last, but also the very *least*, for he says, “I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” Scholars will know why I cannot exactly explain the word which Paul uses, but rather keep to the rendering of our translation, which, although it may not have the force and full meaning of the Greek expression, is, perhaps, none the less useful for public reading. “One born out of due time.”

Paul thought very humbly of himself. He reckoned himself less than nothing and put himself down at the very lowest estimate—and mentioned that he was brought to Christ and made an Apostle when the time for such a work was apparently over. Out of date altogether, beyond the period when it might have been thought that another Apostle would be called of God, there was Paul—found as “one born out of due time.”

My subject tonight is, first, *the singular time of Paul's spiritual birth*. There are many of God's true children who, like the Apostle, were “born out of due time.” When I have expatiated upon that fact, I shall speak of *the sure evidences of his spiritual birth* and show you that, although “born out of due time,” he was born—and there were sure evidences of

his spiritual birth—which evidences, I trust, may be seen in many of us, also!

I. First, then, let us think of THE SINGULAR TIME OF PAUL'S SPIRITUAL BIRTH.

There are still some who, like the Apostle, are born to God "out of due time." They are truly born again, regenerated, converted, *at a most unlikely season*. There have been multitudes brought to Christ under earnest sermons, when the appeals of faithful men have thrilled the congregation and the Truth of God has been effectually carried home to the hearts of many of the hearers. But there have also been times when God's ministers have waxed faint, when the sermon has appeared to be destitute of all force, when nobody has seemed to have felt the power of the sermon and, apparently, the Truth of God has fallen quite flat! Yet, on many such occasions there have been some sinners converted to God when we would hardly have thought it to be possible!

Mr. Tennant, a famous American minister of Whitefield's time—one of the most earnest and seraphic men who ever proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ—had a hearer who remained unmoved under many a score of his most faithful sermons. Others were saved, but not this man. He seemed unmoved and immovable, but it came to pass, on a certain Sabbath, that a very unusual thing happened. Mr. Tennant had prepared his sermon with great care. It was what we are known to call a laborious discourse into which he had put all the thought and all the pains possible. But he had not been preaching long before his memory completely failed him! His mind refused to work and, after floundering about for a while, he was obliged to sit down in great confusion and say that he could not preach to the people that day. The man I have mentioned, who had never before been impressed under Mr. Tennant's ministry, was *that day* called by Sovereign Grace as "one born out of due time," for he was led to see that there was a spiritual and supernatural force which had usually helped the pastor to preach—and that when this Divine influence was withdrawn—he was as weak as other men and could not speak with power as he had been accustomed to do! This Truth of God, somehow or other—for human minds are strangely constituted and things which have no effect upon certain people, very greatly affect others who are present at the same time—this Truth, I say, induced the man to think! And thinking, he was led to believe in God, and to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of his soul. He was, without doubt, one "born out of due time."

I would like to break down, as Mr. Tennant did, if some of you would be born to God by that means! I would rather be dumb and win a soul for Jesus, than speak with the tongues of men and of angels and yet men's hearts should not be impressed by the Truth of God I proclaimed! How often I have found that when I have gone home and sighed, and cried, and groaned over a sermon in which I felt no liberty, but thought it was an utter failure, it has afterwards been proved that, here one, and there another, have come forward blessing and praising God for that very testimony which seemed to me so faulty and feeble, but which the Spirit of the Lord has savingly impressed upon them! So, still, there are some who

in this way are “born out of due time,” through the Holy Spirit’s use, even, of the preacher’s weakness and apparent failure!

Another illustration may be taken from the opposite side of the same Truth. Some are converted when they seem, themselves, to be in a state of mind in which they are the most unlikely to be impressible. I remember being in Dr. John Campbell’s house, one day, when he told me that a minister was preaching at Whitefield’s old Tabernacle in Moorfields, one evening, when there were present, under very strange circumstances, two young men who had fallen into dissipated habits and who had made an appointment with each other for the commission of some gross sin that very night. Had they committed what they had planned, it may be that they would have plunged themselves into a career of vice from which they might never have been extricated. They were passing by the Moorfields Tabernacle, which some of you remember, and as they needed to know the time at which they were to meet for this unholy purpose, one of them said to the other, “Go in and check the time—there is sure to be a clock in there.” But the clock was not fixed as it is here, at the back of the preacher, but the other way—so the young man had to go some little distance further in than he intended, in order to see the clock. If I remember rightly, the preacher that night was Matthew Wilks, and he was just uttering some quaint remark, something that arrested the young man’s attention and held him fast in the aisle. His companion waited outside for a time, but it was cold, so he thought he had better go in and look at the clock, himself, and fetch his friend out. He went in—the arrows of the Lord pierced the heart of both of them! The second of those young men was John Williams, the famous missionary and, at last, the martyr of Erromanga! Thus they, also, were “born out of due time.”

You would not have thought it possible that those men would become, as they did, preachers of the Gospel, when they were, at that very time, desperately set on the commission of a great sin against God and their hearts were wholly given up to the pleasures and follies of this world! But so it happened and our Lord still knows how to stop men as He stopped Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. He is the man who says that he was “born out of due time” and he is a wonderful instance of this method of Divine interposition. He has in his possession the letters from the High Priest which will enable him to bind the saints and carry them off to Jerusalem. He is riding towards Damascus and is within sight of the city when, in the very midst of his high-handed course of persecution, the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, intervenes and smites him down to the ground! Presently, Paul rises to pray and, in his three days’ blindness and fasting, to seek the Lord and then to find Him, to the salvation of his soul and the joy of his spirit—and thus to become an Apostle of that very Savior whom, in his ignorance, he had been persecuting! After such a triumph of Divine Grace, let us never despair of *any* sinner, however far he may have gone into sin!

You know how Paul, writing to Timothy, said of himself, “For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me, first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.” The God who blessed the broken sermon of Mr.

Tennant can bless our imperfect work in the pulpit, the Sunday school, or anywhere else! And the God who saved such men as John Williams and his companion, when they least thought of such a thing happening, can also save some who have strayed in here, tonight, little dreaming what designs of love God has toward them in bringing them at this time under the sound of His Word!

I consider, next, that a convert may be described as one “born out of due time” when he is brought to Christ *after some great revival or notable religious movement has come to an end*. There are some of you who attended the recent special services conducted here by Messrs. Fullerton and Smith. What power there was in those hallowed gatherings! Some of your neighbors wept under conviction of sin, but you did not. Some of them came to Christ and are now rejoicing in Him, but you did not come to Him. You were not even impressed during the meetings, though, possibly, you wished to be. Or it may be that you began with a desire after better things, but you ended in indifference. And now the special services are all over and the good men who came among us to preach and sing the Gospel are gone—and you have been saying to yourselves, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” Ah, but our Lord has a blessed way of picking up the stragglers behind the army! When the main body has marched on with sound of trumpet, praising God, there are a few left behind—and the Lord Jesus sometimes comes and picks them up! I do earnestly pray that some of you may be thus picked up by Him just now, so that you may be able to say, “We were not born for God when many others were, but, like Saul of Tarsus, we were ‘born out of due time.’ But, blessed be God, we were born again by the effectual working of His Spirit! We were brought to Christ, to the praise of the glory of His Grace, and now we, also, have become children of God by faith in Jesus Christ.” Pray that it may be so dear Friends! O you Christian people, bow your hearts before God and ask that it may be so! Perhaps the very fact that those services are over and that a gracious opportunity has gone may be impressed upon the minds of some who were present during the meetings, but who were not converted—and they may now seek the Savior and find Him to their everlasting salvation and happiness!

The Lord can bless strange methods to the awakening of the ungodly. When Puritanism seemed to be trodden under foot, in the reign of James I, and the king issued the Book of Sports, and gave commandment that every clergyman was to read from the pulpit, on Sunday, that it was the royal will and pleasure that the young people should play at football, cricket and other games and pastimes on the Lord’s-Day afternoon, godly ministers who really loved the Lord did not know what to do. One of them thought, perhaps, it would be well to do as the king ordered and to say something beside, so, when the Sunday came for reading the Book of Sports to the people, he said, “I am commanded by the king and the authorities to read to you the following document, but it grieves my heart and conscience to have to read it. I know it is wicked, wrong, shameful and abominable to desecrate the Sabbath as you are invited to do, and I

wonder what will become of my country when even from the church, itself, Sabbath-breaking is recommended.”

So, the good man spoke, to the relief of his own conscience and in hope of awakening the consciences of others. It happened that there was in the congregation, that day, a young man who had always been a ring-leader in the Sabbath sports—he was no sooner out of church, in the morning, than he was on the village green, fast and furious in all the amusements of the time. But, when he heard that Book of Sports read, he said to himself, “well, I acted in that way on my own account and it was wrong enough for me to do so, but now I say with the minister, “What is to become of all the country if everybody is to be as bad as I have been? What will happen to the nation if this kind of thing is to go on?” The thought struck him so forcibly that he became, first, a serious character, and then a true seeker after God—and afterwards a genuine believer in the Lord Jesus Christ! So it came to pass that when the devil thought he was going to have everything his own way, that very day, this young man was born to God—truly, “born out of due time.”

I remember reading a very striking saying of Mr. Bunyan’s. He said he had good reason to believe that in the generation after him, there would be many more saints than in the one of which he formed a part. He said his belief was based upon the fact that wherever he went, he found that there were so many great sinners that he hoped they would be converted and become eminent servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, there was a blessed truth at the back of that hope of his, for, very often, where sin has abounded, Grace does much more abound! And when the Word of God seems to grow scarce and the candle of the Gospel burns but dimly, we may pray and expect that even then some may be “born out of due time” to the praise of the glory of that Grace which saves as it wills—and often selects the very chief of sinners to be the subjects of its almighty power!

There have been some dear friends who may be said to have been “born out of due time,” for they have been converted to God after it seemed impossible that they ever should be. I remember well reading of one who imbibed skeptical notions and became exceedingly furious against the preaching of the Word. One day, in Edinburgh, he heard it said that a certain eminent minister of the Gospel intended, if he met him, to speak with him about his soul. Whereupon the man uttered some very strong expressions and, among other wicked things, he said, “I shall never be converted unless I lose my senses!” All who were acquainted with him and who knew how desperately he was set against the Gospel, thought that his was, indeed, a hopeless case. But, in the Infinite mercy of God, it turned out to be quite the opposite! He began to suffer from great incoherence of thought. His mind gradually wandered—when he was trying to speak, he often spoke utter nonsense. He became unfit for business and had to be put into the custody of someone who watched him as his keeper. Reason was not actually gone, but it was reeling upon its throne, and while he was in that sad state, the case of Nebuchadnezzar came to his mind and he wondered whether God had given him up, altogether, on account of what he had said—that he would never be con-

verted while he was in his senses. He turned his mind, all shipwrecked and battered as it was, towards God, and out of the depths of his half-bewildered spirit, he cried unto the Lord as Nebuchadnezzar did—and his mind returned to him and he became a humble, gentle, holy believer in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Do you not think, dear Friends, that he also was “one born out of due time”? The time of salvation seemed utterly past so far as he was concerned. He had made a covenant with death and a league with Hell. He had cast off those ordinary beliefs which many men hold even though they do not obey them—yet, notwithstanding all that, the surprising Grace of God dealt with him after its own Sovereign manner and laid him low, that it might bring him up again! I do not pray that such a thing may happen to anybody here, but I do pray that God may bring you to Christ somehow and if, in order to attain that end, you have to be driven to the very gates of Hell—so long as you do not actually pass through them—I will rejoice if, afterwards, you are led to flee to Christ for refuge!

Another instance of “one born out of due time” occurs in the case of one *converted after the spiritual father is dead*. We sometimes see posthumous children, that is, those who are born after the father is deceased, and there is generally much sorrow mingled with the thought of such births, for the poor widow’s heart is doubly troubled by the extra care needed for the little stranger who arrives after the bread-winner of the family is taken away. But if a man is the means of bringing another to Christ after he, himself, is dead, there need be no sorrow about that matter! There have been many, many instances in which earnest Christian people have sought the conversion of their relatives or friends. They have prayed for them, and wept over them, and pleaded with them—but all their efforts have been unsuccessful. Yet, after their death, the memory of their holy zeal has touched the conscience of the one who would not yield, before, and brought him to Christ. I wish, dear Friends, that your godly mother, who is in Heaven and who died leaving her son unsaved, might seem to come to you just now. I ask for no apparition, but that she may be consciously present to your mind and that her dying words may ring in your ears, for perhaps the remembrance of what she said may be blessed to you even now.

When I am taken away, I can but wish that any true and faithful word that I have spoken may still continue to speak to you from my grave. When good Mr. Payson died, he begged that his people might come and see him, if they wished, before he was interred and those who did so, read these words on his bosom, “Remember the word which I have spoken unto you being yet present with you.” It was thus his desire, you see, that he should have posthumous spiritual children—that they should be born to God even though they should seem to be “born out of due time.” Ah, you wives, who have been praying for your husbands these many years, never give them up, because they may be brought to Christ when you, yourselves, will be in Heaven! Mothers and fathers, never cease pleading for your children, for they, too, may be brought to Jesus when you are among the angels.

Up in one of the northern counties of England there was a woman, a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose prayer went up continually for her husband, but he never entered the House of God—and despised her for doing so. She was accustomed to go to her usual place of worship alone, so far as any human companions were concerned, yet she was not quite alone, for there was a dog that always went with her. This dog curled himself up under the seat and lay quite still during the service, and then walked home with his mistress. The first Sunday after she was dead, the poor dog went off to the Meeting House as usual, and curled himself up in his old place. He did the same the next Sunday, and the husband, noticing the dog start out so regularly, was struck by its action and wondered where the dog went, now that his mistress was gone. So he thought he would go and see. The dog went before him to his mistress's old seat and curled himself up. The man went in after the dog and sat down in his wife's place—and God helped the minister, that day, to show him that his good works and self-righteousness in which he had always trusted, would not be sufficient for his salvation. And the minister preached to him the full salvation of Christ Jesus—and the man believed and lived. Was not he, also, “born out of due time,” for his wife's prayers for him were all over, and she was gone? Yet he was brought to Christ.

The subject is one upon which I might enlarge indefinitely, but I would rather have you to supply further instances of similar blessing by urging you to persevere in prayer, you who are seeking the salvation of others.

Some have been “born out of due time” because they have been *converted to God in extreme old age*. I would like to encourage any very aged person who is here and still unsaved—and to drive away altogether the notion that it is too late to seek the Lord! It is never too late as long as life lasts and there is the power to repent of sin and to turn to the Lord—

**“While the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return.”**

I will not quote cases, but I have a vivid recollection of a good many persons who have been saved at the age of 70 or eighty. We have had persons, past both of those periods, baptized upon profession of their newly-found faith. The world's proverb says, “It is never too late to mend,” but Christ would tell you, if He were here in bodily Presence, that it is never too late for Him to mend you, or rather, for *Him to make you anew*, for that is the work He undertakes to do. It is never too late for Him to stretch out His pierced hands and help the man who is tottering on his staff, to become a babe in Christ! Yet, surely when very old men are born again, they seem to be “born out of due time.”

Many of you have not yet come to old age, yet if God should save you, tonight, you would be as those who are “born out of due time,” because you are *on the very brink of the grave*. Consumption has laid its cruel hand upon you and pulled down all your strength. In all probability you will not be long in this world. You have come out, tonight, but you are half-afraid that you have done wrong in coming in the state you are in, with that terrible cough that you have—and you have not found the Savior. O my dear young Friend, wherever you may be, it is a sad, sad thing to be carrying about with you, your death-warrant, as you certainly are

doing, and yet to have no warrant to believe that when you die, it will be well with you! Oh, I pray you, do not let Satan tempt you with the idea that now, when sickness is upon you, there is no hope for you!

Come to Jesus, however consumptive you look! Come to Jesus, young man, with that chest that scarcely allows you to breathe! Come unto Him, for He will not cast you away! I remember one, whom I met at Mentone, who had gone there in the hope of lengthening his life, but that was quite out of the question, for he was too far gone when he came. He had two sisters who were sent for to come to him, for it was certain that he could not live long. He himself was under deep concern of soul, earnestly seeking the Lord, but he could not find Him. Day after day, week after week, he had been getting worse and worse and showing all the signs of his approaching departure, but he could not find peace with God. At last, his sisters came from England. They arrived just in time. They found him very anxious about his soul. That night they spoke with him of Jesus and in the morning, early, when they woke, they went to him and he was sitting up in bed, all pale and ghostlike. He said, "Sisters, Christ has forgiven me!" And he fell back on his pillow and he was gone Home. There was an end of his suffering and weakness here below, but the consolation of that last word to them, and of the joy that beamed from his poor eyes was enough to make them gladly commit his body to the tomb. "Sisters, Christ has forgiven me!" Ah, he was, indeed, "born out of due time"—born between the very jaws of death! But death's jaws could not close upon him till he had received forgiveness from his Savior. I beseech any of you who are in a similar condition to his, do not put off seeking the Lord, but hasten to find Him even now!

Once more, there are some who are "born out of due time" because they *are born all of a sudden*. They suddenly come to Christ. They suddenly find peace. They are suddenly saved. I wish that might happen to some here tonight. There is no need of any set period for this all-important matter! Time is no element in the matter. God can work conviction and conversion in a single instant. You know that, sometimes, you see a flash of lightning and then you wait several seconds before you hear the thunder. But when a storm is right overhead, the flash and the slap are simultaneous, and down comes the pouring rain at the same time! And, in like manner, the Lord knows how to send a flash of conviction and, at the same instant, to make His deep voice of mercy to be heard in the soul—and to send the floods of Grace upon the spirit then and there! Why should He not do so tonight for any of you who need these blessings?

Now I will tell you the special reason why I chose this text. It is because this is the 29th of February and it is a Sunday. There is a large number of you who never saw a 29th of February on Sunday, before, and there is a still larger number who will never see the 29th of February on a Sunday, again. I suppose it will be 28 years before that will occur again. So, this is a Sunday thrown in, as it were. It is an odd kind of day, an extra day in the calendar. If you ask our friends of the Greek Church, the Russians, they will tell you that there is not such a day at all, for they keep to the old system of reckoning time. This plan of putting in an odd

day every four years, to make our days square with the sun, is a very good and proper one. Still, it is a kind of a day thrown in, and it seemed to me that, if the Lord would convert some souls on this odd day in this leap year, it would make the 29th of February, that came on a Sunday, to be specially memorable! You will not forget it if it is the day of *your* conversion! You will say to your children, it may be, 28 years hence, if you are alive, “Ah, I recollect when the 29th of February last came on a Sunday—that was the day when I sought and found the Lord! Mr. Spurgeon said that I was like the Apostle Paul, ‘one born out of due time,’ and so I was. Yet I was born in due time, I know, according to the Covenant of Grace.”

Oh that the Lord, in His Infinite mercy, having given us this special day, would now give us a special blessing and bring many to Himself this leap year! Oh, that all of you who are still unsaved, would make a leap right out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of His dear Son, His Holy Spirit enabling you so to do by a simple act of faith in Jesus Christ! And you Christian people, pray for a special and unusual blessing, a 29th of February blessing. Ask God to give it to us, in His infinite mercy, that many and many a soul may be “born out of due time” this very night!

Who shall it be? And where shall the work of repentance begin? Does not somebody over there say, “Lord, let it be me”? There is said to be a special opportunity of making proposals in leap year, but I can tell you, if you make a proposal to come to Christ, that He has long ago set His heart on you! You would never have thought of proposing to Him if He had not first of all ordained to bring you to Himself! If you come to Him, He will receive you and oh, in His great mercy, may the Holy Spirit incline you to come to Him this 29th of February that falls upon a Sunday!

II. Now I have only two or three minutes left for the second part of my subject—THE SURE EVIDENCES OF PAUL’S SPIRITUAL BIRTH.

Though Paul was, in a spiritual sense, “born out of due time,” he was truly born again. And those persons who have been converted at singular times and, under strange circumstances, have been really converted. How do we know that Paul was born again and that he was called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ?

I answer, first, because *he had seen the Lord*. After mentioning those who saw the risen Christ, he says, “Last of all He was seen of me, also, as of one born out of due time.” The first evidence that he was an Apostle was that he had actually beheld the Lord. Now, in a spiritual sense, one of the marks of a true Believer is that he has seen the Lord. My dear Friend, if you have looked to Christ for forgiveness, even though you have only looked to Him, tonight, and this is an odd night—the 29th of February, yet, if you have, by faith, seen Jesus on the Cross, and truly trusted Him, you are as much saved as the man is who believed in Christ 50 years ago! Looking to Jesus is the evidence that we are born again—and happy is everyone who can truthfully say, concerning Christ, “He was seen of me, also.”—

***“I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agonies and blood.”***

I looked to Him. He looked on me and we were one forever. I trusted Him and, therefore, I am saved. If you can say that from your heart and the Holy Spirit bears witness that what you say is true, you need not raise any question about your new birth! If you are trusting in Jesus, it is well with your soul in time and to eternity!

The next evidence of his spiritual birth, which Paul gave, was that *he confessed his sin*. Read the verse following our text. "For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." See how he confessed his sin and forsook it? "He that covers his sins shall not prosper, but who confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy." Are you, dear Friend, willing, now, to confess your sin? Do you turn from it with loathing? Do you desire, henceforth, to be delivered entirely from it? Well, then, your repentance is another sure evidence that you are born again! If you have seen Jesus taking your sin upon Himself and suffering its dread penalty. If you have confessed your sin and, by faith, laid it upon Him as your Sacrifice and Substitute, you are born again, though you may have been, in a certain sense, "born out of due time."

Next, we are sure that Paul was really born again because *he was thoroughly converted*. Never was there a greater change in any man than there was in him! He never went back to his former life and he had no hankering to return to it. With him, old things had passed away and all things had become new—he was, indeed, a new creature in Christ Jesus!

I am sure he was converted, also, because he praised the Grace of God. Read the 10th verse. "By the Grace of God I am what I am." Even when he truthfully says, "I labored more abundantly than they all," he humbly adds, "yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me." It is a sure sign of conversion when a man knows that he is saved by Grace, alone, and does not attribute it to his own merit, or his own works, but praises and adores the Sovereign Mercy and Grace of God. Have you that evidence, dear Friend? Then you are born aright, even though "born out of due time."

And, lastly, Paul proved that he was a true citizen of the New Jerusalem because he became, of all men, *most zealous for Christ*, zealous for the Gospel, zealous for the winning of souls. He seemed to try to do all he could to undo the mischief he had worked in the days of his unregeneracy and to work with both his hands and all his heart to establish and extend the Kingdom which once he tried to overthrow. O God, by Your great mercy, cause another Paul to be born in this House of Prayer tonight! You can do it. Will You not bring to Yourself, by the power of the Eternal Spirit, some wild, threatening, blustering, blaspheming hater of Christ? Lay him at the dear feet of the Crucified and cause him to look up and live!

Pray for this, dear Christian people. Pray for it tonight when you reach your homes as well as now! And then we shall have special reason to remember this 29th of February. Possibly, someone who will, in days to come, stand on this very spot preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, will say to you, "Do you remember the 29th of February, 1880? Do you remember the text, 'One born out of due time?'" I trust that some of you

will be here to hear him say, "I remember it better than any of you do, for that was the night when I was born to God, glory be to His holy name!" Now pray for it with all your hearts, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
JOHN 3:1-18.**

If you were sent for to visit a dying man and you wished to select a chapter which would set the Truth of God before him very briefly and very clearly, you could not make a better choice than this 3rd Chapter of the Gospel according to John. So, as we are all dying men and women, let us read it with that same desire—and may the Holy Spirit apply it to our hearts as we read it.

Verses 1, 2. *There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night.* That was better than not coming at all. "Better late than never." Better come to Christ in the dark than not come to Him at all.

2. *And said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that You do, except God be with him.* This was good reasoning on the part of Nicodemus. If he did not at first go as far as he afterwards did, it argued well for him that he went as far as he could. O you who are troubled with unbelief, believe as much as you can, and then cry, "Lord, I believe, help You my unbelief and, especially, help me to get rid of it." Confess to Christ what you do believe, and He will add more to your belief.

3. *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.* He cannot understand what it is. He cannot know anything about it. He cannot see it.

4, 5. *Nicodemus said unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* If the "water" mentioned here relates to Baptism—which I greatly question—then, certainly, it shows the way of entrance for a Believer, publicly, into the Kingdom of God. But if it relates to the purifying power of the Spirit of God—as I believe it does—then it teaches us that no man enters into the Kingdom of God and becomes a partaker of its privileges—which is something more than merely seeing it—except the Spirit of God shall be to him as water purifying him from sin. This is the reason why a man cannot enter into the *spiritual Kingdom* until he is born again—born from above.

6. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh.* And "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God."

6. *And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* And only the new creature, which is thus born, can, by any possibility, understand or enter into the possession of the spiritual things which belong to the Kingdom of God.

7, 8. *Marvel not that I said unto you, You must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell from where it comes, and where it goes: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.* The Holy Spirit is mysterious, like the wind, and so is the creature that is “born of the Spirit.” The spiritual man often cannot understand himself, he is so mysterious a being—how then shall he be able to fully comprehend how that wondrous new life is created within him? All we know is that he is a new creation, as much the work of eternal power as our first creation.

9, 10. *Nicodemus answered and said unto Him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Are you a master of Israel, and know not these things? “These things” that lie at the very root of everything? “Are you a Rabbi and do you not know this?”* Alas, good Master, there are still many Rabbis who do not understand this! Many who have taken the highest degree the University can give them, yet do not know in their own souls what it is to be born again!

11. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, We speak what We know, and testify what We have seen; and you receive not Our witness.* Spiritual men declare that there are spiritual things. They know them and have seen them, and they have a right to be believed, for they are not liars. They are honest men and speak what they know, yet, often, their witness is not received. They need not be surprised at this, for it was the same with their Master!

12. *If I have told you earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?* If these elementary Truths of God about the new birth stagger you, what is the use of My going on to anything higher? You would not understand it, or receive it.

13. *And no man has ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven.* He alone knows the secrets of God who has been with God, who has come from God, and who is still with God.

14-18. *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believes on Him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.* God give us, even now, deliverance from condemnation through faith in His dear Son—and prevent our being condemned through our unbelief—for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—416, 222, 511.

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY
TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

LESSONS ON DIVINE GRACE

NO. 2833

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 31, 1903.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON A LORD'S-DAY EVENING, IN THE SUMMER OF 1861.**

*“But by the Grace of God I am what I am.
1 Corinthians 15:10.*

THIS confession, suitable on the lips of Paul, is equally appropriate in the mouth of each one of us who have known and proved the Grace of God. We must consider Paul, according to his own account of himself, as being “not meet to be called an Apostle”—though “not a whit behind the very chief Apostles”—because he had persecuted the Church of God. In respect of personal merit, he knew that he did not deserve to be accounted of at all, yet, when the sole ground of approbation was not the service he had rendered to his Sovereign, but the favor which his Sovereign had bestowed upon him, he could say, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” Take the meanest lamb in Jesus’ fold, the feeblest heir of Grace, the most timid and fearing—the most hopeless and helpless of all disciples, the man most devoid of talent, the man who stands the very lowest on the list of the saints of God—surely he may and must say that “by the Grace of God” he is what he is, so far as he is in Christ—a Believer, with all the privileges that Believers have a gracious right to claim! Let this be your comfort, you little ones, that the same Grace that made an Apostle of Paul has made a Christian of you. The same power that has quickened the mightiest man in the army of the Lord of Hosts has also quickened you. The Grace that saves the greatest saves the least. If the largest and brightest gem in the crown of Christ reflects His Grace and glorifies His love, even so shall you, though you are as the smallest pearl that shall be set in His glorious diadem of honor!

Then, next, take the Apostle Paul in the other way he describes himself in our text. In the preceding verse, he says he is the least of the Apostles, yet he also says, “I labored more abundantly than they all.” It is equally true, whether you put him in the meanest place among converts, or in the very forefront of the army of faithful soldiers of Christ—among the feeblest of pensioners or the most zealous of all the laborers in the vineyard of the Master—the acknowledgment must be made, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” Be our attainments never so eminent, our knowledge never so extensive, our usefulness never so great, yet still we stand, in the sight of God, on the same footing as the very meanest member of the Church of Christ! The song which begins among the little

and the timid gathers strength among the great and the brave. It is not altered in the slightest degree—the language is the same, the strain the same, the song the same—“By the Grace of God,” we, all of us, must say, “we are what we are”!

I am going to speak of my text, first, *doctrinally*. Secondly, *experimentally*. And, thirdly, *practically*.

I. First, DOCTRINALLY. Each one of us who is a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ can take this sentence as his creed and say, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.”

That is to say, first, I am not what I am *as the result of something good which God foresaw would be in me*. God has not vouchsafed His love, His favor, His mercy to me because He foresaw that I would repent of my sin and trust in His dear Son. No, there is a deeper cause for His love than anything that could be found in me! Indeed, there is nothing that could be found in me that is lovely in His sight, but it would be proved, immediately, that He had, first of all, freely given that lovely thing to me, or created it within me. If I am a child of God, an heir of Heaven, the wellspring of God’s love to me is in His own Sovereign Grace. Nothing in my disposition or character could move His heart to me. His heart must have moved spontaneously—it must have welled up because of its own deep love—and it must have flowed towards me in its own Divine channel simply because God, in His Sovereignty, would have it so! “By the Grace of God,” I am elected unto eternal life—

**“Grace first inscribed my name,
In God’s eternal book.”**

’Twas Grace which set me apart, in distinguishing love, before the stars were made! ’Twas Grace that separated me from the mass of mankind. ’Twas Grace that laid hold of me while I was but as a pebble in the brook—and ordained that I should be a bright diamond in Christ’s crown! It was God who, in the beginning, by His own Grace, decreed that I should be what I am and, therefore, to begin there, we take this as our creed, “By the Grace of God”—as manifested in eternity and, by that alone have I been caused to be “what I am.”

Then, next, my text also means I am not what I am *as the result of any creature strength, or any means of my own*. I am not what I am because I chose to be what I am, for if I had been what I chose to be, I would still have been “dead in trespasses and sins.” If I had followed my poor, blind free will, it would have been, to this day, leading me to Hell! It would never have led me Heaven. If I had made it my guide, I would have wandered further and further, and further away from God. With my back to the Savior, I would never have moved towards God. It is the same with all of us—if there is anything good in any of us, we must confess that God Himself put it there. He taught our souls to pray. He made us feel our need of Divine Grace. He stripped us of our boastful pride. He delivered us from our refuges of lies. He leveled the legality of our hearts by bringing us low with labor, exhausting all our strength. ’Twas He who cast the first ray of hope into our soul! He opened our blind eyes to see the beauty of Christ! He gave us the first glimmering of faith! He enabled us to see

that our sins were washed away by the precious blood of Jesus and He has kept us alive to this day and will not let us go!

We will maintain this Truth of God against all comers, that saints are what they are “by the Grace of God” and not by their own free will! I have sometimes heard men preach doctrines contrary to this. They have said that men are what they are as the result of the improvement of “universal Grace,” and that the distinction which is apparent in them is made by themselves. God gave them a Grace which they were to use—not a Grace which operated upon them, but a grace which they operated upon. According to that teaching, Divine Grace is given to men as a tool with which they are to work, not as a seal which God sets upon a man—Grace is subservient to man—he is not subservient to Grace. Yet I must say that although I have heard such doctrine as that preached from the pulpit, I have never known it to be practically received in the heart of a child of God. When you come to the point and ask a true Believer, “Why are you, now, a child of God and an heir of Heaven?” he tells you, once and for all, “God made the difference.” He will, perhaps, tell you that men can do much towards their own conversion, but He will deny that he has done anything towards his. He will loyally put the crown on the head of Christ, even though being clouded in his understanding, he may have talked as if he denied the Truth. But, Brothers and Sisters, what we hold is the Doctrine of the effectual working of God in the hearts of His chosen ones, as the Lord said to Zerubbabel, “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, said the Lord of Hosts.” And as Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.”

Now let us look at our text in another aspect. Some suppose that even if Divine Grace begins the work, we must at least carry it on. It cannot be denied that the living child of God has power, but it must not be forgotten that the power of the living child of God is not in himself, but in his Heavenly Father. For it is as true of him as of any sinner—“dead in trespasses and sins” that, without Christ, he can do nothing. The living child of God is still as powerless as the dead sinner apart from the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the constant inflowing of the Divine Life into his soul. “By the Grace of God” we not only are what we are, but we also *remain* what we are. We would long ago have ruined ourselves—and damned ourselves—if Christ had not kept us by His Almighty Grace!

There has not been one hour in our whole Christian experience in which we have preserved ourselves! We cannot look back to any stage in our history and say, “Here I worked mighty marvels by my own unaided power.” We dare not say, when we have been made to stand on our high places, that we stood there by our own wisdom. Nor can we say, when we have run without weariness, that we did it in our own strength. No, Beloved, whenever we discover our own strength in our pilgrimage, it is in going backward and in tumbling down—never in going forward, or in mounting upward. With the Psalmist, we have to say to the Lord, “All my

springs are in You” and, as all the springs are in the Lord, so are all the streams as well. As for myself, I must continually sing—

***“Oh, to Grace, how great a debtor
Daily I ’m constrained to be!”***

Not only am I debtor to Grace, once and for all, but each day adds to the debt and each hour the bulk of my obligation grows. I must still say, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” Some of you could say this 20 years ago, but you can say it with even greater emphasis now! And when you get gray-headed and totter down to Jordan’s brink, you will not be able to say, “By my own goodness I am what I am.” Even there must you give all the glory to that Divine Grace which, having been the Alpha, will also be the Omega—which, having been the beginning, will also be the end.

So, doctrinally, I state the Truth of my text thus, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” I am elect. My election is of Grace. I am redeemed. Redemption is a mighty masterpiece of Grace. I am called—called by Grace. I am preserved—preserved by Grace and whatever there is in me that is commendable and virtuous, whatever there is in me which the Son of God can admire and which gives to my own soul real comfort, must be all of Grace and of Grace alone! I have spoken so much in the first person because the text is in the first person. Will each of you, also, speak in the first person and say in your heart, “By the Grace of God I am what I am,” endorsing the text from your own experience, setting your seal to this part of God’s Word and declaring it to be true and going forth with this motto emblazoned on your banner as the Doctrine which you will hear, and which, if you are called to the ministry, you will preach, “By the Grace of God I am what I am”?

II. Now, in the second place, I am going to take the text EXPERIMENTALLY.

By this I mean that there are times in our experience when this Truth of God starts up in letters of light and we recognize it as an indisputable fact, not only taught to us as a Scriptural Doctrine, but proved to us by our own personal experience. Let me just narrate a few instances. Brothers and Sisters, have you ever had times when the fountains of the great deep of your depravity have been broken up? Have you ever been taken into the chambers of imagery and has the Spirit of God said to you, “Son of man, I will show you greater abominations than these!” And has He taken you, first, into one room, and then into another and made you stand aghast while He has shown you the idols of your heart, the deep depravity that still remains in you, the pride, sloth and various forms of sin which still lurk and find shelter there? Have you ever had the filthy rags unrolled before your eyes? Have you heard the chattering of the unclean birds in the cage of your heart? Have you ever been fully conscious of the stench arising from your Old Adam nature? Has your spirit sickened at the very thought of the depravity of manhood in general and of yourself in particular? Have you ever had your secret sins set in the light of God’s Countenance? Have you ever been made to see the blackness of your own sin, side by side with the brightness of Divine favor? Have you ever been made to taste the exceeding bitterness of your sin even at the

Communion Table—even while you realized the preciousness of the blood of Christ and renewed your former fellowship with Him? If so, then I know that my text has been true to you, as it also has been to me, and that you have said, as I have often been compelled to say, “By the grace of God I am what I am.”

You have looked at your heart and you have seen its barren soil. And if there has been any wheat growing upon it, you have said, “This is the result of the Grace of God.” You have looked at the huge black rock of your Old Adam nature and when you have seen rivers of Living Water flowing out of the very midst of it, you have been obliged to say, “This mighty miracle could only have been worked by the Grace of God.” Flimsy views of human depravity lead to very indistinct ideas of the Grace of God. There is nothing but deep sub-soil plowing that ever makes a man sound in the Doctrines of Grace—and I will defy any man who has had a deep experience of his own odious depravity to believe any other doctrines but the Doctrines of Grace which are commonly called Calvinism! No, more than that, the mind, unless it is most graciously taught by the Spirit of God, will be apt to go beyond the true Scriptural Doctrine and to push the term beyond its legitimate sphere.

There have been other occasions on which you and I have been forced to cry, “By the Grace of God I am what I am,” namely, *after some strong and terrible temptation*. Have you ever known what it is to feel some old lust which you thought was dead, suddenly come upon you with a whirlwind power and drive you before it like a sere leaf of the forest that could not resist its might? I have, sometimes, had this trying experience. When quietly meditating upon the things of God, some fierce and fearful impulse to sin has assailed me—as if a giant had seized me by the neck and pushed me onward until, at last, I came to the very brink of some awful iniquity and looked down upon it. And, just as it seemed as if I must plunge into it, my eyes have been opened and I have seen the horror of great darkness and I have exclaimed, “O God! How is it that I have not committed that sin? How is it that You have come to save me just in the nick of time and stretched out Your hand to rescue me just when ‘my feet were almost gone,’ when, ‘my steps had well-nigh slipped’? Not only had I thought of slipping, but ‘my steps had well-nigh slipped.’ Then, Your mercy, O God, held me up!” I do not know whether you have had strong impulses of that kind. Many of God’s people have, and especially those who, before conversion, plunged deeply into sin. You have sometimes had almost on your lips the oath which you have hated in your inmost heart. Iniquity has come before you in a fascinating guise and, although you abhorred it, yet, for the moment, a strange hallucination of dazzling witchery seemed to lay hold of your spirit—and if you had yielded to it, you would have been like Samson when he fell into the hands of the Philistines! So it is that we are often compelled to say, as we look back upon marvelous Providences and Divine interpositions, “Truly, by the Grace of God we are what we are, and by that Grace, alone, have we been preserved from falling into sin.”

I think, too, that this Truth has often been brought home to us when *we have witnessed the fall of others*. You have, perhaps, walked to and from the House of God with some notable professor of religion and he has instructed you on many points. He seemed to be a man of deep experience and devout life. Your heart has been knit to him and you have said, "Here, indeed, is a Brother," and you have, possibly, envied him his great attainments and his fluent speech. Then, all of a sudden, you heard that he had fallen into some terrible sin. You made enquiries and you found that it was only too true. You were present, one night, at the Church meeting when the solemn sentence of excommunication was pronounced upon him—and while the minister uttered it, all the members wept and prayed that the poor fallen one might be brought to repentance and that his soul might not be the prey of Satan. At such a time as that, you have said, "By the Grace of God I am what I am," and you have said, with good John Newton—

***"When any turn from Zion's way,
(Alas, what numbers do)!
I think I hear my Savior say,
'Will you forsake Me too?'
Ah, Lord, with such a heart as mine,
Unless You hold me fast, I feel I must, I shall decline,
And prove like they at last!"***

Such instances may act as beacons to warn us of pride and to teach us, again, the lesson that by the Grace of God we are what we are.

Then, Brothers and Sisters, I think there are other seasons when we learn this lesson. That is, *in times of great dullness in spiritual matters*. Heavenly trade is not always brisk, even in the best market—that is, in the breast of the Believer. Spiritual mariners do not find that the wind always blows and thus, though we should always have our sails up, (which, alas, is not always the case with us), even then the wind would not always blow, for it "blows where it wishes." Like the sea, we have our ebb as well as our flood-tide. Do you not know what it is to go to the Throne of Grace when—as for words, you can find plenty of them, but as for heart and soul, and vigor in prayer—if your salvation depended upon your fervency, you must perish? Have you not gone to the Mercy Seat and groaned there—and groaned most of all because you could not groan as you ought? You have taken your needs to the Throne of Grace, but you have had to bring them away again. You have gone up to the House of God and though you could find no fault with the sermon, there was, somehow or other, nothing in it for you.

You went home to read your Bible and though you knew that it was a precious Book, it did not seem precious to you. It might be like a honeycomb, but you could not get any of the honey out of it. You had lost all spiritual appetite and you felt as if you were drawing near to the gates of death. You remember, too, how you then sought the society of the godly, yet you received no consolation from them. Heavenly things seemed to be but dreams—the substantial things of eternity did not affect your spirit as they should have done and you could only cry, with the Psalmist, "My soul cleaves unto the dust: quicken You me according to Your word."

And at such times, and especially if your prayer has been graciously heard, you have been compelled to say, "It is my natural state to be cold and dull and if, at any time, I run swiftly in the heavenly race—if my sails are filled and my boat is carried towards Paradise—surely this is by the Grace of God."

Just one more remark upon this point. *Times of great mercy often operate* upon some of us so as to bring us very low and to make us feel, "By the Grace of God we are what we are." Simon Peter had this experience. When his boat was full of fish, so that it began to sink, he fell on his knees before his Master and said "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Their greatness of God's mercy to him convinced him of his own unworthiness and it has been the same with some of us. The more the Glory of God's Grace has been revealed to our souls, the humbler have we been made to lie at His feet. When the Lord has piled up His mercies till they were like the great mountains and His faithfulness has been like the bottomless depths, then have we been obliged to say, "These great things are, indeed, of God—they could not have come of man." At such times we have felt that we could sit before the Lord, as David did, and ask, "Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that You have brought me to this point?" God sometimes overwhelms His children with mercy quite as completely as He ever does with affliction. Pride may be overcome in two ways. It is sometimes overcome by trouble that crushes a man, but, at other times, the same result is produced by Almighty Grace which, in overwhelming waves of love, rushes in upon the man's spirit, till, submerged in love and mercy, he can only resign himself to its depths and feel—yet always feel that he cannot feel enough—the wonders of God's Grace and his own littleness in comparison with God's amazing favor! God sometimes humbles His children by putting them in the dark, but He sometimes does it in another way, as David said, "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have ordained; what is man, that You are mindful of him? And the son of man, that You visit him?" How often have we also had to say, with David, "How precious, also, are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" So I hope it will be with each one of us, that the greatness of God's mercy to us, as a Church, and as individuals, will lead us to say, "By the Grace of God we are what we are."

III. Now, in closing, let us consider our subject PRACTICALLY. What is the practical use of this text, "By the Grace of God I am what I am"?

Surely, as I have already reminded you, it is designed *to keep us humble*. Depend upon it, if we do not take this text for our motto every day, there is the rod of the Covenant ready for us. He will soon be in a storm who does not see God's Grace in the sunshine. If His mercies surround us and our days roll happily along, but we begin to ascribe our greatness and our riches to ourselves, it will not be long before God will bring us down. It may be so in your experience, especially if you soar upon the wings of self-confidence. As surely as you begin to get strong in your own strength, there is an hour of weakness close at hand! Whenever you are full of self, it will not be long before you learn your own emptiness, for he

who begins to grow rich in himself is next door to poverty—no, he is already clothed in rags. No, my Brothers and Sisters, there is no safe walking unless we make this the staff on which we lean—“By the Grace of God we are what we are.” While we stick to this as our hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, everlasting motto, we shall not go astray, nor shall we experience those terrible downcastings which are the inevitable result of our flying up in self-confidence. Come then, Beloved, from this day let us learn humility, let us tread our pride in the dust and say, “Why should we be proud? By the Grace of God we are what we are.”

Then, in the light of our text, *let us learn charity*. Why should I be harsh towards those who are not what I am? I wish that some persons who think themselves very sound in Doctrine, would recollect our text. If another Brother is thought to be unsound, they are ready to cut him in pieces! It would be better if they were to say, before using their sword for such a purpose, “By the Grace of God we are what we are.” Though you should be ever so sound and right, yourselves, be gentle with the Brother who has not received so much Grace as you have. Good John Newton used to say that for a Calvinist to be proud was the most inconsistent thing in the world, because, by his own profession, there were Truths of God which no man could receive or understand of himself—so, why should he boast of his own attainments and why should he blame others for not doing what he knows they cannot do of themselves? If our Brothers and Sisters cannot see as well as we can, why should we be angry with them because our eyes are better than theirs? I see no reason for being angry with a blind man because he cannot see—that is the very reason why we should pity his infirmity. So, let us seek to relieve those who are burdened, to bring back those who have wandered, to strengthen the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees and, to the best of our power, lead others into that glorious Light of God in which we ourselves are walking, for, by the Grace of God we are what we are!

Moreover this should teach us *hopefulness concerning other men*. There is a drunken man—you think he can never be converted, but why not? The Grace that saved you is sufficient to save him. You sometimes meet with an infidel. Perhaps you have one in your family—a father, or brother, or sister—and you are apt to say, “Well, it is no use trying to get such an one to go to the House of God—all he would do would be to mock and jeer. If the minister should make a mistake, he would seize upon it and use it as his stock-in-trade for the abuse of the week. If there is a fault among God’s children, he is sure to notice it and to make it the theme of his reproach, so he had better be kept away from them.” But again I say the Grace that saved you is sufficient to save him—never give anyone up, even as God did not give you up! I always think that as God has converted me by His Grace, He can convert anybody! The conversion of any other sinner is not any more difficult to Omnipotence, neither is it any easier, for Omnipotence knows nothing of degrees. What marvelous things Christ has done and done in some of us, too! Some of you must weep over that verse in which the Apostle says, “And such were some of you, but you are washed.” And you say, “Yes, and to God be all the Glory

that He has made us what we are.” Therefore let us continue to look after those whom Satan has ensnared—even the most hardhearted sinners—and seek to bring them under the saving influence of the Grace of God.

Then, lastly, if we are what we are “by the Grace of God,” this should *teach us greater thankfulness*. Children of the Heavenly King, never forget to praise your God! We sometimes fail in this duty. We have had many meetings for prayer to ask God to bless us in our manifold labors. Now let us have some meetings for praise—to bless the Lord for His great goodness to us. I have heard that in some parts of New England, there used to be a day of fasting every month to mourn for the iniquity of the land and so on. And, at last, some senator proposed that they should have a feast and thank God for the mercies which they had received—and, truly, he was in the right. It is not good always to be fasting—we must sometimes feast! An old Puritan says that we take in breath by prayer by a sort of heavenly Inspiration—and that we breathe it out again by praise. Dear Brothers and Sisters, if you and I were to sing as heartily as we ought to sing, what a joyous song of praise there would be! If our voices could but be tuned to the goodness of God, what songs and sonnets would make glad this wilderness!

You remember Ralph Erskine’s sonnet on the battle in Heaven—the great contention of the bards in Paradise? He pictures them all contending as to who should have the lowest place and which should most loudly praise the Lord! There were the babes snatched from their mothers’ breasts—they claimed the lowest place because they had gone straight to Heaven without any trials or troubles. But the gray-headed men who had been Divinely supported under the afflictions of many years said that they owed the most to Sovereign Grace. Then came those who had been converted in their early years and who said that they had already had a Heaven below, so they could sing the loudest of all. Then came the penitent thief who said that he had the greatest cause to praise the Lord for he had been converted at the last. While some declared that they must praise God most because they had been the blackest sinners, others said that they would praise Him most for the restraining Grace which had kept them from sin. And so the strife went on until they agreed, each one, to sing with all his might to the praise of that Everlasting Love which inscribed their names in the Lamb’s Book of Life, that great Love which bought them with Jesus’ precious blood and that Omnipotent Love which attended them all their journey through and landed them at last in Heaven!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: NUMBERS 4:1-33.

Verses 1, 2. *And the LORD spoke unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers.* There were three families, those of Kohath, Gershon and Merari—and to each of these families a

different service was allotted. First, they were to be numbered. “The Lord knows them that are His,” and He takes count of all His people.

3. *From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, all that enter into the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.* They were to take up this work as a warfare, for, though it was a peaceful work, yet it is described as being a warfare. And he who serves the Lord, though that service is perfect peace, will not serve Him without also finding it to be a warfare.

4. *This shall be the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, about the most holy things.* They were to have to do with the Most Holy Place, to carry it and to carry the vessels of it—a very honorable position.

5, 6. *And when the camp sets forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering veil, and cover the Ark of Testimony with it: and shall put thereon the covering of badgers’ skin, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof.* These Kohathites might not so take the Ark as to handle it, much less might they ever look at it. But the priests and the sons of Aaron went in first and, after carefully covering the Holy Place, they covered up the sacred Ark with a cloth of blue. Blue was the token of holiness—of separation. Hence, every Israelite wore a border of blue upon his garment, but this, which was the symbol of the Divine Presence, was “all of blue.” It is all holiness. We wear, alas, but a border of blue, but this holy thing was “all of blue.”

7. *And upon the table of showbread they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover all: and the showbread shall be thereon.* When they moved the sacred table, the bread was always there—twelve cakes for the twelve tribes—for the bread of God’s House is never lacking.

8-10. *And they shall all spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers’ skins, and shall put in the staves thereof. And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light and its lamps, and its tongs, and its snuff dishes, and all the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it: and they shall put it and all the vessels thereof within a covering of badgers’ skin and shall put it upon a carrying beam.* There were means for handling these vessels without touching them. I mean the Ark had staves, and the vessels were put upon a bar for carrying them.

11. *And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of badgers’ skins, and shall insert its poles.* A type of the holiness veiled in our Lord’s Humanity—the badger skin made apparent the simplicity, the poverty, the humility of our Lord—covering evermore that wondrous cloth of blue.

12, 13. *And they shall take all the instruments of ministry, herewith they minister in the sanctuary, and put them in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers’ skins and shall put them on a carrying bar: and they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a pur-*

ple cloth thereon. A royal altar is this, always grand and glorious in our eyes, covered with a purple cloth.

14-20. *And they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, even the censers, the forks, and the shovels, and the basins, all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers' skins, and insert its poles. And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the son of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to the office of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, pertains the oil for the light and the sweet incense, and the daily meat offering, and the anointing oil, and the oversight of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein is, in the sanctuary, and in the vessels thereof. And the LORD spoke unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Cut you not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites: but thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in, and anoint them, everyone to his service and to his burden: but they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.* This is a very awful thing. I mean something which should produce a great awe and solemnity in our hearts. These men were chosen to carry the vessels of the Most Holy Place, yet they must never see them! They must be covered up by the hands of the priest—and they must never touch them. They must bear them by their staves, or upon the carrying bar upon which they were placed. Oh, how terrible a thing it is to draw near to God! The Lord our God is a jealous God. He will be served with holy reverence or not at all. Hence he says to Moses and Aaron, “Take care that you do not lead these men into any mistake. You go in first, and point out to each man what he is to carry. See that all is covered up, for if you do not, they may die in their work. Do not be accessories to their act and bring upon them this terrible judgment.”

I often wish that God's people would be careful not to cause sin in any of His servants when they are engaged in the ministry. Perhaps in preaching, or otherwise, there may be something done which vexes the Holy Spirit and causes trouble and sin. And, oh, he who stands in the holy place and bears the holiest of the vessel, needs to fear and tremble before God! And he needs to ask his brethren to see that they do nothing which might inadvertently cause him to sin.

21-24. *And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, Take also the sum of the sons of Gershon, throughout the houses of their fathers, of their families, from thirty years old and upward until fifty years old shall you number them; all that enter in to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. This is the sequence of the families of the Gershonites, to serve, and for burdens.* They were to bear the external coverings of the Holy Place. The Most Holy Place was in the custody of the Kohathites, but the Gershonites were to carry as follows—

25-28. *And they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle of the congregation, its covering, and the covering of the badgers' skins that is above upon it, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the hangings of the court, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court, which is by the tabernacle and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all the instruments of their service, and all that is made for them: so shall they serve. At the appointment of Aaron and his sons shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burdens, and in all their service: and you shall appoint unto them in charge all their burdens. This is the service of the families of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation: and their charge shall be under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron, the priest.* There was a wise decision of labor. I wish we had the same kind of thing in every church, and that every member occupied himself in that to which God has appointed him. But there are some who want to do what they cannot do, and who do not care to do what they can do.

29-32. *As for the sons of Merari, you shall number them after their families, by the house of their fathers; from thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old shall you number them, every one that enters into the service, to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation. And this is the charge of their burden, according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation, the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and sockets thereof, and the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments, and with all their service: and by name you shall reckon the instruments of the charge of their burden.* They had the heaviest load to carry, but they were the more numerous. They carried the solid columns upon which the covering of the tabernacle rested. And notice that they had also to carry the pins. Sometimes God's servants dislike carrying pins. They feel themselves too big—but blessed is that servant who, in his place, can be content to carry "their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments."

33. *This is the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service, in the tabernacle of the congregation, under the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron, the priest.*

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

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PAUL'S PARENTHESIS

NO. 3084

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 1908.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 26, 1874.

“By the Grace of God I am what I am.”
1 Corinthians 15:10.

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon on the same passage is #2833, Volume 49—LESSONS ON DIVINE GRACE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

IF you will read the context of this passage, you will find that these words occur in one of Paul's digressions, or parenthesis. He was a writer who very frequently went off at a tangent—he often left the subject on which he was writing, turned his thoughts in quite another direction—and then came back and went on with the subject which he had left for a while. In this respect, I have often, in my own mind, likened the Apostle Paul to Samson. When he was on the road to Timnah with his father and mother, he turned aside to slay the lion and afterwards to find the honey in the carcass. And each time he came back to his parents, just as if nothing had happened. So the Apostle Paul often turns aside from some grand argument upon which he is engaged and says something very valuable and important upon quite another topic—and then comes back again and calmly and deliberately goes on with his argument!

There are some kinds of parenthesis which we can always excuse and, indeed, commend. For instance, the parenthesis of prayer. When we are engaged in any duty, it will not delay us—really we shall make all the better speed—if we pause for a while to pray. I like to think of the Apostle Paul, while he was writing that grand Epistle to the Ephesians, turning aside from his main argument to offer that great prayer, “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His Glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.” [See Sermon #707, Volume 12—HEAVENLY GEOMETRY—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] His argument would not suffer in the least—indeed it would be all the stronger for that little interval of prayer! At another time, it is very sweet to see how he pauses, after recording the Lord's abundant mercy to him, to write that notable doxology, “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and

Glory forever and ever. Amen.” Such parenthesis of prayer and praise must be acceptable to the Most High.

Our text, then, is found in a digression of an exceedingly blessed kind. It would be well if preachers would digress thus nowadays, if by digressing they preached more of Free Grace and more about the Lord Jesus Christ! I have heard of a preacher who, on one occasion, when he entered his pulpit, found himself suddenly stricken with blindness. I think it was old Dr. Gouge, the great Puritan. Being unable to read the discourse which he had taken up with him, and being a man of unusual calmness of spirit, instead of making any outcry, or telling the people that he had lost the use of his eyes, he preached extemporaneously. And when he came down from the pulpit, a woman thanked him for the sermon. “Alas,” said the good man, “a great calamity has happened to me. I have lost my sight.” “Blessed be God for that,” said the woman, “if it makes you give up reading your sermons and enables you to preach as you have just done.” It is a good thing when a preacher loses the thread of his discourse if his discourse is made of thread, and he goes straight away to the Cross, and begins talking about Jesus Christ and Him Crucified. Or if he has been wandering in the mazes of modern thought, it is well when he gets back into the old paths and preaches about the Grace of God. That is, if he can declare, as Paul does here, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” God grant that they who preach Free Grace Doctrines may never get out of the habit of doing so! And may those who have almost forgotten the sound of the word, Grace—and those who never knew the music of it—be made to lose their way until they ramble into the blessed neighborhood of the Sovereign Grace of God, for I am sure that nothing but the Gospel of the Grace of God will ever drive Popery out of this country! The only antagonist that can ever overcome the self-righteousness and priestcraft of Romanism and Ritualism is a clear, bald, outspoken declaration of the great Truth of God that by the Grace of God the saints of God are what they are!

I. Coming to the text and speaking simply and plainly, and praying that God may speak to your hearts through my words, I want to prove to you, first, that THE TEXT CONTAINS A DOCTRINAL STATEMENT. “By the Grace of God I am what I am.”

And that statement may be read, first, as meaning this—that *Paul ascribed his own salvation to the free favor of God*. He believed himself to be a regenerate man, a forgiven man, a saved man—and he believed that condition of his was the result of the unmerited favor of God. He did not imagine that he was saved because he *deserved* salvation, or that he had been forgiven because his repentance had made an atonement for his sin! He did not reckon that his prayers had merited salvation, or that his abundant labors and many sufferings had earned that gift for him at God’s hands. No, he does not for a moment speak of merit—it is a word which Paul’s mouth could not pronounce in such a connection as that. His declaration is, “It is by God’s free favor that I, Saul of Tarsus, have been converted, and made into Paul the Apostle, the servant of Jesus

Christ. I attribute this great change entirely to the goodwill, the Sovereign benignity, the undeserved favor of the ever-blessed God.”

Now, my dear Hearers, let me put this Truth very plainly, so that you may not mistake it. If you are saved, you do not owe your salvation to anything that you have done. Nor, if you ever are to *be* saved, will it be the result of any goodness of your own. You may spin, but if you are ever saved, the first thing God will do will be to unravel that which you have spun. You may clothe yourself in the gaudy garments of a self-made righteousness, but God's first act of Grace will be to strip you of them and to make you feel that all such garments are nothing but filthy rags, fit only for the fire. You must deny your own merits, or you cannot have the merits of Christ! Your Church attendance, your Chapel attendance, your Baptism, your so-called sacraments, your confirmation, your private prayers, your family prayers, your Bible readings, your good thoughts, your alms deeds—all these put together have no merit in them that could help you to go an inch towards salvation! Salvation is not of works, but of Grace alone! And they who do not obtain salvation in this way will as surely perish as the blasphemer and the drunk! There is but one way of salvation—the way of free favor. That was the way in which Paul went and that is the way in which we must go if we would enter into eternal life!

The word, Grace, in Scripture, also means something else besides free favor—it very often means *operative power*. When the Spirit of God works savingly upon the heart, the influence which He exerts is called His Grace. So the Apostle means here, “By the Grace of God I am what I am” that is, “Whatever I am that is right, God made me that. If I am regenerate, I must have been born-again from above by the power of God. If I have repented, my repentance was the gift of God. If I have believed, my faith was the work of God. If I have perseverance in faith, that perseverance has been the effect of the work of God in my soul. If I have ever prayed an acceptable prayer, it was God's Grace that enabled me to do it. If I have ever sung God's praise so as to please Him, that praise was first written in my heart by the Holy Spirit.”

“What have you which you have not received?” is a question to which the answer from every true heart is, “I have nothing which I have not received, except my sin. But all I have that is good must have come from God.” If any of you are to be saved, God must save you. Sinner, you are lost, and lost beyond recovery by any hand but that which is Divine and Omnipotent! “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” Let that text roll like thunder over the heads of those who think that they can save themselves. The Lord must do it from first to last! His is the first act of Grace when He quickens the spiritually dead—and His must be the last act of Grace when we lay down our vile bodies and our spirit enters into the joy of our Lord!

Now, these two things being true, and being surely believed among us, that salvation is by the free favor of God and that it is by the power of Divine Grace, I think I may say that if Paul had been here, he would have pushed this matter a little further. There are some of our dear Brothers

and Sisters, and true Brothers and Sisters, too, who do not see the Doctrines of Grace quite clearly. They see men as trees walking, for they seem to attribute the fact of their salvation in part to themselves. I do not say as to merit, for I believe they abhor that idea. And I do not say as to power, for I believe they hold as earnestly as we do that the sinner is dead in sin and that the power to act comes from the Holy Spirit. But, somehow or other, they make a great deal more of man's will than I think they should, just as, on the other hand, some speak too little of the will of man and treat men as if they had not any wills, but were so many logs of wood! There is Truth of God on both sides of the question and, as some of my Brothers preach the other view of the Truth, I will preach that view of it which my text gives me.

If I am a saved man, how came I to be saved? Somebody asks, "But why are you saved, and not other men?" My dear Friend, there are two questions there, so I must take them one at a time. Will you kindly let me take the first one, only altering it thus—Why are you saved? If you are saved, there is a great difference between you and others who are not saved. You were once a lover of pleasure and of the world, but you are now a lover of God. Now, somebody made that difference, and whoever did it did a good job, so let his head be crowned! Here is the crown. Now, Sirs, upon whose head shall I put it? Have *you made yourself to differ* from what you used to be, and from what others still are? Are you prepared to wear the crown? You bow your head and say, "Oh, no! Let the Lord have the Glory of it." Well, then, it is quite evident that God has made a difference between you and others and that it was a commendable thing for Him to do so. And as it was commendable for God to do it, it must have been so for God to purpose to do it. And if it was commendable for Him to purpose to do it the day He did it, it was commendable for Him to purpose to do it from all eternity! And thus we get back to the old and glorious decrees and Covenant of Divine Grace of which some are so afraid, though, as surely as this Book is written of God, it stands there that He has, "from the beginning," chosen His people unto salvation. "By the Grace of God I am what I am."

If there is an Antinomian here, he will very boldly declare the meaning of this passage. But I will speak as boldly as he does and dare to do it with the Truth of God on my side! I am sure that this is pure unadulterated Truth of God, that Grace, Grace, Grace, Grace saves the soul from beginning to end. But if you ask me, "Why is a man lost?" then the Antinomian and I will differ altogether. I say if he is lost, it is his own fault—it is his sin and his willful rejection of Christ that cause him to be lost. And if there is any Arminian here who will lay the guilt of sin on the sinner's conscience, I can do that as much as he can, and I believe I shall have Scripture with me in so doing! Damnation is all of man from first to last—and salvation is all of Grace from first to last! Someone asks, "How do these two things agree?" No, Brother, how do these two things *disagree*? If you will tell me when they quarrel, I will try to reconcile them. They stand in this Book side by side as two grand Inspired Truths of God and they should be preached side by side! They never did fall out

and they never will. If you love self-righteousness, they will quarrel with you—but they will never quarrel with each other.

II. Now, secondly, I shall briefly treat our text, AS A GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT. Here is a child of God who stood very high among his fellow Believers, one who had many gifts, much Grace, great success, and high honor in the Church—yet he says, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” It would be right for any of us who are nobodies, and who never did anything, to talk thus. But this is Paul who is speaking, the one who could truthfully say, “I was not a whit behind the very chief Apostles.” Yet he says, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.”

Paul's grateful acknowledgment means, first, that *he forbade himself ever to boast*. Why should he boast? Whatever he had that was good had been given to him by the great Benefactor, so he might well have said, “What have I in which I can glory? I am nothing and I have done nothing except what God has made me, and what His Grace has worked in me and by me.” Beloved Friends, it is an astonishing thing that we should be the subjects of pride! Yet, considering what poor creatures we are, it is not astonishing that we are proud, or that we are anything that is bad. But if we are proud, what fools we are! Proud?—just a heap of dust and ashes that the wind would blow away if it were not for a daily miracle—just a mass of corruption that would be putrefying in a few hours if the life were gone out of it! Yet we sell out and think ourselves some great ones—and, oh, what big somebodies we are until the Grace of God brings us down to our proper level! The heavens themselves are scarcely high enough for our tall heads, we think ourselves so great! But it is a deathblow to boasting when anyone can say, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.”

And, dear Friends, this grateful acknowledgment *incites us to holy service*. If everything that we have already received has come from God, let us surrender ourselves and all we have to God! As He has made us, let us live for our Creator! As He has worked all our works in us, let us give up to Him our spirit, soul, and body as our reasonable service. Debtors to Free Grace as we are, if others talk about good works, let us go and do them! While the idle dream of self-righteousness leads some men to make sacrifices, let gratitude for Free Grace compel us to make still greater sacrifices.

Moreover, our text, I think, as a grateful acknowledgment, *leads us to further confidence in God*. If by the Grace of God I am what I am, then by the Grace of God I shall be, by-and-by, something better. He who has brought us to repent and to believe will bring us to greater faith, to fuller assurance and to completer conformity to Christ. And He will preserve us unto the end. When any tell us that God will leave us to perish at the last, I never care to answer them, for it always seem to me that those who talk so of my Master do not know Him. What? Leave His beloved, leave His spouse, leave the members of His own body to perish? It is useless to tell us that! He loves His own with too mighty a love to ever cast them away. Let others say what they will, I join with Paul in saying, “By the Grace of God I am what I am” and I am persuaded that, by that

same Grace, I shall one day be with Christ and be like He. You who are not the subjects of Divine Grace may well fear that you will perish! But you who have received God's Grace may rest assured that since Grace was the motive which began the good work in you, the same motive will continue even to the end! If God had begun saving us because we were good, He would, of course, leave off saving us when we were not good! If he had begun to save us because we were pure in heart and gracious in life, He would leave off when we ceased to be so. But as He began to save us from no motive but His own Sovereign determination to save us, how can that be affected by anything that may happen to us? So let us fall back upon this comforting assurance—by the Grace of God we are what we are, and by the Grace of God we shall one day share Christ's Glory!

III. I will not say more upon that part of the subject, though it is one upon which I might profitably talk for an hour. But, in the third place, I want you to regard the text as A SWEET ENCOURAGEMENT.

A sweet encouragement to whom? Why, first, *to the minister*. Beloved Friends, he who is now speaking to you feels himself to be a marvel of the Grace of God and he can say to you honestly and without any mock humility, that since God saved him, he has never doubted the possibility of the salvation of anyone else of the whole human race! Preserved from outward sin of the grosser kind, I nevertheless had for some years such a full sense of my own depravity and such a horror of darkness on account of the evil that I saw within myself, that I can have sympathy with the most despairing soul that is here. If you are sitting at Hell's dark door, I can tell you that I sat there month after month! And if you are tempted even to destroy yourself, I can assure you that I have known the misery that Job felt when he said, "My soul chooses strangling and death rather than my life." Yet I am saved by the Sovereign Grace of God, Glory be to His holy name! If the Lord sent me to preach the Gospel to the devil, himself, I would believe that God was able to convert even him! I know that He never will, but if there is any man who is as bad as the devil, and the Gospel is sent to him, I shall never despair of the possibility of that man being reclaimed and made to stand among the redeemed at the last!

I know that there are many here who were drunks, swearers and worse than that—but they have obtained mercy, they have been washed in the precious blood of Jesus—and tonight they are rejoicing that their many sins have been forgiven them for Christ's sake! Those who have been in such a plight as that do not despair of the salvation of the greatest sinners here. You have gone far into sin, but you have seen another saved who was once just what you now are, so why should you not be saved? There have been murderers saved, then why not you if your hands are red with the blood of others? There was a thief who was saved at the last hour, then why not you if you are a thief? There have been many Magdalens saved, then why not you if you belong to that sad sisterhood? O you who lie despairing at the gates of Hell, the silver trumpet of the Gospel is sounded in your ears by one who has enjoyed the music of it in his own soul! What an encouragement it is to the preacher when he can say, "By the Grace of God I am what I am!"

And what an encouragement it should be *to the hearer* when he is told that salvation is all of Grace! If Christ came to you and said, "You cannot be saved unless you perform so many good works," there would be no hope for the most of you, though I fear that there are some who think that such a message would just suit them, for they fancy that they have done a great many good works. In cherishing that delusion, they are like a Hindu of whom I once heard. He believed that he must not eat any animal substance, or that if he did, he would perish. A missionary said to him, "That idea is ridiculous. Why, you cannot drink a glass of water without swallowing thousands of living creatures." He did not believe it, so the missionary took a drop of water and put it under a microscope. When the man saw the innumerable living creatures in the drop of water, what did he do? Why, he broke the microscope! That was his way of settling the question. So, when we meet with persons who say, "Our works are pure, clean and excellent," we bring the great microscope of the Law of the Lord, and we bid them look through that. And when they *do* look through it and discover that even one sinful *thought* destroys their hope of salvation by self-righteousness—and when they see a whole host of sins in their prayers, or acts, or thoughts—then they are angry with the preacher and they try to break the microscope! But, for all that, the Truth of God remains, "By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the Law is the knowledge of sin."

But salvation comes by Grace. Catch at that, Sinner, for if it is by Grace that sinners are saved, why should not you be saved? If a thing is given away, nobody can be too poor to have it. If it is the gift of charity, poverty is a recommendation rather than a hindrance. My Lord and Master does not tell me to come and say to you that salvation is by your own feelings. It would be as impossible for you to *feel* right as to *do* right—but salvation is entirely by God's Grace! "But," says someone, "my heart is hard." Then come to God to have it softened! "But I have no good thing to bring Him." Then come to Him for every good thing! "But I cannot even bring a sense of need." Then come without a sense of need—for the man who feels that he has not a sense of need is often the one who has the best sense of need! He who says, "I have at last a sense of need," shows that he has not yet got to the bottom, for if he were brought to the bottom, he would feel that he had not any feeling—he would groan that he could not groan and grieve that he could not grieve! Dear Friends, you have to *do* nothing, and to *be* nothing, and to feel nothing by way of fitness for salvation—but just come and accept, free, gratis, for nothing—the abundant mercy of God in Christ Jesus! He is the empty sinner's fullness, the dead sinner's life, the perishing sinner's salvation! I do not know any Truth of God that can encourage poor sinful souls to pray, to repent and to believe in Jesus except the Truth that salvation is all of Grace from first to last! As the Apostle was saved by Grace, so must it be with all the rest of us—and so may it be with you!

IV. Now, to close, I think our text gives us A SUGGESTION FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

“By the Grace of God I am what I am,” says Paul. And I want each one of you to ask yourself, “*What am I?*” My eyes cannot reach you all, but I want you to feel that God’s eyes are looking at you and that He puts this question to you, “What are you?” Paul tells us what he is, but what are you? An unregenerate sinner? An unpardoned sinner? An impenitent sinner? An unbelieving sinner? Will you put on the right label and wear it? I almost wish I had some labels to put on you, but let your own consciences do it—and when you get home, will you take your pen and write down what you really are? You are either condemned or uncondemned! Write down whichever you are and look the truth in the face. No man is usually so near bankruptcy as the one who dares not look into his books—and that man must be bad who dares not search his own heart. What are you, then, dear Friend? Let that question begin your self-examination.

Here is another question, *How much do you know about the Grace of God?* Paul says, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” You see that the mark of a child of God is that by the Grace of God he is what he is—what do *you* know about the Grace of God? “Well, I attend my place of worship regularly.” But what do you know about *the Grace of God*? “I have always been an upright, honest, truthful, respectable man.” I am glad to hear it. But what do you know about the Grace of God? You think you do not need it, though you are not a saved soul—yet none are so certainly lost as those who think they do not need the Grace of God. *Has that Grace ever changed you?* “Well, I was born-again in baptism.” Yes, I have seen a great many of those who were said to have been born-again in baptism, but I have not seen any difference between them and those who were not born-again in baptism! And nor can anybody else. “You must be born-again,” even you baptized heathens who know no more about the Grace of God than if you had never lived in a land where the Gospel is preached!

I will put to you another straight question, *Is Christ Jesus your only hope?* Were you ever made to feel that there was no merit in anything that you ever did? Were you ever thrown flat on your face on the Grace and mercy of God, and made to pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, “God be merciful to me a sinner”? If not, what is your hope? If there is, in the matter of your supposed salvation, anything that is not of the Grace of God, do with it what the man did with the forged bill—bury it in the earth and run away from it—and be afraid that anybody should think it was yours. Your own righteousness is such an abominable thing that it will as surely damn you as the greatest profanity! The best thing for you to do with it is to bury it and run away from it.

If you cannot say that you are what you want to be. If you cannot say that you know anything experimentally about the Grace of God, the last question I will put to you is this, *What must that principle be which does rule you?* The Grace of God made Paul what he was—what has made you what you are? “Well, Sir, I think I am as good as my neighbors, and rather better than most of them.” Who made you so? I suppose you are a self-made man and it is a matter of fact that everybody worships his

creator, so that if you believe that you made yourself, I am not surprised that you worship yourself. But I do wonder where you expect to go when you die, you who have never done any wrong, and have been so good that you do not need a Savior. Do you expect to go to Heaven? Well, if you could go there, what would you do? I read of the multitude that no man could number, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple." But if you could get there because your garments never needed any washing, surely you would throw up your cap and say, "Well done myself!" And what a discord that would cause in the music of Heaven! What a stranger you would feel among those multitudes who would all praise the blessed God! But you will never go there until you fling that righteousness of yours back to the pit from whence it came, for there is nothing in it that God can look upon with pleasure. It is a vile compound of pride and ignorance. May the light of the Holy Spirit shine upon it and make you loathe it, hate it and flee from it! And may He teach you that there is life in Jesus, there is pardon in Jesus, there is salvation in Jesus for every soul that comes to Him! If you say, "By my own merits and abilities I am what I am," may God save you from that dreadful delusion and bring you humbly to trust in the merits and Sacrifice of His dear Son! So you shall find salvation and He shall have the Glory, world without end. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ACTS 9:1-31.**

Verse 1. *And Saul, yet breathing out threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest.* Notice that little word, "yet." "Saul yet breathing out threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." But there was to be a point beyond which he could not go. I pray God that there may be such a "yet" as that put into the histories of any here who are opposing God and His Christ. "Saul, yet breathing out threats and slaughter"—as if they were his very breath, as if he only lived to blaspheme the name of Christ and to persecute His followers—"went unto the high priest."

2. *And desired of him letters to the synagogues of Damascus, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.* He wanted his hunting ground enlarged! He had not enough to gratify his malice among the thousands of Believers in Jerusalem, so he must go to Damascus to hunt out the Christians there. Paul was always very thorough in all that he did. So, when he was a persecutor, he was a very bitter one. It mattered not to him whether the saints were men or women. In ordinary warfare it is the custom to spare the women. A brave man is satisfied to fight with men like himself—but a bigot's zeal knows no bounds—and so Saul asked for letters so that, "if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."

3. *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus.* The lion is about to leap upon his prey! The sheepfold lies in the valley and the wolf surveys it from the hillside. "Alas for the Church of God at Damascus!" you and I would have said if we had been there.

3. *And suddenly there shined round about him a light from Heaven.* A supernatural blaze, as though Heaven's gate had been thrown open and the Glory had come streaming down upon this rebellious man.

4. *And he fell to the earth, and heard a Voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?* Most people are converted in a somewhat similar fashion to this. There is "a light from Heaven" shining through the Gospel upon them. They fall to the ground in penitent self-abasement and then they hear the Voice of the Son of God speaking to their hearts. I do not mean that the external phenomena are the same as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, but the work is the same in its effects and in some of its processes. Saul "heard a Voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" It was a Divine Voice—majestic, piercing, affectionate, convincing. Saul's mind was of a deeply-logical kind, so Christ's question was an appeal to his reasoning faculties—"Give the reason for your present action. 'Why do you persecute Me?'"

5. *And he said Who are You Lord? And the lord said, I am Jesus whom you persecute: it is hard for you to kick against the pricks.* I do not doubt that he had been already pricked in his conscience and he had kicked out as an ox kicks against the ox-goad when he is pricked by it to make him go forward. Saul was a man of strong will and determined purpose. He had already felt in his own heart some of the sorrows that follow from a wrong course of life, yet he resolved to persevere in it, so the Lord said to him, "It is hard for you to kick against the pricks." And if any of you resist the thrusts of conscience and the strivings of God's Spirit, you will be like a man with naked feet kicking against iron spikes, and hurting himself, but not injuring that against which he kicks.

6. *And he, trembling and astonished, said Lord, what will You have me to do?* This was a very natural question from one who had always tried to live by doing. He had been a work-monger up to that very moment, so he naturally cried, "Lord, what will You have me to do?"

6. *And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told you what you must do.* "You must become a disciple and sit at the feet of another man, of a humbler sort, and you must learn from him." Christ will never teach us by visions what we can learn by the ordinary means of instruction, nor will he work miracles where common methods may suffice.

7. *And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless.* They were struck with astonishment—

7. *Hearing a Voice, but seeing no man.* A loud Voice stunned their ears, but they could not understand its message.

8, 9. *And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.* What a whirl of anguish must his mind have been in all that time!

The panorama of Stephen's martyrdom and of the holy men and women against whom he had breathed out threats and slaughter would pass before his inward eyes, even though his outward eyes were closed.

10, 11. *And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for behold, he prays.* God knows where every sinner is—the street he lives in, the number of the house, and the name of the owner of the house, so that he can find him when He pleases, or send one of His servants to him. You remember what John Bunyan said to the Quaker who came to see him in prison? The Quaker said to him, "Friend John, I am glad I have found you at last, for the Lord sent me to you, and I have been through half the prisons in England trying to find you." "No, no," said Bunyan, "do not tell me that. The Lord did not send you to me, for He knows I have been here all these years. If He had sent you, you would have come straight to the prison door." When the Lord calls a man to go on an errand for Him, He puts His finger on the right spot and says, "Go there."

12. *And has seen in a vision, a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.* You see how true Revelations fit into each other? Something is revealed to Ananias, and it is also revealed to Saul and, therefore, it is proved to be true. Some years ago, a brother told me that he had had it revealed to him that I was to let him preach for me in the Tabernacle. I said that of course I would agree to that when it was revealed to me that I was to let him, but I did not believe in lopsided Revelations. You will find a great many of those crazy revelations about and you may generally judge them in some such common-sense way as that.

13-16. *Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he has done to Your saints at Jerusalem: and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on Your name. But the Lord said unto him, Go your way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake.* He had made God's people suffer because of their loyalty to Christ—so it seemed only right that he, himself, should suffer for the same reason.

17, 18. *And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared to you in the way as you came, has sent me, that you might receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And immediately there fell from his eyes, as it had been, scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.* As he believed in Jesus, it was right that he should confess his faith in the way that Christ appointed.

19. *And when he had received meat, he was strengthened.* Do admire the tenderness of the Holy Spirit in recording that Saul received meat and was strengthened. He had been without food or drink for three days

and nights, so that it was as right for him to partake of food as to confess his faith by being baptized!

19. *Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.* Thus did the lion lie down with the lamb and the wolf with the kid!

20. *And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.* How he must have startled his Jewish Brothers and Sisters that day! They knew why he had come to Damascus, but, behold, he was preaching the very faith that he had gone there to destroy!

21-25. *But all that heard him were amazed, and said: is not this he that destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and came here for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: but their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.* I never heard of a more precious basketful of material than that! Sometimes the greatest of men may owe their safety to the very poorest of instruments and I think it is the duty of a Christian to avoid trouble if he can, just as our Lord bade His disciples, when they were persecuted in one city, to flee to another. Paul was carrying out that command of his Master. It was not cowardice—it was the very soul of courage—that he might go elsewhere to proclaim the Gospel that he had received in Damascus.

26. *And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.* They did not admit anybody and everybody into the Church. They guarded it as Christ's Church should be guarded, that unworthy people might not enter it. If any of you should be kept back a little while, you can say to yourself, "Well, they kept back Paul." We are poor fallible creatures, but we try to judge rightly concerning those who wish to unite with us.

27-31. *But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the Apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem, And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied.* Blessed be God for such a conversion as that of Saul of Tarsus!

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

“IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION”

NO. 2287

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, DECEMBER 18, 1892.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 20, 1890.**

“Now if Christ is preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching in vain, and your faith is also in vain. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if it is so that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not then is not Christ raised: and if Christ is not raised, your faith is in vain; you are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

1 Corinthians 15:12-19.

OUR religion is not based upon opinions, but upon facts. We hear persons sometimes saying, “Those are your views, and these are ours.” Whatever your “views” may be, is a small matter—what are the *facts* of the case? We must, after all, if we want a firm foundation, come down to matters of *fact*. Now, the great facts of the Gospel are that God was Incarnate in Christ Jesus, that He lived, here, a life of holiness and love, that He died upon the Cross for our sins, that He was buried in the tomb of Joseph, that the third day He rose, again, from the dead, that after a while He ascended to His Father’s Throne where He now sits—and that He shall come, by-and-by, to be our Judge—and in that day the dead in Christ shall rise by virtue of their union with Him.

Now, very soon, within the Church of God, there rose up persons who began to dispute the fundamental and cardinal principles of the faith—and it is so even now. When those outside the Church deny that Christ is the Son of God, deny His atoning Sacrifice and deny His Resurrection, we are not at all astonished. They are unbelievers, and they are acting out their own profession. But when men *inside* the Church of God call themselves Christians and yet deny the resurrection of the dead, then is our soul stirred within us, for it is a most solemn and serious evil to doubt those holy Truths of God. They know not what they do, they cannot see all the result of their unbelief! If they could, one would think that they would

start back with horror and let the Truth of God stand where it ought to stand, where God has put it.

The resurrection of the dead has been assailed and is still assailed by those who are called Christians, even by those who are called Christian *ministers*, but who, nevertheless, spirit away the very idea of the resurrection of the dead, so that we are, today, in the same condition, to some extent, as the Corinthian Church was when, in its very midst, there rose up men professing to be followers of Christ who said that there was no resurrection of the dead! The Apostle Paul, having borne his witness and recapitulated the testimony about the Resurrection of Christ, goes on to show the horrible consequences which must follow if there is no resurrection of the dead, and if Christ is not risen. He showed this to be a foundational Truth of God and if it were taken away, much more was gone than they supposed—indeed, *everything* was gone—as Paul went on to prove.

Beloved Friends, let us never tamper with the Truth of God. I find it as much as I can do to enjoy the comfort of the Truth and to learn the spiritual lessons of God’s Word without setting up to be a critic upon it. And I find it immeasurably more profitable to my own soul to believingly adore, than unbelievingly to invent objections, or even industriously to try to meet them. The meeting of objections is an endless work. When you have killed one regiment of them, there is another regiment coming on, and when you have put to the sword whole legions of doubts, doubters still swarm upon you like the frogs of Egypt! It is a poor business. It answers no practical end. It is far better to firmly believe what you profess to believe and to follow out to all the blessed consequences all of the Truths of God which, in your own heart and soul, you have received of the Lord.

One of the Truths most surely believed among us is that there will be a resurrection of all those who sleep in Christ. There will be a resurrection of the ungodly as well as of the godly. Our Lord Jesus said to the Jews, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father has life in Himself; so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and has given Him authority to execute judgement, also, because He is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

Paul declared before Felix the doctrine of the “resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust,” but his argument with the Corinthians specially referred to Believers who will rise from the dead, and stand with Christ in the day of His appearing, quickened with the life that quickened Him, and raised up to share the Glory which the Father has given to Him.

I. Paul’s argument begins here, and this will be our first head, IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION, CHRIST IS NOT RISEN.

If the resurrection of the dead is impossible, Christ cannot have risen from the dead. Now, *the Apostles bore witness that Christ had risen*. They had met Him, they had been with Him, they had seen Him eat a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb on one occasion. They had seen Him perform acts which could not be performed by a spirit, but which needed that

He should be flesh and bones. Indeed, He said, "A spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have." One of them put his finger into the print of the nails and was invited to thrust his hand into Christ's side. He was known by two of them in the breaking of bread, a familiar token by which they recognized Him better than by anything else. They heard Him speak, they knew the tones of His voice—they were not deceived. On one occasion, 500 of them saw Him at once, or, if there was any possibility of a mistake when they were all together, they were not deceived when they saw Him, one by one, and entered into very close personal communion with Him, each one after a different sort. "Now," says Paul, "if there is no resurrection of the dead, if that is impossible, then, of course, Christ did not rise, and yet we all assure you that we saw Him, and that we were with Him—and you must think that we are all liars, and that the Christian religion is a lie, or else you must believe that there is a resurrection of the dead."

"But," says one, "Christ might rise and yet not His people." Not so! According to our faith and firm belief, Christ is one with His people. When Adam sinned, the whole human race fell in him, for they were one with him—in Adam, all died. Even those that have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression have, nevertheless, died. Even upon infants, the death sentence has taken effect because they were one with Adam. There is no separating Adam from his posterity. Now, Christ is the second Adam, and He has a posterity. All Believers are one with Him and none can separate themselves from Him. If *they* do not live, then *He* did not live. And if He did not rise, then they will not rise—whatever happened to Him must also happen to them. They are so welded together, the Head and the members, that there is no dividing them! If He had slept an eternal sleep, then every righteous soul would have done the same. If He rose again, they must rise again, for He has taken them unto Himself to be part and parcel of His very Being! He died that they might live. Because He lives, they shall live, also, and in His eternal life they must forever be partakers.

This is Paul's first argument, then, for the resurrection of the righteous, that, inasmuch as Christ rose, they must rise, for they are identified with Him.

II. But now he proceeds with his subject, not so much arguing upon the resurrection of others as upon the Resurrection of Christ. And his next argument is, that, IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION, APOSTOLIC PREACHING FALLS. "If Christ is not risen, then is our preaching in vain" (see the 14th verse). "Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if it is so that the dead rise not."

If Christ was not raised, the Apostles were false witnesses. When a man bears false witness, he usually has a motive for doing so. What motive had these men? What did they gain by bearing false witness to Christ's Resurrection? It was all loss and no profit to them if He had not risen. They declared in Jerusalem that He had risen from the dead and straightway men began to haul them to prison and to put them to death! Those of them who survived bore the same testimony. They were so full of the conviction of it that they went into distant countries to tell the story of Jesus and His

Resurrection from the dead. Some went to Rome, some to Spain—probably some came even to this remote island of Britain. Wherever they went, they testified that Christ had risen from the dead and that they had seen Him alive—and that He was the Savior of all who trusted in Him!

Thus they always preached and what became of them? I may say, with Paul, that, “they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented.” They were brought before the Roman Emperor again and again, and before the pro-consuls, and threatened with the most painful of deaths—but not one of them ever withdrew his testimony concerning Christ’s Resurrection! They still stood to it, that they had known Him in life, many of them had been near Him in death, and they had all communed with Him after His Resurrection. They declared that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, that He died and was buried, that He rose, again, and that there was salvation for all who believed in Him!

Were these men false witnesses? If so, they were the most extraordinary false witnesses who ever lived! What were their morals? What kind of men were they? Were they drunkards? Were they adulterers? Were they thieves? No, they were the purest and best of mankind! Their adversaries could bring no charge against their moral conduct. They were eminently honest and they spoke with the accent of conviction. As I have already said, they suffered for their testimony. Now, under the law, the witness of two men was to be received, but what shall we say of the witness of 500 men? If it was true when they first declared that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, it is equally true now. It does not matter though the event happened nearly 1900 years ago, it is just as true now! The Apostles bore witness which could not be denied and so it still stands. We cannot assume that all these Apostolic men were false witnesses of God.

If we even suppose that they were mistaken about this matter, we must suspect their witness about everything else. And the only logical result is to give up the New Testament altogether. If they were mistaken as to Christ having risen from the dead, they are not credible witnesses upon anything else! And if they are discredited, the whole of our religion falls with them—the Christian faith and especially all that the Apostles built on Christ’s Resurrection must be turned out of doors as altogether a delusion! They taught that Christ’s rising from the dead was the evidence that His Sacrifice was accepted, that He rose again for our justification, that His rising again was the hope of Believers in this life—and the assurance of the resurrection of their bodies in the life to come. You must give up all your hope of salvation the moment you doubt the Lord’s rising from the dead!

As for Paul, who puts himself with the rest of the Apostles, and says, “If Christ is not risen, we are found false witnesses of God.” I venture to bring him forward as a solitary witness of the most convincing kind. I need not remind you how he was, at first, opposed to Christ. He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, one of the most intolerant members of the sect that hated the very *name* of Christ! He had a righteousness that surpassed that of the men of his times. He was a religious leader and persecutor and yet he

was so convinced of the appearance of Christ to him on the way to Damascus, that from that time he was completely turned round and he preached with burning zeal the faith which once he blasphemed! There is an honesty about Paul which convinces at once—and if he had not seen the Savior risen from the dead, he would not have been the man to say that he did.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, you may rest assured that Jesus Christ *did* rise from the dead! You cannot put down these good men as impostors. You cannot reckon the Apostle Paul among those readily deceived, or among the deceivers of others. So you may be sure that Jesus Christ did rise from the dead, according to the Scriptures.

III. Once more, Paul’s argument is that IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION, FAITH BECOMES A DELUSION.

As we have to give up the Apostles and all their teaching *if Christ did not rise from the dead*, so we must conclude that *their hearers believed a lie*—“your faith is also in vain.” Beloved, I speak to you who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and who are resting in Him with great comfort and peace of mind, yes, who have experienced a great change of heart and a great change in your lives through faith in Christ. Now, if He did not rise from the dead, you are believing a lie! Take this home to yourselves—if he did not *literally* rise from the dead on the third day, this faith of yours that gives you comfort—this faith which has renewed you in heart and life, this faith which you believe is leading you Home to Heaven—must be abandoned as a sheer delusion! Your faith is fixed on a lie. Oh, dreadful inference! But the inference is clearly true if Christ is not risen—you are risking your soul on a lie if Christ did not rise from the dead. This is a solemn statement. I said last Sabbath, and I repeat it—

**“Upon a life I did not live,
Upon a death I did not die
I risk my whole eternity.”**

It is so. If Jesus Christ did not die for me, and did not rise again for me, I am lost. I have not a ray of comfort from any other direction. I have no dependence on anything else but Jesus crucified and risen—and if that sheet-anchor fails, everything fails with it, in my case—and so it must in yours.

“Your faith is also in vain,” wrote Paul to the Corinthians, for, if Christ is not risen, the trial will be too great for faith to endure, since it has for the very keystone of the arch the Resurrection of Christ from the dead. If He did not rise, your faith rests on what never happened, and is not true! And certainly your faith will not bear that, or any other trial. There comes to the Believer, every now and then, a time of great testing. Did you ever lie, as I have done several times, upon the brink of eternity, full of pain, almost over the border of this world, fronting eternity, looking into the dread abyss? There, unless you are sure about the foundation of your faith, you are in an evil case, indeed! Unless you have a solid rock beneath you *then*, your hope will shrink away to nothing and your confidence will depart!

When you are sure that “the Lord is risen, indeed,” then you feel that there is something beneath your feet that does not stir. If Jesus died for you and Jesus rose for you, then, my dear Brothers and Sisters, you are

not afraid, even, of that tremendous day when the earth shall be burned up and the elements shall melt with fervent heat! You feel a confidence that will bear even that test. If Christ did not rise from the dead and you are resting your soul on the belief that He did, what a failure it will be for you in another world! What disappointment when you do not wake up in His likeness! What dismay if there should be no pardon of sin, no salvation through the precious blood! If Christ is not risen, your faith is in vain. If it is in vain, give it up! Do not hold on to a thing that is not true! I would sooner plunge into the water and swim or wade through the river, than I would trust myself to a rotten bridge that would break down in the middle. If Christ did not rise, do not trust Him, for such faith is in vain! But, if you believe that He *did* die for you, and *did* rise, again, for you, then believe in Him, joyously confident that such a fact as this affords a solid basis for your belief!

IV. Now I am going to advance a little further. Paul says, next, that, IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION, THEY REMAINED IN THEIR SINS. “If Christ is not raised, your faith is in vain; you are yet in your sins.”

Ah, can you bear that thought, my Beloved in Christ, that you are yet in your sins? I think that the bare suggestion takes hold upon you, terrifies you and chills your blood! A little while ago you were in your sins, dead in them, covered with them as with a crimson robe—you were condemned, lost. But now you believe that Christ has brought you out of your sins, and washed you and made you white in His precious blood. Yes, and has so changed you that sin shall not have dominion over you, for now you are, by Grace, a child of God! Well, but, if Christ did not rise again, you are yet in your sins.

Observe that—*for then there is no Atonement made.* At least, no satisfactory atonement. If the Atonement of Christ for sin had been unsatisfactory, He would have remained in the grave. He went there on our behalf, a hostage for us, and if what He did upon the tree had not satisfied the Justice of God, then He would never have come out of the grave again! Think for a minute what our position would be if I stood here to preach only a dead and buried Christ! He died nearly 1900 years ago, but suppose He had never been heard of since? If He had not risen from the dead, could you have confidence in Him? You would say, “How do we know that His Sacrifice was accepted?” We sing right truly—

***“If Jesus ne’er had paid the debt,
He ne’er had been at freedom set.”***

The Surety would have been under bonds unless He had discharged all His liability. But He has done so and He has risen from the dead—

“And now both the Surety and sinner are free.”

Understand clearly what I am saying. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, took upon Himself the sum total of the guilt of all His people. “The Lord has made to meet upon Him the iniquity of us all.” He died, and by His death obtained the full discharge of all our obligations. But His rising again was, so to speak, the receipt in full, the token that He had discharged the whole of the dread liabilities which He had taken upon Himself. And now, since Christ is risen, you who believe in Him are not in your sins. But, if He had not risen, then it would have been true, “You are yet in your sins.”

It would have been true, also, in another sense. The life by which true Believers live is the Resurrection-life of Him who said, “Because I live, you shall live also.” But if Christ is not risen, there is no life for those who are in Him. If He were still slumbering in the grave, where would have been the life that now makes us joyful and makes us aspire after heavenly things? There would have been no life for you if there had not first been life for Him. “Now is Christ risen from the dead,” and in Him you rise into newness of life. But, if He did not rise, you are still dead, still under sin, still without the Divine Life, still without the life immortal and eternal that is to be your life in Heaven throughout eternity!

So, you see, once more, the consequences that follow—“If Christ is not raised, your faith is in vain; you are yet in your sins.”

V. Now follows, if possible, a still more terrible consequence! IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION, ALL THE PIOUS DEAD HAVE PERISHED. “Then they, also, which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” “Perished,” by which is not meant “annihilated”—they are in a worse condition than that!

One phrase must be explained by the other which went before it—*if Jesus Christ is not risen, they are yet in their sins*. They died and they told us that they were blood-washed and forgiven, and that they hoped to see the face of God with joy. But if Christ rose not from the dead, there is no sinner who has gone to Heaven—there is no saint who ever died who has had any real hope—he has died under a delusion and he has perished!

If Jesus Christ is not raised, the godly dead are yet in their sins, and *they can never rise*, for, if Christ did not rise from the dead, they cannot rise from the dead! Only through His Resurrection is there resurrection for the saints. The ungodly shall rise to shame and everlasting contempt, but Believers shall rise into eternal life and felicity because of their oneness with Christ. But, if He did not rise, they cannot rise. If He is dead, they must be dead, for they must share with Him. They are, they always must be, one with Him—and all the saints who ever died, died under a mistake if Christ did not rise! We cast away the thought with abhorrence! Many of us have had beloved parents and friends who have died in the Lord and we know that the full assurance of their faith was no mistake. We have seen dear children die in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection! And we know that it was no error on their part. I have stood by many deathbeds of Believers, many triumphant, and many more peaceful and calm than a sweet summer evening. They were not mistaken. No, dear Sirs—believing in Christ who lived, and died, and rose again—they had confidence in the midst of pain, and joy in the hour of their departure! We cannot believe that they were mistaken and, therefore, we are confident that Jesus Christ *did* rise from the dead!

VI. Once more, IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION, OUR SOURCE OF JOY IS GONE. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, we who believe that He did are, of all men, the most miserable. “If in this life only we have hope in Christ,” and we certainly have no hope of any other life, apart from Christ, “we are of all men most miserable.”

What does Paul mean? That Christian men are more miserable than others if they are mistaken? No, he does not mean *that*, for even the mistake, if it is a mistake, gives them joy. The error, if it is an error, yields

them a present confidence and peace. But supposing they are sure that they are under an error, that they have made a mistake—then their comfort is gone and they are, of all men, the most miserable!

Believers have given up sensuous joys. They have sedulously given them up. They find no comfort in them. There are a thousand things in which worldings find a kind of joy, all of which the Christian loathes. Well, if you have given up the brown bread and cannot eat the white, then are you starved, indeed. If we consider the mirth of the worldling to be no better than the husks of swine—and there is no bread for us in the fact that Christ rose from the dead—then we are hungry, indeed.

And, more than that, *we have now learned superior things.* We have learned to love holiness and we seek after it. We have learned to love communion with God and it has become our Heaven to talk with our Father and our Savior. We now look after things which are *spiritual*. And we try to handle the things that are carnal as they should be handled, as things to be used, but not abused. Now if, after having tasted these superior joys, they all turn out to be nothing—and they must turn out to be nothing if Jesus did not rise from the dead—then we are, indeed, of all men, the most miserable!

More than that, *we have had high hopes,* hopes that have made our hearts leap for joy. We have been ready, sometimes, to go straight away out of the body, with high delights and raptures, in the expectation of being “with Christ, which is far better.” We have said, “Though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.” We have been transported with the full conviction that our eyes “shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.” And if that is not sure, if it can be proved that our hopes are in vain, then are we, of all men, the most miserable!

You will wonder why I have been so long in bringing out these points, and what I am driving at. Well, what I am driving at is this. After all, everything hinges upon a fact, an ancient fact, and if that fact is *not* a fact, it is over with us. If Jesus Christ did *not* rise from the dead, then His Gospel is all exploded. What I want you to notice is this, that there must be a basis of *fact* in our religion—these things must be facts or else nothing can give us consolation.

Our eternal hopes do not depend upon our moral condition, for, observe, these men in Corinth would not have been better or worse if Christ had not risen from the dead. Their character was just the same. It had been fashioned, it is true, by a belief that He *did* rise from the dead, but whether He did or did not, they were the same men, so that their hope did not depend upon their good moral condition. The Apostle does not say, “If you are or are not in such and such a moral condition,” but, “If Christ is not raised, your faith is in vain; you are yet in your sins.” So, my Beloved, the reason of your being safe will be that Christ died for you and that He rose again! It is not the result of what you *are*, but of *what* He *did*! The hinge of it all is not in you—it is in Him—and you are to place your reliance, not upon what you are, or hope to be, but wholly and entirely upon a great fact which transpired nearly 1900 years ago! If He did not rise

from the dead, you are still in your sins, be you as good as you may! But if He did rise from the dead, and you are one with Him, you are not in your sins—they are all put away and you are “accepted in the Beloved.”

Now I go a step further. The great hope you have does not hinge, even, upon your spiritual state. You must be born again. You must have a new heart and a right spirit, or else you cannot lay hold of Christ and He is not yours. But still, your ultimate hope is not in what you are spiritually, but in what He is. When darkness comes over your soul and you say, “I am afraid I am not converted,” still believe in Him who rose from the dead and when, after you have had a sight of yourself, you are drifting away to dark despair, still cling to Him who loved you and gave Himself for you, and rose again from the dead for you! If you believe that Christ is risen from the dead and if this is the foundation of your hope of Heaven, that hope stands just as sure whether you are bright or whether you are dull—whether you can sing or whether you are forced to sigh—whether you can run or whether you are a broken-legged cripple only able to lie at Christ’s feet!

If He died for you and rose again for you, that is the groundwork of your confidence, and I pray you keep to it. Do you see how Paul insist upon this? If Christ is not raised, your faith is in vain and you are yet in your sins. The inference is that if Christ is raised, and you have faith in Him, your faith is not in vain and you are not in your sins—you are saved! Your hope must not be here, in what your hands can do, but there, on yonder Cross, in *what He did*, and there, on yonder Throne, *in Him who has risen again for your justification!*

The hardest thing in the world seems to be to keep people to this Truth, for I have noticed that much of the modern-thought doctrine is nothing but old self-righteousness tricked out again. It is still bidding men to trust in *themselves*, to trust in their *moral character*, to trust in their *spiritual aspirations*, or something or other. I stand here, tonight, to say to you that the basis of your hope is not even your own *faith*, much less your own *good works*—it is what Christ has done once and for all, for “you are complete in Him,” and you can never be complete in any other way!

Here, again, I would have you notice that Paul does not say that your being forgiven and saved depends upon your sincerity and your earnestness. You must be sincere and earnest—Christ is not yours if you are not—but still, you may be very sincere, and very earnest, and yet be wrong, all the while. And the more sincere and earnest you are in a wrong way, the further you will go astray. The self-righteous man may be very sincere as he goes about to establish a righteousness of His own, but the more He does it, the more He ruins Himself. But here is the mark for you to aim at, not at your sincerity, though there must be that—but if Christ was raised and that is where you are resting your hopes—then you are not in your sins, but you are accepted in Christ and justified in Him.

This is where I stand and I pray every Believer to stand here. There are many new discoveries made in science. We are pleased to hear it. I hope that we shall be able to travel more quickly and pay less for it. I hope that we shall have better light and that it will not be so expensive. The more true science, the better, but when science comes in to tell me that it has

discovered anything about the way to Heaven, then I have a deaf ear to it! “If Christ is not risen, then is our preaching in vain, and your faith is also in vain; you are yet in your sins.” But if Christ is risen, then I know where I am. If it is really so, that He is God in human flesh—if He took my sin and bore the consequences of it, and made a clear sweep of it from before the Judgement Seat of the Most High—and if His rising, again, is God’s testimony that the work is done and that Christ, who stood as Substitute for me, is accepted for me, oh, hallelujah, hallelujah! What more do I need, but to praise and bless the name of Him who has saved me with an effectual salvation? Now will I work for Him! Now will I spend and be spent in His service! Now will I hate every false way, and every sin, and seek after purity and holiness, but not, in any sense, as the groundwork of my confidence! My one hope for time and eternity is JESUS, only JESUS! Jesus crucified and risen from the dead!

I do not know any passage of Scripture which, more thoroughly than this one, throws the stress where the stress must be—not on man, but on Christ alone—“If there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching in vain; and your faith is also in vain.” O dear Hearer, if you would be saved, your salvation does not lie with yourself, but with Him who left His Father’s bosom and came down to earth a Babe at Bethlehem, and hung upon a woman’s breast—upon Him who lived here, for 33 years, a life of suffering and of toil, and who then took all the sin of His people upon Himself—carried it up to the tree and there bore all the consequences of it in His own body—

**“Bore all that Almighty God could bear,
With strength enough, but none to spare.”**

Jesus Christ bore that which has made God’s pardon an act of justice and vindicated His forgiveness of sin so that none can say that He is unjust when He passes by transgression! Christ did all that and then, dying, was laid in the tomb, but, the third day His Father raised Him from the dead in token that He spoke the Truth when He said, on the Cross, “It is finished.”

The debt is now paid! Then, O Sinner, leave your prison, for your debt is paid! Are you shut up in despair on account of your debt of sin? It is all discharged if you have believed in Him who was raised from the dead! He has taken all your sin and you are free. That handwriting of ordinances that was against you is nailed to His Cross. Go your way and sing, “The Lord is risen, indeed,” and be as happy as all the birds in the air, till you are, by-and-by, as happy as the angels in Heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-20.

Verse 1, 2. *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; by which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain.* Paul preached the Gospel. His hearers received it and also stood in it—“wherein you stand.” It is essential to salvation to hear the Gospel, to receive it, and then to stand in it. Now,

what was this Gospel? Paul is going to tell us and, instead of making a list of doctrines, He mentions a set of *facts*.

3. *For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received.* Notice that the *preacher* does not make the Gospel. If he makes it, it is not worth your having! Originality in preaching, if it is originality in the statement of doctrine, is falsehood! We are not makers and inventors—we are *repeaters*—we tell the message we have received.

3. *How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.* This, then, is the Gospel, that Jesus “died for our sins,” taking our sins upon Himself. He bore the death penalty for us, “according to the Scriptures.” There are plenty of Scriptures—Old Testament Scriptures—which teach this great Truth of God by way of prophecy.

4. *And that He was buried.* This was necessary as a proof of His death and as the groundwork of His rising again.

4. *And that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.* This is the Gospel—Christ dead, buried, risen again, always living. We must dwell upon these points, for they are the essentials of the Gospel.

5, 6. *And that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present day.* When Paul wrote.

6, 7. *But some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James; then of all the Apostles.* In different places, and at different hours; sometimes by one, sometimes by eleven, once by 500 brethren at once, Jesus was seen after He had risen from the dead! As I have often said, there is no historical fact that is so well authenticated as that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

8. *And last of all He was seen of me, also, as of one born out of due time.* Paul calls himself an abortion and speaks of himself as one hardly worth mentioning. Yet he had seen the Lord after His Resurrection from the dead. He was not a man to be deceived, for he had persecuted the Church of Christ. He was exceedingly mad against the Messiah, so that if he said that he had seen Jesus of Nazareth, and that he was converted by the sight, we may be quite sure that it was so. Paul was not a man to undergo all the sacrifices he had to endure for the sake of a mere dream.

9, 10. *For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the Grace of God I am what I am: and His Grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.* No man could be more thoroughly with Christ, heart and soul, than that Paul who, before, had been the blood thirsty Saul of Tarsus! His witness may well be believed and, in connection with all that went before it, it proves beyond all doubt that He who was crucified and was laid in the tomb, did certainly rise, again, and was seen in life after death.

11. *Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so you believed.* There was not a doubt about that. All the Apostles, all the early Christians preached the Resurrection of Christ, and the Corinthians, when they became Christians, believed it.

12. *Now if Christ is preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? What? Had they got so far as that, to call themselves Christians, and yet they doubted the Truth of the resurrection of the dead? Yes, they spirited it away. They made it into a kind of myth or fable—and yet they called themselves Christians! That the heathen should not believe it was not amazing—but that those who professed to believe that Christ had risen from the dead, yet doubted the resurrection of His people was, indeed, a strange thing! Paul argues with them about this matter.*

13, 14. *But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching in vain; and your faith is also in vain. If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, we are preaching a falsehood. If He did not rise from the dead, you are believing a falsehood and our preaching and your believing are nothing but vanity.*

15-17. *Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if it is so that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then Christ is not raised: and if Christ is not raised, your faith is in vain; you are yet in your sins. If Jesus Christ is not risen, He has done nothing for you! You are not saved, you are not pardoned, you are not renewed. It is all a myth, all a piece of deceit! If that fact is given up, that Christ rose from the dead, everything connected with salvation is also given up!*

18. *Then they, also, which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. All the godly saints died resting in the risen Christ, but if He is not risen, they died under a delusion—and they have perished.*

19. *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. Those who are Believers in Christ, says Paul, are miserable dupes if He has not risen from the dead. They are believing and resting all their hopes upon a lie! It makes them happy, truly, but if you can take that hope away from them by persuading them that what it is grounded upon is not true, you have made them, miserable, indeed!*

20. *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. Paul has been arguing on every supposition and now he comes back with his own positive witness that Christ is risen. You remember that Jesus died at the time of the Passover, as the one great Paschal Lamb, but He rose again on the first day of the week, and that was the feast of first-fruits with the Jews. They brought handfuls of wheat from the fields to show their gratitude to God and, in order that a blessing might rest on all the crop. And Paul uses Christ's rising on that particular day as a figure—“Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.”*

He lives! He is the first-fruits and the full harvest will follow! All who are in Him will rise from the dead, for He is one with them, and none can separate them from Him, nor sever Him from them! They died in Him and they live because He lives, blessed be His name!

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

“ALAS FOR US, IF YOU WERE ALL, AND NOTHING BEYOND, O EARTH” NO. 562

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 27, 1864,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are
of all men most miserable.”
1 Corinthians 15:19.*

You will understand that the Apostle is arguing with professedly Christian people who were dubious about the Resurrection of the dead. He is not saying that all men are now miserable if there is no hope of the world to come, for such an assertion would be untrue. There are very many who never think of another life who are quite happy in their way, enjoy themselves and are very comfortable after a fashion. But he speaks of Christian people—“If we, who have hope in Christ, are led to doubt the doctrine of a future state and of a resurrection, then we are of all men most miserable.”

The argument has nothing to do with some of you who are not Christians. It has nothing to do with you who have never been brought out of a state of nature into a state of Grace. It only respects those who are real, living followers of the Savior and who are known by this, that they have hope in Christ—hope in His blood for pardon, in His righteousness for Justification, in His power for support, in His Resurrection for eternal Glory. “If we who have hope in Christ, have that hope for this life only, then we are of all men most miserable.”

You understand the argument. He is appealing to their consciousness. They, as Christians, had real enjoyments, “but,” says he, “you could not have these enjoyments if it were not for the hope of another life. Once take that away, if you could still remain Christians and have the same feelings which you now have and act as you now do, you would become of all men most miserable.” Therefore to justify your own happiness and make it all reasonable, you must admit a Resurrection. There is no other method of accounting for the joyous peace which the Christian possesses. Our riches are beyond the sea! Our city with firm foundations lies on the other side the river!

Gleams of Glory from the spirit-world cheer our hearts and urge us onward. But if it were not for these, our present joys would pine and die. We will try and handle our text this morning in this way. First, we are not, of all men, most miserable. But secondly, without the hope of another life we should be—that we are prepared to confess—because thirdly, our chief joy lies in the hope of a life to come. And thus, fourthly, the future influences the present. And so, in the last place, we may today judge what our future is to be.

I. First then, **WE ARE NOT OF ALL MEN MOST MISERABLE.** Who ventures to say we are? He who will have the hardihood to say so, knows nothing of us. He who shall affirm that Christianity makes men miserable is himself an utter stranger to it and has never partaken of its joyful influences. It were a very strange thing, indeed, if it did make us wretched, for see to what a position it exalts us! It makes us sons of God! Do you suppose that God will give all the happiness to His enemies and reserve all the mourning for His sons?

Shall His foes have mirth and joy and shall His own home-born children inherit sorrow and wretchedness? Are the kisses for the wicked and the frowns for us? Are we condemned to hang our harps upon the willows and sing nothing but doleful dirges, while the children of Satan are to laugh for joy of heart? We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus! Shall the sinner, who has no part nor lot in Christ, call himself happy and shall we go mourning as if we were penniless beggars?

No, we will rejoice in the Lord always and glory in our inheritance, for we “have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear. But we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” The rod of chastisement must rest upon us in our measure, but it works for us the comfortable fruits of righteousness. And therefore, by the aid of the Divine Comforter, we will rejoice in the Lord at all times. We are, my Brothers and Sisters, married unto Christ! And shall our great Bridegroom permit His spouse to linger in constant grief? Our hearts are knit unto Him—we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. And though for awhile we may suffer as our Head once suffered, yet we are even now blessed with heavenly blessings in Him.

Shall our Head reign in Heaven and shall we have a Hell upon earth? God forbid! The joyful triumph of our exalted Head is in a measure shared by us, even in this vale of tears. We have the earnest of our inheritance in the comforts of the Spirit which are neither few nor small. Think of a Christian! He is a king—and shall the king be the most melancholy of men? He is a priest unto God, and shall he offer no sweet incense of hallowed joy and grateful thanksgiving? We are fit companions for angels—He has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. And shall we have no days of Heaven upon earth?

Is Canaan ours from Dan to Beersheba and shall we eat no fruit from Eshcol’s vine on this side of Jordan? Shall we have no taste of the figs and of the pomegranates and of the flowing milk and honey? Is there no manna in the wilderness? Are there no streams in the desert? Are there no streaks of light to herald our eternal sun rising? Heritors of joy forever, have we no foretastes of our portion? I say again—it were the oddest thing in the world if Christians were more miserable than other men—or not more happy.

Think again of what God has done for them! The Christian knows that his sins are forgiven. There is not against the Believer a single sin recorded in God’s book. “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions and, as a cloud, your sins.” More than that, the Believer is accounted by God as if he had perfectly kept the Law, for the righteousness

of Christ is imputed to him and he stands clothed in that fair white linen which is the righteousness of the saints. And shall the man whom God accepts be wretched? Shall the pardoned offender be less happy than the man upon whom the wrath of God abides? Can you conceive such a thing?

Moreover, my Brethren, we are made temples of the Holy Spirit and is the Holy Spirit's temple to be a dark, dolorous place—a place of shrieks and moans and cries, like the Druidic groves of old? Such is not like our God! Our God is a God of love and it is His very Nature to make His creatures happy. And we, who are His twice-made creatures, who are the partakers of the Divine Nature having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust—is it to be supposed that we are bound by a stern decree to go mourning all our days? Oh, if you knew the Christian's privilege! If you understood that the secret of the Lord is laid open to him! That the wounds of Christ are his shelter! That the flesh and blood of Christ are his food! That Christ Himself is his sweet Companion and his abiding Friend! Oh, if you knew this, you would never again foolishly dream that Christians are an unhappy race!

“Happy are you, O Israel, who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord?” Who can be compared with the man who is “satisfied with favor and full with the blessing of the Lord”? Well might the evil prophet of Bethor exclaim, “Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his.” We will go a step farther. We will not only say that from the nature of his position and privileges a Christian should be happy, but we declare that he *is* so and that among all men there are none who enjoy such a constant peace of mind as Believers in Christ.

Our joy may not be like that of the sinner, noisy and boisterous. You know what Solomon says—“The laughter of fools is as the crackling of thorns under a pot”—a great deal of blaze and much noise and then a handful of ashes and it is all over. “Who has woe, who has redness of the eyes? They that tarry long at the wine: men of strength to mingle strong drink.” The Christian, in truth, does not know much of the excitement of the bowl, the viol and the dance. Nor does he desire to know! He is content that he possesses a calm deep-seated repose of soul. “He is not afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.”

He is not disturbed with any sudden fear—he knows that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” He is in the habit, in whatever society he may be, of still lifting up his heart to God. And therefore he can say with the Psalmist, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed—I will sing and give praise.”—

***“He waits in secret on his God;
His God in secret sees;
Let earth be all in arms abroad,
He dwells in heavenly peace.
His pleasures rise from things unseen,
Beyond this world and time,
Where neither eyes nor ears have been,
Nor thoughts of sinners climb.*”**

He wants no pomp nor royal throne

To raise his figure here—

Content and pleased to live unknown,

Till Christ his life appears.”

There is a river, the streams of which make glad the city of God. Believers drink of that river and thirst not for carnal delights. They are made “to lie down in green pastures,” and are led “beside the still waters.” Now this solid, lasting joy and peace of mind sets the Christian so on high above all others that I boldly testify that there are no people in the world to compare with him for happiness. But do not suppose that our joy never rises above this settled calm! Let me tell you, and I speak experimentally, we have our seasons of rapturous delight and overflowing bliss. There are times with us when no music could equal the melody of our heart’s sweet hymn of joy. It would empty earth’s coffers of every farthing of her joy to buy a single ounce of our delight!

Do not fancy Paul was the only man who could say, “Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knows,” for these ecstasies are usual with Believers. And on their sunshiny days when their unbelief is shaken off and their faith is strong, they have all but walked the golden streets. And they can say, “If we have not entered within the pearly gate, we have been only just this side of it. And if we have not yet come to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven, if we have not joined the great congregation of the perfect in actual body, yet still—

“Even now by faith we join our hands

With those that went before,

And greet the blood-besprinkled bands

On the eternal shore.”

I would not change one five minutes of the excessive joy my soul has sometimes felt for a thousand years of the best mirth that the children of this world could give me. O Friends, there is a happiness which can make the eyes sparkle and the heart beat high and the whole man as full of bounding speed of life as the chariots of Amminadib. There are raptures and high ecstasies which on festival days such as the Lord allots to His people, the saints are permitted to enjoy. I must not fail to remind you that the Christian is the happiest of men for this reason—his joy does not depend upon circumstances. We have seen the happiest men in the most sorrowful conditions.

Mr. Renwick, who was the last of the Scotch martyrs, said a little before his death, “Enemies think themselves satisfied that we are put to wander in mosses and upon mountains, but even amidst the storm of these last two nights I cannot express what sweet times I have had when I have had no coverings but the dark curtains of night—yes, in the silent watch my mind was led out to admire the deep and inexpressible ocean of joy wherein the whole family of Heaven does swim. Each star led me to wonder what He must be who is the Star of Jacob and from whom all stars borrow their shining.”

Here is a martyr of God driven from house and home and from all comforts and yet having such sweet seasons beneath the curtains of the black

night as kings do not often know beneath their curtains of silk. A minister of Christ going to visit a very, very poor man, gives this description. He says, “I found him alone, his wife having gone out to ask help of some neighbor. I was startled by the sight of the pale emaciated man, the living image of death, fastened upright in his chair by a rude mechanism of cords and belts hanging from the ceiling, totally unable to move hand or foot, having been for more than four years entirely deprived of the use of his limbs and suffering extreme pain from swellings in all his joints. I approached him full of pity and I said, “Are you left alone, my Friend, in this deplorable situation?”

He answered with a gentle voice—his lips were the only parts of his body which he appeared to have power to move—“No, Sir, I am not alone, because the Father is with me.” I began to talk with him and I soon observed what was the source of his consolation, for just in front of him lay the Bible upon a pillow, his wife having left it open at some choice Psalm of David so that he might read while she was gone, as he had no power to turn over the pages. I asked him what he had to live upon and found that it was a miserable pittance, scarcely enough to keep body and soul together, “But,” said he, “I never want anything, for the Lord has said, ‘Your bread shall be given you and your water shall be sure,’ and I trust in Him and I shall never want while God is faithful to His promise.”

“I asked him,” says this minister, “whether he did not often repine on account of suffering so acutely for so many years.” “Sir,” said he, “I did repine at first, but not for the last three years, blessed be God for it, for I know whom I have believed and though I feel my own weakness and unworthiness more and more, yet I am persuaded that He will never leave me nor forsake me. And so graciously does He comfort me that when my lips are closed with lock-jaw and I cannot speak a word for hours together, He enables me to sing His praises most sweetly in my heart.”

Now here was a man to whom the sun of all earthly comfort was set and yet the Sun of Heaven shone full in his face and he was more peaceful and happy in deep poverty and racking pain than all you or I have been in the health and strength of youth! John Howard spent his time in visiting the jails and going from one haunt of fever to another. He was asked how he could find any ground of happiness when he was living in miserable Russian villages, or dwelling in discomfort in a hospital or a jail. Mr. Howard’s answer was very beautiful, “I hope,” said he, “I have sources of enjoyment which depend not upon the particular spot I inhabit. A rightly cultivated mind, under the power of Divine Grace and the exercise of a benevolent disposition affords a ground of satisfaction that is not to be affected by heres and theres.”

Every Christian will bear witness that he has found his sad times to be his glad times, his losses to be his gains, his sicknesses means to promote his soul’s health. Our summer does not depend upon the sun, nor our flood-tide upon the moon. We can rejoice even in death. We look forward to that happy hour when we shall close our eyes in the peaceful slumbers of death, believing that our last day will be our best day. Even the crossing of the river Jordan is but an easy task, for we shall hear Him say,

“Fear not, I am with you: be not dismayed, I am your God. When you pass through the rivers I will be with you and the floods shall not overflow you.”

We dare to say it, then, very boldly—we are not of all men most miserable—we would not change with unconverted men for all their riches and their pomp and their honor thrown into the scale—

**“Go you that boast in all your stores,
And tell how bright they shine,
Your heaps of glittering dust are yours,
And my Redeemer’s mine.”**

II. This brings us to the second point—WITHOUT THE HOPE OF ANOTHER LIFE WE WILL ADMIT THAT WE SHOULD BE, OF ALL MEN, MOST MISERABLE. Especially was this true of the Apostles. They were rejected by their countrymen. They lost all the comforts of home. Their lives were spent in toil and were daily exposed to violent death. They, all of them, suffered the martyr’s doom except John, who seems to have been preserved not from martyrdom, but in it. They were certainly the twelve most miserable of men apart from that hope of the world to come, which made them, of all men, the most happy.

But this is true, dear Friends, not merely of persecuted and despised and poverty-stricken Christians, but of all Believers. We are prepared to grant it, that take away from us the hope of the world to come we should be more miserable than men without religion. The reason is very clear, if you think that the Christian has renounced those common and ordinary sources of joy from which other men drink. We must have *some* pleasure—it is impossible for men to live in this world without it and I can say most truthfully I never urge any of you to do that which would make you unhappy.

We must have some pleasure. Well then, there is a vessel filled with muddy filthy water which the camels’ feet have stirred—shall I drink it? I see yonder a rippling stream of clear flowing water, pure as crystal and cooling as the snow of Lebanon and I say, “No, I will not drink this foul, muddy stuff. Leave that for beasts. I will drink of yon clear stream.” But if I am mistaken, if there is no stream yonder, if it is but the deceitful mirage—if I have been deluded—then I am worse off than those who were content with the muddy water, for they have at least some cooling draughts, and I have none at all.

This is precisely the Christian’s case. He passes by the pleasures of sin and the amusements of carnal men because he says, “I do not care for them, I find no pleasure in them—my happiness flows from the river which springs from the Throne of God and flows to me through Jesus Christ—I will drink of that.” But if there were no hereafter, if that were proven to be a deception, then were we more wretched than the profligate and licentious!

Again, the Christian man has learned the vanity of all earthly joys. We know when we look upon pomp that it is an empty thing. We walk through the world not with the scorn of Diogenes, the cynical philosopher, but with something of his wisdom and we look upon the common things in which men rejoice and say with Solomon, “Vanity of vanities, all is van-

ity.” And why do we say this? Why, because we have chosen *eternal* things in which there is no vanity and which are satisfying to the soul. But, my Brethren, it is the most unhappy piece of knowledge which a man can acquire—to know that this world is vain—if there is not another world abundantly to compensate for all our ills.

There is a poor lunatic in Bedlam, plaiting straw into a crown which he puts upon his head and calls himself a king and mounts his mimic throne and thinks that he is monarch over all nations and is perfectly happy in his dream. Do you think that I would undeceive him? No, verily, if I could, I would not. If the delusion makes the man happy, by all means, let him indulge in it.

But, dear Friends, if you and I have been undeceived—our dream of perfect bliss beneath the skies is gone forever! What, then, if there is no world to come? Why then, it is a most sorrowful thing for us that we have been awakened out of our sleep unless this better thing which we have chosen, this good part which shall not be taken from us, should prove to be real and true, as we believe it is! Moreover, the Christian man is a man who has had high, noble, and great expectations! And this is a very sad thing for us if our expectations are not fulfilled, for it makes us, of all men, most miserable.

I have known poor men waiting and expecting a legacy. They had a right to expect it and they have waited and waited and borne with poverty and the relative has died and left them nothing. Their poverty has ever afterwards seemed to be a heavier drag than before. It is an unhappy thing for a man to have large ideas and large desires if he cannot gratify them. I believe that poverty is infinitely better endured by persons who were always poor than by those who have been rich and have had to come down to penury—for they miss what the others never had and what the originally poor would look upon as luxuries they consider to be necessary to their existence.

The Christian has learned to think of eternity, of God, of Christ, of communion with Jesus and if, indeed, it is all false, he certainly has dreamed the most magnificent of all mortal visions. Truly, if any man could prove it to be a vision, the best thing he could do would be to sit down and weep forever to think it was not true! For the dream is so splendid, the picture of the world to come so gorgeous, that I can only say if it is not true, it ought to be—if it is not true, then there is nothing here worth living for, my Brethren, and we are disappointed wretches, indeed—of all men most miserable.

The Christian, too, has learned to look upon everything here on earth as fleeting. I must confess every day this feeling grows with me. I scarcely look upon my friends as living. I walk as in a land of shadows and find nothing enduring around me. The broad arrow of the great skeleton king is, to my eyes, visibly stamped everywhere. I go so often to the grave and with those I least expected to take there, that it seems to be rather a world of dying than of living men. Well, this is a very unhappy thing—a very wretched state of mind for a man to be in—if there is no world to come. If

there is no resurrection of the dead, then is the Christian, indeed, committed to a state of mind the most deplorable and pitiable.

But, O my Brothers and Sisters, if there is a world to come, as faith assures us there is, how joyous it is to be weaned from the world and to be ready to depart from it! To be with Christ is far better than to tarry in this vale of tears—

**“The cords that bound my heart to earth
Are broken by His hands.
Before His Cross I find myself,
A stranger in the land.
My heart is with Him on His Throne,
And ill can brook delay;
Each moment listening for the voice,
‘Make haste and come away.’ ”**

May I not pant to be in my own sweet country with my own fair Lord, to see Him face to face? Yet, if it is not so and there is no resurrection of the dead, “we are of all men most miserable.”

III. OUR CHIEF JOY IS THE HOPE OF THE WORLD TO COME. Think of the world to come, my Brothers and Sisters, and let your joys begin to kindle into flames of delight, for Heaven offers you all that you can desire. You are, many of you, weary of toil—so weary, perhaps, that you can scarcely enjoy the morning service because of the late hours at which you have had to work at night.

Ah, there is a land of rest—of *perfect* rest—where the sweat of labor no more bedews the worker’s brow and fatigue is forever banished. To those who are weary and spent, the word “rest” is full of Heaven. Oh, happy truth, there remains a rest for the people of God! “They rest from their labors and their works do follow them.” Others of you are always in the field of battle. You are so tempted within and so molested by foes without that you have little or no peace. I know where your hope lies. It lies in the victory—when the banner shall be waved aloft and the sword shall be sheathed and you shall hear your Captain say, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have fought a good fight. You have finished your course—from now on wear the crown of life which fades not away.”

Some of you are tossed about with many troubles. You go from care to care, from loss to loss—it seems to you as if all God’s waves and billows had gone over you. But you shall soon arrive at the land of happiness where you shall bathe your weary soul in seas of heavenly rest. You shall have no poverty soon! No mud hovel, no rags, nor hunger. “In My Father’s house are many mansions,” and there shall *you* dwell, satisfied with favor and full of every blessing. You have had bereavement after bereavement—the wife has been carried to the tomb, the children have followed—father and mother are gone and you have few left to love you here.

But you are going to the land where graves are unknown things! Where they never see a shroud and the sound of the mattock and the spade are never heard. You are going to your Father’s House in the land of the immortal, in the country of the hereafter, in the home of the blessed, in the habitation of God Most High, in the Jerusalem which is above, the mother of us all! Is not this your best joy—that you are not to be *here* forever, that

you are not to dwell eternally in this wilderness—but shall soon inherit Canaan?

With all God’s people their worst grief is sin. I would not care for any sorrow if I could live without sinning. Oh, if I were rid of the appetites of the flesh and the lusts and the desires which continually go astray, I would be satisfied to lie in a dungeon and rot there—so as to be delivered from the corruption of sin. Well, Brothers and Sisters, we shall soon attain unto perfection. The body of this death will die with this body. There is no temptation in Heaven, for the dog of Hell can never cross the stream of death! There are no corruptions there, for they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. There shall by no means enter into that kingdom anything which defiles.

I think as I hear the joyous song of the glorified this morning, as I catch floating down from Heaven the sound of that music which is like many waters and like the great thunder, and as I hear the harmony of those notes which are sweet as harpers harping with their harps, my soul desires to stretch her wings and fly straight to yonder worlds of joy! I know it is so with you, my Brethren in the tribulation of Christ—as you wipe the sweat of your brow, is not this the comfort—there is rest for the people of God?

As you stand out against temptation and suffer for Christ’s sake, is not this your comfort—“If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him”? When you are slandered and despised by men, is not this your hope—“He will remember me when He comes into His kingdom. I shall sit upon His Throne, even as He has overcome and sits down upon His Father’s Throne”?

Oh, yes, this is the music to which Christians dance! This is the wine which makes their hearts glad! This is the banquet at which they feast. There is another and a better land and we, though we sleep with the clods of the valley, shall in our flesh see God when our Redeemer shall stand in the latter days upon the earth. I think you catch my drift—we are not of all men most miserable. Apart from the future hope we should be, for our hope in Christ for the future is the mainstay of our joy.

IV. Now, dear Friends, this brings me to a practical observation in the fourth place—**THUS THE FUTURE OPERATES UPON THE PRESENT.** I had some time ago a conversation with a very eminent man whose fame is familiar to you all, but whose name I do not feel justified in mentioning. He was once a professed Believer but is now full of skepticism. He said to me in the course of our argument, “Why, how foolish you are and all the company of preachers! You tell people to think about the next world, when the best thing they could do would be to behave themselves as well as they can in this!”

I granted the truth of the observation. It would be very unwise to make people neglect the present, for it is of exceedingly great importance. But I went on to show him that the very best method to make people attend to the present was by impressing them with high and noble motives with regard to the *future*. The potent force of the world to come supplies us, through the Holy Spirit, with force for the proper accomplishment of the

duties of this life. Here is a man who has a machine for the manufacture of hardware. He needs steam power to work this machine. An engineer puts up a steam engine in a shed at some considerable distance.

“Well,” says the other, “I asked you to bring steam power here, to operate upon my machine. “That is precisely,” says he, “what I have done. I put the steam engine there. You have but to connect it by a band and your machine works as fast as you like. It is not necessary that I should put the boiler and the fire and the engine close to the work, just under your nose—only connect the two and the one will operate upon the other.” So God has been pleased to make our hopes of the future a great engine wherewith the Christian man may work the ordinary machine of everyday life, for the band of faith connects the two and makes all the wheels of ordinary life revolve with rapidity and regularity. To speak against preaching the future as though it would make people neglect the present is absurd!

It is as though somebody should say, “There, take away the moon and blot out the sun. What is the use of them—they are not in this world?” Precisely so, but take away the moon and you have removed the tides and the sea becomes a stagnant, putrid pool. Then take away the sun—it is not in the world—take it away and light and heat and life—everything is gone! What the sun and moon are to this natural world, the hope of the future is to the Christian in this world. It is his light—he looks upon all things in that light, and sees them truly. It is his heat. It gives him zeal and energy. It is his very life—his Christianity, his virtue would expire if it were not for the hope of the world to come.

Do you believe, my Brethren, that Apostles and martyrs would ever have sacrificed their lives for Truth’s sake if they had not looked for a hereafter? In the heat of excitement the soldier may die for honor, but to die in tortures and mockeries in cold blood needs a hope beyond the grave! Would yon poor man go toiling on year after year, refusing to sacrifice his conscience for gain? Would yon poor needle-girl refuse to become the slave of lust if she did not see something brighter than earth can picture to her as the reward of sin? O my Brothers and Sisters, the most practical thing in all the world is the hope of the world to come.

And you see the text teaches this, for it is just this which keeps us from being miserable. And to keep a man from being miserable, let me say, is to do a great thing for him! For a miserable Christian—what is the use of him? Keep him in a cupboard where nobody can see him! Nurse him in the hospital, for he is of no use in the field of labor. Build a monastery and put all miserable Christians in it—and there let them meditate on mercy till they learn to smile—for really, there is no other use for them in the world!

But the man who has a hope of the next world goes about his work strong, for the joy of the Lord is our strength. He goes against temptation mighty, for the hope of the next world repels the fiery darts of the Adversary. He can labor without present reward, for he looks for a reward in the world to come. He can suffer rebuke and can afford to die a slandered man because he knows that God will avenge His own elect who cry day and night unto Him. Through the Spirit of God the hope of another world

is the most potent force for the product of virtue. It is a fountain of joy. It is the very channel of usefulness. It is to the Christian what food is to the vital force in the animal frame. Let it be said of any of us that we are dreaming about the future and forgetting the present, but let the future sanctify the present to highest uses.

I fear our prophetic Brethren err here. They are reading continually about the last vials, the seventy weeks of Daniel and a number of other mysteries. I wish they would set to work, instead of speculating so much, or speculate even more if they will, but turn their prophecies to present practical account. Prophetic speculations too often lead men away from present urgent duty and especially from contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. But a hope of the world to come is, I think, the best practical power which a Christian can have.

V. And now, to conclude, this will let us see very clearly WHAT OUR FUTURE IS TO BE. There are some persons here to whom my text has nothing whatever to say. Suppose there were no hereafter, would they be more miserable? Why, no. They would be more happy. If anybody could prove to them that death is an eternal sleep, it would be the greatest consolation that they could possibly receive. If it could be shown to a demonstration that as soon as people die they rot in the grave and there is an end of them—why some of you could go to bed at night comfortable! Your conscience would never disturb you, you would be molested by none of those terrible fears which now haunt you.

Do you see, then, this proves that you are not a Christian? This proves as plainly as twice two make four that you are no Believer in Christ. For if you were, the taking away of a hereafter would make you miserable. Since it would not tend to make you happy to believe in a future state, this proves that you are no Believer in Christ. Well, then, what have I to say to you? Why just this—that in the world to come, *you* will be, of all men, most miserable.

“What will become of you?” said an infidel once to a Christian man, “supposing there should be no Heaven?” “Well,” said he, “I like to have two strings to my bow. If there is no hereafter I am as well off as you are. If there is I am infinitely better off. But where are you? Where are you?” Why then, we must read this text in the future—“If in this life there is, indeed, a hope of a life to come, then you shall be in the next life of all men most miserable.”

Do you see where you will be? Your soul goes before the great Judge and receives its condemnation and begins its Hell! The trumpet rings! Heaven and earth are astonished. The grave heaves—yonder slab of marble is lifted up, and up you rise in that very flesh and blood in which you sinned and there you stand in the midst of a terrified multitude, all gathered to their doom. The Judge has come! The great assize has commenced. There on the Great White Throne sits the Savior who once said, “Come unto Me, you weary and I will give you rest,” but now He sits there as a Judge and opens with stern hand the terrible volume.

Page after page He reads and as He reads He gives the signal, “Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire,” and the angels bind up the tares in

bundles to burn them. There stand you and you know your doom! You already begin to feel it. You cry to the lofty Alps to fall upon you and conceal you. “O mountains, can you not find in your rocky bowels some friendly cavern where I may be hidden from the face of Him who sits upon the Throne?” In terrible silence the mountains refuse your petition and the rocks reject your cry. You would plunge into the sea, but it is licked up with tongues of fire! You would gladly make your bed even in Hell if you could escape from those dreadful eyes, but you cannot!

And now your turn is come. That page is turned over which records your history. The Savior reads with a voice of thunder and with eyes of lightning. He reads and as He waves His hand you are cast away from hope. You shall then know what it is to be, of all men, most miserable! You had your pleasure! You had your giddy hours! You had your mirthful moments! You despised Christ and you would not turn at His rebuke—you would not have Him to reign over you! You lived His adversary! You died unreconciled and now where are you? Now, what will you do, you who forget God, in that day when He shall tear you in pieces and there shall be none to deliver you?

In the name of my Lord and Master I beg you, fly away to Christ for refuge! “He that believes in Him shall be saved.” To believe is to trust. And whoever this morning is enabled by faith to cast Himself upon Christ need not fear to live, nor fear to die! You shall not be miserable here! You shall be thrice blessed hereafter if you trust my Lord—

***“Come, guilty souls and flee away
To Christ and heal your wounds!
This is the welcome Gospel-day
Wherein free Grace abounds.”***

O that you would be wise and consider your latter end! O that you would reflect that this life is but a span and the life to come lasts forever! Do not, I pray you, fling away eternity! Play not the fool with such solemn things as these, but in serious earnestness lay hold upon eternal life. Look to the bleeding Savior! See there His five wounds and His face bedewed with bloody sweat? Trust Him! Trust Him and you are saved!

The moment that you trust Him your sins are gone. His righteousness is yours! You are saved on the spot and you shall be saved when He comes in His kingdom to raise the dead from their graves. O that the Lord might lead us all to rest on Jesus, now and forever. Amen.

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RESURRECTION—CHRIST

THE FIRST FRUITS

NO. 445

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 20, 1862,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“But now is Christ risen from the dead and become
the first fruits of them that slept.”
1 Corinthians 15:20.*

THE fact of Christ's resurrection is exceedingly well attested. It was necessary that it should be beyond dispute, since it lies at the very basis of our holy faith. It is consoling to think that it is so. For thus our foundation stands most secure. Our Lord was careful to show Himself after His resurrection to those who, having known Him before His decease, would be able to answer for the identity of His Person. Had He merely showed Himself to strangers who had not known Him before, they might have been able to say that they had seen such an one, but they could not have affirmed that He was the same person who had been buried.

But showing Himself to men like Thomas, and bidding them put their fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust their hand into His side, He gave to men the most absolute proofs of His resurrection and received from the most competent witnesses the most assured evidence that no deception had been practiced. “Handle Me and see that it is I, Myself,” was a challenge of identity all the more conclusive because it was addressed to the men who had known Him intimately during the whole period of His ministry.

The witnesses were men who had nothing to gain by giving their evidence, but everything to lose—they were unlearned men, utterly unfitted to found or promulgate an impostor. Their evidence was so clearly borne out by the absence of the Body of Christ from the tomb that it was found necessary to invent an impossible story in order to account for that absence. The eye-witnesses were just the right men, such as prudence would select if we had now to hand down such a transaction to future faith and history. Our Lord, to put the matter beyond controversy, took care to appear many times and to numerous companies.

Our Apostle gives a summary of those appearances which had most fully come under his own notice. “He was seen of Cephas, then of the

twelve: after that, He was seen of above five hundred Brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present but some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James. Then of all the Apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time” (1 Cor. 15:5-8). From the Evangelistic reports we are led to believe that Christ appeared no less than twelve times to His disciples. For some of these instances which the Apostle Paul mentions under one head, may include two or three appearances.

As, for instance, “then of the twelve” may denote His two visits to the Apostles. For you remember He first appeared to them when Thomas was absent and afterwards when Thomas was present. Isaac Ambrose gives a summary of these appearances to this effect. He showed himself to Mary Magdalene by herself, then to all the Marys, next to Simon Peter, alone, afterwards to the two disciples journeying to Emmaus. To the ten Apostles when the doors were shut. To all the disciples when Thomas was with them. To Peter, John and others while fishing in the lake of Tiberias.

To five hundred Brethren at once. To James, the Lord’s brother. To the eleven disciples in Galilee. To all the Apostles and disciples at Olivet before His ascension. And lastly to the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus. There may even have been more than these, for we have no proof that all His appearances are on record. Enough, however, we have, and more would answer no useful end.

So clear is the evidence of Christ’s resurrection, that when Gilbert West—a celebrated infidel—selected this subject as the point of attack, sitting down to weigh the evidence and to digest the whole matter, although filled with prejudice, he was so startled with the abundant witness to the truth of this fact, that he expressed himself a convert and has left as a heritage for coming generations a most valuable treatise, entitled, “Observations on the Resurrection of Christ.” He laid down certain laws of evidence to begin with, and then went to the matter as though he had been a lawyer examining the *pros* and *cons* of any matter in dispute. And this, which is the fundamental doctrine of our faith, seemed to him so exceedingly clear that he renounced his unbelief and became a professor of Christianity!

Does it not strike you that very many events of the greatest importance recorded in history and commonly believed, could not in the nature of things have been witnessed by one-tenth as many as the resurrection of Christ? The signing of famous treaties affecting nations—the births of princes—the remarks of cabinet ministers—the projects of conspirators—and the deeds of assassins—any and all of these have been made turning points in history, and are never questioned as facts. And yet few could

have been present to witness them. I venture to assert that even the most recent political event, which has caused so much sorrow to our whole nation—the death of the lamented Prince Albert—had not nearly so many witnesses as the resurrection of Christ.

If it came to a matter of dispute, it were far easier to prove that Christ is risen, than to prove that the Prince is dead. If it came to the counting of the witnesses who saw the Prince die and could attest the identity of the body now resting in the royal vault with that which they saw fever-stricken in the bed-chamber—it strikes me they would turn out to be far fewer than those who saw the Lord after He had risen and were persuaded that it was Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified and had burst the bonds of death. If this fact is to be denied, there is an end to all witness and we say deliberately what David said in haste—“All men are liars.”

And from this day forth every man must become so skeptical of his neighbor, that he will never believe anything which he has not himself seen. The next step will be to doubt the evidence of his own senses. To what further follies men may then rush, I will not venture to predict! We believe that the very best attested fact in all history is the resurrection of Christ. Historical doubts concerning the existence of Napoleon Bonaparte, or the stabbing of Julius Caesar, or the Norman Conquest, would be quite as reasonable as doubts concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

None of these matters have such witnesses as those who testify of Him—witnesses who were manifestly truthful, since they suffered for their testimony and most of them died ignominious and painful deaths as the results of their belief. We have more and better evidence for this fact than for anything else which is written in history, either sacred or profane. Oh, how should we rejoice, we who hang our salvation wholly upon Christ, that beyond a doubt it is established that, “now is Christ risen from the dead.”

But you may ask the question at the outset, “Why is it that the resurrection of Christ is of so much importance?” Upon it we have said that the whole system of Christianity rests. For, “If Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain. You are yet in your sins” (1 Cor. 15:14, 17). The *Divinity* of Christ finds its surest proof in His resurrection, since the Apostle tells us in the first chapter of Romans, at the fourth verse, that Christ was, “Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

It would not be unreasonable to doubt His Deity if He had not risen. Moreover, Christ’s *sovereignty* also depends upon His resurrection for

Scripture affirms—“To this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that He might be Lord, both of the dead and living” (Rom. 14:9). Again, *our justification*, that choice blessing of the Covenant, hangs upon Christ’s resurrection. “He was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:25). No, more—our very *regeneration* depends upon His resurrection, for Peter, speaking by the Holy Spirit, exclaims, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

And most certainly our *ultimate resurrection* rests here. For, “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwells in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11). If Christ is not risen, then shall we not rise. But if He is risen, then they who are asleep in Christ have not perished, but in their flesh shall surely behold their God. It would not be difficult to enlarge this catalog. The fact is that the silver thread of resurrection runs through all the blessings, from regeneration onward to our eternal glory, and binds them together.

It is time to pass on and come more fully to the text. “But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.” Let me draw your attention, first of all, to *the pictures here given of the death of the saints*. Further, we shall observe *the singular relationship which exists between Christ’s resurrection and the resurrection of the saints*. And before we leave the subject, we shall *suggest certain practical considerations arising from the doctrine before us*.

I. First of all, then, THE TEXT GIVES A VIEW OF DEATH VERY COMMON IN SCRIPTURE, BUT NOT SUFFICIENTLY ACCEPTED AMONG US.

The representations of the text, I take it, are twofold. Death is here compared to a sleep—“The first fruits of them that *slept*.” But moreover, you will plainly perceive it is compared also to a sowing. For Christ is pictured as being “*the first fruits*.” Now, to a harvest there must have been a sowing. If the resurrection of Christ is the first fruits, then the resurrection of the elect must be looked upon as a harvest, and death would, therefore, be symbolized by a sowing.

1. First, then, we have before us the picture so commonly employed in Scripture of *death as a sleep*. We must not make a mistake by imagining that *the soul sleeps*. Such a heresy was once received by a large number of persons—it has long ago been rejected as being inconsistent—as well as with natural as with revealed religion. The soul undergoes no purgato-

rial purification or preparative slumber in the limbo of the fathers. Beyond a doubt, “Today shall you be with Me in Paradise,” is the whisper of Christ to every dying saint. They sleep in Jesus but their souls sleep not. They are before the Throne of God, praising Him day and night in His temple—singing hallelujahs to Him who has washed them from their sins in His blood. It is the *body* that sleeps in its lonely bed of earth, beneath the coverlet of grass, with the cold clay for its pillow.

But what is this sleep? We all know that the surface idea connected with sleep is that of *resting*. That is doubtless just the thought which the Spirit of God would convey to us. The eyes of the sleeper ache no more with the glare of light or with the rush of tears. His ears are teased no more with the noise of strife or the murmur of suffering. His hands are no more weakened by long protracted effort and painful weariness. His feet are no more blistered with journeying to and fro along a rugged road. There is rest for aching heads, and strained muscles, and overtaxed nerves, and loosened joints, and panting lungs and heavy hearts, in the sweet repose of sleep.

On yonder couch, however hard, the laborer shakes off his toil, the merchant his care, the thinker his difficulties and the sufferer his pains. Sleep makes each night a Sunday for the day. Sleep shuts, too, the door of the soul and bids all intruders tarry for awhile, that the royal life within may enter into its summer garden of ease. From the sweat of his brow man is delivered by sleep, and the thorn and thistle of the curse cease to tear his flesh. So is it with the body while it sleeps in the tomb. The weary are at rest. The servant is as much at ease as his lord. The galley slave no more tugs the oar, the slave forgets the whip.

No more the worker leans on his spade, no more the thinker props his pensive head. The wheel stands still, the shuttle is not in motion, the hand which turned the one and the fingers which threw the other are quiet. The body and all its members find the tomb a couch of sufficient length and breadth. The coffin shuts out all disturbance, labor, or effort. The toil-worn Believer quietly sleeps, as does the child weary with its play, when it shuts its eyes and slumbers on its mother’s breast. Oh, happy they who die in the Lord! They rest from their labors and their works do follow them. We would not shun toil, for though it is in itself a curse, it is, when sanctified, a blessing.

Yet toil for toil’s sake we would not choose, and when *God’s* work is done we are too glad to think that *our* work is done, too. The mighty Husbandman, when we have fulfilled our day, shall bid His servants rest upon the best of beds, for the clods of the valley shall be sweet to them. Their repose shall never be broken until He shall rouse them up to give

them their full reward. Guarded by angels, curtained by eternal mysteries, resting on the lap of mother earth, you shall sleep on—you inheritors of glory—till the fullness of time shall bring you the fullness of redemption.

Moreover, we look upon sleep as a season of forgetfulness and in this, too, it images death. “Their memory and their love are lost.” They are “alike, unknowing and unknown.” Their sons come to honor and they know it not. Or their seed degenerates but it causes them no grief. Let armies march over their tombs—their tramp shall disturb them no more than the crawling of a worm. Let the vault of Heaven blaze with the flaming bolts of God, let the earth shake at the awful voice of the thunder, let the cedars be broken, let the rocks be shivered, let the sea roar—there, under their green hillocks they slumber as peacefully as though it were a soft summer evening when the hum of a bee or the flitting of a fly were the only sounds. The dead may be remembered by their kinsfolk. But they remember not. They have forgotten the joys and the sorrows, the peace and the strife, the defeats and the victories of time.

The *soul* forgets not. And we have no reason to believe that the glorified are ignorant of what is going on below. We have far more presumptive evidence that they “know even as they are known”—that they still have communion with the living Church on earth and that the Church victorious is not sundered from the Church militant in point of knowledge. But as to their bodies, what do their bodies know? What does the human organism now understand? Take up the skull—see if there is memory there. Look at the place where once the heart was, and see if there is any trace of present emotion. Gather into your hands the bones—see if they are still obedient to muscles which could be moved at will as passing events might affect the mind. Try to discover any live coals amid your heap of ashes—a heart still quivering with delight, or an eye moistened by a sorrow. These dry bones are forgetful, indeed—steeped in forgetfulness, these decayed skeletons know nothing.

But yet once more—sleep *has its intent and purpose*. We do not close our eyes without aim and open them again without benefit. The old cauldron of Seder has its full meaning in sleep. In the old tradition we read of Medea the enchantress casting the limbs of old men into her cauldron that they might come forth young again. Sleep does all this in its fashion. We are old enough oftentimes, after hours of thinking and of labor—but we sleep and we wake refreshed—as though we were beginning a new life. The sun begins a new day when he rises from the eastern sea. And we begin a new life of renewed vigor when we rise from the couch of quiet rest.

“Tired nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep.”

Now, such is the effect of the body’s visit to its grave. The righteous are put into their graves all weary and worn. But such they will not rise. They go there with the furrowed brow, the hollowed cheek, the wrinkled skin—they shall wake up in beauty and glory. The old man totters there, leaning on his staff. The palsied comes there, trembling all the way. The halt, the lame, the withered, the blind journey in doleful pilgrimage to the common dormitory. But they shall not rise decrepit, deformed, or diseased, but strong, vigorous, active, glorious, immortal! The shriveled seed, so destitute of form and comeliness, shall rise from the dust a beautiful flower.

A green blade all fresh and young shall spring up where before there was the dried decayed grain. Well said the holy martyrs, when their limbs were being torn away—“We cheerfully resign these members to the God who gave them to us.” Our members are not ours to hold or lose, no torment can rob us of them in reality. For when we wake up in Christ’s likeness it will not be as halt or lame, but full of strength and vigor—more comely than earthly sons of men. The winter of the grave shall soon give way to the spring of resurrection and the summer of glory. Blessed is death, since it answers all the ends of medicine to this mortal frame and through the Divine power disrobes us of the leprous rags of flesh, to clothe us with the wedding garment of incorruption!

One reflection must not escape our notice—this is not a dreamy slumber. The sleep of some men is much more wearying than refreshing. Unbidden thoughts steal away the couch from under them and throw them on the rack. The involuntary action of the mind prevents us at times from taking rest in sleep. But not so with the dear departed. In that sleep of death no dreams can come, nor do they feel a terror in undressing for that last bed, for no phantoms, visions, or terrors by night shall vex their peace. Their bodies rest in the most profound slumber. It is sleep, indeed, such as the Lord gives, for, “So He gives His Beloved sleep.”

Nor ought we ever to look upon it as a hopeless sleep. We have seen persons sleep who have been long emaciated by sickness, and we have said, “That eye will never open again. He will sleep himself from time into eternity.” We have felt that the sleep was the prelude of the eternal slumber, and might probably melt into it. But it is not so here. They sleep a healthy sleep—not thrown over them by death-bearing drugs, nor fell disease. They sleep to wake and not to die the second death. They sleep to wake—to wake in joyous fellowship, when the Redeemer stands in the latter day upon the earth. Sleep on, then, you servants of the Lord, for if

you sleep, you shall do well. Indeed, concerning these departed ones we may well speak of taking rest in sleep.

Dear Friends, ought not this view of death as a sleep, prevent our looking upon it in so repulsive a light? I know we like not to look at dead bodies—we are afraid to touch them. Some foolish people do not like to remain in the same house with a corpse, at least alone, or at night. There is a certain horror connected with the ruins of our earthly house. Did you ever feel horror at a sleeping child? Do you feel any sort of dread of your sleeping mother, or your slumbering husband or wife? Have you felt anything dreadful to draw back the curtain of the little cot and to gaze upon the sweet young face when the eyes are closed in happy sleep? Oh, why, then, should you think it dreadful to look upon the sleeping Believer's brow?

True, there are marks of decay which are not pleasant to nature. But are they not the footprints of the retreating enemy and signs that the corruptible is passing away to make room for incorruption? Do not those very marks which mar the form indicate that the ragged smoke-blackened tent of Kedar is being pulled down so that the curtains of Solomon may glitter in their place, and that the soul may dwell there as in a fair pavilion? Oh, look not upon the departed as though they were dead, but speak of them as Christ did of His friend—"Our friend Lazarus sleeps." Let the ears of your faith hear the Master say, "And I come that I may awake him out of his sleep." Let not the grave seem more abhorrent to you than your bedchamber.

Let there be, by no means, such a view of the death of the redeemed as to wish them back again. Would you wish, when your friend has long been in excruciating pain, and at last falls into sleep, to shake him in his bed, to awake him, to tell him some idle tale? No. You have been watching for hours and you have said, "Oh, that he could have a little sleep! Doctor! Can you not give some sleep to this poor tortured frame?" And at last you have said, "Thank God, his eyelids drop. Speak softly. Tread lightly. He sleeps!" And you have been afraid even to let your foot fall upon the ground, lest you should awaken him.

And what? After all the pain, the suffering, the temptation and the trial of your friends, do you wish to awake them? Rather I think you should say, "I charge you, O you daughters of Jerusalem, that you ask not that he should be stirred up or awakened until Jesus please. Let him sleep on while the night lasts, and then, at the trump of the archangel, and the voice of God, he shall wake in the morning when the sun has risen upon the earth!"

2. The text affords us, however, a second figure. *Death is compared to a sowing*. The black mold has been plowed, certain dry-looking seeds are put into a basket and the husbandman takes his walk and with both hands he scatters right and left, broad-cast, his handfuls of seeds. Where have they gone? They have fallen into the crevices of the earth. The clods will soon be raked over them and they will disappear. So is it with us. Our bodies, here, are like those dry grains of wheat. There is nothing very comely in a grain of wheat, nor yet in our bodies. Indeed, Paul calls them “these vile bodies.” Death comes—we call him a *reaper*—mark, I call him a sower—and he takes these bodies of ours and sows us broad-cast in the ground.

Go to the cemetery and see his fields. Mark how thickly he has sown his furrows! How closely he has drilled the rows! What headlands has he left! We say, they are there *buried*. I say, they are *sown*. They are dead, say we—No, say I—they are put into the earth—but they shall not abide there forever. In some sense these holy bodies of the just are dead, “For that which you sow is not quickened except it die,” but it is not a death unto death. It is, rather, a death leading unto *life*. That molding body is no more dead than yonder decaying seed which you have just now disturbed in its bed of earth. It shall soon spring up again and you shall see a harvest.

We do lose sight, it is true, of those who have gone from us, for there must be a burial, how else can the seed grow? Truly it is never a pleasant sound, that rattle of the clay upon the coffin lid. “Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes,” Nor to the farmer, for it’s own sake, would it be a very pleasant thing to put his grain into the dull cold earth. Yet I know of no farmer who ever wept when he sowed his seed. We have not heard the husbandmen groan and sigh when they scatter their baskets of seed corn. Rather, we have heard them cheerily singing the song of mirth and have heard them anticipate the reaper’s joy, when they have trod the furrows.

Have you seen them robed in black, or wearing the dull weeds of mourning, while they tread the brown ridges of the fertile earth? We grant you, that in itself considered, it were no wise or gladsome thing to bury precious grain amid dead clods of earth. But viewed in the light of harvest, since there must be a burial, and after the burial a rottenness and a decay—both of these lose all traces of sorrow and become prophets of joy. The body must become worms’ meat. It must crumble back to its former elements, for “dust you are and unto dust shall you return,” but this is no more our sorrow, for—“In Christ shall all be made alive.”

Nor will we even mourn because of the stench and rottenness of death. The life germ in the grain of wheat must begin to feed on the food laid up in store for it—a kind of decay must seem to take place. But I know no farmer ever weeps because the seed which he has put into the ground has swollen and lost its former size and shape. He never mourns if he is told the seed he has put into the ground is undergoing the death that is necessary for its future growth. No, he rejoices in patient hope. Therefore, you Worms, should you force me to weep? And why, Corruption, should you make me sigh? Rather will I call you my Brothers and my Mother, for your kindly glooms are but part of the road to immortality.

After sowing and decay, comes a springing up and the farmer soon perceives, in a few short weeks, the little green blade—the son of the buried life. So with the dead. There is soon to come, and how soon we do not know—the springing up. We shall thus perceive that they were not lost but only committed to the grave, in readiness for “the redemption”—put there that our souls might, when reunited, receive them in a better and nobler form.

Dear Friends, if such is death—if it is but a sowing, let us have done with all faithless, hopeless, graceless sorrow. “The granary is empty,” says the farmer. Yes, but he does not sigh over it. For the seed is put into the ground, in order that the granary may be filled again. “Our family circle has been broken,” you say. Yes, but only broken that it may be formed again. You have lost a dear friend—yes, but only lost that friend that you may find him again, and find more than you lost. They are not lost. They are sown. And as “light is sown for the righteous,” so are the righteous sown for light. The stars are setting here to rise in other skies to set no more. We are quenched like torches only to be lit once more with all the brilliance of the sun.

II. We will not tarry longer on this point but rapidly carry you to the second—THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AND THAT OF BELIEVERS.

The text tells us that Christ is “the first fruits of them that slept.” Some professors take very great delight in the hope that they may be “alive and remain,” at the coming of Christ and so may never die. I confess I greatly rejoice in the hope that Christ will come. But the prospect of never dying has no sort of charms for me, for methinks those who never die lose a great privilege. At least, to our comprehension it seems so, for Christ is “the first fruits of them *that slept*.” Oh, then, it is a blessed thing to sleep, that Christ may be to us in the relationship of first fruits. They who never die can hardly know so much of fellowship with Christ in His death as those who fall asleep in Jesus.

Whereas you and I, who feel the pin's prick of the dart of death, will be able to say in eternity, "I, too, passed through the grave. He was with me passing through the valley of the shadow of death. I, in my own proper person, knew a death and a resurrection, too, even as did my Lord, which you who never died can only understand by hearsay and report." Oh, happy they who die! They that are alive and remain shall not precede them in any privilege or honor.

But what is meant by Christ being "the first fruits?" You will remember that there was a feast of the Jews called the feast of first fruits. This was when the first sheaf was brought out from the harvest as a token of the whole. It was, first of all, heaved upward as a heave-offering, and then waved to and fro as a wave-offering. It was, thus, dedicated to God in testimony of the gratitude of the holders of the soil for the harvest which the Lord had given. Now, this happened on the first day of the week. You will remember that the Passover was celebrated first. Then came a Sabbath Day. Then after that came the feast of first fruits.

So Christ died on the Passover. He, as the slaughtered Lamb of God, of God's Passover, died exactly at the Passover season. The next day was the Sabbatical rest—Christ's Body, therefore, tarried in the grave. Then early in the morning of the first day, before it was yet light, while yet the sun was rising upon the earth, Christ rose—on the morning of the feast of the first fruits. And so He is revealed as the blessed wave sheaf preceding and consecrating the whole harvest.

But the uninstructed Believer asks me to explain at greater length. Beloved, remember then, *that Christ was the first that rose from the dead in order of time*. You will mention to me Enoch and Elijah. We answer that they never died but were translated that they should not see death. You will remind me of the widow's son who was raised by Elijah and the young man restored by Elisha. Yes, but these are not cases in point. They were raised but they died again. All the instances in the Old Testament are only temporary restorations and so also those in the New. In no instance, save in that of Lazarus, were any of them buried at all, so that none of them came out of their graves.

And even in the case of Lazarus, he lived but to die. He had a furlough from the tomb. But at the expiration of the due time, his body was yielded to the appointed keeper. Christ was the first who really rose no more to die. He leads the vanguard through the dark, and his brow first salutes the light of the plains of Heaven beyond the gloom. Men admire the man who is first to discover a new country. The name of Columbus shall ring in the ears of ages, because he first crossed the stormy sea to win another world. The name of the man who climbed the mountains

and first saw the broad Pacific with exceeding great joy, is well remembered. Oh, then, sing it in songs, sound it with voice of trumpet to the ends of the earth—Christ is the first who returned from the jaws of death to tell of immortality and light!

He is also *first in point of cause*. For as He comes back from the grave, He brings all His followers behind Him in one glorious train. We read of Hercules in the old mythology descending into Hades and bringing up his friend. Verily went Christ there and He gave no sop to Cerberus but cut off his head. Like a sun He suddenly flashed upon the night of death and scattered its darkness. Like Samson in Gaza, He tore up the gates of death and carried away the bars of the grave. Like David, He delivered His flock out of the jaws of the lion and took the monster by the beard and slew him.

Like Abraham, He resumed triumphantly from the slaughter of the kings. Like Moses, He led His Israel out of the house of bondage. With ten thousand times ten thousand He came forth with a high hand and an outstretched arm. Who is this that comes up from the land of darkness—from the gates of the grave? Who is this that drags behind Him captive the grim prince of the realms of death shade? Who is this, so strong, so mighty, that adamantine walls give way before Him and gates of brass are broken in two?

It is He! It is He! It is the same conqueror who came from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah. The victory on the Cross is succeeded by a victory in the tomb. He who won Heaven for earth when He died, wins Heaven for the dead when He descends into the grave. Sound His praises! Proclaim His victories! Let Heaven itself take up the strain, He has “led captivity captive,” rifled the grave and robbed death of his sting. He is the death of death and Hell’s destruction.

But then, again, He is first *in point of pledge*. The first fruits were a pledge of the harvest. “From where, O husbandman, from where have you brought yonder sheaf?” “I gathered it,” says he, “from the fields that are waving with plenty.” “Verily,” says the priest, “the harvest is plenteous this year, and full, and many are the ears, for this sheaf bears good witness.” From where, O power Divine, did You bring this glorious sheaf, this Body of our Lord, so bright and glorious? From where did You bring it, O Spirit of the Lord? Is there a harvest of many shocks of corn such as this? “Yes, verily,” says the Teacher; “this is but One among many, the First Born among many Brethren.”

We know right well that there must be a glorious harvest of resurrection forms and immortal bodies, since Jesus Christ, clothed in immortality and light, walks among the sons of men, the pledge of all the rest.

He was, again, the first fruits, not only as a pledge but as the *representative* of the whole. When the first fruit sheaf had been waved before God, it was considered that all the harvest had been brought into the sanctuary. It was all dedicated, all consecrated, from that very hour. So when Christ rose as a heave offering from the sepulcher and when He went about among the people as a wave offering, moving among His disciples, He consecrated the whole harvest. All the righteous dead were virtually risen in Him. All the chosen members of His body had a resurrection when their Head appeared as “risen indeed.” And moreover, they were all dedicated and consecrated to God, by His dedication as the first fruits to the Most High.

Triumph, you children of God, triumph in this. You are risen in Christ today! We see not the saints as yet ascended—rather, we see their bones dried in the valley, and we ask, “Can these dry bones live?” But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. And we know that He is risen, and sits at the right hand of the Father! And by faith we perceive that as our Covenant Head He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places even in Him—for He is the Head over all things to His Church, which is His Body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all. Never doubt, Believer, of your resurrection, since the second Adam was loosed from the bands of the tomb.

III. And now, lastly, we will close by noticing THE INFLUENCE OF THE WHOLE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION AND CHRIST’S CONNECTION WITH IT UPON OUR OWN SPIRITS.

First, let us look well to the *holiness of our bodies*. “Know you not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit? If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy.” We do not believe in consecrated Churches. We think it altogether absurd to talk of holy bricks and mortar. But we do know by Scriptural authority that the *body* is holy—that the *body* of the saint is as really holy as men pretend that Churches and temples may be.

Now, Brethren, if our eyes look upon vanity, we have defiled the windows of God’s house. If our tongues speak that which is evil, have we not desecrated the gates of the temple of the Lord? Let us see to it that our feet carry us nowhere but where our Master can go with us, lest the pillars of our house become our destruction, like the pillars of the Philistine temple of old. Let us mind that our hands be outstretched for nothing but that which is pure and lovely, lest like Belshazzar we profane the vessels of the Lord’s temple.

They who pamper the body, they who look to its adornment, they who regard its physical health more than its moral purity, forget the higher end of their being. For what is beauty after all? What is the comeliness which human skill can give? See that skull? “Go, take that to my lady’s chamber and tell her, though she paint herself an inch thick, to that complexion must she come at last.” And say to all who think so much of comeliness and goodness—That deadly brown which worms and earth shall bring upon us—that is the natural complexion of man—and to that the fairest must be bronzed at last.

But there is another way of minding your complexion—by seeing that your cheeks never need be reddened with shame, that your hands are never black with evil deeds—that your flesh is not soiled by lasciviousness, or contact with that which is evil. “Will you take the members of Christ and make them members of an harlot?” says the Apostle Paul, when he bids men see to it that their bodies are chaste and pure. Know you not that your very flesh, if you are Christians, has been bought with Christ’s blood, and that precious is your very dust in His sight?

Mind you, O mind you, that the slime of the serpent come not here, and that you defile not the members of your body, lest the Lord abhor you and cast you out from His Presence, as things He cares not for, being none of His. Let us look at things in this light, and so, by the Holy Spirit, escape from sin. What? Shall these eyes that are one day to, “See the king in His beauty,” be delighted with vanity? Shall these lips that are to be tuned to melodious sonnets, “sung by flaming tongues above,” talk that which is light and frivolous and ministers not unto edification? What? Shall these fingers that are to strike the golden harps be given up to work unrighteousness with greediness?

No, as we are to be fellows with the angels and more glorious than they. And as these bodies are to be made like unto Christ’s Body, let us keep them pure, washed with clean water by His Spirit, renewed and preserved, that we go not astray unto sin.

But, secondly, another thought arises here. *Are we among those for whom Christ thus stood as first fruits?* For Christ is to rise first. And as the first fruits, “afterwards they that are Christ’s, at His coming.” Then when do the *wicked* rise? There are two resurrections. And “blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection; on such the second death has no power.” When the Lord shall come from Heaven, with the trump of the archangel, and the voice of God, then the dead in Christ shall suddenly start from their sleep and shall be offered to God as the great harvest, the great Pentecost, of which Christ’s resurrection was the first fruits.

What, then, shall become of the wicked? They shall continue rotting in their graves. The worm shall feed upon them. They shall be ashes beneath the feet of the saints. The righteous shall tread this earth, and on the scene of their conflict, enjoy a thousand years of triumph with Christ. In the latter day Christ's feet shall stand upon Mount Olivet. His people shall bow around Him, and shall reign with Him triumphant over the creature that was once subject to vanity. Beneath their feet shall be the dead bodies of their ungodly persecutors and deep down in their graves shall rot those infamous kings and princes and those careless crowds and nations who knew not Jehovah, and would not be obedient unto His Son.

They said, "Let us break His bands asunder. Let us cast His cords from us." And now where are they? "Death has dominion over them in the morning, and the righteous triumph over them, while they lie ignominiously like those who fall in battle, a portion for foxes." But what then? When the splendors of the millennial age are over, then comes the end. The king shall ascend the Judgment Seat. He who came to reign with His people, shall suddenly, sitting upon His Throne, bid His angel proclaim the last assize. Then, unwillingly shall souls tormented in Hell come back from Tophet to be reunited with their equally guilty bodies, and He who is able to destroy both body and soul in Hell, shall say, "Gather them together in bundles to burn them."

He shall pronounce their sentence, "Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire in Hell, prepared for the devil and his angels." Oh, that you and I may be among the harvest and not the vintage. There are two ingatherings mentioned, you remember, in the Revelation. The harvest is the gathering in of the righteous. They are carefully housed in God's barn. The vintage is the gathering of the wicked. They are cast into the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God, "and they are trod under foot till their blood runs forth up to the horses' bridles."

Now, how am I to know whether I belong to that portion of which Christ is the first fruits? Why, thus—If Christ rose for me and if I rose in Him, then I died in Him. Oh, Soul, do you believe that Christ died for you? Have you a part in His passion? Do you hope in His agonies? Do you rest on His Cross? If so, He that died for you rose for you, too, and you are a part of that holy lump of which Christ was the holy offering. Have you died with Christ yourself? Are you dead to the world? Do you hate the things that you did once love? Are you weaned from your old pleasures? Do you seek for something higher and better?

Ah, then, if you have died with Him, you are risen with Him. Say, now, do you desire to be one with Christ? For if you are one with Him in heart,

you shall be one with Him in all His trophies and His glories. Do you say, “No. I care not for Christ”? Soul! Soul! If you die in that mind you shall have no part in the first resurrection. But when the wicked rise, then shall you, “Awaken to shame and everlasting contempt.”

But and if you say in your heart this morning, “I believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead according to the Scriptures. I put my sole and only trust in Him. He is to me all my salvation and all my desire,” go your way. You shall “stand in your lot at the end of the days.” You shall have your portion among them that are sanctified. You shall rejoice together with Him and sit down at His marriage banquet forever. God add His own blessing, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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“HE MUST REIGN”

NO. 2940

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**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 18, 1875.**

***“For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.”
1 Corinthians 15:25.***

“HE must reign.” Here was another, “must,” which His disciples were very slow to learn. Very much of our Lord’s teaching to His Apostles was concerning the necessity that He must suffer. That doctrine seemed so strange to them that at first they could scarcely catch the idea. When they perceived that Christ really meant it, they could not bear the thought of it. One of them even began to rebuke his Lord, but He sharply stopped him. The notion that Christ must suffer could not be drilled into the Apostles—their very spirits seemed to revolt against it. And do you wonder? If you had lived with that dear and blessed Lord and had seen the perfection of His Character, the liberality of His gifts and the tenderness of His heart and if you had known, as they did, in a measure—the Glory of His Nature and the marvel of His person—could you have endured the thought that He must be despitefully used, spit upon and nailed like a felon to a cross? No, even Christ Himself might have found it difficult to get that thought into your mind. It was such a cruel, “must”—that He must die! Why, even after He *had* died and all the prophecies concerning His death had been fulfilled, it was still a bewilderment to His disciples! The two who walked to Emmaus with Christ were in a maze concerning it and He had to say to them, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered those things and to enter into His glory?”

That first, “must,” cost the people of God much before they learned it, but we know right well that the price of pardon for us was Christ’s suffering and death. We understand that there was no other way of access for us but by the Atonement—no other method by which the lost inheritance could come back except by that ransom price which was found in the pierced heart of Christ! And now there is another, “must,” which, I think, is almost as difficult for us to learn. The shadow of the Cross has fallen upon us and we live so much in its shade that it is not easy for us to catch the gleam of that necessity which comes from His Throne—“He must reign.” The Cross, too, is on our shoulder. It is not merely that we live under the *shadow* of the Cross, but the *burden* of the Cross has to be cheerfully endured from day to day. As we bear it, it is not easy for us to feel that, “He must reign.” O Brothers, when you preach and no man gives heed to your message—when you teach, but the children yield not their hearts to your Lord—when you sojourn in

Mesech and dwell in the tents of Kedar and meet with hard and cold hearts in every place that thaw not even beneath the sunbeams of the love of Jesus, you are very apt to say that it does not appear that, “He must reign.”

The long rebellion against Jehovah still continues! The dread revolt against the majesty of Heaven seems as if it will never end and we sometimes fear that the treason will last on to all eternity! It appears impossible that the Crucified Christ shall yet be the universal Conqueror, that the Man of Nazareth will yet mount His white horse and lead His conquering armies to the last charge and to the final victory and yet, as surely as it was true that He must suffer, so surely, “He must reign”! And it becomes us to open our hearts to this predestinated necessity ordained of the Most High. Jesus must reign! His defeat is not to be thought of for a moment! Delay there may be, but the victory must come! “He must reign.” Let Heaven ring with the anticipation of it! “He must reign.” Let earth resound with the prophecy of it! “He must reign.” Let Hell’s darkest cavern hear the tidings of that imperative necessity! “He must reign.” And let each Christian feel revived and quickened by the joyful sound! He who had to die must surely reign! The second necessity shall be as certainly fulfilled as was the first—“He must reign.” Let me try to ring that bell, or to sound that trumpet.

I. There is, first, A FACT WHICH IS A SORT OF PRELUDE OR ACCOMPANIMENT TO THE NECESSITY IN ITS GREATER FULFILLMENT.

The fact is that He does now reign—that is in our text. It says, “He must reign, till He has put all enemies under His feet.” *Jesus is reigning even now in Heaven.* No shame can approach Him there and no scorn can even be whispered at His feet. He reigns there with undisputed sway. It would not be possible for me to fully depict the royal state in which Emmanuel sits enthroned above, but I would like your faith to endeavor to realize it. You may even venture to call in your sanctified imagination to aid you to sketch the scene where He reigns in Glory. There is no province of the celestial domain which does not acknowledge His sway and not one individual of all the happy tribes that dwell in Glory is not glad to call Him, King! The holy angels, whom He has made to be as flames of fire, delight to do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word. All the various orders of cherubim and seraphim yield Him their loyal homage and all the angels and principalities and powers in the Heavenly places acknowledge Him as their Lord forever. His redeemed occupy the most honorable place in Heaven. Nearest to the Throne you will find the 24 elders, the representatives of the Church. And then, in an outer ring, stand the angels worshipping and adoring—and all the redeemed spirits, as well they may, since they owe their glory to His blood—call Jesus their Lord and King! He is no servant there! He washes no disciples’ feet there! He goes not from there to Pilate’s Hall to be judged! Absolute and supreme is He—King of kings, for they are all kings whom He has redeemed—and Lord of lords, for they are all lordly ones over whom He reigns! And He occupies the highest seat amidst the splendors of the celestial realm!

But do not imagine that Christ’s reign is limited to these gates of pearl and streets of shining gold. Far from it, for *Jesus reigns today on earth*. It did my ears and heart good, just now, to hear you sing, “Crown Him Lord of All.” I dared not hope that every heart here was really crowning Him, but I did believe that there were thousands who, in their inmost souls, were wishing Him all honor and glory and delightedly confessing their allegiance to Him. O Jesus, You have still on earth myriads whose highest joy is found in Your name and who find their Heaven on earth as they think of You! In Your Church You are still Lord and Master! And if there be churches that revolt against You and play the harlot, You still have Your chaste spouse and You reign over her in undisputed Sovereignty!

Nor is Christ’s Kingdom limited to the Church in Heaven and the Church on earth, for *He reigns today over all things*. “All power,” said He, “is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth.” Providence is at the disposal of the Nazarene! Let those doubt it who will, we believe that every event which transpires—political, national, social, domestic—is overruled by Him for the accomplishment of the grand designs of mercy which He has for His own elect! Just as Joseph reigned in Egypt and all had to come to him for food in the time of famine, so does Jesus reign in the courts of earth for the good of His people. His cause must prosper, for He is always at the helm! Yes, even where confusion seems to rule, He is everywhere King, putting a bit into the mouth of the tempest and riding upon the wings of the wind. Just as the seas acknowledged His Presence when He was here Incarnate, so do they acknowledge His Presence now. And just as the earth then felt His footsteps, so does she feel them now, but it is no more the weary tramp of the Son of Man, but the majestic footsteps of the Son of God! He rules everywhere. “The sea is His, and He made it: and His hands formed the dry land. In His hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is His, also.”

He reigns, too, even in Hell itself. The devils bite their iron bands in grim despair because He reigns. They tried to make this earth their own, but now they know the prowess, the strong arm and the valiant heart of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Highest and they must do His bidding! “To here shall you come, but no further,” is His command to the grim and fierce spirits—and they are compelled to submit to Him, however anxious they are to do still more mischief to the sons of man. Yes, Jesus reigns from the bottomless gulf to the heights of Heaven! Far off, where the sun now gilds the Western hills, and yonder in the East, where we shall watch for its return tomorrow morning—over all those regions Jesus reigns—

***“Far as the eagle’s pinion
Or dove’s light wing can soar.”***

He reigns today and let His people proclaim it without fear, “The Lord is King.” The fact that He is now reigning cheers our hearts—

***“Rejoice, the Lord is King!
Your Lord and King adore.
Mortals, give thanks and sing,
And triumph evermore!***

***Lift up the heart, lift up the voice,
Rejoice aloud, you saints, rejoice!***

II. But, to come still more closely to our text, we ring this bell again and call your attention to THE NECESSITY FOR CHRIST'S REIGN. “He *must* reign.” It is not merely that He shall, He can, or He may, but He *must*—“He must reign.” Let us see why He must.

Well, the first and weakest argument of all, yet one that has much force in it—*all His servants say that He shall reign*. Weak as the 12 Apostles and the immediate followers of Christ were, they said that, “He must reign,” and they meant it and they lived to make it true—and almost all the nations on the earth heard of Jesus within a century after He had been taken up to Heaven! Then came the kings of the earth and set themselves against Him. And they said that He should not reign. But the martyrs came and yielded up their lives with joy, each one singing, “He must reign.” While the amphitheatres ran with blood, other champions came into the ring, each one uttering the watchword, “He must reign.” The kings of the earth mocked at the saints of God. “What are these feeble Jews doing?” they said, just as Pharaoh might have said, “The locusts, what can they do?” But the locusts might have answered, “We are, each one of us, weak, but there are myriads of us and we will come up and cover your land, and we will eat every green thing that is left in the land!” And they did. It was very much the same with the persecuted saints of God—each individual Believer was weak, but they came by tens, by hundreds, by thousands—they came in countless shoals till the kings threw away their swords and quenched their fires in sheer despair—and they agreed that, nominally at least, Christ should reign, for His disciples would have it so.

And now, today, it becomes us not to speak proudly, but, if persecuting times should ever come again, many of those who say the least about it would be among the first to go boldly to be burned at the stake, or to submit their bodies to the torture of the rack for love of the Lord Jesus Christ! When Mutius Scaevola put his right hand into the fire to burn, he told the king that there were a thousand youths who had sworn that they would be put to death rather than that their country should fall into the king's hands—and the tyrant trembled. And there are thousands now of Christians who only need the dire necessity to rise again, and they would come forward with cheerfulness to yield their lives for their Lord, declaring that, “He must reign,” whatever might become of them. We must never let His standard fall, or even tremble in the day of battle! Forward, you sons of heroes, in the name of Him who bled and died for you! Never let there be any question in your mind whether “He must reign” or not. The sun may cease to shine and the moon forget her nightly marches, but Jesus must reign! It must be so, for His people declare it!

I said, however, that this was the weakest of reasons and there are many far stronger ones. “He must reign,” for *He is Jehovah's Heir*—the “Heir of all things.” Kings cannot always ensure the putting of their crowns upon the heads of their sons. When they die, perhaps a rebellion

breaks out and overthrows the dynasty—but what power can overturn the Divine dynasty and rob the Heir of God of His dominions?

“He must reign,” for *by Nature He is a King*. He was *born* a King! You might have seen something of Sovereignty in His eyes when He first opened them upon earth’s light. The Wise Men from the East brought gifts which showed that they recognized the royalty of the newborn Babe of Bethlehem. Every characteristic of the life of Christ is royal. He is no tyrant king. He is the people’s King, but a true King in every part of His being! There is nothing mean, or low, or selfish, about Him. Every motion of His hand is princely, as He feeds the multitudes, or heals their sicknesses. And every glance of His eyes is kingly, as He weeps over man’s sin and fall, or as He rebukes man’s transgression.

“He must reign,” for *He deserves that honor*. You cannot see Him voluntarily yielding up His soul unto death in order that He might redeem His people by His blood—you cannot hear His cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”—without feeling that if there is justice in the courts of Heaven, the death of Christ upon the Cross cannot be the end of Him! That terrible shame must be rewarded and how can it be rewarded except by the brightest crown that can possibly be conceived, or by something brighter, even, than that? Reign He must, for He was so good, so generous, so self-sacrificing, so oblivious of Himself in death! We would lose our faith in the Deity if we could lose faith in the reign of Christ as the reward of all that He suffered upon the Cross.

Besides, “He must reign,” for *who is to stop Him?* In the olden days, many tried to do so, but He defeated them all. The Prince of darkness came to Him in the wilderness and offered Him a paltry bauble in the place of His true crown, but the tempter was repulsed by the sentence, “It is written.” The Prince of darkness came again and again, but he found nothing in Christ upon which he could lay his hand and, before long, Christ will have the great adversary beneath His foot and finally bruise his head. All the evil forces upon the face of the earth cannot stand against Christ, for if, upon the accursed tree, *He defeated them in His weakness*, He will surely conquer them in the time of His strength! He trod them under His feet when He died—how much more completely shall He vanquish them, now that He is risen again? He scattered them like chaff before the wind with His dying breath—how much more shall He do it, now, in the fullness of His Resurrection Life? Rejoice, O Christians, in the fact that there is nothing that can stand against Jesus!

“He must reign,” for the best of all reasons—*the Father has decreed it*. “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” God wills it and that stands for us as a sufficient reason. And God is working it. Omnipotence is on the side of Christ. We see Him not yet at the head of His Heavenly armies, but He is there and He is even now going forth conquering and to conquer—and everything that happens is working out the decree that Christ must be King of kings, and Lord of lords!

III. Not only does Christ reign and must Christ reign, but THERE IS A PROGRESS ABOUT HIS KINGDOM. It is growing. It becomes more and more visible among the sons of men. I am not going into prophecies—I

leave them for wiser persons than I am. I am more at home in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John than in the deeps of Revelation—but this one thing I do know from the Word of the Lord, that, first of all, *“He must reign lovingly over all His elect.”* Some of them are hard to bring in, but they must come, sooner or later. Christ Himself said, “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring.” Some of them are with us now—they have long resisted Mercy’s call, but they will have to yield! Sovereign Grace has determined it, so yield they must. The Lord says, “Compel them to come in,” and come in they must, for, “He must reign.” He will not suffer one of the sheep He bought with His blood to be lost in the mountains, or one single soul that He ransomed from the enemy to abide forever in captivity. “He must reign” over them and He will! And the day shall come when He shall pass all His sheep, one by one, under the hand of Him that counts them—and they will all be there, all with the blood mark upon them as they come through the gate—and the count of the flock shall be complete, not one shall be devoured by the wolf. The Shepherd shall say to His Father in that day, “Those that You gave Me I have kept, and none of them is lost.”

It also seems to me to be clear from the Scriptures that *in future ages, Jesus Christ will reign over all nations.* I do not believe that the great drama of the world’s history will end till the Truth of God is triumphant. I read, concerning the Messiah, “He also shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust.” The North shall give up, and the South shall no longer keep back, but they shall bring His sons from afar and His daughters from the ends of the earth. I cannot help expecting a period when “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.” Happy day! Oh, that it might soon arrive! Push on with mercy’s work, O missionaries and evangelists! Toil on, preachers and teachers, for, “He must reign.” Ours is not a losing cause—Jesus must yet subdue the nations and be acknowledged by them as Lord and God!

I also know that He must *one day reign over all mankind*, whether by their willing consent, or in spite of their opposition, “for to Him every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”—

**“He shall reign from pole to pole,
With illimitable sway.”**

And over and above that, I look for a time when *Jesus Christ will reign upon this earth over all nature.* When all His enemies being subdued, the new Jerusalem shall come down out of Heaven upon the earth, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Read the Revelation and you will find that much which we generally apply to Heaven is really a description of what is to take place upon this earth. I hope it is not mere poetic fancy that leads me to believe that the mists, which now swathe this planet and make her dim in comparison with her sister stars, will one day all be swept away and she shall shine out as bright as in that pristine morning when the sons of God shouted for joy at the sight of the new creation! I

think it is no fiction to believe that the day shall come when restored manhood, in connection with the personal reign of Christ, shall have dominion over all the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea, whatever passes through the paths of the sea—and when it shall not be a metaphor, but a realized fact that—“the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.” When whispers of blasphemy shall not merely be drowned in thunders of adoration, but shall not even be known—when the last taint and trace of sin shall have disappeared and the earth shall shine as if she had never been defiled, and the days of her mourning shall be forever ended! And, “Glory, glory, glory,” shall be the song from sunrise to sunset and the night watches shall be kept with music of praise, and angels shall go to and fro between the Throne above and the Throne below, and the new Heavens and the new earth shall be seen, wherein dwells righteousness—

**“Hallelujah!—Hark! The sound
From the center to the skies
Wakes above, beneath, around,
All creation’s harmonies!
See Jehovah’s banner furled,
His sword sheathed! He speaks—‘tis done!
And the kingdoms of this world
Are the kingdoms of His Son!”**

Then comes the grand climax when He shall “put all enemies under His feet”—not annihilate them, not exterminate them, not convert them—but put them under His feet. There shall still be a devil but He shall be a devil under Christ’s feet. Lost spirits there shall still be, but the great Conqueror shall hold them down beneath His almighty heels. Death shall be destroyed—“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” We shall remember that men died. We shall ourselves remember that we passed beneath the power of death, but all the bitterness of death will be past as far as we are concerned. Through Christ’s death, eternal life has become ours. Oh, what a prospect opens up before me! My time flies so nimbly, as it always does when I have such a subject as this, so I must forbear to speak of it as I gladly would. But let your faith project itself into the glorious future of which I have been reminding you. It may be much nearer than you have imagined. If you listen intently, you may hear the chariot wheels of the coming King! Be ready to greet Him whenever He comes! It may be that tonight, before the clock has sounded out the midnight hour, the cry may be heard in Heaven and earth, “Behold, the Bridegroom comes!” And starting from your beds, you will have to meet Him. Will you be ready to hail Him joyfully as your long-expected King, or will you have to meet Him dolefully and to be trod beneath His feet? “For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.”

So I close with this question—let each one take it to heart as best he may and may the Spirit of God send it home!—*How do I stand in relation to the great event thus predestinated?* What is my connection with the triumph of Christ? Am I one of His enemies? Suppose a gnat should be able to plunge itself into the inconceivably fierce heat that burns from the orb of day—its instant destruction must follow—and it must be so

with you, also, if you are opposed to Christ! You potsherd of earth, strive with other potsherds like yourself! For you to strive with Jesus is for a potsherd to strive against a rod of iron which will break it in pieces! There is no hope of success for you, so give up the hopeless enterprise. Your utter insignificance will make your opposition to be contemptible in that day when the intelligences of the universe shall judge things aright.

What then? Had we not better yield? I will not say because we must, but because we ought. For, in this case, Christ’s might is on the side of right and it is no disgrace to a man to yield to might when it is allied with right. “I yield to Christ” says one. How far do you yield? Do you yield so far as to be saved by Him? “Yes,” you say. Do you yield so far as to be forgiven by Him? “Yes,” you say. Do you yield so far as to become His disciple? “Yes,” you say. But do you yield that He should reign over you—that you should do as He bids you and not do what He forbids? Shall He be King over you? If you want to have Him on any other terms than these, you cannot have Him at all, for, “He must reign”—

***“Yet know (nor of the terms complain)
Where Jesus comes, He comes to reign!
To reign and with no partial sway—
Thoughts must be slain that disobey.”***

Will you have Him to thus reign over you? This is the all-important point! Alas, many say, “We will not have this Man to reign over us.” Be not you so senseless as this, but yield to Jesus Christ and let Him be your Lord and King! If you will not do so, I must again remind you of the dread alternative. You must either let Him reign over you, or else you will have to lie beneath His feet! Have you ever reckoned what will be the weight of the rejected love of God Incarnate who died for sinners and yet is rejected by myriads despite His unspeakable love? Take your pens and calculate that weight if you can—Omnipotence indignant that Eternal Love was slighted! Omniscience aroused to anger by the fact that Divine Compassion, such as could never have been dreamt of, was trampled underfoot by impudent sons of men! In the name of the God who made the Heavens and the earth and who made each one of you, I entreat you to yield to that Christ who is your rightful King! As sinners, yield yourselves by trusting in Him! As men, yield yourselves to obey His commands! In the name of Him who will come with sound of trumpet and with angel guards attending Him, swift to judge and stern to punish, I implore you to bow before Him now! As though I felt death’s cold hand upon me and heard a voice saying to me, “Speak out now, man, for the last time, and obey your King’s command,” so I speak in the name of Him who will make earth and Heaven reel beneath His awful Presence when He comes to judge the quick and the dead!

In the name of Him who will shut the gates of Mercy on all those who reject His Gospel, I do not merely ask you, or beseech you, but I *command you*, in His name, to repent and be converted! “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but He that believes not shall be damned.” O God, acknowledge this message, for it is Your own Truth! Prove it to be so, for Jesus sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

1 CORINTHIANS 15.

Verses 1, 2. *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; by which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain.* What was this Gospel of which Paul thought so highly and which he says is the means of our salvation? Did it consist in sundry doctrinal statements? No, it *contained* doctrinal statements, but it did not consist entirely of them. Here is Paul’s declaration concerning the Gospel.

3. *For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.* This is the solid basis of the Gospel.

4. *And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.* This is the very keystone of the Gospel arch—the Christ who died on the Cross and was buried in Joseph’s tomb, “rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” This great Truth of Christ’s Resurrection is so important that Paul dwells upon it at length.

5. *And that He was seen of Cephas.* Peter saw Him.

5, 6. *Then of the twelve: after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present day.* When the Epistle was written.

6-8. *But some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James; then of all the Apostles. And last of all He was seen of me, also, as of one born out of due time.* There is no fact, in all history, that is so well attested as the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! Whether there ever was such a person as Julius Caesar might be contested, though there were, doubtless, thousands of witnesses who saw him and many who wrote about him. But as to whether Christ rose from the dead, no candid mind can entertain a doubt! He was seen by great companies of Believers and by various individuals who had long known Him most intimately and who had many opportunities of judging whether they were deceived or not. Christ’s Resurrection is not only well attested, but it is also the most important fact that ever happened in the history of the world, as Paul goes on to show.

9-14. *For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the Grace of God I am what I am: and His Grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so you believed. Now if Christ is preached that He rose from the dead, how say among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. “We are deceivers, and you are deceived, and the whole Christian system crumbles into dust unless Christ did really rise from the dead.”*

15. *Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be*

that the dead rise not. Between Christ and His people, there is a union which can never be broken, so that if He rose from the dead, they also must rise. If we are one with Him, who shall separate us? And if we cannot be separated, then we must share and share alike with Him.

16-19. *For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ is not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.* To have been quickened into a life which gives great pain and sorrow would be a miserable thing if this were not compensated by the hope of Glory which that life has brought to us! A man who has been always poor can bear his poverty. But let him taste of wealth and luxury for a while and then go back to poverty and how keen is the pang he feels! And let a man be quickened to know God and to rejoice in the new life—and then be told that there is no hereafter and he is, indeed, “of all men most miserable.”

20-22. *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* All that were in Adam died in Adam—and all that are in Christ live in Christ and shall rise in Christ!

23-26. *But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must return till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.* Death is an enemy, but it is the last one. And it is an enemy that shall be destroyed, but it shall be destroyed last.

27, 28. *For He has put all things under His feet. But when He says all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be All in all.* There will, one day, be an end of the Mediatorial system. Christ shall have restored us to the Father and then He, as our Head, and we, as making up the family of the redeemed, shall rejoice in the God who is “All in all.”

29-32. *Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I affirm by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.* If there is no resurrection, the philosophy of the Epicureans is a true one. If we are to come an end when we die, let us enjoy life while we can. If it is to be a short life, let it be a merry one. You see to what a conclusion this theory would lead us, so let us start back from it with horror! The logical consequence convicts the statement of falsehood. There is a future state and there is to be a resurrection of the body.

33-35. *Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manner. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of*

God: I speak this to your shame. But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? You know the almost endless questions that may be asked about this matter and you know the snares into which a man may fall if he begins to pry curiously into this mystery. Paul will have no prying into the mystery—and somewhat tartly he answers.

36. *You fool, that which you sow is not quickened, except it dies.* Would you take a seed into your hand and begin to argue, “How can that little seed ever become a flower?” Could you guess, apart from observation, what kind of flower would come out of such a seed as that? You would make a hundred foolish guesses if you tried it! So is it concerning the resurrection of the body—in due time we shall know and we shall see—but until then, we must wait and trust.

37, 38. *And that which you sow, you sow not that body that shall be, but bare grain—perhaps wheat, or of some other grain: but God gives it a body as it has pleased Him, and to every seed its own body.* Every man shall have his own body. There will be differences and peculiarities, even as there are here—and we shall, therefore, know each other.

39-42. *All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption. You know all about that.*

42. *It is raised in incorruption.* What an anticipation for us!

43. *It is sown in dishonor.* For with all the honor that we can pay to our departed dear ones, it is a dishonor to them to have to lie encased in a coffin, in the cold clay of the cemetery.

43. *It is raised in glory.* Oh, the splendor of that resurrection!

43. *It is sown in weakness.* It is so weak that it cannot get into its own last resting place, but must be tenderly laid there by others.

43, 44. *It is raised in power: it is sown a natural body.* A soulish body, a body fitted for the human soul.

44. *It is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.* A body fitted for the newborn spirit which is given in regeneration.

45-48. *And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from Heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy. You and I have every evidence about us that we are earthy!*

48. *And as is the Heavenly, such are they also that are Heavenly.* Glory be to the name of Christ, we belong to Him and already the Heavenly light begins to shine upon us! We are getting ready to soon put on the garments of immortality!

49-51. *And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the Heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep. For some will be here when Christ comes again to this earth.*

51-58. *But we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, “Let us weep and lament”? Oh, no! That is not the Apostle’s inference. Therefore, let us throw down our weapons and say, “It is no good to continue the fight, for we must all die”? Far from it!*

58. *Be you steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. “You know,” because Christ has risen and because you also shall rise and because there is a reward of Grace laid up in store for you! The Lord’s people may die, but the Lord’s Church never dies and the Lord Himself, the Ever-Living One, it always with us, blessed be His holy name!*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—426, 338, 417.

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

GOOD NEWS FOR LOYAL SUBJECTS NO. 807

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 19, 1868,
BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“He must reign.”
1 Corinthians 15:25.

“MUST” is for the king, and concerning King Jesus there is a Divine necessity that He *must* reign. He was once the King of misery—in that kingdom He reigned supreme. That crown of thorns is preeminent in the sorrows which it signifies. O King of grief and tears and death, who shall rival You? Today He is the King of glory, enthroned far above all principalities and powers! He is so glorious that when seraphs are asked, “Who is the King of glory?” they mention no other name but His! He is the King once dishonored but now exalted in the highest Heaven. Of Him the text says not only that He must live, though that is a precious truth, for while He lives we shall live, also! Nor merely does it say that He shall enjoy a degree of reverence, though it is delightful to us to think of His being honored in any heart and being had in reverence by even a handful of men.

But it is said, “He must *reign*.” Not a place, but the *chief* place shall be His. Not bare existence, but preeminence. Not honor, but superlative glory. He must reign! No seat but the Throne shall become Him. No ornaments but those of royalty shall befit Him—“He must reign.” He must reign because He is *God*. “The Lord reigns” must ever stand a Truth. Jehovah exists eternally, infinite in power and wisdom. Who but He should be King of kings and Lord of lords? And since the Man of Nazareth is the Everlasting Father, since of His generation there was no beginning, and none can count the number of His years, He must reign from the very fact of His essential Deity. He must reign as Man—for the Lord has made a Covenant with David that the scepter should not depart from him, that of his seed there should sit upon the throne of Israel forever a King to rule in righteousness, and Jesus of Nazareth is that King!

Israel has no other monarch, neither have they sought after any other king. As a nation they have been broken and scattered and peeled. And as a united people they cannot be gathered under any other headship than that of the house of David, of which Jesus Christ is the lineal and rightful descendant, and who claims and keeps the scepter in His own hand. He must reign also as the Mediator, the Intercessor, the Interposer, the Interpreter, one of a thousand. “He must reign.” Behold, at this time the sovereignty of the world is committed to His keeping. He is the Headship of His Church, the Originator of Providence. His is the ruling of Heaven, and earth, and Hell, as the mediatorial Monarch. And until that time when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even our Father, He must reign, for so has God appointed and settled Him to be a King and a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

What a sweet comfort it is to think that none can snatch the government from the hand of Jesus, for, “the government shall be upon His shoulder.” None can drive Christ from the Headship of the Church, nor the Headship of Providence for the Church. He must be at the helm, none shall remove Him. Both as God and Man, and as the Mediator of the New Covenant, according to the express words of our text, “He must reign.” There seemed to me to be so sweet a thought wrapped up in these three words—so precious, so full of all manner of delights—that if the Holy Spirit did but enable us to enjoy it, we should not lack today for wines on the lees, well refined, and fat things, yes, fat things full of marrow!

I shall endeavor, as I may be helped, first, at some length to discuss the reasons for this “must.” Then, secondly, to draw out encouragement from it. And, thirdly, to dwell upon its admonitions.

I. First, “He must reign.” **WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR THIS “MUST”?** The answer shall be sevenfold. The Lamb, as seen by John, had seven horns of power, and here are seven reasons why He should possess the Throne forever.

1. First, because His empire in itself is such as to ensure perpetuity. There have been many empires in this world of which men said, for the time, that they must exist—and they supposed that if they were overthrown, the very pillars of the earth would be removed. Yet in due time they grew gray with years and were swept away as worn out things, and it was a joy for the nations when the hoary abominations were consumed.

The most colossal empires have melted like visions of the night, and the most substantial creations of human power have passed away like the fleeting dew of the morning. But, “He must reign.” He must reign, first of all, because His reign over human mind is based upon the Truth of God. There have been various dynasties of thought—at one time Plato reigned supreme over thoughtful minds. Then Aristotle held a long and rigid rule—he so ruled and governed the entire universe of mind that even the Christian religion was continually infected and tainted by his philosophical speculations.

But another philosophy found out his weakness and supplanted him, to be in its turn subverted by the next. As men grow more enlightened, or the human mind passes through another phase of change, men say to their once-revered rabbis and honored teachers, “Stand out of the way! A new light has arisen! We have come to a new point of thought, and we have done with you.” Things which were accounted sure and wise in years gone by are now ridiculed by us as the height of folly. And why? Because these systems of philosophy and thought have not been based upon the Truth of God. There has been a worm in the center of the fair apple of knowledge. There has been a flaw in the foundations of the great master-builder—they have built upon sand, and their edifices have tumbled to irretrievable ruin.

But the Truth, which Jesus taught from the mountaintop, reads as if it were delivered but yesterday! Christianity is as suitable to the 19th century as to the first. It has the dew of its youth upon it. As Solomon’s Song says of Christ, His locks are bushy and black as a raven to show His youth and

vigor. So may I say of the Gospel—it is still as young and vigorous—as full of masculine energy as ever it was! We who preach it fear not for the result—give us a fair stage and no favor, and the Samson of Divine Truth, its locks still unshorn—will yet remove the pillars of the temple of error, and bring ruin to the powers of Hell. Jesus must reign as the royal Teacher because all He teaches is based upon the surest Truth.

Our Lord's dominion over human hearts, too, is absolutely sure, because it is based upon *love*. To illustrate what I mean, I need only remind you of the life of the great Napoleon. He founded an empire—an empire which has not always been justly estimated—for perhaps unwittingly Napoleon was a grand advancer of human liberty, since he first taught the old kings that the pretense of Divine right could not keep crowns upon unpopular heads, and that young men from the ranks might yet mount a throne. He produced a code of laws, which, for simplicity of justice, has never been surpassed. Still, he relied too much upon coercion and the sword—his enormous armies were his bulwark and security.

Strong battalions were the cornerstone of his empire, and though for awhile he stood firm, and armies advancing against him were only like so many waves dashing against the rocks of his tremendous power—yet, after all his many wars, he was overthrown and he was said to have uttered in St. Helena that memorable speech—“My empire has passed away. I founded it upon the sword, and it is gone. Jesus Christ established an empire upon love, and it will last forever.” So it *will* last. When all that kings and princes can do with state-craft, and with power, shall have dissolved as hoar frost in the sun, Christ's kingdom must stand because it is based upon the law of love. His Person is the incarnation of love. His teachings are the doctrines of love. His precepts are the rule of love. His Spirit is the creator of love. His whole religion is saturated with love—and because of this His kingdom cannot be moved!

Once more, the empire of Jesus must exist because it is the one great remedy which this sad woe-begone world requires. Though men know it not, this is the only balm for earth's poor bleeding wounds. Earth cries out every now and then like a sleeper in delirium. She cries out for the coming man, and eyes everywhere are watching! Men scarcely know why—they look for a man who shall right the wrong of mankind and commence on a glorious era—that good time coming for which men have looked so long. Jesus is the coming Man—He alone is the daystar from on high who shall visit us with light and healing—and replace our darkness with an everlasting morning!

The world is like the troubled sea that cannot rest, tossed to and fro, and there is but one foot which can tread its waves, and but one voice which can say, “Peace, be still.” The world's joy lies now in the tomb. It has been dead four days already, and by this time it stinks and the poor world does not know that there is only one voice that can bring back earth's paradise, give a resurrection to her buried mirth. Jesus of Nazareth it is who is the true Liberator of captive nations, “To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the valley of the shadow of death.”

The world will never rest till it rests in Christ! It groans and travails in pain together until now, scarcely knowing what it wants. But to us it is given to know that earth needs her Lord to reign over her, and He shall bring her joy and peace. The agonizing groans of earth demand the sovereignty of Jesus and therefore we believe that He must reign, for God will yet give His creature what it needs. Our Lord's dominion is, in itself, so securely founded upon Truth and love, and is so demanded by a bleeding world, that "He must reign."

2. Secondly, He must reign because His Father decrees it. How delightful it is to think of the eternal purposes concerning our Lord! Our God did not make this world without a plan, nor does He rule it without a scheme. Whatever Jehovah decrees, stands fast and firm, for these are His words, "Has He said, and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken and shall He not make it good?" Whatever the eternal mind resolves upon is certain to be fulfilled! Though men should strive against it, and devils should rise with infernal rage, yet, if Jehovah decrees it, who shall stand against the eternal will?

Go, Fool, who thinks to stand against God, and dash yourself upon the bosses of His buckler and be broken in pieces! Or run upon the point of His glittering spear to your own destruction, for, against the Eternal, who shall stand? His thunder in the heavens, though it is but the whisper of His voice, makes the nations tremble! The going forth of His might in nature, though it is the hiding of His power, makes all the inhabitants of the earth shake. Who shall stay His hand, or say unto Him, "What are You doing?"

The eternal purpose of God has ordained that Jesus Christ shall reign eternally! He must reign from the river even to the ends of the earth. Up till now God has maintained the Throne of His Son. Read the second Psalm and see: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath and vex them in His sore displeasure. Yet have I set My king upon My holy hill of Zion."

Yes, the Divine determination, the Everlasting Covenant, and the immutable promises of Covenant Grace all unite in the resolve that Christ shall reign, and therefore well says the text, "He must reign."

3. But in the third place, Divine justice demands it. Jesus Christ must reign. Beloved, you cannot imagine for a moment that He who judges all the earth will be unjust, and unjust to His own Son! Our Lord came into this world to bleed and die that He might have a reward for His pains. And the Father covenanted with Him: "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days." "I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong." The Father promised that He should be a leader and a commander of the people, and determined, as the result of His humiliation, that He should mount to a superior Throne as the Son of Man and the Son of God.

Shall God belie His word? Begone, blasphemous thought! Shall God defraud the Only-Begotten? Down, suggestion of the pit! Shall Jesus die in vain? Shall He pour out His soul unto death, and shall there be no crown for Him? Shall the promised diadem be withheld? Beloved, we know it cannot be so! As we stand at the foot of the Cross we feel that every pang He suffered guaranteed to Him that He should be King of kings, and Lord of lords. Oh, it were, indeed, sad for us to imagine that yonder wondrous work of His in redemption should remain unrewarded with the promised crown! It were vain for us to trust in the Redemption, for we might be as well deluded in it as He if there were no honor brought to Him for all that He endured for us. Courage, Brothers and Sisters, there can be no doubt about it—since immutable justice demands it, Jesus “must reign.”

4. The fourth reason is found in this, that Christ’s reigning is inwrought into the order of Providence. A few months ago snow was on the ground. The frost was sharp, the winds were cold, the trees were bare—but it was in the order of Providence that there should be a spring. And though the seasons grew colder and the dreary months passed on and not a snowdrop peeped up from under the soil, nor a golden crocus opened its cup, yet God had purposed it—the spring must come.

Walk in your gardens today when all the fruit trees are opening their blossoms and pouring forth their perfumes in the air, and the birds are at the highest point of song, and you will think, “Yes, it has surely come. Spring smiles on us, after all.” The cold blustering winds and the cold dark nights could not prevent it! The vernal blossoms are on every bough. Here is spring, and in its right hand it holds a faithful promise of the coming summer. We cannot say that in any one day in all these last months spring seemed to make any great advance. You cannot put your finger upon a certain day or hour, and say, “Now the weather is manifestly turning.”

But the sweet days of bud and blossom have been introduced with a beautiful gentleness and growth. Even when the days lengthened we saw no great progress, for the cold strengthened—and if we enjoyed a mild day, there came a biting night of frost. But, surely and steadily the veins of the trees were filled with the life-blood of sap, and the buds first swelled and then revealed their glories! Mother earth yielded to the roots of plants and trees fresh vigor, and helped them to put on their green array—and now we look for the beauties of summer and the golden sheaves of autumn with sure and certain hope.

So Christ’s reigning is woven into the warp and woof of Providence, and though He has long been lifted on high and has not yet drawn all men unto Him, it is coming—and if we have faith we may almost see it. His kingdom is coming! The time of the singing of the birds is drawing near! There have been dark times, but the light has arisen! There have been times of shameful lukewarmness, but, now and then a live coal has been sent from off the altar to touch the lip of some favored seer whose power has turned the tide of the Church’s zeal once more. Rest assured that

nothing can possibly resist the kingdom of Jesus Christ—His kingdom shall come! He shall have dominion and His foes shall bow.

He shall come in His own proper Person and shall sit upon David's throne. Though the wheels of Providence are so high that they are terrible, they are all full of eyes, and every eye looks to Christ. "Upon one stone shall be seven eyes," yes, all the eyes of Providence look upon Jesus our Cornerstone, and in the Divine economy, "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose," and chiefly for the glory of Him who loved God best of all, and was first chosen in the Divine decree.

That Jesus shall reign is the end, aim, and design of Providence. How I rejoice to believe that if we serve God the very stones of the field are in league with us, and the beasts of the field are at peace with us! And as it was said by Deborah in her memorable song, "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera," so all created things are allies of the righteous cause and adversaries of evil. The marches of years, the advance of months, and the arrangements of days all fight like armed men the wrong, and march side by side with the armies of the Lord of hosts—sworn to do battle for Jesus and His Throne—for, "He must reign."

5. I must not tarry long on any one point, and, therefore, our fifth argument for Jesus' kingdom is that the Holy Spirit has been given to the Church to promote this glorious end. At the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out—then the whole Church was baptized with a sacred influence—and ever since then the Holy Spirit has never been withdrawn from the Christian Church. "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever."

We often unbelievably pray for the Holy Spirit as if He were not still with us—as if He were not perpetually resident among the sons of men. He is here, always here—always dwelling in the Christian Church. Now consider who the Holy Spirit is—He is the blessed God Himself—one Person of the glorious Trinity in unity, and He is therefore the possessor of infinite power. In the world of mind He can work according to His own will, and can convince men of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He can soften the most hardened! He can turn to kindness the most cruel, and lead into light the most darkened. There are none beyond the range of the operation of the Holy Spirit, and none who shall be able finally to resist His influence when He puts forth the fullness of His might, for who can stop Omnipotence?

Now, Brethren, the possession of the Holy Spirit is the Church's treasury. Here is her battle-ax, and here her weapons of war. Do you speak of the tower of David where a thousand bucklers did hang, all shields of mighty men? The possession of the Holy Spirit secures a far greater power than all the bucklers of mighty men could be! Solomon speaks of the Church's bed, and says that around it were fourscore men, each man with his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night. But the Holy Spirit is a greater protection than the ablest bodyguard of warriors! His dove-like wings perpetually brood over the Lord's chosen and guard them from

every ill, according to the promise, "I, the Lord, do keep it, I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."

Ho, you who preach Christ in the street, or teach Him in the school, do not become discouraged under difficulties when you remember that you are workers together with *God*, and that with you, when you speak the truth for Jesus, there goes forth an irresistible power from the Holy Spirit Himself which none shall be able to gainsay or to resist! This is the Church's power—let her seek more of it, and, possessing it—let her rest assured that the purpose for which she has been raised up will be accomplished, for Jesus Christ *must* and *shall* reign if the Spirit of God is at work to ensure His Sovereignty.

6. Sixthly, our Lord Jesus Christ must reign because He is naturally the Chief of the human race. When all Israel were gathered together to choose a king, they selected Saul who was in stature head and shoulders taller than the rest. They would have the strongest soldier to lead the van. But if my Lord and Master were to come into this world—if men's eyes were but opened, and their senses were but trained to right perception—they would no sooner put eyes on Him than they would say, "He is the chief among 10,000 and the altogether lovely: let Him wear the crown." Remember that in this present state the good often go to the wall, and the most worthy are the least esteemed—but in the long run it is a rule of God's government that the best shall be uppermost.

And when the last great rectification shall come, you will find that those who were really lowest in character will be lowest in perdition, and those who were highest in their service of God shall be highest in esteem among the sons of men. Jesus Christ must take the highest place, because He is highest and there is none to rival Him—

***"No creature can with Him compare
Among the sons of men,
Fairer He is than all the fair
That fill the heavenly train."***

Once but get a clear, spiritual glimpse of Him and you will acknowledge His surpassing superiority—

***"Soon as faith the Lord can see,
Bleeding on the Cross for me,
Quick my idols all depart,
Jesus gets and fills my heart."***

O stone-blind eyes, if you could but see Him, how you would be fixed on Him in one long fascinated gaze! O blind world, if you had Grace enough to see but half the beauties of Christ, how you would cease your rebellion and fall down to worship the matchless Prince! But the blindness and obduracy of humankind make men enemies to their best Friend and make them see no beauty where there is *all* beauty, and no perfection wherever perfection dwells.

As well might men say that there is no light from the sun as declare that there is no loveliness in Him! As well might they say that there is no salt in the sea as that there is no sweetness in Christ, for He is altogether lovely! All preciousness, at its very highest degrees, is found commingled in His gracious Character. Let Him be King, then! He must reign! It is impossible that yonder black prince, that fiend of Hell, that traitor, that en-

emy of the human race should always reign! Down with him! Down with him as they did in the town of Mansoul when they broke the images of Diabolus, casting them to the ground.

It is not possible that the devil should always be king over God's creatures. Let Immanuel be exalted, and let His loyal subjects bow before Him and rejoice in His crown and scepter. He must reign, then, because of the excellence of His Character.

7. And lastly upon this point, He must reign because the power to reign belongs to Him. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." "He has all power given unto Him in Heaven and in earth." "Go you, therefore," says He, "and teach all nations." Jesus Christ is no puny pretender to the Throne, nor a rightful owner without power to win His own, but as His cause is good His arm is strong. The power of Immanuel is equal to His right—He must, therefore, reign! What a vision that is of Christ on the white horse, riding forth conquering and to conquer, and all His saints following Him in the same triumphant style, His sword going out of His mouth, the preaching of the eternal Gospel being still the power of God unto salvation!

This is what He is doing now—this is what He shall do till He comes with His iron rod to break the nations in pieces, like a potter's vessel, and dash His enemies to pieces. He has the power to reign, a power of love which He puts into the Gospel which, by-and-by, He will exchange for the power of vengeance, when He takes the Throne and sits there to judge the nations according to their works. What a total overthrow the powers of darkness will sustain! They will not have a thought with which to comfort themselves. When the last great battle shall come and the campaign between Christ and the Prince of Evil shall be over, there will not remain a handful of spoil in the hand of the enemy—not one old banner or tattered flag belonging to the Lord's hosts to hang up in the hall.

"They will be beaten," as the text puts it, "like the chaff on the summer's threshing floor." "And you shall winnow them," says the Prophet, "and the wind shall carry them away." The black horse went down to the sea of almighty love with his rider and began to drink up that sea, but he could not do it. He snorted, and drank, and drank again of the brine which sickened his very soul, but malice urged him on, and so he drank again, and waded breast-deep into the ocean. Nor stayed he in his fury, but plunged farther and farther, till he was drowned in the inexhaustible depths.

I think I see the black carcass submerged far down in the abyss—death and Hell drowned in the sea of almighty love and power, and the kingdom of Jesus rolling like a mighty stream over all those who were determined upon His destruction. Glory be unto God! We fight and victory flies to congratulate our banner. Ours is no desperate warfare, but a royal crusade in which every soldier is even now a priest and a king, and is on the way to the banqueting halls where men feast with God, and Jesus forever and ever wears the fadeless diadem.

II. Time allows but a few words upon THE ENCOURAGEMENT to be gathered from the "must" which lies in the soul of the text.

1. The first encouragement is that if He must reign, then all our enemies shall be subdued. This text occurs in that memorable chapter concerning the resurrection and it especially points to death. "He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet." "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Now, beloved Believer, you are called to fight daily with sin and here is your consolation—Jesus must reign! The Christ in you must bruise Satan under your feet! His Atonement has forever destroyed the damning power of your sins. Christ reigns supreme on the milk-white Throne of mercy as the pardoning God.

Even so Jesus must reign over the active power of sin within your heart, for His death is the double death of sin. He has pierced its heart and nailed its hands and feet—it shall not have dominion over you. Jesus, the King of kings, must hold His court in the castle yard of your heart, and all your powers and passions must do Him cheerful homage. Most sweet Prince, You shall wear Your royal robes in the coronation chamber of my affections! You shall reign over my quick imperious temper! He shall put His foot on the neck of my pride and shall command my every thought and wish. Where I cannot rule, Jesus can!

Rebellious lusts acknowledge the spell of the Cross and indwelling sin falls like Dagon before that ark. Jesus has made us kings and priests that we may reign over the triple monarchy of our nature—spirit, soul, and body—and that by our self-conquest *He* may be undisputed sovereign of the Isle of Man. O you who are contending with your corruptions, push on in the war for He must reign! Corruption is very strong, but Christ is stronger, and Divine Grace must reign through righteousness unto eternal life—through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I think I hear you groaning, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Harken to the answer! It rings like a sweet Sabbath bell, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." You may die with Jesus but you shall certainly rise with Him, for He will leave none of His members in the grave of their corruptions. This Joshua will slay all the Canaanites! He will drive out the old dragon from his throne with all his hellish crew and your entire manhood shall be a fair temple for the Holy Spirit's indwelling!

As long as we live in this world, and when we live again in the coming world, Jesus shall be the Well-Beloved Monarch of our hearts! This ought to put away all fears of death, for Christ must reign, must reign over death! When the last enemy appears in view it shall only be an opportunity for new triumphs, when the Lord of life shall reveal Himself with renewed splendor. Imagine not that death shall ever reign over Christ! Ah no, in your departing moments you shall have most extraordinary Grace—so that with joyful heart your lips shall sing, "O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory?"

When your body shall have molded to ashes, Christ must reign, and every precious particle of that dust shall be attracted to its fellow—bone shall come to bone, and the flesh shall come upon the whole—and you shall live! Though worms destroy that body, yet in your flesh shall you see God. And so in your resurrection Jesus Christ shall reign! What a lamp is

shining in the vaults of death! The day breaks upon all our darkness when we see that He must reign!

The next cool cup of encouragement springing from this well is this—our efforts are, after all, not in vain. If Christ must reign, then every soldier who fights for Christ is contributing to the victory, and everyone who in any way advances the cause is working with sure and great results. You have not wasted those many silent prayers and those bitter tears. Those feeble efforts of yours which were so imperfect that you could scarcely hope them to be successful are all co-operating to produce a victory the shouts of which shall be heard all down the ages!

You may but lay a single stone of the heavenly temple, but if it is done for Christ, it is a stone which will stand the fire and your share of the building will remain to the last, while many a great one who has built a mass of wood, and hay, and stubble shall see his labors all consumed in the day that tries every man's work. O my fellow Soldiers, as we rest in this bivouac today waiting till another fight begins, let us be of good courage and the Lord shall strengthen our hearts! Wait, I say, on the Lord, for the Lord is on our side!

Our foes are tall as Goliath, and mighty as Pharaoh, and proud as Nebuchadnezzar—but in the name of God will we destroy them! In the name of Jesus we will again say Jehovah-Nissi, and setting up the banner we follow our Captain whose vesture is dipped in blood. He rides forth conquering and to conquer, and we follow Him to absolute victory! It is but a little before we shall hear the shout, "Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns." One sweet drop of comfort may be pressed from this text, "He must reign"—I must confess the sweetest comfort I have ever tasted. I know not why it is, but if I sink in spirit (and I do full often) I very seldom get any cordial anywhere except from this one thing—that Christ must reign.

"There," I have said in my soul, "then what becomes of me is of no consequence at all! If He will only take me into the royal galley and chain me down to the oar, and let me tug and pull till I have no more life left, I will be satisfied if I may but row my Lord towards His Throne and have but the smallest share in making Him great and glorious in the eyes of men and angels." What cares my heart for herself if she may but see Jesus set on high? It is a Heaven to me to think that Christ is in Heaven, and another Heaven to believe that He will reign among men! If Christ is glorious, it is all the Heaven I ask for! If He shall be King of kings, and Lord of lords, let me be nothing! If He shall but reign, and every tongue shall call Him blessed, it shall be bliss to me to know it! And if I may be but as one of the withered roses which lie in the path of His triumph, it shall be my paradise!

Comrade in arms, as you and I in this ditch lie bleeding on the skirts of the battle, it is sweet to hear the shouts of victory! This is better than wine, better than healing, better than life! See yonder He rides with His crown upon His helmet! There He rides on His white horse in the very front of the fray! Can you not hear Him as He cries, "Onward!" and the enemy flees, and His forces march on to victory? You and I may lie down

and die—what matters it, for the cause is safe—Jesus is King! Rest assured that Christ’s victory is ours and He will no more forget us than a woman will cease to think of the son of her womb. Oh, to put our heart into Christ’s heart! To wish His wishes and to love His loves! This is to enjoy peace like a river, and bliss like the waves of the sea. Blessed thought for you who love Him! Treasure it. “He must reign.”

How this ought to inspire all of you who grow downhearted about the cause of Christ. Some of my friends are frightened with that everlasting bugbear of Roman Catholicism. According to some we are going back to Rome, every mother’s son of us, and old England is to be a rank popish country. Many in these days are fine hands at painting ugly pictures and believing them to be realities. But I believe my text, namely, that *Jesus* must reign. Therefore I do not fear the Pope or the devil. All the driveling priests of Rome with their Jesuitical tricks, shall find their master, for Hell itself cannot shake that decree, “He must reign.”

“Jesuits,” you say, “are creeping in unawares.” I know it! But behold, we shall tread upon the lion and the dragon—yes, the young lion and the dragon shall we trample under our feet. Do you not believe in the Gospel as the power of God? Do you imagine that an unrighteous and unscriptural church establishment is needed as a bulwark to the Gospel? Shall rotten wood defend the steel? Nonsense! Blow the establishment to a thousand pieces with the big guns of Justice and then the Gospel will hold its own with all the greater ease. The Gospel is quite able to take care of itself without your hierarchies, and tithes, and royal headships—you encumber the Church with your bulwarks of wood, and hay, and stubble! You clog our David with the royal armor.

My Lord Jesus Christ can do well enough in Ireland without Caesar or his pennies. He needs you not to drain wealth from those who serve another Lord in order to uphold His cause. He hates your robberies which you call burnt-offerings. He always has taken care of Himself and His ministers and will continue to do so. The ark of God of old was never captured till it was defended with carnal weapons, and even then, as soon as it was left alone it rescued *itself*. When there was not a soldier to take care of it—when it was imprisoned in the temple of Dagon—Dagon fell, and Philistia was humbled.

And so in England and Ireland, State alliance is bringing the Gospel into jeopardy, but if that alliance can be broken which is the worst of ills, then the Gospel in its grandeur of unaided might will confound all adversaries. Never be afraid—it does not become a Christian to fear—it is unmanly, unchristian, to talk as if Christ’s cause were going to be trampled out like a spark under our feet! It cannot be! As enduring as the earth itself, and more eternal—as far as everlasting as the Throne of God are the Cross and honor and dignity of Christ. Let us feel this, for He must reign, and anticipated changes, instead of preventing Him from reigning, will help Him to reign more universally. And the shaking off of old abuses, instead of being an injury to the Cross of Christ, will give its glories ampler space, for He must reign, let men say what they will.

III. Once more, and I have done. There is an ADMONITION in the text, “He must reign.” My Hearer, has He ever reigned in *your* heart? Where are *you*, my Hearer? For I want you now. I must get you by the ear. “Jesus must reign.” What have you to say to this? You have been opposing Him, have you? You are kicking against the pricks with naked feet—you are stumbling upon this stone and you will be broken—and if the stone shall take to rolling down, like a massive rock, on you, it will grind you to powder.

Persecutor, beware! You have gone upon a very very desperate errand. You are like a crawling worm that is fighting with the fire—you wiggle already in the heat of it—but if you continue long, what can you expect? You are like stubble contending with the fire-brand, or like chaff wrestling with the whirlwind. What can you do? O Man, sheathe that sword! Take counsel while you are in the way, “whether you can, with 10,000 meet him that comes against you with twenty thousand.” “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.”

Another thought, if Jesus Christ must reign, then you who have never submitted yourselves to Him to accept Him as your Monarch will find His reign as terrible as it is sure. He will reign over you, either by your own consent, or without it! He will either reign over you with that glorious glittering silver scepter of mercy in His hand, or He will rule over you with the heavy iron rod with which He will break you in pieces. Now, which is it to be? One or the other. His blood must be on you—either it must be on you to accuse and condemn you, as the Jews found it when they said, “His blood be on us, and on our children”—or else it shall be on you to cleanse, to pardon, to save. Which shall it be?

This morning, in the name of God I do entreat you answer this question for your own good! Does Jesus reign over you this morning, or not? Oh, if He never should reign over you in this life, then, when you *die* you shall find that you cannot escape from His power! He will reign over you while you are a prisoner, manacled in fetters of iron in the place of everlasting misery! He will reign over you, and you will be compelled to confess it, too, as you bite your iron bands and weep, and gnash your teeth in anger and in shame! He will reign over you absolutely, for you will not be able to lift a finger to contend against Him in the day when He comes to judge the quick and the dead—

***“You sinners, seek His Grace,
Whose wrath you cannot bear!
Fly to the shelter of His Cross,
And find salvation there.”***

May eternal mercy bring you, now, like loyal subjects, to bow before Jesus! May you be granted saving Grace to give yourselves up to Him, trusting in Him, and in Him alone. That is the matter—to confide simply in Him is life eternal! There is the whole sum and substance of godliness. Then shall it be your joy to know and feel that “He must reign.” The Lord bless you, and make you a blessing, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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CHRIST THE DESTROYER OF DEATH

NO. 1329

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 17, 1876,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."
1 Corinthians 15:26.***

DURING four previous Sabbaths we have been following our Lord and Master through His great achievements. We have seen Him as the end of the Law, as the Conqueror of Satan, as the Overcomer of the world, as the Creator of all things new. And now we behold Him as the Destroyer of death. In this and in all His other glorious deeds, let us worship Him with all our hearts! May the Spirit of God lead us into the full meaning of this, which is one of the Redeemer's grandest Characters. How wonderfully is our Lord Jesus *one with man*! For when the Psalmist David had considered "the heavens, the work of God's fingers," He said, "Lord, what is man—that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You visit him?"

He was speaking of Christ. You would have thought he was thinking of man in his humblest estate, and that he was wondering that God should be pleased to honor so frail a being as the poor fallen son of Adam. You would never have dreamed that the glorious Gospel lay hid within those words of grateful adoration! Yet, in the course of that meditation David went on to say, "You made Him to have dominion over all the works of Your hands, You have put all things under His feet." Now, had it not been for the interpretation of the Holy Spirit, we would still have considered that he was speaking of men in general, and of man's natural dominion over the brute creation, but behold, while that is true, there is another and a far more important Truth of God concealed within it, for David, as a Prophet, was all the while chiefly speaking of the Man of men, the model Man, the second Adam, the Head of the new race of men!

It was of Jesus, the Son of Man, as honored of the Father, that the Psalmist sang, "He has put all things under His feet." Strange, was it not, that when he spoke of man, he must of necessity speak also of our Lord? And yet, when we consider the thing, it is but natural and according to truth. It is only remarkable to us because in our minds we too often consider Jesus and man as far removed and too little regard Him as truly one with man. Now, see how the Apostle infers from the Psalm the necessity of the Resurrection, for if all things must be put under the feet of the man, Christ Jesus, then every form of evil must be conquered by Him and death among the rest. "He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet."

It must be so and, therefore, death itself must ultimately be overcome. Thus out of that simple sentence in the Psalm, which we would have read far otherwise without the light of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle gathers the doctrine of the Resurrection. The Holy Spirit taught His servant, Paul, how, by a subtle chemistry, he could distil from simple words a precious

fragrant essence which the common reader never suspected to be there. Texts have their secret drawers, their box within a box, their hidden souls which lie asleep till He who placed them on their secret couches awakens them that they may speak to the hearts of His chosen.

Could you ever have guessed Resurrection from the eighth Psalm? No, nor could you have believed, had it not been told you, that there is fire in the flint, oil in the rock and bread in the earth we tread upon! Man's books have usually far less in them than we expect, but the Book of the Lord is full of surprises! It is a mass of light, a mountain of priceless revelations. We little know what yet lies hidden within the Scriptures. We know the form of sound words as the Lord has taught us and by it we will abide—but there are inner store houses into which we have not peered—chambers of Revelation lit up with bright lamps, perhaps too bright for our eyes at this present time.

If Paul, when the Spirit of God rested upon Him, could see so much in the songs of David, the day may come when we, also, shall see still more in the Epistles of Paul and wonder at ourselves that we did not understand better the things which the Holy Spirit has so freely spoken to us by the Apostle. May we at this time be enabled to look deep and far and behold the sublime glories of our risen Lord!

To the text, itself, then—*death is an enemy. Death is an enemy to be destroyed. Death is an enemy to be destroyed last*—“the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

I. DEATH AN ENEMY. *It was so born*, even as Haman the Agagite was the enemy of Israel by his descent. Death is the child of our direst foe, for, “sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.” “Sin entered into the world and death by sin.” Now, that which is distinctly the fruit of transgression cannot be other than an enemy of man. Death was introduced into the world on that gloomy day which saw our fall and he that had the power of it is our arch enemy and betrayer, the devil—from both of which facts we must regard death as the manifest enemy of man.

Death is an alien in this world. It did not enter into the original design of the unfallen creation, but its intrusion mars and spoils the whole. It is no part of the Great Shepherd's flock, but it is a wolf which comes to kill and to destroy. Geology tells us that there was death among the various forms of life from the first ages of the globe's history, even when as yet the world was not fitted up as the dwelling of man. This I can believe and still regard death as the result of sin. If it can be proved that there is such an organic unity between man and the lower animals that they would not have died if Adam had not sinned, then I see in those deaths before Adam the antecedent consequences of a sin which was then uncommitted.

If by the merits of Jesus there was salvation *before* He had offered His atoning Sacrifice, I do not find it hard to conceive that the foreseen demerits of sin may have cast the shadow of death over the long ages which came before man's transgression. Of that we know little, nor is it important that we should, but certain is it that as far as this present creation is concerned, Death is not God's invited guest but an intruder whose presence mars the feast. Man, in his folly, welcomed Satan and sin when they

forced their way into the high festival of Paradise, but he never welcomed Death. Even his blind eyes could see in that skeleton form a cruel foe!

As the lion to the herds of the plain, as the scythe to the sowers of the field, as the wind to the sere leaves of the forest, such is Death to the sons of men. They fear him by an inward instinct because their conscience tells them that he is the child of their sin. Death is well called an enemy for *it does an enemy's work* towards us. For what purpose does an enemy come but to root up and to pull down and to destroy? Death tears in pieces that comely handiwork of God, the fabric of the human body, so marvelously worked by the fingers of Divine skill. Casting this rich embroidery into the grave among the armies of the worms, to its fierce soldiery, Death divides "to everyone a prey of many colors, of many colors of needlework"—and they ruthlessly tear in pieces the spoil!

This building of our manhood is a house fair to look upon, but Death, the destroyer, darkens its windows, shakes its pillars, closes its doors and causes the sound of the grinding to cease. Then the daughters of music are brought low and the strong men bow themselves. This vandal spares no work of life, however full of wisdom or beauty, for it looses the silver cord and breaks the golden bowl. Lo, at the fountain, the costly pitcher is utterly broken and at the cistern the well-worked wheel is dashed in pieces! Death is a fierce invader of the realms of life and where he goes, he fells every good tree, stops all wells of water and mars every good piece of land with stones.

See a man when Death has worked his will upon him—what a ruin he is! How is his beauty turned to ashes and his comeliness to corruption! Surely an enemy has done this! Look, my Brothers and Sisters, at the course of death throughout all ages and in all lands. What field is there without its grave? What city without its cemetery? Where can we go to find no sepulchers? As the sandy shore is covered with the traces of the worm, so are you, O Earth, covered with those grass-grown hillocks beneath which sleep the departed generations of men! And you, O Sea, even you are not without your dead!

As if the earth were all too full of corpses and they jostled each other in their crowded sepulchers, even into your caverns, O mighty main, the bodies of the dead are cast! Your waves must become defiled with the carcasses of men, and on your floor must lie the bones of the slain! Our enemy, Death, has marched, as it were, with sword and fire ravaging the human race. Neither Goth, nor Hun, nor Tartar could have slain so universally all that breathed, for Death has allowed none to escape! Everywhere he has withered household joys and created sorrow and sighs! In all lands where the sun is seen, he has blinded men's eyes with weeping. The tear of the bereaved, the wail of the widow and the moan of the orphan—these have been Death's music of war and he has found, therein, a song of victory!

The greatest conquerors have only been Death's executioners, journey-men butchers working in his shambles. War is nothing better than Death holding carnival and devouring his prey a little more in haste than is his common way. *Death has done the work of an enemy to those of us who*

have as yet escaped his arrows. Those who have lately stood around a new grave and buried half their hearts can tell you what an enemy Death is. It takes the friend from our side and the child from our bosom, neither does it care for our crying. He has fallen who was the pillar of the household. She has been snatched away who was the brightness of the hearth! The little one is torn out of its mother's bosom though its loss almost breaks her heartstrings—and the blooming youth is taken from his father's side though the parent's fondest hopes are thereby crushed.

Death has no pity for the young and no mercy for the old! He pays no regard to the good or to the beautiful! His scythe cuts down sweet flowers and noxious weeds with equal readiness! He comes into our garden, tramples down our lilies and scatters our roses on the ground! Yes, and even the most modest flowers planted in the corner and hiding their beauty beneath the leaves that they may blush unseen—Death spies out even these! He cares nothing for their fragrance, but withers them with his burning breath. He is your enemy, indeed, you fatherless child, left for the pitiless storm of a cruel world to beat upon with none to shelter you! He is your enemy, O widow, for the light of your life is gone and the desire of your eyes has been removed with a stroke.

He is your enemy, husband, for your house is desolate and your little children cry for their mother of whom Death has robbed you. He is the enemy of us all, for what head of a family among us has not had to say to him, "You have bereaved me again and again!" Especially is Death an enemy to the living when he invades God's House and causes the prophet and the priest to be numbered with the dead. The Church mourns when her most useful ministers are struck down, when the watchful eye is closed in darkness and the instructive tongue is mute. Yet how often does Death thus war against us! The earnest, the active, the indefatigable are taken away.

Those mightiest in prayer. Those most affectionate in heart. Those most exemplary in life—these are cut down in the midst of their labors, leaving behind them a Church which needs them more than tongue can tell. If the Lord does but threaten to permit Death to seize a beloved pastor, the souls of his people are full of grief and they view Death as their worst foe, while they plead with the Lord and entreat Him to bid their minister live. Even *those who die* may well count Death to be their enemy—I mean not *now* that they have risen to their seats and, as disembodied spirits, behold the King in His beauty—but earlier while Death was approaching them.

He seemed to their trembling flesh to be a foe, for it is not in nature, except in moments of extreme pain or aberration of mind, or of excessive expectation of Glory, for us to be in love with Death. It was wise of our Creator so to constitute us that the soul loves the body and the body loves the soul, and they desire to dwell together as long as they may, else had there been no care for self-preservation and suicide would have destroyed the race—

***"For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud men's contumely,***

***When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare knife?"***

It is a first law of our nature that skin for skin, yes, all that a man has, will he give for his life, and thus we are nerved to struggle for existence and to avoid that which would destroy us. This useful instinct renders Death an enemy, but it also aids in keeping us from that crime of all crimes—the most sure of damnation if a man commits it willfully and in his sound mind!

I mean the crime of self-murder. When Death comes, even to the good man, he comes as an enemy, for he is attended by such terrible heralds and grim outriders as do greatly scare us—

***"Fever with brow of fire.
Consumption with palsy,
Half-warmed with life,
And half a clay-cold lump;
Joint-torturing gout,
And ever-gnawing rheum;
Convulsion wild;
Swollen dropsy; panting asthma;
Apoplexy full gorged."***

None of these add a particle of beauty to the aspect of Death. He comes with pains and griefs. He comes with sighs and tears. Clouds and darkness are round about him. An atmosphere laden with dust oppresses those whom he approaches and a cold wind chills them even to the marrow. He rides on the pale horse and where his steed sets its foot the land becomes a desert. By the footstep of that terrible steed, the worm is awakened to gnaw the slain!

When we forget other grand Truths of God and only remember these dreadful things, Death is the king of terrors to us. Hearts are sickened and reins are loosened because of him. But, indeed, he is an enemy, for what comes he to do to our body? I know he does that which ultimately leads to its betterness, but still, it is that which, in itself, and for the present, is not joyous, but grievous. He comes to take the light from the eyes, the hearing from the ears, the speech from the tongue, the activity from the hand and the thought from the brain. He comes to transform a living man into a mass of putrefaction—to degrade the beloved form of brother and friend to such a condition of corruption that Affection, itself, cries out, "Bury my dead out of my sight."

Death, you child of sin, Christ has transformed you marvelously, but in yourself you are an enemy before whom flesh and blood tremble, for they know that you are the murderer of all born of woman, whose thirst for human prey the blood of nations cannot slake! If you think for a few moments of this enemy, you will observe some of his points of character. He is the common foe of all God's people and the enemy of all men—for however some have been persuaded that they should not die—yet is there no discharge in this war. And if in this conscription a man escapes the ballot many and many a year till his gray beard seems to defy the winter's hardest frost, yet the man of iron yields at last! It is appointed unto all men once to die.

The strongest man has no elixir of eternal life to renew his youth amid the decays of age. Nor has the wealthiest prince a price with which to bribe destruction. To the grave must you descend, O crowned Monarch, for scepters and shovels are akin! To the sepulcher must you go down, O mighty man of valor, for sword and spade are of like metal! The prince is brother to the worm and must dwell in the same house. Of our whole race it is true, "Dust you are, and unto dust shall you return." Death is also a *subtle* foe, lurking everywhere, even in the most harmless things. Who can tell where Death has not prepared his ambush? He meets us both at home and abroad. At the table he assails men in their food, and at the fountain he poisons their drink.

He waylays us in the streets and he seizes us in our beds. He rides on the storm at sea and he walks with us when we are on our way upon solid land. Where can we fly to escape from you, O Death, for from the summit of the Alps men have fallen to their graves and in the deep places of the earth where the miner goes down to find the precious ore, there have you sacrificed many a hecatomb of precious lives! Death is a subtle foe and with noiseless footsteps follows close at our heels when least we think of him. He is an enemy whom *none of us will be able to avoid*, take what by-paths we may, nor can we escape from him when our hour is come.

Into this fowler's nets, like the birds, we shall all fly! In his great seine must all the fishes of the great sea of life be taken when their day is come. As surely as the sun sets, or as the midnight stars at length descend beneath the horizon, or as the waves sink back into the sea, or as the bubble bursts, so must we all, sooner or later, come to our end and disappear from earth to be known no more among the living. *Sudden*, too, full often, are the assaults of this enemy—

***"Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,
And stars to set—but all,
You have all seasons for your own, O Death!"***

Such things have happened as for men to die without an instant's notice. With a Psalm upon their lips they have passed away! Or engaged in their daily business, they have been summoned to give in their account. We have heard of one who, when the morning paper brought him news that a friend in business had died, was drawing on his boots to go to his counting-house and observed with a laugh that as far as he was concerned, he was so busy he had no time to die. Yet, before the words were finished, he fell forward and was a corpse. Sudden deaths are not so uncommon as to be marvels if we dwell in the center of a large circle of mankind.

This is Death—a foe not to be despised or trifled with! Let us remember all his characteristics and we shall not be inclined to think lightly of the grim enemy whom our glorious Redeemer has destroyed.

II. Secondly, let us remember that Death is AN ENEMY TO BE DESTROYED. Remember that our Lord Jesus Christ has already worked a great victory upon death so that He has delivered us from lifelong bondage through its fear. He has not yet *destroyed death*, but He has gone very near to it, for we are told that He has "abolished death and has brought

life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” This surely must come very near to having destroyed death altogether.

In the first place, our Lord has subdued death in the very worst sense by having delivered His people from spiritual death. “And you has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Once you had no Divine Life whatever, but the death of original depravity remained upon you and so you were dead to all Divine and spiritual things. But now, Beloved, the Spirit of God, even He that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, has raised *you* up into newness of life and you have become new creatures in Christ Jesus! In this sense death has been subdued. Our Lord, in His lifetime, also conquered death by restoring certain individuals to life.

There were three memorable cases in which, at His bidding, the last enemy resigned his prey. Our Lord went into the ruler’s house and saw the little girl who had lately fallen asleep in death, around whom they wept and lamented. He heard their scornful laughter when He said, “She is not dead but sleeps,” and He put them all out and said to her, “Maid, arise!” Then was the Spoiler spoiled and the dungeon door set open! He stopped the funeral procession at the gates of Nain, from where they were carrying forth a young man, “the only son of his mother, and she was a widow,” and He said “Young man, I say unto you, arise.”

When that young man sat up and our Lord delivered him to his mother, then, again, was the prey taken from the mighty! Chief of all, when Lazarus had laid in the grave so long that his sister said, “Lord, by this time He stinks,” when, in obedience to the word, “Lazarus come forth!” forth came the raised one with his grave clothes still about him, but yet really quickened, then was Death seen to be subservient to the Son of Man! “Loose him and let him go,” said the conquering Christ, and Death’s bonds were removed, for the lawful captive was delivered!

When at the Redeemer’s Resurrection many of the saints arose and came out of their graves into the holy city, then was the crucified Lord proclaimed to be victorious over death and the grave. Still, Brothers and Sisters, these were but preliminary skirmishes and mere foreshadows of the grand victory by which Death was overthrown. The real triumph was achieved upon the Cross—

***“He Hell in Hell laid low
Made sin, He sin overthrew:
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
And Death, by dying, slew.”***

When Christ died He suffered the penalty of death on the behalf of all His people and, therefore, no Believer now dies by way of punishment for sin, since we cannot dream that a righteous God would twice exact the penalty for one offense! Death, since Jesus died, is not a penal infliction upon the children of God! As such He has abolished it and it can never be enforced.

Why do the saints die, then? Why, because their bodies must be changed before they can enter Heaven. “Flesh and blood,” as they are, “cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” A Divine change must take place upon the body before it will be fit for incorruption and Glory! And death and the grave are, as it were, the refining pot and the furnace by means of which the body is made ready for its future bliss. Death, it is true you are

not yet destroyed, but our living Redeemer has so changed you that you are no longer Death, but something other than your name! Saints do not die now, but they are dissolved and depart.

Death is the loosing of the cable that the boat may freely sail to the fair havens! Death is the fiery chariot in which we ascend to God! It is the gentle voice of the Great King who comes into His banqueting hall, and says, "Friend, come up higher." Behold, on eagle's wings we mount! We fly, far from this land of mist and clouds, into the eternal serenity and brilliance of God's own house above! Yes, our Lord has abolished death! The sting of death is sin and our great Substitute has taken that sting away by His great Sacrifice! Death without a sting abides among the people of God, and it so little harms them, that to them, "it is not death to die."

Further, Christ vanquished Death and thoroughly overcame him when He rose. What a temptation one has to paint a picture of the Resurrection, but I will not be led aside to attempt more than a few touches. When our great Champion awoke from His brief sleep of death and found Himself in the withdrawing room of the grave, He quietly proceeded to put off the garments of the tomb. How leisurely He proceeded! He folded up the napkin and placed it by itself, that those who lose their friends might wipe their eyes. And then He took off the winding sheet and laid the grave clothes by themselves that they might be there when His saints come there, so that the chamber might be well furnished and the bed ready sheeted and prepared for their rest.

The sepulcher is no longer an empty vault, a dreary morgue, but a chamber of rest, a dormitory furnished and prepared, hung with the drapes which Christ, Himself has bequeathed! It is now, no more, a damp, dark, dreary prison—Jesus has changed all that—

***"Tis now a cell where angels use,
To come and go with heavenly news."***

The angel from Heaven rolled away the stone from our Lord's sepulcher and let in the fresh air and light again upon our Lord—and He stepped out more than a conqueror! Death had fled. The grave had capitulated—

***"Lives again our glorious King!
Where, O Death, is now your sting?
Once He died our souls to save;
Where's your victory, boasting Grave?"***

Well, Brothers and Sisters, as surely as Christ rose, so did He guarantee an absolute certainty the resurrection of all His saints into a glorious life for their bodies, the life of their souls never having paused even for a moment! In this He conquered Death! And since that memorable victory, every day Christ is overcoming Death, for He gives His Spirit to His saints and having that Spirit within them they meet the last enemy without alarm. Often they confront him with songs. Perhaps more frequently they face him with calm countenance and fall asleep with peace. I will not fear you, Death, why should I? You look like a dragon, but your sting is gone! Your teeth are broken, oh old lion, why should I fear you? I know you are no more able to destroy me, but you are sent as a messenger to conduct me to the golden gate wherein I shall enter and see my Savior's unveiled face forever!

Expiring saints have often said that their last beds have been the best they have ever slept upon. Many of them have enquired—

“Tell me, my Soul, can this be death?”

To die has been so different a thing from what they expected it to be, so easy and so joyous! They have been so unloaded of all care, have felt so relieved instead of burdened, that they have wondered whether this could be the monster they had been so afraid of all their days! They find it a pin's prick, whereas they feared it would prove a sword thrust! It is the shutting of the eyes on earth and the opening of them in Heaven, whereas they thought it would have been a stretching upon the rack, or a dreary passage through a dismal region of gloom and dread!

Beloved, our exalted Lord has overcome death in all these ways. But now, observe, that this is not the text—the text speaks of something yet *to be done*. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death, so that Death, in the sense meant by the text, is not destroyed yet. He is to be destroyed, and how will that be? Well, I take it he will be destroyed in the sense, first, that at the coming of Christ, those who are alive and remain shall not see death! They shall be changed—there must be a change, even to the living, before they can inherit eternal life, but they shall not actually die. Do not envy them, for they will have no preference beyond those that sleep. Rather do I think theirs to be the inferior lot of the two in some respects. But they will not know death—the multitude of the Lord's own who will be alive at His coming will pass into Glory without needing to die.

Thus Death, as far as they are concerned, will be destroyed. But the sleeping ones, the myriads who have left their flesh and bones to mold back to earth, Death shall be destroyed even as to them, for when the trumpet sounds they shall rise from the tomb! The Resurrection is like destruction of death! We never taught, nor believed, nor thought that every particle of every body that was put into the grave would come to its fellow and that the absolutely identical *material* would rise—but we do say that the identical *body* will be raised and that as surely as there comes out of the ground the seed that was put into it, though in very different guise, for it comes not forth as a seed but as a flower—so surely shall the same body rise again!

The same material is not necessary, but there shall come out of the grave, yes, come out of the earth if it never saw a grave, or come out of the sea if devoured by monsters—that same body for true identity which was inhabited by the soul while here below. Was it not so with our Lord? Then so shall it be with His people! And then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting! O grave where is your victory!” There will be this feature in our Lord's victory, that Death will be fully destroyed because those who rise will not be one whit the worse for having died!

I believe, concerning those new bodies, that there will be no trace upon them of the feebleness of old age. None of the mark of long and wearying sickness, none of the scars of martyrdom! Death shall not have left his mark upon them at all, except it is some glory mark which shall be to their honor, like the scars in the flesh of the Well-Beloved which are His

chief beauty, even now, in the eyes of those for whom His hands and feet were pierced! In this sense Death shall be destroyed because he shall have done no damage to the saints at all—the very trace of decay shall have been swept away from the redeemed.

And then, finally, there shall, after this trumpet of the Lord, be no *more death*, neither sorrow, nor crying, for the former things will have passed away. “Christ, being raised from the dead dies no more, death has no more dominion over Him.” And so the quickened ones, His own redeemed, they, too, shall die no more. Oh dreadful, dreadful supposition, that they should ever have to undergo temptation or pain or death a second time! It cannot be. “Because I live,” says Christ, “they shall live, also.” Yet the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, having been given up by some, certain of them have felt obliged to give up with the eternity of future punishment the eternity of future bliss—and assuredly, as far as some great proof texts are concerned, they stand or fall together!

“These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.” If the one state is short, so must the other be! Whatever the adjective means in the one case it means in the other! To us, the word means endless duration in both cases—and we look forward to a bliss which shall never know end or duration! Then in the tearless, sorrowless, graveless country, Death shall be utterly destroyed.

III. And now last of all, and the word, “last,” sounds fitly in this case, DEATH IS TO BE DESTROYED LAST. Because he came in last, he must go out last. Death was not the first of our foes. First came the devil, then sin, then Death. Death is not the worst of enemies. Death is an enemy, but he is much to be preferred to our other adversaries. It were better to die a thousand times than to sin. To be tried by Death is nothing compared with being tempted by the Satan! The mere physical pains connected with dissolution are comparative trifles compared with the hideous grief which is caused by sin and the burden which a sense of guilt causes to the soul.

No, Death is but a secondary mischief compared with the defilement of sin. Let the great enemies go down first! Smite the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. Let sin and Satan, the lord of all these evils, be smitten first and Death may well be left to the last. Notice that Death is the last enemy to each individual Christian and the last to be destroyed. Well now, if the Word of God says he is the last, I need to remind you of a little piece of practical wisdom—leave him to be the last. Brother, do not dispute the appointed order, but let the last be last! I have known a Brother wanting to vanquish Death long before he died. But, Brother, you do not need dying Grace till dying moments! What would be the good of dying Grace while you are yet alive?

A boat will only be necessary when you reach a river. Ask for *living* Grace, and glorify Christ and *then* you shall have dying Grace when dying time comes! Your enemy is going to be destroyed, but not today. There is a great host of enemies to be fought today—and you may be content to let this one alone for a while! This enemy will be destroyed, but of the times and the seasons we are in ignorance—our wisdom is to be good soldiers of

Jesus Christ as the duty of every day requires. Take your trials as they come, Brother! As the enemies march up, slay them, rank upon rank! But if you fail, in the name of God, to smite the front ranks, and say, "No, I am only afraid of the rear rank," then you are playing the fool! Leave the final shock of arms till the last adversary advances! Meanwhile, hold your place in the conflict.

God will, in due time, help you to overcome your last enemy, but meanwhile see to it that you overcome the world, the flesh and the devil! If you live well, you will die well. That same Covenant in which the Lord Jesus gave you life contains, also the grant of death, for, "All things are yours, whether things present or things to come, or life or death, all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Why is Death left to the last? Well, I think it is because Christ can make much use of him. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death, because Death is of great service before he is destroyed. Oh, what lessons some of us have learned from Death!

"Our dying friends come o'er us like a cloud to dampen our brainless ardors," to make us feel that these poor fleeting toys are not worth living for! They remind us that as others pass away so must we, also, be gone—and thus they help to make us let loose of this world and urge us to take wing and mount towards the world to come! There are, perhaps, no sermons like the deaths which have happened in our households—the departure of our beloved friends have been to us solemn discourses of Divine Wisdom which our heart could not help hearing. So Christ has spared Death to make him a preacher to His saints.

And you know, Brothers and Sisters, that if there had been no death, the saints of God would not have had the opportunity to exhibit the highest ardor of their love. Where has love to Christ triumphed most? Why, in the death of the martyrs at the stake and on the rack! O Christ, You never had such garlands woven for You by human hands as they have brought You who have come up to Heaven from the forests of persecution, having waded through streams of blood! By death for Christ the saints have glorified Him the most. So is it, in their measure, with saints who die from ordinary deaths—they would have had no such test for faith and work for patience as they now have if there had been no death!

Part of the reason of the continuance of this dispensation is that the Christ of God may be glorified, but if Believers never died, the supreme consummation of faith's victory must have been unknown. Brothers and Sisters, if I may die as I have seen some of our Church members die, I court the grand occasion! I would not wish to escape death by some by-road if I may sing as they sang! If I may have such hosannas and hallelujahs beaming in my very eyes as I have seen, as well as heard, from them, it were a blessed thing to die! Yes, as a supreme test of love and faith, death is well respited awhile to let the saints glorify their Master!

Besides, Brethren, without death we should not be so conformed to Christ as we shall be if we fall asleep in Him. If there could be any jealousies in Heaven among the saints, I think that any saint who does not die, but is changed when Christ comes, could almost meet me and you, who

probably will die, and say “My Brother, there is one thing I have missed. I never lay in the grave. I never had the chill hands of Death laid on me, and so in that I was not conformed to my Lord. But you know what it is to have fellowship with Him, even in His death.” Did I not well say that they that were alive and remain should have no preference over them that are asleep? I think the preference, if anything, shall belong to us who sleep in Jesus and wake up in His likeness!

Death, dear Friends, is not yet destroyed, because he brings the saints home! He does but come to them and whisper his message and in a moment they are supremely blessed!—

***“Have done with sin and care and woe,
And with the Savior rest.”***

And so Death is not destroyed yet, for he answers useful purposes. But, Beloved, he *is* going to be destroyed! He is the last enemy of the Church collectively. The Church, as a body, has had a mass of foes to contend with, but after the Resurrection we shall say, “This is the last enemy. Not another foe is left!” Eternity shall roll on in ceaseless bliss! There may be changes, bringing new delights, perhaps. In the eternity to come there may be eras and ages of yet more amazing bliss and still more superlative ecstasy! But there shall be—

***“No rude alarm of raging foes,
No cares to break the last repose.”***

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death and if the *last* is slain there can be no future foe! The battle is fought and the victory is won forever! And who has won it? Who but the Lamb that sits on the Throne, to whom let us all ascribe honor, glory, majesty, power, dominion and might forever and ever! The Lord help us in our solemn adoration! Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Corinthians 15:1-34.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—909, 843, 841.***

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THE LAST ENEMY DESTROYED

NO. 721

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 18, 1866,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”
1 Corinthians 15:26.***

OUR Savior stooped to the lowest depths of degradation—He shall be exalted to the topmost heights of glory. “Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name.” Our Lord was trampled beneath the feet of all, but the day comes when all things shall be trampled beneath His feet. By so much as He descended, by so much shall He ascend. By the greatness of His sufferings may we judge of the unspeakable grandeur of His glory. Already sin lies beneath His feet, and Satan, like the old dragon bound, is there also.

The systems of idolatry which were paramount in the days of His flesh, He has broken as with a rod of iron. Where are the gods of Rome and Greece? Where are Jupiter, Diana, and Mercury? Let the moles and the bats reply. The colossal systems of idolatry which still dominate over the minds of men must yet come down. The truth as it is in Jesus must before long prevail over those ancient dynasties of error, for Jesus our Lord must reign from the river even unto the ends of the earth. In these last times, when sin in all its forms and Satan with all his craft shall be subdued, then Death itself, the unconquerable Death, the insatiable devourer of the human race who has swept them away as grass before the mower’s scythe—then shall Death who has feared the face of none, but has laid armies prostrate in his wrath, be utterly destroyed!

He who is immortality and life shall bring death of Death and destruction to the grave, and unto Him shall be songs of everlasting praise. Contemplate the glory of your Master, then, Believer! From the base of the pyramid, deep in darkness, He rises to the summit which is high in glory! From the depths of the abyss of woe He leaps to the tops of the mountain of joy. Anticipate His triumph by faith, for you shall partake in it! So surely as you share in His abasement, you shall also partake in His glory, and the more you shall become conformable unto Him in His sufferings, the more may you rest assured that you shall be partakers with Him in the glory which is to be revealed.

Come we now to the text itself. The text teaches us that Death itself is, at the last, to be vanquished by Christ. No, it is to be utterly destroyed by Him so that it shall cease to be! In handling the text, there are four things which at once strike you. Here is Death an enemy. But, secondly, he is

the *last* enemy. Thirdly, he is an enemy to be destroyed, but, fourthly, he is the last enemy that shall be destroyed.

I. First, then, you have in our banquet of this morning, as your first course, BITTER HERBS—wormwood mingled with gall—for you have DEATH, AN ENEMY. It is not difficult to perceive in what respects Death is an enemy. Consider him apart from the Resurrection, apart from the glorious promises which spring up like sweet flowers sown by celestial hands upon the black soil of the tomb, and Death is preeminently an enemy. Death is an enemy because it is always repugnant to the nature of living creatures to die. Flesh and blood cannot *love* Death. God has wisely made self-preservation one of the first laws of our nature—it is an attribute of a living man to desire to prolong his life. “Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has will he give for his life.”

Life is our dearest heritage. To throw away life by suicide is a crime, and to waste life in folly is no mean sin. We are bound to prize life. We must do so—it is one of the instincts of our humanity, and he were not greater but less than man who did not care to live. Death must always, then, by creatures that breathe, be looked upon as a foe. Death may well be counted as a foe because it entered into the world and became the master over the race of Adam through our worst enemy, SIN. It came not in accordance to the course of nature, but according to the course of evil. Death came not in by the door, but it climbed up some other way, and we may therefore rest assured that it is a thief and a robber.

It was not in the natural constitution of humanity that man should die, for the first man, Adam, was made a living soul. Eminent physiologists have said that they do not detect in the human system any particular reason why man should die at fourscore years. The same wheels which have gone on for twenty, thirty, forty years might have continued their revolutions for a hundred years, or even for centuries, so far as their own self-renewing power is concerned. There is no reason in man’s body, itself, why it should inevitably return to the dust from which it was taken. Or if there is now such a reason, it may be traceable to the disease which sin has brought into our constitution. But, as originally formed, man might have been immortal—he *would* have been immortal.

In that garden, if the leaves had faded, he would not. And if the animals had died (and I suppose they would, for they certainly did die before Adam came into the world), yet there is no need that Adam should have died. He could have renewed his youth like the eagle and remained immortal amidst mortality—a king and priest forever, if God had so chosen it should be. Instead of which, through sin, though he is even now a priest, he must, like Aaron, go up to the top of the hill and put off his priestly garments and breathe out his life. *Sin* brought in death, and nothing that came in by sin can be man’s friend.

Death, the child of Sin, is the foe of man. That the Truth of God before us is most sure, some persons know by very bitter experience, for it embitters their existence. To some men this is the one drop of gall which has made life bitter to them. The thought that they should die shades them with raven wings. By the fear of death they are all their lifetime

subject to bondage. Like Uriah the Hittite, they carry in their bosom the message which ordains their death—but, unlike he, they know that it contains the fatal mandate. Like cloth which feeds the moth which devours it, their fears and forebodings feed the fatal worm. When their cups are sweetest they remember the dregs of death. And when their viands are the daintiest they think of the black servitor who will clear away the feast.

They can enjoy nothing because the darkness of death's shade lies across the landscape. The ghost of Death haunts them. The skeleton sits at their table. They are mournfully familiar with the shroud, the coffin, and the sepulcher—and they are familiar with these not as with friendly provisions for a good night's rest—but as the cruel ensigns of a dreaded foe. This makes Death an enemy with emphasis, when our fears enable him thus to spoil our life. When Death rides his pale horse, roughshod, over all terrestrial joys, he makes us feel that it is a poor thing to live because the thread of life is so soon to be cut—a miserable thing even to flourish, because we only flourish like the green herb—and, like the green herb—are cut down and cast into the oven.

Many others have found Death to be their foe, not so much because they themselves have been depressed by the thought, but because the great enemy has made fearful breaches in their daily comforts. O you Mourners! Your somber garments tell me that your family circle has been broken into, time after time, by this ruthless destroyer! The widow has lost her comfort and her stay. The children have been left desolate and fatherless. O Death! You are the cruel enemy of our hearths and homes! The youthful spirit has lost half itself when the beloved one has been torn away, and men have seemed like maimed souls when the best half of their hearts has been snatched from them.

Hope looked not forth at the window because the mourners went about the streets. Joy drank no more from her crystal cup, for the golden bowl was broken and the wheel was broken at the cistern, and all the daughters of music were brought low. How often have the unseen arrows of Death afflicted our household, and struck at our feet those whom we least could spare? The green have been taken as well as the ripe—death has cut down the father's hope and the mother's joy, and, worse than this—he has pitilessly rent away from the house its strongest pillar and torn out of the wall the corner stone. Death has no heart of compassion. His flinty heart feels for none. He spares neither young nor old. Tears cannot keep our friends for us, nor can our sighs and prayers reanimate their dust. He is an enemy, indeed, and the very thought of his cruel frauds upon our love makes us weep.

He is an enemy to us in that he has taken away from us One who is dearer to us than all others. Death has even made a prey of Him who is immortality and life! On yonder Cross behold death's most dreadful work! Could it not spare *Him*? Were there not enough of *us*? Why should it smite our David who was worth ten thousand of us? Did it not suffice that we, the common men who had been tainted by sin, should fall by a doom that was justly due to our sin—but must the virgin-born, in whom there was

no sin—the immaculate Savior—must He die? Yes, Death's vengeance was not satisfied till out of his quiver had been drawn the fatal arrow which should pierce the heart of the Son of God. Behold He dies!

Those eyes that wept over Jerusalem are glazed in death's deepest darkness. Those hands that scattered blessings hang as inanimate clay by that bloodstained but lifeless side. The body must be wrapped in spices and fine linen and laid within the silent tomb. Weep, Heaven! Mourn, earth! Your King is dead! The Prince of Life and Glory is a prisoner in the tomb! Death, all-conquering tyrant, you are an enemy, indeed, for you have slain and led our dearest One into your gloomy cell!

We may more fully perceive Death's enmity in our own persons. He is an enemy to us because very soon he will bear us away from all our prized possessions. "These things," said one, as he walked through fine gardens and looked upon lawns, and parks, and mansions—"these things make it hard to die." To leave the fair goods and gains of earth, and to return into the womb of mother earth as naked as first we came forth from it—to have the crown taken from the head, and the ermine from the shoulder, and to be brought down to the same level as the poorest beggar that slept upon a dunghill is no small thing.

Dives must be unwrapped of his scarlet, and if he shall find a tomb he shall be no more honored than Lazarus though Lazarus should die unburied. Death is an enemy to man, because though he may store up his goods and build his barns and make them greater, yet it is Death who said, "You fool, this night shall your soul be required of you." Death makes wealth a *dream*! It turns misers' gain to loss, and laughs a hoarse laugh at toiling slaves who load themselves with yellow dust. When the rich man has made his fortune he wins six foot of earth and nothing more, and what less has he who died a pauper?

Death is an enemy to Christians, too, because it carries them away from choice society. We have often said—

***"My willing soul would stay
In such a frame as this."***

We love the Saints. The people of God are our company, and with our Brethren we walk to His house, who are our familiar companions, and alas, we are to be taken away from them! Nor is this all—we are to be parted from those who are nearer still—the wife of our bosom and the children of our care. Yes, we must bid farewell to every loved one, and go our way to the land from which no traveler returns, banished from the militant host of God and from the happy homes of men.

Death is an enemy because it breaks up all our enjoyments. No cheerful peals of Sunday bells again for us. No going up to the much-loved sanctuary where the holy hymn has often borne us aloft as on eagle's wings. No more listening to the teachings of the Christian ministry where Boanerges has awakened us and Barnabas has consoled us until the desert of our life has blossomed like a rose. No mingling in communion around the Master's table. No more drinking of the cup and eating of the bread which symbolizes the Master's sufferings. At Death's door we bid

farewell to all Sunday enjoyment and sanctuary joys. Oh you enemy, you do compel us to give a long, a last farewell to all our employments!

The earnest and successful minister must leave the flock, perhaps to be scattered or torn by grievous wolves. Just when it seemed as if his life were most necessary, the leader falls, and like a band of freshly enlisted young recruits who lose the warrior whose skill had led them on to victory, they are scattered when he seemed necessary to make them one, and lead them on to conquest. He who was training up his children in God's fear sleeps in the grave when the children need him most, and he who spoke for Christ, or who was a pillar in the House of God, who served his day and generation—he, too, must fall asleep—no more to feed the hungry, or to clothe the naked, or to teach the ignorant, or comfort the feeble-minded.

He is gone from the vineyard of the Church that needed him to trim the vines, and from the House of God which needed him as a wise master builder to edify it to perfection. Who but an enemy could have taken him away at such a moment and from such engagements? He is gone, too, dear Friends, from all the success of life—and herein has Death been his bitter enemy. He is gone from hearing the cries of penitent sinners—the true success of God's ministers. Gone from leading pilgrims to the Cross and hearing their songs of joy. Great-Heart has led many a caravan of pilgrims to the Celestial City, but now he, himself, must cross the Jordan! It little avails him that he has fought with Giant Despair and brought him to his knees.

It matters little that he slew old Giant Grim who would have forced Christiana and the children to go back. Hero as he has been, the floods must still roll over his head! Of that black and bitter stream he, too, must drink, and that, too, very probably when God had honored him most, and favored him with the prospect of yet greater success. So, Brothers and Sisters, it may be with you. When you are most diligent in business, most fervent in spirit, and serving the Lord with the greatest joy—when your sheaves are heavy and you are shouting the Harvest Home it may be, then, that this unwelcome enemy will hasten you from the field of your triumph to leave to others the work you loved so well.

Nor is this all. This enemy is peculiarly so to us, because we are accustomed to surround the thought of his coming with many pains, with many infirmities, and above all, since the decay, corruption, and utter dissolution of the body is in itself a most terrible thing, we are alarmed at the prospect of it. The pains and groans and dying strife drive us back from the grave's brink, and make us long to linger in our prison and our clay. We fear to pass through the gate of iron because of the grim porters of Pain and Sickness who sit before the gate. Certainly to some it is hard work to die!

While life is still vigorous it will not yield its dominion without a struggle. In other cases where old age has gradually smoothed the pathway we have known many of our Brothers and Sisters who sleep themselves into a better land—and none could tell when they passed the mysterious line which divides the realm of life from the domain of death. It

is not always that Death is escorted by bodily griefs, but so often does he come with clouds and darkness round about him that men at the first glance conclude from his hostile array that he is no friend!

He is an enemy, no, *the* enemy, the very worst enemy that our fears could conjure up, for we could fight with Satan and overcome *him*, but who can overcome Death? We can master sin through the precious blood of Jesus, and can be more than a conqueror over all our fears—but we must bow before the iron specter of this grim tyrant. To the dust we must descend, and midst the tombs we all must sleep (unless, indeed, unless the Lord should speedily come), for it is appointed unto men once to die.

II. Having said enough upon this topic we shall now take away the dish of bitter herbs, and bring forth a little salt while we speak upon the second point—though death *is* an enemy, **IT IS THE LAST ENEMY**. I say salt, because it is not altogether sweet. There is a pungency as well as a savor, here. It is the last enemy—what if I say it is the dreaded reserve of the army of Hell? When Satan shall have brought up every other adversary, and all these shall have been overcome through the blood of the Lamb, then the last, the bodyguard of Hell, under the command of the King of Terrors, the strongest, the fiercest, the most terrible of foes, shall assail us!

It has been the custom of some great commanders to keep a body of picked men in reserve to make the final assault. Just when battalion after battalion have been swept away, and the main army reels. Just when the victory is almost in the enemy's hands, the all but defeated commander pours his mightiest legions upon the foe, uncovers all his batteries and makes one terrible and final charge with the old guard that never has been beaten, and never can surrender, and then, perhaps at the last moment, he snatches triumph from between the enemy's teeth!

Ah, Christian, the last charge may be the worst you have ever known. You may find in your last moments that you will have need of all your strength, and more—you will be constrained to cry to the Strong for strength—you will have to plead for heavenly reinforcements to succor you in that last article! Let no man conclude himself at the close of the war till he is within the pearly gates, for, if there is but another five minutes to live, Satan will, if possible, avail himself of it. The enemy may come in like a flood precisely at that flattering moment when you hoped to dwell in the land Beulah, and to be lulled to rest by soft strains from the celestial choirs.

It is not *always* so, it is not *often* so, for, “at eventide there shall be light” is usually the experience of the Christian. But it is sometimes so. It has been notably so with those whose previous life has been very peaceful—a calm day has ended with a stormy evening—and a bright sun has set amid dark clouds. Some of those whose candle never went out before have been put to bed in the dark. The soldiers of the Cross have been pursued by the foe up to the city walls, as if the Lord had said to His soldier, “There are more laurels yet to win. Behold I give you another opportunity of glorifying My name among My militant people.”

Brethren, if Death is the *last* enemy I do not think we have to fight with him *now*. We have other enemies who claim our valor and our watchfulness today. We need not be taken up with devising plans of present defense against an enemy that does not yet assail us. The present business of life, the present service of God and of His cause are our main concern, and in attending to these we shall, as Christians, be found best prepared to die. To live well is the way to die well! Death is not our first foe but the last! Let us then fight our adversaries in order and overcome them each in its turn, hoping that He who has been with us even until now will be with us until the end.

Notice, dear Friends—for here lies the savor of the thought—it is the LAST enemy. Picture in your mind's eye our brave soldiers at the battle of Waterloo. For many weary hours they had been face to face with the foe. The fight had lasted so long and been so frequently renewed that they seemed to have encountered successive armies, and to have fought a dozen battles. Charge after charge had they borne like walls of stone. Imagine, then, that the commander is able to announce that they have only to endure *one more* onslaught of the foe. How cheerfully do the ranks close! How gallantly are the squares formed! How firmly their feet are planted!

“Now,” they say, “let us stand like a wall of rock! Let no man shrink for a moment, for it is the last the enemy can do. He will do his worst, but soon he will be able to do no more but sound to boot and saddle and leave the field to us.” The last enemy! Soldiers of Christ, do not the words animate you? Courage, Christian, courage! The tide must turn after this—it is the highest wave that now dashes over you—courage, Man, the night must close. You have come to its darkest hour, the day star already dawns!

Now that you are dying you begin to live. The last enemy conquered! Does it not bring tears to your eyes to think of bearing your last temptation? We little care who the foe may be if he is but conquered and is but the last, for have we not been perplexed with a succession of enemies? We have only conquered one foe to find another waiting for us. Our path has been, up to now, from temptation to temptation, from trial to trial, from tribulation to tribulation. We are growing weary, we cannot forever bear wave upon wave, grief upon grief, and temptation upon temptation. Like the warrior of old, our arm grows weary, but our hand (glory be to Divine Grace!) cleaves to our sword! We are faint, yet pursuing!

And what good news when we shall hear that the present enemy is the last! Though it is Death, we will rejoice! O Christian, there will be no more poverty to tempt you to murmur, no more losses and crosses to cast your spirit down, no more inbred sins to mar your devotion and to spoil the glory of your faith! There will be no outward temptation, no sinners with their trifling talk to vex your ears, no blasphemies to torment your soul, no more aches and pains of body, no more tortures and troubles of spirit!

The Dog of Hell will be silenced forever! There will be no more Canaanites to drive out of the land! The race of Amalek shall be utterly

destroyed. And where will *you* be? In the land that flows with milk and honey! In the home of peace and the abode of rapture—

***“Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God, eternally shut in.”***

Well may you welcome Death! Let him come in his chariot of fire—he bears you to Elijah’s God! Let him lay hold of the shield and buckler and frown upon you like a king of fierce speech and terrible countenance—he carries you not into captivity, but delivers you out of bondage!

At his coming your sky may be darkened, the thunders may roll, and the solid pillars of your house may be shaken, but it is the last commotion, and is therefore the token of everlasting rest! Having overcome death, peace is proclaimed, the sword is sheathed, the banners furled, and you are forever more than a conqueror through Him that loved you!

III. Having come so far, we may now proceed another step. Death is an enemy, the last enemy—HE IS AN ENEMY TO BE DESTROYED. Here I take away the salt and bring the milk and honey, for surely here is much of exquisite sweetness and of true spiritual food to the child of God. Death is the last enemy to be destroyed. The destruction of Death will be perfectly achieved at the Resurrection, for then Death’s castle, the tomb, will be demolished and not so much as one stone left upon another.

All Death’s captives must go free! Not a bone of the Saints shall be kept as a trophy by the arch foe. Not so much as a particle of their dust shall he be able to show as a spoil which he has been able to preserve. He must disgorge the whole that he has fed upon. He must pay back all that he has stolen. The prey shall be taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive shall be delivered. From the land and from the sea, those that were lately dead, and those that centuries ago had dissolved into dust shall rise. The quickening trumpet shall achieve a work as great as the creation!

The voice of God which said, “Let there be light” and there was light, shall say, “Let there be *life*,” and there shall be life. And, as in the valley of vision—bone shall come to bone, and flesh shall come upon them, and life shall come into them—and they shall live! The same bodies shall arise, the same for identity, but not the same for quality! The same, but oh, how changed! They were the shriveled seed when Death sowed them in the earth—they shall be the fully developed flower when Resurrection’s springtime shall bid them blossom from the dust! They were battered and time-worn when he dragged them to his den—they shall come forth with the dew of their youth upon them when Christ shall give them life. Oh the sweet gains of death!

“It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.” Oh the interest which we shall win from that arch usurer who thought to claim both principal and interest! “It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.” It is sown a natural body, it is raised a heavenly and spiritual body. O Death, you are no gainer by *us*! But we shall be mighty gainers by *you*! And though this poor body shall become worms’ meat, and decay shall drive its tunnels through and through and through this mortal frame and make its solemn way—though back to dust eye and arm and hand and brain

must mold—yet not lost, nor in any degree injured, shall the whole fabric be! It will be as if it were filtered, purified by the grave, and my fair body shall emerge again!

The grave shall be to the Believer's body as the bath of spices in which Esther bathed herself to make herself ready to behold the great King. Corruption, earth, and worms do but refine this flesh and make it pure according to God's will, until we shall put it on afresh at His bidding. We throw aside a workday dress, all torn, and crumpled and dusty! We are glad to put it off, glad that evening time has come, and that it is time to undress. But when we awake we shall find, instead of that worn-out vesture, a noble change of raiment! The same dress will be there, but marvelously changed—the great Fuller shall have exercised His art upon it, and made it like the array which Moses and Elijah wore on Tabor!

How goodly will our royal robes be! How dressed with pearls, how stiff with threads of gold, and studs of silver! How fitted for God's priests and kings! How meet for those who shall enter the pearly gates and tread the golden streets of the heavenly Jerusalem! How meet for those that shall walk in the golden light of the city that has foundations, whose Maker and Builder is God! Death is thus to be destroyed by the resurrection of the body when our Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout. A resurrection which shall prove to assembled worlds that to those who are in Christ Jesus, "to die is gain."

But, dear Friends, although this is a great Truth of God with regard to the future, I desire to conduct your minds for a few minutes over the road by which Christ has, in effect, virtually destroyed Death already. In the first place, He has taken away the shame of death. It was once a shameful thing to die. A man might hold his head low in the presence of angels who could not die, for he might remember with shame that he is the brother of the worm and corruption is his sister. But now we can talk of death in the presence of archangels and not be ashamed, for *Jesus* died. It is from now on no degradation for man to die, to sleep in the bed where Christ reposed. It is an honor! And angels may almost regret that they have not the ability in this respect to be made like unto the angels' Lord.

Oh, Christian, you need not speak of death with bated breath, but rather rejoice that you have fellowship with Jesus in His tomb, and shall have fellowship with Him as one of the children of the Resurrection! Christ has, moreover, taken away the sting of death. The sting of death lay in this—that we had sinned and were summoned to appear before the God whom we had offended. This is the sting of death to you, unconverted ones—not that you are dying, but that after death is the *judgment*—and that you must stand before the Judge of the quick and the dead to receive a sentence for the sins which you have committed in your body against Him.

This makes it death to die. This hangs the dying bed with black curtains, and puts out the light of the sick chamber. The second death makes death to be death, indeed, but—

***"If sin is pardoned I'm secure,
Death has no sting beside.***

***The law gave sin its damning power,
But Christ, my Ransom, died.”***

Christmas Evans represents the monster Death as being so intent to destroy our Lord that it drove the dart in its tail right through the Savior till it stuck in the Cross on the other side—and the monster has never been able to draw it out again! Christ on the Cross took away the sting of Death, so that he has no further power to hurt the Christian. “The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law, but thanks be unto God which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Our Divine Lord has taken away from sin its slavery. The bondage of death arises from man’s *fearing* to die. Death has fitted fetters upon many a man’s wrists, and fixed an iron collar on his neck, and driven him with his whip about the world—but Jesus has taken away the yoke of Death from the necks of His disciples. The Christian is not afraid to die. He looks forward to it, sometimes, with equanimity, and frequently even with expectation! Hundreds of Saints have been able to speak of dying as though it were but everyday work, and there have been hundreds more who have looked forward to their last day with as much delight as the bride hopes for her wedding. Was not our song, which we sung just now, a truthful one?—

***“Sweet truth to me! I shall arise,
And with these eyes My Savior see.”***

It was to some of us, at any rate, and we are still desirous to sing it, longing for that time when our death shall come and we shall enter into the joy of our Lord!

Moreover, Christ has abolished Death by removing its greatest sorrows. I told you that Death snatched us away from the society of those we loved on earth. It is true, but it introduces us into nobler society by far. We leave the imperfect Church on earth, but we claim membership with the *perfect* Church in Heaven. The Church militant must know us no more, but of the Church *triumphant* we shall be happy members! We may not see time-honored men on earth who now serve Christ in the ministry, but we shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the noble army of martyrs, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, and the glorious company of the Apostles! We shall be no losers, certainly, in the matter of society, but great gainers when we are introduced to the general assembly and the Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in Heaven!

I said that we should be taken away from enjoyments. I spoke of Sunday bells that would ring no longer, of communion tables at which we could not sit, and songs of holy mirth in which we could not join—ah, it is small loss compared with the gain unspeakable! For we shall hear the bells of Heaven ring out an unending Sunday! We shall join the songs that never have a pause, and which know no discord! We shall sit at the banqueting table where the King Himself is present, where the symbols and the signs have vanished because the guests have found the Substance! And the King eternal and immortal will be visibly in their presence!

Beloved, we leave the desert to lie down in green pastures. We leave the scanty rills to bathe in the bottomless river of joy. We leave the wells of

Elim for the land which flows with milk and honey. Did I speak of leaving possessions? What are the possessions? Moth-eaten garments, cankered gold and silver, things that rust consumes and that thieves destroy! But we go to the land where nothing corrupts or decays, where flowers fade not, and riches take not to themselves wings to fly away. Loss? Let the word be banished! Death gives us infinitely more than he takes away.

I spoke of Death as an enemy because he took us from sacred employments. It is so, but does he not usher us into far nobler employments? To stand before that Throne of God upon the sea of glass mingled with fire! To bow within the Presence chamber of the King of kings, gazing into the glory that excels! And to see the King in His beauty—the Man that once was slain wearing many crowns and arrayed in the vesture of His glory—His wounds like sparkling jewels still visible above. Oh to cast our crowns at His feet! To lie there and shrink into nothing before the Eternal All! To fly into Jesus' bosom! To behold the beauty of His love and to taste the kisses of His mouth! To be in Paradise, swallowed up in unutterable joy because taken into the closest, fullest, nearest communion with Himself! Would not your soul burst from the body even now to obtain this rapture? Cannot you say—

***“I'd part with all the joys of sense
To gaze upon Your throne,
Pleasure springs fresh forever there,
Unspeakable, unknown”?***

If death does but give us a sight of Jesus and makes it our employment forever to sing His praise, and forever to learn His Character—forever more lie in His bosom—then let him come when he wills—we will scarcely call him enemy again! An enemy destroyed in this case becomes a friend. The sting is taken away from you, you hornet, and you become a bee to gather sweet honey for us! The lion is slain, and like Samson we go forth to gather handfuls of sweetness. I shall not tarry longer, though greatly tempted, except to say this one thing more—the fear of death which arises from the prospect of pain and grief is also taken away by Christ when He reminds us that He will be with us in our last moments. He will make the dying bed feel soft, and in the midst of the river He will say, “Fear not, I am with you.” So that in *all* respects death is to be destroyed.

IV. Time warns us to clear the tables and send home the guests with the fourth consideration, THAT DEATH IS THE LAST ENEMY THAT WILL BE DESTROYED. Do not, therefore, give yourself so much concern if you do not feel death to be destroyed in you at present. Supposing that it does cause you pain and fear, remember that *dying* Grace would be of no value to you in *living* moments. Expect that if your faith is not faith enough to die with, yet if it is faith as a grain of mustard seed it will grow—and grow it will, into a more developed state, enabling you to die triumphantly when dying time comes.

When I looked at the Book of Martyrs and noticed the fearful pictures of Saints in their dying agonies, I asked myself, “Could I bear all that for Christ?” and I was compelled to say, “No, I know I could not as I am now.” But suppose I were called to martyrdom, could I bear it? And I thought I

could say without presumption I could, for Christ would give me Divine Grace when dying Grace was needed. Now Death is to be destroyed, but not till the last. You have many enemies who are not destroyed, and you have inbred sins not slain. Look well to *them*. Until they are all gone you must not expect Death to be destroyed, for he is the last to die.

So then, Friend, let me whisper in your ear—expect, still, to lose your dear ones—for Death is not destroyed. Look not upon any of your friends as though they would be with you tomorrow, for Death is not destroyed yet. See the word “mortal” written upon all our brows. The most unlikely ones die first. When I heard during this week of several cases of dear friends who have gone to their reward, I could have sooner believed it had been others, but God has been pleased to take from us and from our congregation many whom we supposed to be what are called good lives, and they were good lives in the best sense, and that is why the Master took them!

They were ripe and He took them Home. But we could not see that. Now remember that all your friends—your wife, your husband, your child, your kinsfolk—are all mortal. That makes you sad. Well, it may prevent your being more sad when they are taken away. Hold them with a loose hand. Do not count that to be freehold which you have only received as a leasehold. Do not call that yours which is only lent you, for if you get a thing lent you and it is asked for back, you give it back freely. But if you entertain the notion that it was *given* you, you do not like to yield it up. Now, remember, the enemy is not destroyed and that he will still make inroads into our family circle.

And then remember that you, too, must die. Bring yourself frequently face to face with this Truth of God—that you must die. Do not forget it, Christian Friend! No man knows whether his faith is good for anything or not if he does not frequently try that faith by bringing himself right to the edge of the grave. Picture yourself dying. Conceive yourself breathing out your last breath and see whether, then, you can look at Death without quaking—whether you can feel, “Yes, I have rested upon Jesus. I am saved. I will go through Death’s tremendous vale with His Presence as my stay, fearing no evil.”

If you have no good hope, may God give you Divine Grace at this moment to fly to Jesus and to trust in Him. And when you have trusted in Him, then, and only then, will Death be to you a destroyed enemy. May God grant His blessing for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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ALL AND ALL IN ALL

NO. 2501

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JANUARY 24, 1897.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MAY 3, 1885.**

*“Christ is all, and in all.”
Colossians 3:11.*

*“That God may be all in all.”
1 Corinthians 15:28.*

IN our two texts there are three “alls” rising, one out of the other—the first leading to the second and the second conducting to the third. You will notice at once that the first two are in the present tense. “Christ is all” and, “Christ is in all.” The third one refers to the future—it is yet to be fulfilled. When the great consummation shall come, then shall God be, “all in all.” I shall not detain you with any sort of preface, for my sole endeavor at this time will be to impress these texts upon your memory—in the hope that the Spirit of God may make them a living and abiding influence upon your hearts and lives—that to you, Christ may be all, that Christ may be in you all, and that so, in all that you do, and say, and are, God may be all in all.

I. We begin at THE FOUNDATION WHERE ALL BLESSING BEGINS. “Christ is all.”

These are but few words, yet what Divine shall ever fully expound them? “Christ is all.” Here is sea-room enough for all godly mariners! Yet with the best wind that ever blew to speed the ship along, and with every sail set and filled with the breeze from Heaven, who shall ever be able to go from one shore of this great Truth of God to the other—“Christ is all”? I shall not venture upon such a voyage! I can but look across this sea and ask you to kindly notice the connection in which the text stands that we may learn exactly what the Apostle meant. Writing, “to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse,” Paul says, “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all.”

That is to say, *in the matter of salvation*, “Christ is all.” That which had often seemed the most important thing in the world is here thrown into the background by the Apostolic declaration, “There is neither Greek nor Jew.” For a long time it seemed as if the eternal Light of God was only revealed to the eyes of the seed of the house of Israel. They sat in the brightness and all the rest of the world lay in dense darkness. But, behold, the Christ has come, “a Light to lighten the Gentiles,” and henceforth salvation is “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,” but, “Christ is all.”

It is a great privilege to be born of godly parents, to have come of a race that for generations has feared the Lord. But let no man trust merely in his natural descent. If you had sprung from a lineage of saints. If every one of your progenitors had feared God, yet still, nothing of all this could matter for your own salvation. “Christ is all.” Now may the Gentile dog eat of the crumbs that fall from the Master’s table where He feeds His Israel! No, the dog is transformed into a child—he who was far off is made near! In the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, both Jew and Gentile are made one and all the sheep of the Good Shepherd are sheltered in the same fold! We who believe in Jesus are children of him who was called the father of the faithful and though, according to the flesh, “Abraham was ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledges us not,” yet by faith we become the spiritual seed of the great father of all Believers! As he believed in a son being born according to God’s promise, and in a seed to which the Covenant promises were given, even so do we. And entering into union with Christ Jesus, that blessed Son of the promise, we become joint-heirs with Him, “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” You see, then, dear Friends, that it is not *race*, or *pedigree*, or *descent* that saves the soul, but that “Christ is all.”

Then Paul goes on to say, “There is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision,” from which I gather that *there is nothing in outward ceremonies which can save*. Everything is still of Christ—“Christ is all.” That circumcision in the flesh was ordained of God and it was the mark of the seed that He had chosen. It was not, therefore, lightly to be spoken of. But now, “we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” At this day even the ancient Divine ordinance is put in the background, for, “Christ is all.” So is it with every other ordinance, whether ordained of God or of man. It must never be placed in the front, as if it were the means of salvation! I say to you who may have been sprinkled, or to you who may have been immersed—to you who may bow at your altars, or to you who may come to the Communion Table—I do not place all these rites on a level, certainly, for some are of God and some are not, but I do place them all on a par in this respect—that they enter not into the essence of our salvation! And I say to all of you, “These things cannot save you, for, ‘Christ is all.’” Be you who you may, and do you what you may, you shall not be saved because of your natural birth, nor because of any supposed holy acts that you may perform! Neither shall you be saved by any transactions that may be the work of a human priest! You must have Christ as your Savior and you must rest in Him, alone, or you cannot be saved! He is the one foundation and, “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” for, “Christ is all.” The Lord Jesus Christ sums up everything that ordinances can possibly mean and all that pedigree and descent can possibly bring—and He is infinitely more than all of them!

Read on in this Epistle and you will find that as race and ceremonialism are both put into the background, so also is culture. “There is neither Barbarian nor Scythian, but Christ is all.” Of course it was for many reasons much better to be a Roman citizen than to be a rude barbarian.

And it is much better, now, to be a civilized man than an untutored Indian of the Wild West. But so far as vital godliness and the soul's salvation are concerned, there is no difference! The simplest and most illiterate, upon believing in Jesus Christ, shall find that "Christ is all." And the most learned and most fully instructed, if they bring any of their learning and their culture and put it side by side with Christ as a ground of trust, shall sorrowfully discover that none of those things can be placed on an equality with Him, but that, "Christ is all."

I rejoice, Brothers and Sisters, in this Truth of God! If the Gospel of Christ were something eclectic which could only be received by a superior few, what a poor prospect there would be for the great mass of people among whom we dwell! If the Gospel of Christ were a matter so deep and profound that it could not be understood except by years of educated thought, where would they be who have never had any culture and, perhaps, can scarcely read the letters of a boy's schoolbook, if, this day, they were lying upon the bed of sickness, expecting soon to stand before God? Blessed be God, we have a remedy for sin's sickness which the Great Physician understands! And if *He* is well acquainted with it, it matters not whether the patient fully comprehends it or not! Blessed be God, the effect of Christ's medicine does not depend upon the degree in which we can realize how it acts, but if we receive it by *faith*, if it penetrates into the *heart*, if it takes possession of the *affections*, it will work in us that wondrous change by which we shall be delivered from the love of sin and saved both from its condemnation and its power! Thank God for a simple Gospel! Blessed be His name that "Christ is all"! If, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, you have learned that Christ died for the ungodly. If you know that He is the Son of God and the one great Propitiation for sin, and if you accept Him as such, you have that which has delivered you from going down into the Pit, for God has found a ransom even for you!

Once more. By this expression, Paul means us to understand that *all conditions and position of men in this life are put on a level before Christ*, for He adds, "There is neither bond nor free; but Christ is all." When the Gospel of Jesus Christ came into the world, it contemplated the saving of bondmen as well as of freemen. Of course there was a great distinction between being bond or free, and the Apostle wrote, "If you may be made free, use it rather," but as to the real power of God's Grace, there was no distinction between the noblest citizen of Rome and the poor slave who wore an iron collar and was fastened, like a dog, at his master's gate! Christ's Grace could enter into the heart of the servile, as well as into the heart of the noble—and could work alike in each.

Now, hear you, Sirs! It is well that you should be industrious, that you should be thrifty and that you should make your way in the world. But this is not the way to eternal life! What if you should work till your fingertips were raw? What if you labor during the livelong day and night and deprive yourselves of needed sustenance, that you may hoard up gold and silver? With all this, you cannot buy salvation, or be an inch nearer to it. "Christ is all." And if you lie penniless upon a workhouse bed, there is that in Christ which can save you! If you beg your food from

door to door, yet shall you not stand at a disadvantage with this great and blessed Gospel, for it comes freely to you with this message and, as it asks of you no *learning*, so it asks of you no wealth, no rank and no position—for, from first to last—“Christ is all.”

Thus have I taken the words in their connection and they are full of important teaching. Remember that they mean just this—that *to the man who is saved, Christ is all his trust*. Our healing lies in His stripes. Our life lies in His death. Our pardon lies in His having suffered the punishment due to us. Our eternal life is in the fact that He once died for us and that He now lives to make intercession for us. “Christ is all.” You must not add anything to Christ as your ground of confidence, but just lean the weight of your sin, your sorrow, your needs and your desires wholly and entirely upon Him who lives to stand for you before God. Christ, then, is all our trust!

And, as for our belief, *Christ is all our creed*. What He has taught us personally and by His Holy Spirit through the Epistles—what He gives us in His Word—this is what we believe, and nothing else! The Bible and the Bible, alone, is the religion of a Christian! “Christ is all”—and all the Truth that there is in this Book is in Him. This revelation of the Word of God is the same revelation as that which is made in the Christ, Himself, who is the true Logos, the Word of God. “Christ is all” as our creed.

And, further, *Christ is all as our example*. You may safely do what He did and you may not do what *He* would not have done. You may judge of the right or wrong of everything by this question—What would Jesus Christ do in these circumstances? You may thus know what you should do. And what you cannot suppose He would have thought of doing, you must not venture to do, for, “Christ is all.” He draws a ring around us and we must not go outside that circumference. He is the atmosphere in which we are to live. He is about us. He is above us. He is beneath us. He is within us. He is everywhere and, to us, if we are Christians, “Christ is all.”

There is the foundation of all our faith and hope—and I want you who preach and you who teach the children to always keep to this one Truth of God—that “Christ is all.” Many other things have a measure of instruction in them, but Christ is all that is necessary. If you want to save men, if you truly wish to elevate men, if you desire still further to exalt them to the very highest degree of which human nature is capable, remember that “Christ is all” as your lever, and in Him is your fulcrum, and in Him is the power to use the lever! “Christ is all.” You need not go abroad for anything, for “you are complete in Him.” The ship is furnished from stem to stern in Him. The house, from its foundation to its rooftop, is all complete in Him. “Christ is all.” Oh, to know Him! Oh, to have Him as our own! Oh, to live wholly upon Him! Oh, to grow like He and always to keep before our mind’s eyes this great Truth that, “Christ is all”!

II. Now we are going a step farther to consider the second part of our first text—“Christ is all, *and in all*.” This is a matter of experience and it reveals to us HOW THE WORK OF GRACE PROCEEDS. Christ is in all His people, this gracious possession is the work of the Spirit of God, by whose means Christ is formed in us, the hope of Glory.

To my mind it is a very beautiful thing that the Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes into the soul, does *not annihilate any part of the personality*, but shines in each separate being, for He is not only all, but He is *in* all His people! There is, for instance, the Greek—the “Gentile”—shall be the word. Very well, the Grace of God does not turn the Gentile into a Jew. He remains a Gentile, but Christ is in him and, therefore, he is made into a new creature. There have been some beautiful specimens of holiness and Grace found in many of the Gentile nations dwelling in the islands of the sea, or among all sorts and conditions of men scattered up and down the world—and Christ has shone gloriously in them. Then comes the Jew. When he is saved, Christ is in him. The Apostles of Jesus were mostly, at least, of that race, and many later Believers have been of the seed of Abraham. But Christ has been in them and He has gloriously displayed Himself in them. The Lord Jesus Christ, dwelling in the Jew, leaves him still a member of the house of Abraham, but, through the Presence of the Lord Jesus within him, how wondrously his whole character is exalted!

Then you have the man who is circumcised and the man who is uncircumcised—and in each of these, if he is saved, Christ dwells. And each one, therefore, lives according to his light, his knowledge and his standing. Christ enters into the barbarian and though in certain natural respects he remains, to a large extent, what he was before, yet, as soon as Christ enters into him, all of his barbarism that is *sinful* disappears! He still retains the free spirit of the child of the wilderness or the son of the woods, but how grandly has Christ displayed Himself in such men as he is! The personal piety of a Red Indian, or of an African freshly taken from the wilds of the Dark Continent has been as brilliant and as beautiful—certainly as fresh, bright, clear and striking as the piety of the most educated of the Caucasian race! Whether he is barbarian or Scythian, if Christ is formed in him, the hope of Glory, it is only another form of the same exquisite beauty!

It is always a pity when our missionaries try to make other nations into English people. If we have pride enough to think so, we may regard ourselves as the model for others to imitate, but it would be a great pity if we should be such a model that every native of India must copy the Englishman! I like the worship of our Black friends in Jamaica and in the Southern States of America, with its delightful simplicity, its vivacity—yes, and I venture to say, even its grotesqueness. And I would not have a black man begin slavishly to imitate the white man. Let him continue to be a black man and let Christ shine in the black man’s face right gloriously. Yes, let a man be a brown man, or a yellow man, or a red man, or whatever color God made him! The more he keeps to his own nationality and reflects the Glory of Christ from that angle, the more will Christ’s Gospel triumph and the more will Christ Himself be honored!

The Apostle adds, as we have already noticed, “Neither bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.” May the day speedily come when there shall not be a bondsman under Heaven! But in those days of the worst of all slavery, the Christian slaves were among the most brilliant gems in the Redeemer’s diadem. Oh, what brave deeds they did for the Crucified One!

I should think that it was harder to be a Christian *freeman*, in those days, than to be a Christian slave. But whether bond or free, whether the man took his place in the Forum among the senators, or his lot was cast yonder among the slaves—either case, if Christ was in him—the Light of God shone gloriously from Him and God was magnified thereby! Christ is all, and Christ is in all His people, each one remaining the same in His individuality, but Christ shining in each one!

I must again refer you to the connection of our text and ask you to read in the 9th and 10th verses, where Paul says, “You have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.” You recollect that Adam was made in the image of God and that he lost that image by his sin. But when Christ enters into a man and he is created anew in Christ Jesus, then *he receives afresh the image of God*. The image of God is Christ Jesus, for He is the express image of His Father’s Glory. He that has seen Christ has seen the Father and, inasmuch as Christ enters into all Believers and makes them like Himself, the image of God is thereby restored in all Believers.

So, note again that because Christ dwells in him, *every Believer becomes a copy of Christ*. Read the 13th verse—“Forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if anyone has a quarrel against another, even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.” Is not that beautiful—Christ in every Believer—that Christ the image of God, and that Christian the image of Christ so that, just as Jesus freely forgave, so does every Christian freely forgive! Do you find it difficult to forgive one who has wronged you? Then you will find it difficult to get to Heaven! If you cannot enter Heaven unless you are like Christ, how can you be like Christ unless you can freely forgive? This seems a grand opportunity for you to stand on the same platform with Christ and, in some respects, to do the works of Christ when, having been slighted, ungratefully treated, misrepresented, slandered and injured, you can say, “I as freely forgive you as the Lord Jesus Christ forgave *me*.” This is the token and evidence that Christ is in you—when you become imitators of Christ as dear children!

It is a remarkable fact, as I have often said to you, that, although our Lord Jesus Christ is more perfect than any other example—indeed, the *only perfect example*—yet it is more easy to imitate Christ than it is to imitate some of the best of His people! That is curious, but it is a fact. I know a Brother whom I greatly admire, an eminent Christian—I would not mention my own name in the same day with his, he lives so near to God and is such a truly gracious man—yet I could not imitate him. It is quite impossible that my nature should ever become exactly like his. Another Brother, whom I used to know—he is now with God—was equally good, but he was as different from the other good man as anyone could be. They were as opposite as the poles in their temperament and behavior. The first Brother I mentioned is solid, calm, quiet, unexcitable. And I should think that he very seldom laughs and that even then, he does not know that he has done it!

My other friend used to, sometimes, literally roar with laughter! He was full of earnest love for the souls of men and God blessed him greatly

in his service. He had a merry vein and a humorous spirit—and I was more at home with him than I was with the first one. Yet the Lord Jesus Christ is far more easy to imitate than either of my two friends, for sometimes I am so depressed that I cannot show all the cheerfulness of the one. And at other times, having such a humorous vein in my nature, I would be hypocritical and unnatural if I suppressed it and always acted as if I were as solemn as death itself! But in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, albeit that there is never any mention of laughter, yet there were ripples of holy pleasantry in His life and in His Character though He was “a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He is more of a Man than the best of other men, and more imitable, though altogether inimitable, than those who can be imitated and, perhaps, can even be excelled.

What is more, Christ in each one of these Believers *creates them all into one body*. Read the 14th and 15th verses—“And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one body and be you thankful.” The same life is in all Believers—in you and in me—well, then, we are one! The same life is in ten thousand Christians—then they, also, are all one! If the same life quickens them and they live under the same influences, and they act according to the same rule, then are they one and Christ becomes the glorious Head of a body which He renders glorious by quickening it with His own indwelling!

I like to think of this blessed Truth of God—Christ in all Believers creating them into one body—this is the beginning of true unity. Here, for instance, is a man who says that he is baptized as I am, but if he has not the life of God within him, I cannot get on with him, whatever he may call himself—I am not in union with him. There, perhaps, comes a Methodist, and we begin to talk about the Lord Jesus Christ and I find that he loves Him with all his heart, and I know that I do, though I wish that I loved Him more. And directly we two get on together—we feel that we are one in Christ because of the one Life which quickens us. Do you not feel it to be so? Have you not been reading a book, sometimes, and said to yourself, “Oh, what a blessed book this is! How full of the Divine life”? Yes, and after you have read it, you have been surprised to find that the person who wrote it was a Romanist—for there are many books of that kind—or the writer was a member of some church that, in many respects, lies in very dangerous error! You say to yourself, “I do not care where this man lived, or what he did, I am one with him as far as he is one with Christ.”

The one common feeling of union to Christ and Christ being in us makes us feel that we are one with each other. Wherever there is, as Augustine used to say, “*aliquid Christi*”—“anything of Christ”—there our love must go forth, we cannot help it! Christ in you all makes you into one body and unites you together in a mysterious and unique manner. There is not a parallel to it anywhere else—it gives such a living, loving, abiding, undeniable unity that even if you wish to forget it, you cannot! If the man is in Christ, you must love him, do what you may, for you are one body with him.

Such is this manifestation of Christ in His people, that it leads, further, to *the offering of one oblation*. Read the 16th verse—“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with Grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Yes, all God’s people love God’s Word! They all find a great sweetness in “Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” They all delight to sing praises unto the Most High. Montgomery truly wrote—

“The saints in prayer appear as one,”

but it is equally true that the saints in *praise* appear as one. And the saints in love to the Word of God appear as one because Christ, being in them, and Christ being one, they are knit to one another. Oh, how blessed it is for us to have Christ in us!

And lastly upon this point, all that I have said leads up to each *one acting to the glory of one name*, for if Christ is in you, the 17th verse is true of you—“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” What a life to lead—Christ taking such entire possession of a man that everything he does, he does as if Christ, Himself, were doing it, because he does it in Christ’s name and by Christ’s power! As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God,” so that it shall no longer be yourselves that do it, but Christ that dwells in you. This shall sanctify the most common actions of everyday life and make the whole of the Christian’s career to be sublime, so that while he treads the earth beneath his feet, literally, he is also doing it *spiritually*— and all the while his conversation is in Heaven.

I must just linger one minute here. You all agreed with me when I spoke about Christ being all. You understood clearly that He is the only ground of our hope. Can you also go with me in this part of my subject—Christ is in all His people? Is Christ formed in *you*, the hope of Glory? Do you know anything about an *indwelling* Christ? Verily I say unto you, the Christ on the Cross will never save you unless there is also Christ *within you*! It is the Christ on the Cross in whom we trust, but the outcome of that trust is that He is born in our hearts! His power comes from His love, His Grace, His truth, Himself—and we live because He lives in us. Do you understand this? If you do not, I pray God that you may, for, unless Christ is in you, you know what the Apostle says—“Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves. Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, unless you are reprobate?” If you are disapproved of God, Christ is *not* in you. If Christ is not in you, you are disapproved of God. But if He lives in you, you are “accepted in the Beloved” and that life of yours shall never die out, but you shall, by-and-by, behold your Savior’s face in the kingdom of His Glory.

Brothers and Sisters, we are not what we ought to be! We are not what we want to be, we are not what we shall be! But we are something very different from what we used to be. The change in us is as great as in that blind man who said, “One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.” The change is not merely external, but it is vital! The Lord has taken away the heart of stone out of our flesh and given us back the heart of flesh which belonged to man in his unfallen nature—and then

upon this heart of flesh He has also worked wondrously, making it conscious to spiritual influences which once did not affect it, and writing upon the fleshy tablets of that renewed heart, His perfect Law. Glory be to the name of Jehovah, a notable miracle has been performed upon us! A miracle so marvelous that it is comparable to the resurrection from the dead and, in some respects, it even surpasses the wonders of creation, itself! We shall tell this story in the streets of the New Jerusalem and we shall draw around us attentive crowds as we narrate our experience and tell the tale of the sin which ruined us, and of the mercy which reclaimed us!

Thus have we gone up the second rung of this golden ladder. First, "Christ is all." Next, "Christ is in all."

III. Now kindly turn back in your Bibles to our other text—the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, 15th chapter, and 28th verse—"That God may be all in all." First, Christ is all. Next, Christ is in all His people, but THE CONSUMMATION, the top-stone of all is "that God may be all in all."

The passage in which this text stands seems to be a very difficult one to understand. The common meaning that is given to it by nearly every interpreter I have ever met with, I do not believe or accept. It seems to a great many to be taught here that there is to come a time, called, "the end," when the Lord Jesus Christ, having conquered all His enemies, is to resign His position, abdicate His Throne and cease to be King, "that God may be all in all." Let us read the connection of the passage—"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He has put all things under His feet. But when He says all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son, also, Himself, be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

The general meaning given to these words is that there is to be a time when the mediatorial Kingdom of Christ will come to an end of itself and He will deliver up the Kingdom to God, ceasing, Himself, to be King. I can only say that if this is the teaching of this text, it is not taught anywhere else in the whole Bible—nobody can find any parallel passage to it, or anything like it. Neither do I believe that it is taught in the Bible at all—neither here nor anywhere else! And I can say that for this reason I cannot see that there is to be any end whatever to the mediatorial Kingdom of Christ.

You perceive that *it is the Son who is to be subject to the Father* but it is of the Son that we read in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Unto the Son He says, Your Throne, O God, is forever and ever," where the Father, manifestly speaking to the Son, in His complex Person declares that His Throne is to be forever and ever. Brethren, in the day when the Christ shall have overcome all His enemies and Death, itself,

shall be destroyed, there will be no abolition of His mediatorial kingdom! There still stands in the Scriptures this promise of our Lord Jesus Christ—"To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on My Throne, even as I, also, overcame, and am set down with My Father on His Throne." Does that mean that we are to have a temporary reign with a temporary Christ—a brief rule with a short-lived Monarch? I do not believe it!

Moreover, the priesthood enters into the mediatorial office most eminently, yet "the Lord swore and will not repent, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." If the priesthood is to continue forever—and Melchisedec was king as well as priest—then the kingdom of Christ is to continue, world without end. Moreover, in the Book of the Revelation—not to mention the almost innumerable passages to the same effect—we find that when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, it is added, "*and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever.*" When the kingdoms are brought back, they will be the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. Then we read of "the throne of God and of the Lamb." And when all kingdoms are subdued and the Lord God Omnipotent reigns, then we are told to expect the announcement, "The marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has made herself ready." What does all this mean but a continuance of that dispensation in which the Christ, the Son of Man, as the Son of God, shall be still at the head of His people, still their Priest and still their King and still reigning? And that is exactly what this passage says, if you will kindly look at it again and dismiss all previous prejudices from your minds!

The fact is our Lord Jesus Christ has performed and is still performing, *a work which will end in putting everything into its proper order*. Now, the proper order, according to the first Epistle to the Corinthians, the 11th chapter, and the third verse, is this—"I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." This is how it stands—the woman with the man for her head, the man with Christ for his Head—and Christ with God for His Head. Such is the Scriptural order—an order which has been disturbed all through except with regard to the Father and the Son, for God has always been the Head of Christ! Now, Christ has come into the world to restore that right order from the bottom, right up to the top! And it is to be so restored, first, by Christ becoming the Head of men—when He shall have put down all His enemies under His feet and when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power, "for He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

Christ is come into the world that all the evil that is in the world should be subdued. And He will drive it out of the world. There shall remain no power that shall dare revolt against the majesty of Heaven! Over the whole surface of this globe, beneath the new heavens and on the new earth, there shall yet be the Kingdom established of which Jesus Christ shall be the supreme Head and over which He shall reign forever, King of Kings and Lord of Lords! The Lord hasten it in His own time!

Well, and what then?" asks one. "Does it not say that He is to deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, and to be subject to the Father?" Exactly so. Supposing that India had been in revolt against our Queen and that a Viceroy had been sent there, and that he had warred against all the rebellious tribes and kingdoms, and they had all been conquered. He telegraphs to the Queen, "Your Majesty's empire is at your feet." Does he therefore cease to be Viceroy? Not necessarily in the least degree! He may still remain as ruler and yet have delivered up the kingdom. I believe that to be the meaning of this passage—that Christ has so conquered the Kingdom that it is all God's.

But what does it mean when it says that *then* shall the Son also be subject unto the Father? It means that He is subject, now, and that *even then* He will continue to be subject to the Father, that is all. It cannot mean that at a certain time Christ will *become* subject to God, because He has been so ever since that day of His glorious humiliation when, for His people's redemption, he took upon Himself the form of a Servant—and that condition is not to cease. He is still to be the Representative of God even when He shall have put down all power and all authority under His feet and when God has put all things under His feet. It is manifest that He that did put all things under Him is not, Himself, under Him. And it is clear, from the text, that even then, God shall be the Head of Christ. I do not know whether you catch my thought yet, but it is just this—all evil subdued, all the saints having Christ dwelling in them, Christ the Head of all these saints, and then God, still as God, all the more surely and securely supreme over all things—for the Head of Christ is God and God is all in all.

The conclusion of the whole matter is this, that every day this should be the great consummation to be kept in view, "that God may be all in all." For this, the heroic labors of the Son of Man here on earth! For this, His cruel death! For this, His rising again! For this, His grasping of the mediatorial scepter! For this, His ruling in Providence! For this, His management of the world's affairs! For this, His Second Coming and the glory of His saints! All this, while it continues to bring Glory to Him, has been done in subjection to His great Father's will. He has accomplished it all as the Father's Representative and Messenger, sent by Him to do it and then, when it is all done, and He shall reign forever and ever, even then, the Son, Himself, shall continue in that position in which He put Himself long, long ago, "that God may be all in all." Then will the whole universe, restored and brought back to its proper place, be ordered according to the eternal Covenant arrangement.

And the practical outcome of it all is this. I want you, beloved Friends, so to live as to be persuaded that it will be so one day, that God shall be all in all—that there shall come a time when we shall stand before the Throne of God, God in us all, and everything in us of God, when all His elect, all His redeemed, all to whom Christ is all, and all in whom Christ is, shall only know God as their All in All! God all in their very existence. God their all in every hymn. God their all in every pulsing of their joy. God their all in every hope. God their all in every memory. God all to them and God *in* all of them to the very fullest—all redeemed, all deliv-

ered from the power of sin, all quickened into the Divine and God-like life, all summed up in Christ, Christ comprehending them all—and then Christ Himself Head over all things to His Church, standing and giving unto God the Glory forever and ever, that the Father may be All in All.

I see no abdication of a throne here. I see not even a change of dispensation and I do not believe in any! But, as surely as God lives, our King lives, and our Priest still ministers before Him. And He shall still be King over His people, though still, as the Christ, in His infinite goodness, abiding as subject unto God, Himself, God forever and ever, and yet, in His complex Person, making the Father to be All in All. Looking forward to that glorious consummation, we can join again in the jubilant hymn we sang just now—

***“Hallelujah!—hark! the sound,
From the center to the skies,
Wakes above, beneath, around,
All creation’s harmonies!
See Jehovah’s banner furled,
Sheathed His sword! He speaks—‘tis done!
And the kingdoms of this world
Are the kingdoms of His Son.
He shall reign from pole to pole,
With illimitable sway.
He shall reign when, like a scroll,
Yonder heavens have passed away!
Then the end—beneath His rod,
Man’s last enemy shall fall!
Hallelujah! Christ in God,
God in Christ is All in All.”***

Now let us begin at the beginning. This is very simple—“*Christ is all.*” Then may the Spirit of God help us to go on to the next rung of the ladder—“*Christ is in all His people.*” There is the difficulty! Is He in you, Beloved? Have you received Him by faith? Then comes the third step—this may be, at present, full of mystery, but we shall see it in brighter light, by-and-by—*God shall be all in all.* So shall He be to us even now! Amen and Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—412, 355, 813.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY
TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

DYING DAILY

NO. 828

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, AUGUST 30, 1868,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***"I die daily."
1 Corinthians 15:31.***

IN a certain sense we all do this. The very moment we begin to live we commence to die. We are like hour-glasses—there are fewer sands left to run from the very moment they begin to trickle down. The whole of our life is like an ebbing tide—our first months and years may look like advancing waves, but the whole is retreating, and by-and-by the living flood will be replaced by the mire of death—

***"Our pulse, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the tomb."***

Or, as Watts words it—

***"Every heaving pulse we tell,
Leaves but the number less."***

This is no land of the living, but the land of the dying, and this so called life is but one protracted act of death. This is not our rest, our soul is ever on the wing. Like the swallows, we must depart for another land. Life is a long descent to the valley of the shadow of death—it shelves gradually to the precipice—and no man can prevent his feet from sliding down it every hour. We fly like arrows to that common target of mankind—the grave—so that we may all say in the words of the text, "I die daily."

Of some, also, this may be affirmed in a very painful and unhappy sense. They die daily because they feel a thousand deaths in fearing *one*. They are those of whom the Apostle writes, "who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." This nightmare oppresses them and breaks their rest. This ghost stalks before them at all hours and makes life grim with foreboding—this gall-drop makes all their pleasant things bitter. They are afraid to die and yet are so fascinated by death that they cannot take their eyes off it. They cannot shake off the chill horror of the grave. Their clothes seem to them to smell of the coffin, and their bread tastes of the morgue. They are slaves to a fear whose chains are heavy.

These timorous doves ought to remember that Jesus Christ came into this world on purpose that He might deliver such as they are. It was never His intention that any of His people should be subject to the fear of death, nor ought they to be—nor, indeed, *would* they be if they walked by faith—for what can there be in death for a Christian to fear? "The sting of death is sin," but that is pardoned! "The strength of sin is the Law," but Christ has fulfilled it! What is dying but departing to be with Christ, which is far better? And why should a man fear that which is far better for him—

which will rid him of all his ills, admit him into unlimited blessedness, take him away from all fear and all care—and conduct him to the fullness of the Glory which is laid up in Christ Jesus? I trust you and I may never have to moan out, in that mournful and gloomy sense, “I die daily,” but with *holy joy* may we look forward to the hour of our departure which is so near at hand.

Paul used this expression in an heroic sense, to which I fear you and I are not very likely to attain. He said, “I die daily,” because every day he deliberately put his life in jeopardy for the cause of Jesus Christ. One day he went into the Jewish synagogue, knowing that in all probability they would drag him out, scourge him with rods, or, perhaps, in fanatic zeal, stone him to death. Another day he was found in the street preaching to a multitude of idolaters and denouncing their gods—irritating them by exposing their vices and by advancing truths which were novelties—and so contrary to their prejudices that they could not endure them.

Behold him often crossing the sea in a frail ship, or passing over rugged mountains among robbers! He was often in peril from the mountain-torrents, and from cold and nakedness. In all places, he lived the life of one whose neck was always on the block—who stood ready at any minute to offer himself up as a sacrifice for Christ. In these more silken days we cannot run such serious risks, and it is to our shame that there are some who are not *willing* to run even the *little* risks which the times may demand. We know professors who cannot imperil their business by an admission of their faith, and others who cannot venture the breaking of some fond connection for the sake of the Cross of Christ.

Alas, there are many who are ashamed of Jesus because a father or a mother or a brother might, perhaps, ridicule them or sneer at them. They are ashamed to bear the loss of anything, when our Apostle *rejoiced* to suffer the loss of *all* things, and did count them but dung that he might win Christ! May the heroic age of Christianity return to us, and even if it should be necessary that the furnace should be heated once again, yet if God’s gold may but glow with that clear, bright luster which it exhibited in the former days, we may well be satisfied with the fury of the blazing coals! The persecuted were happy men despite their sorrows. They were honored men notwithstanding their shame. They were earth’s princes, Heaven’s peers—for they could say that for Christ’s sake they, every day, were delivered unto death—but did rejoice and were exceedingly glad that they were privileged to suffer for the Cross of Christ.

Our text we shall now take in a *spiritual* sense. Neither fixing our minds upon its universal sense, nor yet upon its mournful, nor even upon its heroic meaning—but taking it in a *spiritual* way common to all the saints, “I die daily.” Our subject this morning is the art and mystery of dying every day. First, we shall notice some previous necessities for the practice of this art. Secondly we shall speak upon in which this art consists. and thirdly, upon the great benefits which will accrue to those who shall learn to die daily.

I. First, there are CERTAIN THINGS PREVIOUSLY NECESSARY before a man can be a scholar in this great art of dying everyday. The first neces-

sity is that he must be *willing* to die. If he shall shrink at death, and covet life and dread even the *thought* of departure, it will be a miserable necessity to him that he will have to die someday—but he will not be at all likely to be an apt pupil in the art of dying today, and tomorrow, and the next day—and every day that he lives. With a natural disinclination, with an awful fear and a terrible shrinking from the very fact of dissolution, he will not be at all forward to bring his mind to find delight and satisfaction in contemplation of the grave.

In order that a man should be willing to die daily he must be a saved man. He must have his sins forgiven and he must know it by infallible assurance or else death will be to him, of all things, the most terrible. He must be clad in the righteousness of Jesus Christ as with armor of proof, and he must know that he has it on or else death will be a dart that will afflict him terribly, and from it he will shrink with all his soul. He must be a man perfectly at peace with his Creator, not ashamed to look into his Maker's face in Christ Jesus, nor afraid to stand before Jehovah's solemn bar.

He must, in fact, have looked by faith to the blood-stained Cross and he must have seen Jesus making a full atonement, there, for sin. He must have accepted that Atonement as being made for *him*. He must be resting on it with an unstaggering faith, believing that all his sin is put away through that one dread Sacrifice. He must know that the righteousness of Christ is wrapped about him and that he is accepted in the Beloved, or else to talk to Him of dying daily would be somewhat analogous to inviting the thief to be hanged daily, or asking a culprit to be arrested daily. It will be enough, he thinks, to endure once that dread sharp stroke which will separate him from his joys. He certainly will not predict and anticipate the period, but be glad to forget it while he can, crying, "Let us drown care and live while we live."

Yet more is necessary than this to make a good student of the art of daily dying. A man must not only submissively await his dissolution, but he must be even *desirous* of departure and *cheered* with the hope of the better land. A hard thing, you say, yet not impossible. Impossible, perhaps, to *nature*, for it shrinks from the hard thought of dissolution, but possible enough to Divine Grace, for Grace overlooks the temporary separation, anticipating the bright resurrection and the everlasting Glory.

To an ungodly man, to die can never be a thing to be desired, for what remains for him after death? His possessions go from him. Like birds that have rested for a little while upon the field, but take to their wings when the traveler claps his hands, so all the worldling's riches must take to themselves wings and fly away. And what remains for the sinner in the next world? A fearful looking for of judgment, and of fiery indignation! Ungodly men and women, you know what you have to expect when you shall be called to the unknown land to face the Judge upon His Throne! You will be condemned, banished, accursed, executed, destroyed forever! It is not possible that death should be a welcome thing to drunkards and unclean persons, or even to merely *moral* men.

But the Believer, what of him? To him death is gain! What he loses of comfort, here, is made up to him a thousand fold by the joys of the hereafter. He knows that for him there is the crown of triumph and the palm of victory—for him the harp of ecstatic joy! For him the robe of immaculate purity! For him a place at the right hand of God, even the Father, in eternal security and ineffable delight! Therefore the Christian not only regards death as a necessity through which he hopes to be supported as a patient through a painful operation, but he *looks* for his departure as an heir looks forward to the day of his majority! As the bride anticipates her wedding day!

It is the time when his manhood shall burst its shell, when his imprisoned soul shall snap its fetters, when that which was long like a shriveled corn shall bud and blossom, and bear sweet fruit in the garden of God! When he is in his right mind and his faith is in active exercise, he longs to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better! Endowed with such a longing, he becomes an apt pupil in the art of dying daily.

Once more, if a man would learn to die daily, it is necessary that he should have a good understanding and a clear knowledge as to what death really is, and what are the matters that follow upon it. Nothing is more becoming our study than the departure of our souls from this mortal stage to the immortal Glory. What is it to die? Is it to cease to be? If it were so, then, indeed, we should be idiotic to speak of dying *daily*. To die! Is it to part with every comfort and lose every joy? If it were so, and we had to be driven forth from the body as naked spirits—houseless, restless, drifted about with everlasting winds—we might, indeed, be excused if we shut our eyes to the dreary prospect.

To die is nothing but for the soul to be separated from the body. The body remains to rest in the grave and mold back to mother earth while the soul ascends *immediately* to God who gave it—to be at once with Jesus, *immediately* in Paradise, without the body—a disembodied spirit, naked for a time, but yet most sweetly blessed! To die is, in its after consequences, to wait a little in a state of bliss, and then at the trump of the archangel to return to put on the body again—the same body which was buried, the same in identity but marvelously changed—as changed as the flower from the seed, or the crocus with its golden cup from the bulb which was put into the soil.

I say our souls shall come back to their bodies to a new marriage. The spirit and the body shall be knit together once again, so that our manhood shall be again entire—body, soul, and spirit, all being in Glory even as we are here on earth—but far more gloriously developed. Believers in Christ know that the first resurrection delivers them from all fear of second death. We shall reign with Christ upon the earth—a thousand years of glory shall be given unto the saints—on this same globe in which they suffered with their Master they shall triumph with Him! Then in the last time when Jesus shall have delivered up the kingdom unto God, even the Father, then the people of God shall reign forever and ever in unsurpassed and unimaginable delight!

This it is, then, to die. There is nothing dreadful at all about it. It is altogether the very simplest of operations, although it involves afterwards the most wonderful of results. I suppose that to die is but a pin's prick, or less than that. The pains which we call dying pains are really pains caused by *life's* struggles to hold its own. Death gives us no pain whatever. It is the anodyne that lulls us into a blessed slumber. It is the obstinate grasp of life within us which causes all the agony of separation—but as soon as life relaxes its stern grip, grief is ended. As for Death, his hand is gentle and tender, and to those who know him his voice is music and his countenance a delights!

Now, Christian, if you can get an intelligent view of what dying is—and a clear view of what will follow dying—you will then be able to learn to die daily. And by the Grace of God you may yet be able to achieve it—and everyday, before you have mingled with the din of this world's turmoil, you may bathe in Jordan's river, and be refreshed!

II. Secondly, WHEREIN DOES DYING DAILY CONSIST? Many things go to make up this high achievement. The first is to consider with much care, everyday, the certainty of death to all those who shall not remain at the coming of Christ, and to let the certainty of our own death or change go with us as an undivided companion. We ought always to feel that we are mortal—it should be to us a garment that we never shake off. The fact that we are here but as sojourners and wayfarers should be painted on our eyeballs.

We are never right-hearted when we imagine that we are abiding inhabitants of this land. We are but strangers and sojourners in it! We are only right when we act as such. The Lord, knowing that we should try to shake off the remembrance of death, has so helped us as almost to *force* us to it. We have before us the frequent departures of others—the path to the cemetery is well trod. It is well for us that we live not always in the house of feasting—the grave's brink is a healthier resort than the table of luxury.

Just think how often you have seen strong men who appeared to be as likely to live as yourselves taken away in their strength! How often have we marked others sickening gradually before our eyes like slowly fading lilies! God rings the funeral knell in our ears and bids us remember that the bell may next toll for us. Our dying friends cast their shadows over us and cool our worldly heats and madness. In the presence of the corpse we gather up our skirts and gird up the loins of our mind, because as surely as the soul is gone from yonder lifeless body we, too, must follow. We have no lease on life. We have no earthly immortality guaranteed to us. Let us, then, remember the myriads who have marched before us. Let us keep their track before our eyes, feeling that we are wending our way to the same goal.

The whole of Nature around us also helps us to remember that we are mortal. Look at the year. It is born amid the songs of birds and the beauty of flowers. It comes to its ripeness and luscious fruits and shouts of harvest home—but soon the old age of autumn comes and a lamentation is heard, "The harvest is passed and the summer is ended." Amidst the fall

of decaying leaves and the howling of the cold winds of winter the year finds its end. So, too, with each day. Well does Herbert sing—

***“Sweet day, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
The dew must weep your fall tonight,
For you must die.”***

Every flower we see lavishing its fragrance on the breeze trembles because it hears the footsteps of Death. It blooms that it may wither. “Its root is ever in its grave, and it must die.”

Where do you see immortal things beneath the moon? Lift up your eyes—look where you may—don’t you see everywhere, change and mutability, and departure written upon Nature’s brow? And all this God hangs up, as it were, as a notice upon the wall—like the mystic characters which amazed Belshazzar—that we may not dare to forget that it is appointed unto all men once to die. No, as if this were not all, not only is Nature full of helps to make us familiar with the grave but our own *bodies* also tell us of our appointed change. What is that gray hair but the beginning, the first sign, the foretold of the coming winter which shall freeze the life current within the veins and chill the heart itself?

What is that loosened tooth but a part of the fabric crumbling to let us know that the whole tenement must soon come down? What are those aches and pains, and what that decay of the eyesight, and that dullness of hearing—what are those tottering knees, and why that cane but that we may receive clear warnings that the whole tabernacle is shaking in the rude winds of time and must soon totter to its fall? The Lord will not suffer us to win a freehold here! He puts affliction into our family and disease into our flesh in order that we may seek after a better country, even a heavenly one!

Let me exhort you then, beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, seeing you have all these mementoes to keep the lamp of the sepulcher always burning in your chambers, to be well acquainted with the shroud and the winding sheet. Every time you take off your clothes at night think how you must be unrobed for your last narrow bed. And when you put on your garments in the morning, familiarize yourself with the time of the resurrection—when you shall put on your glittering garments in which you are to rejoice forever.

Do not, I pray you, put aside these reflections because at first sight they may seem somber. Familiarize yourself a little with the gray tints of death and they will brighten before your eyes—and before long you will see a transcendent beauty in such meditations to which you would not be a stranger if you could! Thus the first part of dying daily is to think constantly of death.

The next part of dying daily is to put your soul, by faith, through the whole process of death. It is a wise thing to sit down quietly and to picture your departure. You need not stretch your fancy much. You have seen the like with others—you can picture it for yourselves. There you lie, upon that bed grown hard with weeks of weariness, and loving watchers whisper in the silent chamber. They are anxious that you should not catch the sound, but your quick ear hears it, and you wistfully enquire, “What is it

the physician says?” You gather, though they tell you not, that you must soon depart. As a Believer in Jesus you are glad to hear it! You have had enough of this world. You are like a child tired out with its day’s play and you are glad to fall asleep upon your father’s breast.

The solemn article comes nearer and nearer, the pulse is fainter. You have enough consciousness left to perceive that the eye is being glazed and outward objects are lost. Perhaps you have also enough strength to sing your last song, for Heaven has met you while you are yet here and your soul is flooded with a joy you never knew before! You have evidently arrived at the border land, for there are flowers beneath your feet, the like of which never bloomed in the wilderness! And you hear songs such as you never before heard in the desert. Then you, yourself, begin to sing. Perhaps it is some such song as this—

***“And when you hear my eye-strings break,
How sweet the minutes roll;
A mortal paleness on my cheek,
But Glory in my soul,”***

or perhaps you burst out with a song concerning the new Jerusalem, “your happy home,” name ever dear to you! And you rejoice that you are about to end your labors in the joy and peace which remains for the people of God.

The solemn instant has come, but will you be able, precisely, to distinguish it? May there not be so sweet a gradation from the earnest of the Spirit to the bliss, itself, that at no exact moment shall there be a wrench from time to eternity? All may be so Divinely ordered that pilgrims may advance by degrees from the tabernacle of earth to the Temple of Heaven. There will be a matchless change, but it will not necessarily be a shock to the spirit—the folding gates of Paradise may be opened by degrees that our eyes may be gradually prepared to endure the excessive Glory.

But while we linger, the spirit has mounted. Now, oh, joy of joys! You are in His bosom, who loved you with an everlasting love! The hand that embraces you still wears the nail print, and as you bow to kiss those sacred feet and cast the crown which has been placed upon your head before that Man, that God—you see that the feet are the feet of Him who was nailed to the tree for you. What joy! What blessedness to see that your Father smiles upon you! The Spirit of God fills you and you know Him and you grieve Him no more! The Son of God gives you to partake in all His Glory, for you are with Him where He is!

Now be sure that you rehearse such thoughts as these as though they were a sacred drama in which you are soon to take your part. Traverse the azure way. Plume your wings for the last solemn flight. Let faith, like a courier, march before to track the way. Every semblance of affectation upon dying beds is shocking. I have never been able to admire the oft-quoted deathbed of Addison. “Come,” he said, “and see how a Christian can die.” It seems to me too like a *brag* to be a fitting utterance for a soul humbly resting at the feet of the Cross and looking out over the black waters which fringe the eternal shore.

The true idea of a Christian’s dying speech is a humble and gracious witness to those who look around—that though a sinner, he has found

peace with God through the precious blood of Jesus—and would have others trust in the same Savior. *Prepare to deliver such a testimony.* Often picture yourself as bidding adieu to every earthborn thing. Anticipate the final stroke, the upward mounting, the soaring through tracts unknown, the sight of the Judgment Throne, the eternal Beatific Vision. So will you die daily.

But we have not come into the soul of the matter yet. The way to die daily, practically, is to hold this world with a very loose hand. Birdlime so much abounds. When a man wins a little gain in this world it sticks to him, holds him, prevents his aspiring to heavenly things and holds him bound to earth. Our dear friends, and our beloved children are all strong chains, binding our eagle-souls to the rock of earth. “Ah!” said one, as he was shown a rich man’s ample house and luxuriant gardens, “these are the things that make it hard to die.” And I suppose they are. When they are misused and wrongly applied, they birdlime us—they hold us to the soil when we would wish to mount.

But, Brothers and Sisters, you must not be the servants of the present. Look on your lands as a dying man would look on them. Look on your children and the comforts of your fireside, and your little savings, as so much hoar-frost to vanish in the sun. Look on your hourly cares and daily joys as on things which perish with use—mere visions of the night—things that flit at the rising of the sun. You will never enjoy earth rightly unless you know it to be a poor mutable thing! Earthliness eats as does a canker, and if you become so great a fool as to think that mortal things are *eternal*, or that you, yourself, will long endure, you will reserve for yourself many sorrows.

See you not how the glittering dew drops exhale as the day grows old—such and so fleeting are human joys! Mark how the meteor marks the brow of night, and soon is seen no more—such and so hasty is mortal bliss! Hold not earth’s treasures with too firm a grasp. Give them all up to your Father and use them as temporary comforts borrowed for awhile, to be returned soon. Our bereavements would not be half so sharp if we always viewed our friends as being lent to us. A man does not cry when he has to return a tool which he has borrowed. No, but as an honest man, he knew he borrowed it—he never called it his own—and he hands it back, thankful that he has had it so long.

When you weep, who have lost your friends, you do well. But if you carry that weeping to repining, you ought to remember the mercy of God in letting you retain these dear ones at all, and in sparing them to you so long. And you should mourn that a rebellions spirit should so reign in you as to make you lament because your God takes back His own. Gracious souls rejoice to say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” To die daily, then, is to hold this world with a loose hand—and to look upon earthly possessions as fickle joys.

To die daily, again, is to test our hope and our experience very solemnly everyday. Alas, for that evil habit of taking our religion for granted—of looking back to some period a few years ago and believing that we were then converted—and reckoning that it must be all right now because of

something that happened then! Brethren, it is most mischievous to live in the past and to be afraid, at any moment, to try our faith by *present* tests. We may live on experience if we will use experience in its proper place—but any man who is afraid to search present evidences and to try the foundation of his faith before God, today, is treating his soul most wretchedly.

How would you like to die today, dear Friend? Would you like to die with a hope too weak and tender to endure to be questioned? Can you enter into eternity with a hope that you dare not put into the crucible? Oh, no, you feel you need sure work when it comes to the last! You need a safe and stable foundation to build your soul upon in the trying moment! Well, then, Beloved, see that your hope is stable *now*. Each day examine yourself whether you are in the faith. Whether you have really repented of sin. Whether you have actually and truly laid hold of Jesus Christ. Search! See whether the root of the matter is in you and the fruits of the Spirit proceeding from you—whether God dwells in you—whether you walk after the flesh or walk after the Spirit.

I would not foment doubts and fears, but I would, above all things, press professors to avoid presumption. The man who is in a sound business does not object to overhaul his stock and examine his books. But the man to whom bankruptcy is eminent generally seeks to shut his eyes to his actual position. O Sirs, if you are right with God you will desire to be quite sure! You will not flinch at heart-searching preaching! You will be anxious to be put into the sieve and to be tried even as by fire! Your prayer will be, “Cleanse me, O God, from secret faults! Search me and try me, and know my ways!” You will not be among those who hunt after prophets with smooth tongues who prophesy in gentle strains. You will not desire to have your cradle rocked that you may be lulled into presumption, but you will labor to make sure work for eternity lest you suffer irreparable loss.

Beloved, do this everyday! Look into the glass of the Word and see what manner of men you are. Purge yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of your spirit. Put yourself under the lash of the severest texts of Scripture, and by all means labor that you are not deceived, for God will not be mocked but will deal with you according to *fact*. To die daily, it will be necessary that you come everyday, just as you did at conversion, to the Cross of Christ, as a poor guilty sinner and rest in Him. I do not know anything that is more delightful, more necessary, or more profitable than a renewal of the *look of faith*. I have always found, when I have been in fear as to my safety, or have had hard thoughts of death pressing heavily upon me, that my only resort has been a humble resort to the Atonement. Carey ordered that they should write on his tombstone—

**“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Christ’s kind arms I fall.
He is my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and my All.”**

Here is an epitaph for each one of us. Just come with nothing of your own—no good feelings and no good works. Fall become the Cross of Jesus and rest there. Take Jesus to be everything that God’s Law and your con-

science can require. I think, dear Friends, this is the way to die daily—and if you can always live as an empty sinner filled with the fullness of Christ, as a lost sinner saved wholly by a precious Savior—you are then fit to live and fit to die!

But I have not quite concluded. To die daily, the Christian should take care to be always in such a place and situation that he should not be ashamed to die therein. Therefore, the possessor of faith in Jesus Christ has no license to be found in places of ungodly and unclean amusement. How would he like to die there? The old story has it that the devil once carried off a very hopeful young man, hurrying him on a sudden to Hell. A monk of great saintliness called after the devil, “You have taken one of mine. You have no business with him!” “Well,” said Satan, “I found him in the theater. He was on my premises, and I took him.”

I should not wonder if many a professor is carried off in that style. If professors of religion go astray into the purlieu of iniquity, no wonder if they are shot at by that old hunter after souls! Where your treasure is there your heart is. Tell me where you go to find your amusement and I will tell you what you are—for where a man finds his highest joy—there his heart most truly abides. It may serve you as a guide when you have to question yourself, “Ought I to do this, or to go to this or that place?” Then ask yourself, “Should I be prepared to die in such company and in such an occupation?” If you could not, leave it alone. If you would, you may fairly go.

The Christian, also, should never be in a state of temper in which he would be ashamed to die. Who would like to die bearing malice against any man? Who would wish to die with hard thoughts of a neighbor? Who would like to die in a passion? You have no business to get into a passion at any time, but to die daily. The aim and strife of a Christian should be to keep himself in that delightfully equable frame of mind in which he should be prepared, at any moment, to stand before his God with his present emotions and feelings upon him. You say that is hard work? So it is, but you have a glorious Helper—the Holy Spirit shall enable you—and by His power you may accomplish miracles of holiness.

To die daily a Christian man should have all his affairs in such a condition that he is ready to die. I admire that habit in Whitfield, who was a man so very orderly that he would not go to bed at night until everything was in order, for he said, “I should not like to die with a pair of gloves out of place.” And yet I know some Believers who have not made their wills! And if they were to die today, and they may, their property would go far otherwise than it ought to do, and a wife whom they love so well might be put to serious suffering.

A Christian man has no right to leave his affairs in a tangle. If he cares not for the affairs of his own household he is worse than a heathen and a publican! Many traders keep their business transactions in such a confusion that if they were taken away their very character might be impugned—but such should not be! We must set our house in order, for we must die, and not live. We should watch because the Master comes as a

thief, and a good servant would wish to have all things in good order at his Lord's appearing.

So should it be with all our acts towards God. Some of you have not yet fulfilled the Master's command with regard to Baptism. Now, if you died unbaptized you would be saved, but still, I am sure you would not wish to be taken away till you had fulfilled your Master's bidding. Make haste, then, and delay not to keep His commandments. Some of you have dear children who are unconverted and you have not spoken to them about their souls. Now, if you were called, this afternoon, to sleep upon the bed of death I am sure you would wish that you had delivered your soul fully to these dear ones. This afternoon, then, call them into your room and plead with them. A thousand other things may press upon your conscience, but you have been putting them off—attend to them, I pray you, at once—as a dying man should do! Who would wish to die with a duty left undone? I would like to depart when the day's work is quite finished.

It is said that that venerable divine, Watts Wilkinson, asked of God that he might never know consciously what it was to die, and he died, as many of you will remember, in his sleep, so that his admission into Heaven must have been almost without any recognition of death. In his case death was swallowed up in victory. Perhaps such an end may be given to us. I would choose so to die, that I should have nothing to disturb my mind of matters left undone, but be found waiting and ready. If we are thus prepared, we have acquired the art of dying daily.

III. What would be THE PRACTICAL BENEFIT of such daily dying? It will help us to live well, and this is no small matter. We would not be covetous and grasping if we knew that the heap would soon melt or we should be taken from it. We should not be so impetuous, and attach so much importance to trifles, if we felt that there were grander things close at our heels. We should not be so obstinate, and take so long to be persuaded to Christian duty, if we felt that the time was short and it behooved us to get much done in a little time. If we saw our candle flickering in its socket, we should be far more diligent. We should not be so groveling and so earthly if we saw that the world is founded on the floods, and therefore is utterly unstable.

Next to living close to Christ, I do not know of any better prescription for overcoming worldly-mindedness than this dying everyday. He whose mind anticipates a departure to be with Jesus is armed with weapons for warring a good warfare. But mark, Brothers and Sisters, the best practical effect is that it would help us to die. No man would find it difficult to die who died everyday! He would have practiced it so often that he would only have to die but once more—like the singer who has been through his rehearsals and is perfect in his part. He has but to pour forth the notes once and for all and have done.

Happy are they who every morning go down to Jordan's brink and wade into the stream in fellowship with Christ, dying in the Lord's death, being crucified on His Cross, and raised in His Resurrection! They, when they shall climb their Pisgah, shall behold nothing but what has been long familiar to them—as they have studied the map of death. I do not know how

wide the benefits of dying daily may be, but they seem to me to be commensurate with the whole period of human existence. You young people, you would not be likely to plunge into youthful gaieties to your own damage if you felt that you might die while yet you are young. That wild oat sowing would never cause you a harvest of regrets if you felt that you might perish in the midst of sin! Graves are often short trenches for little prattlers. Beware, you boys and girls!

You men of middle age, how it would check you in that eager pursuit after gold—that hastening to be rich which never leaves a man innocent—if you felt that it is little matter, after all, to gain wealth since so soon you must be parted from it. And you who totter on a staff, I cannot conceive of anything which would keep you in a holier frame of mind, or in a happier and calmer state than to be always dying the death of Jesus that you might live His life! Put the Christian man in any position, and this art of dying daily will be useful to him. Is he rich? He will not be purse proud because he knows that he must soon be removed from all his treasures. Is he poor? He will not murmur, for he recollects the streets of gold which are so speedily to be his portion!

This is useful to a Christian in all pursuits. If he is seeking after knowledge, as he may, he will mingle with it the knowledge of Christ Crucified, for he knows that all else will not serve him. If he is toiling for a livelihood, as he may and as he *should*, he will seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, because these things last when all else shall perish like faded leaves. Make a Believer a king or a pauper, and the art of dying daily will help him in either position! And whether he shall rule as a potentate, or suffer as a slave, dying daily will be an equal benefit to his soul. Put him under every temptation and this will help him, for he will not be tempted by the offers of so brief a happiness—his soul has a grip upon *eternal* realities, and vain shows it utterly despises.

“See here, Tempter,” he says, “I have a kingdom which cannot pass away. Vain is your offer of the kingdoms of this world. See here, foul Fiend, I have the beauty and the joy which never can fade—why tempt me with these vanities, these painted nothings?” Above temptation’s billows the Believer lifts his head with calm joy because he breathes the atmosphere of Heaven! Daily dying is as useful to the saint in his joys as in his griefs, in his exaltations as in his depressions. It is a blessed thing for him in the valley and on the mountain, in strength and in sickness, on the battlefield of activity or in the hospital of suffering. He shall be tutored for immortality, trained for bliss, fitted for Heaven by learning to die daily! God teach us this art, and He shall have the glory of it. Amen.

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RESURRECTION!

NO. 306

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 1, 1860,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“But someone will say, ‘How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?’ Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain; perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.”
1 Corinthians 15:35-38.***

We preach with words. God preaches to us in acts and deeds. If we would but perceive it, creation and Providence are two continual sermons, streaming from the mouth of God. The seasons are four Evangelists, each of them having his testimony to utter to us. Does not summer preach to us of God’s bounty, of the richness of His goodness, of that generousness with which He has been pleased to supply the earth, not simply with food for man, but with delights for both ear and eye in the beautiful landscape, the melodious birds and the flowers of various hue?

Have you ever heard the still small voice of autumn, who bears the wheat sheaf and whispers to us in the rustling of the seer leaf? He bids us prepare to die. “All we,” says he, “do fade as a leaf and all our righteousnesses are but as filthy rags.” Then comes winter, crowned with snow and he thunders out a most mighty sermon, which, if we would but listen to it, might well impress us with the terrors of God’s vengeance and let us see how soon He can strip the earth of all its pleasantries and enrobe it in storm, when He shall come Himself to judge the earth with righteousness and the people with equity.

But it seems to me that spring reads us a most excellent discourse upon the grand doctrine of revelation. This very month of April, which, if it is not the very entrance of spring, yet certainly introduces us to the fullness of it. This very month—bearing by its name the title of the opening month, speaks to us of the resurrection. As we have walked through our gardens, fields and woods, we have seen the flower buds ready to burst upon the trees and the fruit blossoms hastening to unfold themselves. We have seen the buried flowers starting up from the sod and they have spoken to us with sweet, sweet voices, the words, “You, too, shall rise again. You, too, shall be buried in the earth like seeds that are lost in winter, but you shall rise again and you shall live and blossom in eternal spring.”

I propose this morning, as God shall enable, to listen to that voice of spring, proclaiming the doctrine of the resurrection—a meditation all the more appropriate from the fact that the Sabbath before last we considered the subject of Death—and I hope that then very solemn impressions were made upon our minds. May the like impressions now return, accompanied with more joyous ones, when we shall look beyond the

grave, through the valley of the shadow of death, to that bright light in the distance—the splendors and glory of life and immortality.

In speaking to you upon this text, I would remark in the outset that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is a doctrine peculiar to Christianity. The heathen, by the feeble light of nature, were able to spell out the truth of the immortality of the soul. Those professors of religion who deny that immortality, are not so far advanced in learning as the heathen themselves. When you meet with any who think that the soul of man may possibly become annihilated, make them a present of that little catechism brought out by the Westminster Assembly, which bears the title, “Catechism for the Young and Ignorant.” Let them read that through and begin to understand that God has not made man in vain.

The resurrection of the body was that which was new in the apostolic times. When Paul stood up on Mars Hill, in the midst of the learned assembly of the Areopagites, had he spoke to them about the immortality of the *soul*, they would not have laughed. They would have respected him, for this was one of the sublime truths which their own wise men had taught. But when he went on to assert that the flesh and blood which was laid in the tomb should yet arise again, that bones which had become the dwelling place of worms, that flesh which had corrupted and decayed should actually start afresh into life—that the body as well as the soul should live—some mocked and others said, “We will hear you again of this matter.”

The fact is, reason teaches the immortality of the spirit—it is Revelation, alone, which teaches the immortality of the body. It is Christ alone who has brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel. He was the clearest proclaimer of that grand Truth of God. Albeit that it had lain in the secret faith of many of the ancient people of God before, yet He it was who first set forth in clear terms the grand Truth that there should be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. As far as I know, the doctrine has not been disputed in the Christian Church. There have been some few heretics who have denied it at different times, but they have been so few, so utterly insignificant, that it is not worth while to take any notice of their scruples, or of the objections which they have urged. Instead thereof, we will turn to our text. One will assume that the doctrine is true and so proceed to utter some words of explanation upon it.

First, then, our text suggests the real identity of the resurrection body. The Apostle uses the figure of a seed, a shriveled grain of wheat. It is put into the ground—there it dies. All the starchy part of it decays and forms a peculiarly fine soil, into which the life germ strikes itself and upon which the life germ feeds. The seed itself dies, with the exception of a particle almost too small to be perceived, which is the real life contained within the wheat.

By-and-by we see a green blade starting up—that grows, swells and increases, until it comes to be corn in the ear and afterwards the full corn in the ear. Now no one has any suspicion but that the same wheat arises from the soil into which it was cast. Put into the earth, we believe it springs up and we are accustomed to talk of it in our ordinary language as being the very same seed which we sowed, although the difference is striking and marvelous. Here you have a plant some three feet high,

bearing many grains of wheat and there you had the other day a little shriveled grain—yet no one doubts but that the two are the same.

So shall it be in the resurrection of the dead. The body is here but as a shriveled seed. There is no beauty in it that we should desire it. It is put into a grave, like wheat that is sown in the earth, there it rots and it decays. But God preserves within it a sort of life germ which is immortal and when the trump of the archangel shall shake the heavens and the earth it shall expand to the full flower of manhood. It shall blossom from the earth a far more glorious form than the manhood which was buried.

You are, my Brethren, today, but as a heap of wheat, a heap of poor shriveled corn. Despite that earthly beauty which makes glad our countenances, we are, after all, shriveled and worthless, compared with what our bodies shall be when they shall awake from their beds of silent dust and cold damp clay. Yet while they shall be different, they shall be precisely the same—it shall be the same body. The identity shall be preserved. Though there shall seem to be but little similarity, yet shall no man doubt but that the very body which was sown in the earth has sprung up to eternal life.

I suppose that if I should bring here a certain grain of seed and you had never seen the image of the plant into which it would ripen, and I should submit it to a thousand persons here present and ask them this question—“What form will this seed assume when it shall grow into a plant and bear a flower?”—none of you could possibly tell what it would be like. Yet when you saw it spring up you would say, “Well, I have no doubt that the sunflower sprang from its own seed. I am sure that a violet springs from a violet seed. I cannot doubt that the lily has its own appropriate root.”

And another time, when you come to see the seed, you perhaps imagine you see some little likeness, at least you never mistrust the identity. Though there are wide extremes of difference between the tiny mustard seed and the great tree beneath the branches of which the birds of the air build their nests, yet you never for a moment question but what they are precisely the same. The identity is preserved. So shall it be in the resurrection of the dead. The difference shall be extraordinary, yet shall the body be still the same.

In order to affirm this, the ancient Christian Church was in the habit in their creed of adding a sentence to the Article which runs thus—“I believe in the resurrection of the dead.” They added, in Latin words to this effect—“I believe in the resurrection of the dead, of this very flesh and blood.” I do not know that the addition was ever authorized by the Church, but it was continually used, especially at the time when there was a discussion as to the truth of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The very flesh and blood that is buried, the very eyes that are closed in death, the very hands which stiffens by my corpse—these very members shall live again—not the identical particles of the same matter any more than the self-same particles of the wheat spring up to make a blade and to make full corn in the ear. Yet shall they be identical, in the true sense of the term. They shall spring up from this body—shall be the true result and development of this poor flesh and blood, which we now drag about with us here below.

Ten thousand objections have been raised against this, but they are all readily answerable. Some have said, “But when men’s bodies are dead

and are committed to the grave, they are often dug up and the careless sexton mixes them up with common mold. No, it sometimes happens that they are carted away from the churchyard and strewn over the fields, to become a rich manure for wheat, so that the particles of the body are absorbed into the corn that is growing and they travel round in a circle until they become the food of man—so that the particle which may have been in the body of one man enters into the body of another. Now,” say they, “how can all these particles be tracked?”

Our answer is, if it were necessary, every *atom* could be traced. Omnipotence and Omniscience could do it. If it were needful that God should search and find out every individual atom that ever existed, he would be able to detect the present abode of every single particle. The astronomer is able to tell the position of one star by the aberration of the motion of another. By his calculation, apart from observation, he can discover an unknown orb—its hugeness puts it within his reach. But to God there is nothing little or great. He can find out the orbit of one atom by the aberration in the orbit of another atom—He can pursue and overtake each separate particle.

But remember, this is not necessary at all, for, as I said before, the identity may be preserved without there being the same atoms. Just go back to the excellent illustration of our text. The wheat is just the same, but in the new wheat that has grown up there may not be one solitary particle of that matter which was in the seed cast into the ground. A little seed that shall not weigh the hundredth part of an ounce falls into the earth and springs up and produces a forest tree that shall weigh two tons. Now, if there is any part of the original seed in the tree, it must be but in the proportion of a millionth part, or something less than that. And yet the tree is positively identical with the seed—it is the same thing.

And so there may only be a millionth part of the particles of my body in the new body which I shall wear but yet it may still be the same. It is not the identity of the matter that will make positive identity. And I shall show you that again. Are you not aware that our bodies are changing—that in about every ten years we have different bodies from what we had ten years ago? That is to say, by decay and the continual wearing away of our flesh, there is not in this body I have here, a single particle that was in my body ten years ago and yet I am the same man. I know I am precisely the same. So you. You shall have been born in America and lived there twenty years. You shall suddenly be transferred to India and live there another twenty years. You come back to America to see your friends—you are the same man, they know you, recognize you, you are precisely the same individual.

But yet philosophy teaches us a fact which cannot be denied—that your body would have changed twice in the time you have been absent from your friends. That every particle is gone and has had its place supplied by another. And yet the body is the same. So that it is not necessary there should be the same particles. It is not needful that you should track every atom and bring it back in order that the body should preserve its identity.

Have you ever heard the story of the wife of Peter Martyr, a celebrated reformer, who died some years before the time of Queen Mary? Since his enemies could not reach his body, they took up the body of his wife after she was dead and buried it in a dunghill. During the reign of Elizabeth, the body was removed from its contemptuous hiding place. It was then

reduced to ashes, in order that the Romanists, if they should ever prevail again, might never do dishonor to that body, they took the ashes of Peter Martyr's wife and mixed them with the reputed ashes of a Romish saint. Mixing the two together, they said, "Now these Romanists will never defile *this* body, because they will be afraid of desecrating the relics of their own saint."

Perhaps some wiseacres man says, "How can *these* two be separated?" Why, they could be divided readily enough if God willed to do it. For granted that God is Omniscient, Omnipotent and you have never to ask how, for Omniscience and Omnipresence put the question out of court and decides the thing at once. Besides, it is not necessary that it should be so. The life germs of the two bodies may not have mixed together. God has set His angels to watch over them, as He set Michael to watch over the body of Moses and He will bring out the two life germs and they shall be developed and the two bodies shall start up separately at the sound of the archangel's trump.

Remember, then, and doubt not that the very body in which you sinned shall be the very body in which you shall suffer in Hell—and the body in which you believe in Christ and in which you yield yourselves to God, shall be the very body in which you shall walk the golden streets and in which you shall praise the name of God forever and ever.

So much upon this first point. But observe, while the identity is real, the transformation is glorious. The body here is mortal, always subject to decay. We dwell in a poor uncomfortable tent, continually is the canvas being rent, the cords are being loosed and the tent pins are being pulled up. We are full of sufferings and aches and pains, which are but the premonitions of coming death. We all know, some by our decayed teeth, which are, as I said the other day, but the emblems of a decayed man. Others by those gray hairs which are scattered here and there. We all know that our bodies are so constituted that they cannot remain here except for a limited period and they must—so God has willed it—return to their native dust.

Not so, however, the new body—"It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption." It will be a body upon which the tooth of time can have no power and into which the dart of death can never be thrust. Age shall roll after age, but that body shall exist in everlasting youth. It shall sing, but never shall its song be stayed by weakness. It shall fly, but never shall its flight flag with weariness. There shall be no signs of mortality. The shroud and the spade are never seen in Heaven. Such a thing as an open grave shall never appear in the celestial kingdom—there they live, live, live, but never, never, never shall they die. See then, how different the body must be. For as this body is made, every nerve and every blood vessel tells me I must die—it cannot be otherwise—I must endure this stern decree, "Dust to dust, earth to earth, ashes to ashes." But in Heaven every nerve of the new body shall cry, "Immortality." Every part of that new frame shall speak for itself and tell to the immortal spirit that they are everlasting companions, managed in eternal wedlock.

There shall be, moreover, a great change in the new body as to its beauty. "It is sown in dishonor. It shall be raised in glory." The old metaphor employed by all preachers upon this doctrine must be used again. You see here a crawling caterpillar, a picture of yourself, a creature that eats and drinks and may readily be trod on. Wait a few weeks, that

caterpillar shall spin itself a cover, lie down, become inactive and sleep. A picture of what you shall do. You must spin your winding-sheet and then be laid in the tomb. But wait awhile. When the warmth of the sun shall come, that apparently lifeless thing shall burst its sheath. The chrysalis shall fall off and the insect fly forth equipped with glittering wings. Having arrived at its full state of perfection, the image, the very image of the creature, shall be seen by us all dancing in the sunbeam.

So shall we, after passing through our wormwood here to our chrysalis state in the grave, burst our coffins and mount aloft glorious winged creatures made like unto the angels—the same creatures, but oh, so changed, so different, that we should scarce know our former selves if we could be able to meet them again after we have been glorified in Heaven!

There shall be a change, then, in our form and nature. Old master Spenser, who was a rare hand at making metaphors, says, “The body here is like an old rusty piece of iron, but Death shall be the blacksmith—he shall take it and he shall make it hot in his fire—until it shall sparkle and send forth burning heat and look bright and shining.” And so surely is it. We are thrust into the earth as into the fire and there shall we be made to sparkle and to shine and to be full of radiance—no more the rusty things that we once were, but fiery spirits, like the cherubim and the seraphim—we shall wear a power and a glory the like of which we have not even yet conceived!

Again—another transformation shall take place, namely, in power. “It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.” The same body that is weak, shall be raised in power. We are puny things here. There is a limit to our labors and our usefulness is straightened by reason of our inability to perform what we would. And oh, how weak we become when we die! A man must be carried by his own friends to his own grave. He cannot even lay himself down in his last resting place. Passively he submits to be laid out, to be wrapped up in his winding-sheet and to be shut up in the darkness of the grave. Silently, passively he submits to be carried away with the pall covered over him and to be put into the earth. The clods are shoveled over him, but he knows it not, neither could he resist his burial if he were conscious of it. But that powerless body shall be raised in power.

That was a fine idea of Martin Luther, which he borrowed from St. Anselm, that the saints shall be so strong when they are risen from the dead, that if they chose they could shake the world. They could pull up islands by their roots, or hurl mountains into the air. Some modern writers, borrowing their ideas from Milton, where he speaks of the battles of the angels, where they plucked up the hills with all their shaggy loads, rivers and trees at once and hurled them at the fallen spirits, have taught that we shall be clothed with gigantic force. I think if we do not go the length of the poets, we have every reason to believe that the power of the risen body will be utterly inconceivable.

These, however, are but guesses at the truth. This great mystery is yet beyond us. I believe that when I shall enter upon my new body, I shall be able to fly from one spot to another, like a thought, as swiftly as I will. I shall be here and there, swift as the rays of light. From strength to strength, my spirit shall be able to leap onward to obey the behests of God. Up, borne with wings of ether, it shall flash its way across that shoreless sea and see the glory of God in all His works and yet ever behold

His face. For the eyes shall then be strong enough to pierce through leagues of distance and the memory shall never fail. The heart shall be able to love to a fiery degree and the head to comprehend right thoroughly. It does not yet appear what we shall be.

But, Brothers and Sisters, to come back to reality and leave fiction for a moment, though it does not *appear* what we shall be, yet we *know* that when he shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. And do you know what we shall be like, if we shall be like He? Behold the picture of what Jesus Christ is like and we shall be like He. "I saw," says John, "one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow. And His eyes were as a flame of fire and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace and His voice as the sound of many waters.

"And He had in His right hand seven stars and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword and His countenance was as the sun shines in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead." Such shall we be when we are like Christ. What tongue can tell, what soul can guess the glories that surround the saints when they start from their beds of dust and rise to immortality!?

But now, to turn away from these, which I fear to very many of you are rather uninteresting particulars, let me give you one or two figures which may show to you the change which shall take place in us on the day of resurrection.

Do you see yonder beggar? He is picking rags from a dunghill. He pulls out piece after piece from the heap of dust, as he uses his rake. You may see the like any day, if you will go to those great dust yards in Agar Town. There he pulls out piece after piece and puts it in his basket. What can be the value of those miserable old rags? He takes them away, they are carried off, picked, sorted, rag to its own rag, like to like. By-and-by they are washed, they are put into the mill, they are beaten hard, they are smashed, they are ground to pulp and what is that I see just coming out of yonder mill? A clear white sheet, without a stain and from where came this?

"I am the son of the old rag," says he, "no, I am the identical rag that was but a few hours ago picked from the dunghill." Oh, strange! Does purity come out of impurity and does this beauty, this utility come out of that which was neither comely nor useful, but which men loathed and cast away as a worthless thing?

See here, Brothers and Sisters, the picture of yourselves. Your bodies are like rags, put away into this vast dunghill earth and there buried. But the angel shall come and sort you, body to its body, the righteous to the righteous, the wicked to the wicked—they shall come together, bone to his bone and flesh to his flesh. And what do I see?—I behold a body like unto an angel, with eyes of fire and a face like the brightness of the sun and wings like lightning for swiftness. Where did you come from, you bright spirit? "I am he that was buried, I am that thing that once was worms' meat, but now I am glorious through the name of Jesus and through the power of God." You have there before you a picture of the resurrection, a homely picture, it is true, but one which may vividly convey the idea to homely minds.

Take another—one used of old by that mighty preacher, Chrysostom—there is an old house, a straight and narrow cottage and the inhabitant of it often shivers with the cold winter and is greatly oppressed by the heat of summer. It is ill adapted to his wants—the windows are too small and very dark—he cannot keep his treasure safely therein. He is often a prisoner. And when I have passed by his house I have heard him sighing at the window—“Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

The good master comes, the landlord of the house—he speaks to the tenant and he bids him come away—“I am about to pull down your old house,” says he, “and I would not have you here while I am pulling it stone from stone, lest you be hurt and injured. Come away with me and live in my palace, while I am pulling your old house to pieces.” He does so and every stone of the old house is thrown down. It is leveled with the ground and even the foundations are dug up.

Another is built—it is of costly slabs of marble, the windows thereof are pure and clear, all its gates are of agate and all its borders of precious stones—while all the foundations are of chrysolite and the roof is of jasper. And now the master of the house speaks to the old inhabitant, “Come back and I will show you the house which I have built for you.” O what joy when that inhabitant shall enter and find it so well adapted to his wants—where every power shall have full range, where he shall see God out of its windows, not as through a glass, darkly, but face to face, where he could invite even Christ Himself to come and sup with him and not feel that the house is beneath the dignity of the Son of Man!

You know the parable, you know how your old house, this clay body, is to be pulled down, how your spirit is to dwell in Heaven for a little while without a body. And how afterwards you are to enter into a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, a mansion which is holy, incorruptible and undefiled and which shall never decay.

To use yet a fresh figure—I see a beggar passing by a rich man’s door. That poor wretch is covered with filth. His garments are hanging about him in pieces as if the wind would blow all away and drive both man and garments among the rags upon the dunghill. How he shivers, how he seeks to pull about him that scant cloak which will not meet around his loins and will not shield him from the blast. As for his shoes, they are, indeed, old and clouted and all his garments are of such a sort that one never could know the original, for they have been mended and patched a thousand times—and now they need to be mended and patched again.

He is freely invited to come into the rich man’s hall. We will not tell you what is done in the meantime, but we will see him come out of that door again and would you know him? Would you believe that he is the same man? He has been washed and cleansed. On his back there hangs the imperial purple, while on his head glitters a brilliant crown. His feet are shod with silver and on his hands there are rings of gold. About the paps he wears a golden girdle. And as he comes abroad bright spirits wait on him and do him honor—angels wait to be his servants and think it to be their highest pleasure to fly to do his will. Is this the same man and is this the same dress? It is the same. By some marvelous might, rather by a Divine energy, God has received this beggar, taken him into the inner chamber of the grave—has washed him from all imperfections. And now he comes out as one of the princes of the blood royal of Heaven. And as is

his nature, such is his apparel. As is his dignity, such is his estate and such the company of servants who wait upon him.

Not to multiply illustrations, we will use but one more. I see before me an old and battered cup which many a sin-black lip has touched, out of which many a villain's throat has received moisture. It is battered and covered over with filth. Who could tell what metal it is? It is brought in and given to the silversmith. He no sooner receives it, than he begins to break it into pieces—he dashes it into shivers again and again. He pounds it until he has broken it and then puts it into his fining pot and melts it. Now you begin to see it sparkle again and by-and-by he beats it out and fashions it into a goodly chalice, out of which a king may drink. Is this the same? The very same thing.

This glorious cup is this the old battered silver we saw just now. Silver did I say, it looked like battered filth. Yes it is the same and we who are here below like vessels, alas, too unfit for the Master's use. Vessels which have even given comfort to the evil ones and helped to do the work of Satan—we shall be put into the furnace of the grave and be there melted down and fired and fashioned into a glorious wine cup that shall stand upon the banqueting table of the Son of God.

I have thus sought to illustrate the change, and now I will occupy your attention but one or two minutes on another thought which seems to lie within the range of my text. We have had the real identity under the glorious transformation. I bring you back to a thought kindred to the first. There will be in the bodies of the righteous an undoubted personality of character. If you sow barley, it will not produce wheat—if you sow tares—they will not spring up in the form of rye. Every grain has its own peculiar form—God has given to every seed his own body.

So, my Brothers and Sisters, there are differences among us here. No two bodies are precisely alike—there are marks on our countenances and in our bodily conformation that show that we are different. We are of one blood, but not of one fashion. Well, when we are put into the grave we shall crumble back and come to the same elements. But when we rise we shall everyone of us rise different from the other. The body of Paul shall not produce a body precisely like that of Peter. Nor shall the flesh of Andrew bring forth a new body like that of the sons of Zebedee, but to every seed his own body.

In the case of our blessed Lord and Master, you will remember that when He rose Himself from the dead He preserved His personality—there were still the wounds in His hands and still there was the spear mark in His side. I do not doubt that when He underwent His transfiguration and at the time of His ascension up to Heaven, He still retained the marks of His wounds. For do we not sing and is not our song based upon Scripture?—

***“He looks like a Lamb that has been slain,
And wears His priesthood still”?***

So, Brethren, though of course we shall retain no weaknesses, nothing which will cause sorrow, yet every Christian will retain his individuality. He will be like and yet unlike all his fellows. As we know Isaiah from Jeremy here, so shall we know them above. As I differ from you here, if we two shall together praise God, there shall be some difference between us above. Not the difference in failings, but the difference in the perfections of the form of the new body. I sometimes think martyrs will wear their scars. And why should they not? It were a loss to them if they should lose their

honors. Perhaps they shall wear their ruby crown in Paradise and we shall know them—

**“Foremost among the sons of light
Midst the bright ones doubly bright.”**

Perhaps the men who come from the catacombs of Rome will wear some sort of pallor on their brow that will show that they came from darkness, where they saw not the light of the sun. Perhaps the minister of Christ, though he shall not need to say to his fellows, “know the Lord,” shall still be chief among the proclaimers of the ways of God. Perhaps the sweet singer of Israel shall still be foremost in the choir of the golden harps and loudest among them that shall lead the strain. And if these are fancies, yet am I sure that one star differs from another star in glory. Orion shall not be confounded with Arcturus, nor shall Mazaroth for a moment be confounded with Orion.

We shall all be separate and distinct. Perhaps we shall each one have our constellation there, as we shall cluster into our own societies and gather around those whom we best have known on earth. Personality will be maintained. I do not doubt but what you will know Isaiah in Heaven and you will recognize the great preachers of the ancient Christian Church. You will be able to speak with Chrysostom and will talk with Whitfield. It may be you shall have for your companions those who were your companions here. Those with whom you took sweet counsel and walked to the House of God, shall be with you there and you shall know them. And with transporting joy you shall there together tell your former trials and ancient triumphs—and the glories you are alike made to share. Treasure up, then, these things, the identity of your body after its glorious transformation and, at the same time, the personality which will prevail.

I want, now, your solemn attention for some five minutes, while I sketch a most fearful contrast here. The things I have already spoken should make the children of God happy. At Stratford-on-Bow, in the days of Queen Mary, there was once a stake erected for the burning of two martyrs, one of them a lame man, the other a blind man. Just when the fire was lit, the lame man hurled away his staff and turning round said to the blind man, “Courage, Brother, this fire will cure us both.” So can the righteous say of the grave, “Courage, the grave will cure us all, we shall leave our infirmities behind us.”

What patience this should give us to endure all our trials, for they are not of long duration. They are but as the carvings of the graver’s tool, shaping these rough blocks of clay, to bring them into the right form and shape, that they may bear the image of the heavenly. But the contrast is awful. Brethren, the *wicked* must also rise again from the dead. The lips with which you have drunk the intoxicating drink till you have reeled again—those lips shall be used in drinking down the fiery wrath of God. Remember, too, ungodly woman, the eyes that are full of lust will one day be full of horror—the ears with which you listen to lascivious conversation must listen to the sullen moans, the hollow groans and shrieks of tortured ghosts.

Be not deceived. You sinned in your *body*, you will be damned in your *body*. When you die your spirit must suffer alone—that will be the beginning of Hell—but your body must rise again, then this very flesh in which you have transgressed the Laws of God—this very body must smart for it. It must be in the fire and burn and crack and writhe throughout eternity. Your body will be raised incorruptible, otherwise the fire would

consume it. It will become like the asbestos stone, which lies in the flame and yet is never consumed. If it were this flesh and blood it would soon die under the pangs we must endure—but it will be a body all but omnipotent.

As I spoke of the righteous having such great power, so shall you have. But it will be power to *agonize*, power to *suffer*, power to die and yet to live, uncrushed by the stern foot of death. Think of this, you sensualists, who care not for your souls, but who pamper your bodies. You shall have that fair complexion scorched away—those members that have become instruments of lust, shall become instruments of Hell. Rotting as they will do in the grave, they shall nevertheless rise with a fiery immortality about them and endure an eternity of agony and unutterable woe and punishment. Is not that enough to make a man tremble and cry, “God be merciful unto me, a sinner”?

But further, remember that while your body shall be identically the same, yet it, too, will be transformed and as the wheat brings forth the wheat, so the nettle seed brings forth the nettle. What your body will be like I cannot tell, but perhaps as the body of the righteous will come to be like Christ, yours may become like the body of the devil. Whatever that may be—the same hideous conformation, the same demon gaze and hellish stare which characterize that proud archangel shall characterize you. You shall have the image and the lineaments of the first traitor stamped upon your fire-enduring face. Seeds of sin, are you prepared to ripen into the full blown flower of destruction?

You Seeds of evil, are you ready to be scattered now from Death’s hand and then to spring up an awful harvest of tormented ones? Yet so it must be unless you turn to God. Except you repent, He has said and He will do it, He is able to cast both body and soul into Hell. And let me remind you yet once again, that there will be in you an undoubted personality—you will be known in Hell. The drunkard shall have the drunkard’s punishment. The swearer shall have the swearer’s corner to himself. “Bind them up in bundles to burn and cast them into the fire.” Thus says the voice of inflexible Justice.

You shall not suffer in another man’s body but in your own and you shall be known to be the very man that sinned against God. You shall be looked at by one who sees you today, if you die impenitent, who will say to you, “We went up to that hall together. We heard a sermon on the resurrection which had a frightful ending. We laughed at it, but we have found out that it is true.” And one will say to the other, “I should have known you, though we have not met these many years till we met in Hell. I should have known you, there is something about your new body which lets me know that it is the same body that you had on earth.” And then you will mutually say to one another, “These pangs that we are now enduring, this horror of great darkness, these chains of fire that are reserved for us—are they not well deserved?”

And you will curse God together again and suffer together and will be made to feel that you have only received the due reward of your deeds. “Did not the man warn us,” you will say, “did he not warn us, did he not bid us fly to Christ for refuge? Did we not despise it and make a jeer of what he said? We are rightly punished. We damned ourselves, we cut our own throats—we kindled Hell for ourselves and found the fuel of our own burning forever and ever.”

Oh, my dear Hears, I cannot bear to stay on this subject. Let me finish with just this word. "Whoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." That means you, poor man, though perhaps you were drunk last night and scarcely got up in time enough to come here this morning. If you believe, William, you shall be saved. This means you, poor woman, harlot though you are—if you cast yourself on Christ you are saved. This means you, respectable man, you who trust in yours own works—if you rely on Christ you shall be saved, but not if you trust in yourself.

Oh, be wise, be wise! May God give us grace now to learn that highest wisdom and may we now look to the Cross and to the quivering Lamb that bleeds upon it and see Him as He rises from the dead and ascends up on high—and believing in Him may we receive the hope and the assurance of a blissful resurrection in Him.

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A CHALLENGE AND WAR CRY

NO. 2929

A SERMON
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**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
IN THE YEAR 1862.**

***“O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my Beloved brethren, be you steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for so much as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”
I Corinthians 15:55-58.***

THERE is little fear that the minister of this flock should forget that man is mortal. Where men are massed in such numbers, we not only believe in mortality, we see it. We hear the funeral knell like the striking of the clock—habitually. The mower always has work in this pasture—every week the great gleaner has some ears of corn to gather in this harvest field and every time we assemble in this house we have to remember that some who were with us when we met before have crossed the flood and entered into their rest. We cannot forget this.

But, my dear Friends, there is a danger lest you should forget it. Not being able to take a glimpse over so large a company as this, if your children have been spared to you, if your house has been unvisited by death for this last 19 or 20 years, you may be apt to think that you have immunity given to you—that you will never come to the grave—that death may arrest others, but that you sit alone in some privileged security and shall see no sorrow, that the arrows may fly and strike on the right hand and on the left, but that you walk invulnerable among the dead. It is well, therefore, in order to cool the hot blood of our youth and to stir the dull blood of our old age, that we should oftentimes make a journey to the tomb and reflect on death, judgment, resurrection, and eternity. In these busy times, when men have so much to do in order to live, it may be of much service to them to think how certainly they must die. 'Tis greatly wise to talk about our last hours. The shroud, the grave, the shovel may teach us more of true wisdom than all the learned heads that ever pondered vain philosophy, or all the lips that ever uttered earth-born science!

Now, I intend tonight, as God the Holy Spirit shall enable me, to address my text first to Believers in Christ and then briefly to warn those who are as yet not included in that happy number. I must leave your conscience to judge to which class you belong. I fondly hope that no one will be so perverse as to take encouragement that does not belong to him, but that every man will be wise enough and honest enough to his own

heart to take just that truth which fits his own case and lay it home to his conscience and to his heart.

I. First of all, THE MESSAGE TO BELIEVERS. We take this text, not with the hope of exploring it, but with the thought of skimming the surface with the swallow, rather than diving into its depths like leviathan.

There are three things on the surface—A brief but unparalleled challenge given to two dreadful and invincible foes “O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory?” A glorious paean of splendid triumph—“Thanks be to God who gives us the victory,” and a war cry addressed by a great commander to his soldiers—“Brethren, be you steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

There is here, first, *a double challenge*: “O Death, where is your sting?” Death, you skeleton monarch, where is your sting? Fleshless rider upon the pale horse, we ask you, where is your sting? With a horrible and ghastly smile, he answers us, “My sting? You have but to open your eyes and see it and before long I shall make your flesh quiver with it when I send it in even to your very soul! Where is my sting? Is it no sting to you to know that you must leave everything you call dear on the earth, that your estates must be left behind you and your broad acres must be all renounced? Is it nothing to you that your houses and your lands, your merriments and your enjoyments, your feasts and your riots must be forsaken? That the hearth and everything that is genial in the family, friendship and the communion of generous hearts and everything that makes glad the eyes or cheers the ears must be left behind you? For your eyes—when filmed by my finger—to no more see the landscape, the rugged mountain, or the plain? For your ears, when I have sealed them in eternal silence, to no more hear the voice of them that make merry, no more hear the music or the choral hymn? You shall be deaf forever when I cast you into the grave! Is it no sting to you to leave the enjoyments of the House of God? For you no more the communion of the body and blood of Christ? For you no more the gladsome seasons when the tribes come up to the House of the Lord with willing footsteps to keep holy day and magnify Him who has loved them and given Himself for them? Is it no sting to remember that soon you must gaze, for the last time, upon the cheek which is now so fair in your sight? That soon you must take the last fond gaze of her who is the partner of your life? That you must leave everything, taking nothing with you, returning to the earth naked as you came from your mother’s womb, stripped, bereft of everything, a penniless beggar, going back to the vile dust from where you did spring—is there no sting in this?”

“Where is my sting? Ask the gray-headed,” the monster says, “whether they already do not feel the pangs of it! Their eyes grow weak, the strong pillars of the house of man begins to fail, the breath comes heavily, the hair is blanched—the grasshopper has become a burden and the teeth cease because they are few! Ask me where is my sting? Even the young can feel it, for, if they think at all, they know that every breath they draw is but a step towards the tomb and that their pulses—

Like muffled drums, are beating

Funeral marches to the grave.”

“Where is my sting?” asks Death. “Look to the widow in whose heart my sting is rankling now. The beloved of her soul has departed and she is left to mourn like a dove without her mate. Ask the fatherless where the sting of death is as they are driven into the street, received by the cold hand of public charity, scarcely housed and fed. Where is my sting? Ask the weeping child as he looks down into the coffin upon the dead face of the mother that once toiled and labored for him, who once cherished and loved him, but who has now gone to the place appointed for all living! Aha! Aha,” he says, “where is my sting? You have all felt it in the departure of your best beloved ones, when you most wished to have them. The State has felt it. I smote the fellow with the crowned head and laid him low! I smote again and took away the statesman when he had returned from a distant empire laden with the spoils of many years experience! I have with my sting taken away the rich and the mighty, the beautiful and the lovely, the learned, the pious, the good, the benevolent! I have taken them away just when the world needed them the most, till I made good men say, ‘The righteous perish and the godly man ceases from the earth.’ Ask me where is my sting?” he cries, and drives his white horse of terror onward and dashes from us in disdain!

Yes, Death, but we still defy you, and though you have thus vented your spleen, we cry to you again, “Have at you, Death! Have at you! You have no sting, for all your boast! To Believers you are now a stingless locust! Hold awhile till we hear the other tyrant, your powerful confederate.”

“O Grave, where is your victory?” From its hollow depth the Grave replies, “Ask me where is my victory? Why, O foolish son of Adam, do you not ask where is *not* my victory? From Machpelah to Gethsemane I have had my splendid triumphs. Onward, from the first age even until now I have proved to men that I am victor. Where are my triumphs? Open the soil upon which your fair world rests and see if every vault is not filled with a putrid mass of rotten mortality! Could you bring up your fellows from the grave and pile them above the sod, there would be so many dead that there would not be room for the living! Yes, heap them up, heap them up till they make a pyramid higher than the Egyptian Pharaoh ever reared—pile them up and they will outreach the Alps and salute the morning star with their dread heights of rottenness!

“Where is my victory? Ask every howling tempest as it drives the ship like a cockleshell before it. Ask every sunken rock and reef and icebound shore. Where is my victory? Ask the battlefield of yesterday, all gory with blood shed by a brother’s hands, where sons of Anglo-Saxon mothers lie upon the plains of their own country, slain by their own brothers’ hands! Where is my victory? From Waterloo go back to Trafalgar—stretch your wings and fly to ancient times, to Salamis and Marathon, or farther back still—speak of all that Sennacherib did, and the mighty host that went before him when he smote the loins of kings and slew hecatombs of their subjects in an hour!

“Where is my victory? There is not a spot of ground but feels it. There is not an age but must testify thereunto. The signs of it are everywhere! Look at yonder lovely nook where birds are singing and sweet flowers are springing up from the green sod. You will say, ‘Death has never been here.’ But what are those hillocks bound with the brown bramble? I *have* been here and here keep I my place! Look yonder where the white stones stand up like the very teeth of death and see how I have devoured my thousands! From yonder busy city they bring them out by scores each day and lay them in the tomb—and yet you ask me where is my victory? Why, you are, every one of you, captives of my perpetual triumphing! You are marching on, every one of you, downwards to my jaws! Go where you may, you are always coming down to my doors. I shall soon shut my gates upon you, every one of you. Strong and healthy men, men of brawny arms, men of massive intellect, men whose limbs totter not, though you bear mighty burdens, I shall one of these days receive you, helpless as little children—and you shall lie in your white cerements, in your wooden case—and I shall then prove to you and to the world where my victory is!”

Even as we tremblingly listen, the Grave shuts its yawning mouth and all is still save where the voice of faith, looking down upon the dry bones and believing that they shall yet live, cries, “Despite your vaunt, you braggart, your boastings are as hollow as yourself! Where is your victory? We will prove you impotent yet, O desperate Grave! You have no triumphs! Our Lord, Jehovah’s Christ, the Resurrection—He has broken open your portals and made through your territories a wide passage for all Believers to the Land of Promise. What though—

***‘An angel’s arm can’t snatch me from the grave,
Legions of angels can’t confine me there!’***

Turn now, O Believer, and sing a paean of triumph. “The sting of death is sin.” Through Jesus Christ that is forgiven. “The strength of sin is the Law.” Through Christ Jesus that has ceased to thunder, for it has been fulfilled and has become our friend. Therefore, “thanks be unto God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Prepare, then, the voice of joyous thanksgiving! Make ready your triumphal hymn! Death, we now triumph over you. You have spoken, but now we will speak and answer you to your face! Death has no sting to a Believer. Once death was the penalty of sin—sin being forgiven, the penalty ceases and Christians do not die, now, as a punishment for their sin, but they die that they may be prepared to live! They are unclothed that they may be clothed upon with that house which is from Heaven! They leave the tenement of clay that they may inherit the eternal mansion!

There is no sting left in you, O Death, in yourself. As for all you can tell us of aches and pains and groans, we know that all these things work together for our good! As for what you tell us of your gloom and of your horror, we believe in nothing that you say, for, if Christ is with us, we will walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death and fear no evil!

As you have lost your sting in yourself, O Death, so you have also lost your sting as to all that we lose by you. You tell us that we lose the sights of earth, but, skeleton king, we gain the sights of Heaven! What are the

landscapes of this dusky world compared with the azure skies, the lakes of crystal and the plains of everlasting green in the land of light and glory? What are the cities of this world—the giant cities of the West, the fairy cities of the East—what are they all compared with Jerusalem, the golden city, the pearly-gated, the city whose walls are jasper, whose very paving stones are laid with fair colors? Lose by losing earth? Surely in gaining Heaven the loss is all forgotten! You say our ears are closed—it is not so—they are opened to hear the seraph's hymns and to listen to the music of the cherubim, awful, sublime and beautiful! You say we leave behind us wealth and wit and friends. Fool that you are, 'tis wealth we gain—and all is dross we leave behind! And as for friends, we have as many—yes, and many more—and they are better, too, than those we leave on earth. We have beloved ones that have crossed the flood and at their head we have One who is better to us than a million friends, the Chief among Ten Thousand, the Altogether Lovely! As for all that you can take away, take it and welcome, since the joy which shall be revealed in us is an exceeding and eternal weight of glory! This far surpasses the light affliction of losing all that earth can give.

Death, we tell you again that your sting is taken away as to the friends we have lost. The widow, weeping, tells you that she does not feel your sting, for her husband is in Heaven and she is following him as speedily as time can carry her. The mother tells you, Death, that through Divine Grace you have no sting in her thoughts concerning her infants. She rejoices to know that at her breast there once did hang immortal spirits that now behold the Savior's face! And we say to you, Death, concerning all beloved ones who have gone, that we sorrow not over them and would not—

***“Break their placid sleep,
Nor lure them from their home above.”***

We devoutly thank the Father of spirits, who has safely housed them beyond fear of damage and brought them to the desired haven where no rough wind or tempestuous wave shall ever rock their keel again. “Blessed,” we say, as we repeat the voice from Heaven, “blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.” And that voice from Heaven responds again, in tones articulate, “Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.”—

***“Thus brighter hopes, that are not dreams,
Their light around the spirit shed
And Heaven itself breaks out in gleams
Of Glory round the dying bed.”***

Death, you have no sting—your pains are loosed! So what if your face is pale, your shadow dark as you flit across the chamber? So what if frail nature shrinks and shudders at your dart? Kind Jesus, help us—we cling to You and all our spirit bravely cries in calm defiance, lively faith and holy rapture—“O Death, where is your sting? Thanks be unto God who gives us the victory!”

As for the grave, dear Brothers and Sisters, let us answer its foul-mouthed boasts. We tell the grave that it has no victory in itself. 'Tis true we shall sleep in it, but we sleep as victors! We hear the shout of triumph

and we lie down as warriors taking their rest, not as vanquished ones. Christ has made the tomb, which was once a prison, a resting place for the bodies of His saints. He has made the tomb His royal closet where he bids His beloved lay aside the dusky garments of their work days till they shall be cleansed and made meet to be the garments of His everlasting holy days in Heaven! O Grave, when you do encompass our bodies, you are yourself defeated—you are our servant—call us not your slaves! We conquer before we come to nestle in your bosom. O, Grave, we have lost nothing but the like of that we committed to your keeping when we placed the slumbering forms of friends we dearly loved to lodge within your arms. Their relics are there, but they are in Heaven! Their corruption is there, but the earnest of their resurrection is on high and that which lives in deathless immortality is above! There they lie, for flesh and blood have sin—let them lie there, for flesh and blood must be purified. But they shall live and we tell you, Grave, that when the trumpet sound, you must give back our friends to us 10 times more dear than they were when, with hollow sound of, “Dust to dust and ashes to ashes,” we laid them in your cold embrace. You have no victory, ‘tis but a temporary triumph—you must give back your prey!

O Grave, you talk of corruption—what is it but as the fuller’s bath wherein the body lies till it is made of purest white? You speak of cold vaults, darkness and damp—what are all these but fit accompaniments of the process in which the corruption shall become incorruption and the mortal, immortality? We smile at all your horrors. We salute you as the place where we shall take repose awhile rather than as the dungeon of our souls’ imprisonment! O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory?

I wish I could set these matters tonight in language such as Christmas Evans would have used in his glowing moments. This is a right glowing theme that might make a dumb man speak and might summon the ears of the deaf to listen! Christ has vanquished death by dying! He has disrobed the grave of its triumphal garments by wearing its cerements Himself! He consecrated the sepulcher by slumbering in its dark recess! Death is now no more the destroying angel, the tomb no more a morgue! Behold, as Samson carried the gates of Gaza to the top of Hebron—doors, posts, bars and all—so has Christ carried the gates of Death to the top of Heaven’s hill—posts, bars and all—and all the legions of Hell cannot bring back the trophies which our Samson has torn away! Once bound, Himself, with cords by His own brethren, He snapped them as though they were green withs and in heaps upon heaps He has laid His enemies dead at His feet! Sin, and Death and Hell—all are vanquished by the Man that once was bound, but who now binds captivity and leads it captive! Sing unto Him, you spirits that are redeemed before the Throne of God! Lift up your hallelujahs, clap your wings, sweep your harps and say, “All hail You, vanquisher of Death, destroyer of the grave!” Let the echo reverberate to the lowest depths of Hell and let the fiends bite their fire-tormented tongues and gnash their teeth in vain, while that song is

echoed in notes like these, “O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory?”

Now listen! Oh, listen! Heed *the war cry of our Great Captain*. “Therefore, my Beloved brethren, be you steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” Alas for the embattled hosts of God’s elect, if you, O Death, did seal the dispatch from the gory field of battle and you, O Grave, did hollow out the niche where the warrior should receive in holy fear his honorable due! “If in this life, only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

’Twere a troublous and a toilsome thing, in truth, to be steadfast if there were no reward! Christian men and women, to you is this word of admonition given. Inasmuch as you shall not die but live. Inasmuch as you are the heirs of immortality and life, Christ bids you this day be steadfast! Be steadfast in your Doctrine. Hold the Truth of God, and especially the solemn Truth of Resurrection! Hold it firmly, as with an iron grip. Be you steadfast in holiness—let nothing move you—stand for the right. Remember, if the earth reels, your hands are on the stars and, therefore, you need not lose your hold. Be you steadfast in your profession—blush not, hide not your candle under a bushel. The glory that is to be revealed will make you good amends for all the shame and contumely that the reproach of Christ may bring upon you. Be you steadfast in everything that is a matter of faith to you—steadfast in your firm belief of Christ’s Redemption of your souls—steadfast in the full conviction that you are the adopted children of your Heavenly Father—steadfast in your continual perseverance in Sanctification that you may be fitted for the embrace of your Lord! Be you steadfast like mountains that never move, like the hidden pillars of granite on which, though eyes have never seen, this large globe rests! Like those under-lying rocks which bear up all the deep soil, be you everlastingly steadfast!

Temptation will come—“be you immovable.” Like cedars rocked in the storm, but never uprooted—like lighthouses against which the huge waves dash and over which the mountains of foam will leap, be you bright in testimony but never stirred in steadfastness. Like some peak that glitters in the sun and soon is shivered in the lightning, yet still stand looking up to the next storm and defying the next blow! “Be you immovable.” As the anvil to the stroke of the hammer, so bear you persecution, affliction, temptation—let none of these things move you, neither count your life dear unto you. Immortality! Be that your watchword as you stand in your ranks while the shot is flying and the foe is advancing. When you are bidden not to advance, but to stand still—“having done all to stand”—be this your reflection, “your life is hid with Christ in God.” Immortality shall make amends for all your pain and suffering here! Resurrection shall restore all you seem to lose in the fray.

Be you “always abounding in the work of the Lord.” Be you working here and there, at home and abroad—in the morning when the first ruddy streak paints the brow of the young dawn—at noon when the hot sun pours out its lavish floods of light, at eventide when the birds are going to their rest and at midnight, if there is a fallen Sister who at no

other hour can be reached. "In the morning sow your seed and in the evening withhold not your hand." With a heart for any strife, be first and foremost in every conflict—dash in at every skirmish and be in your rank at every decisive struggle. Hide not your face from shame and spitting! Turn not back from labor or from scorn—"in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread" on earth, but that bread which you eat in Heaven, so gloriously won by the Grace of God, shall be all the sweeter for the sweat that was lavished upon it! "Always abounding in the work of the Lord."

But I hear some of you say, "To what end is all this strain?" "Ah," says one young man, "I have been steadfast and immovable and I have lost my job. Instead of being prospered by it, I have suffered loss." Well, there is another and a better land—your wrongs shall be righted there. Think of the rest which remains for the people of God! "Ah," says a mother, "but I trained up my little child and she just began to gladden my heart with her first prayer—and then she died." Refrain your eyes from weeping, for your work shall be rewarded, says the Lord—she lives a better life than she could have lived with you. I, too, may ask, "To what end?" I may say that I see many brought to Christ and what becomes of them?—they die. In the college, out of our small numbers, two men we trained for the ministry have fallen asleep in Christ—one while yet a student and the other when he had but departed from us a few months. Well, but what of all this? They live! We trained them for the skies and made them choristers for eternity!

Our work is not lost. We must be steadfast, always abounding in God's work while here. It seems to me that this is the end for which the Sunday school teacher, the mother, the father, the minister should always be working. What does the farmer look for? Is he content when he sees his corn turning yellow to say, "How straight it stands! What a good harvest there is!"? No, no, he never counts what he has in his harvest till they shout the "Harvest Home." So we should think our work is never rewarded to the full till souls, saved through our means, get to Heaven and until we get there to meet them there! I see some dear Brothers and Sisters here who I have no doubt look for many souls to meet them at the gates of Paradise—and I can cast my eye over a Sister, here and there in this Church who, highly honored of God, will have young spirits to meet them at Heaven's gate and salute them joyfully as mothers in Israel! Happy, happy we who, when we wing our way to Heaven, shall hear a band behind us—and when we turn our heads, wondering who they are, shall hear each say, "You did bring me to Christ! You did teach me His blessed name! You did rescue me from sin and vice! You have led me along the golden shining path to Heaven and here I am, to share your bliss forever." Brethren, there is another and a better land"—therefore be you steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

II. We will pause a minute and then use our text for a very short time, indeed, for the other part of the congregation, uttering A WARNING TO UNBELIEVERS.

Where are they? Where shall I point my finger? Where shall I present my gaze? They are mingled everywhere—in almost every pew! In these aisles and in the pews we have men and woman who do not love Christ, who have not passed from death unto life. Strangers, yes, and those that hear us every Sabbath, too, to our pain and grief are here—hundreds, hundreds, hundreds that are still enemies to God and in the gall of bitterness!

Hear me, then, hear me! *To you death has a sting.* It will sting you in death. It will plague you on your pillow. It will make you toss your aching head. It will make your heart palpitate with a huge unutterable dread. You shall feel the sting and your friends shall see that you feel it by those dread expressions of awful gloom which shall come over you on the bed of death! And there will be a sting after death, a sting the moment you are dead. Summoned before your God, you shall hear your sentence and there will be a sting in judgment! When the body shall rise from the grave, then there will be a sting forever and forever, in the second death—forever and forever! Is there any man here who can measure eternity? Who can tell its everlasting years? Yet all the while there shall be a sting in death and such a sting, and such a terror, and such a misery, and such a torment as only they can know who have begun to feel it—and even they know it not, for still it is forever and forever, when twice ten thousand thousand years have gone—forever and still forever!

There is a sting in Death *to you and over you the Grave will get the victory*, for the Grave shall devour you! When you wake up from it, again, it shall not be to newness of life—it shall not be in the image of the Second Adam, but in the image of the first—and perhaps in the image of the first Adam in all the decay and loathsomeness into which death brought him! I know not in what form the wicked dead shall rise. It may be they shall, even in their bodies, be the objects of everlasting contempt, devoured by the worm that never dies, so that their very flesh will give evidence of it. O my Hearers, if these things are true, it is time that we woke up! It is time that saints woke up to try and bring you to Christ! It is high time that you also awoke up out of slumber! “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,” “for our God is a consuming fire.” Are you ready to meet God? Are you ready for the Judgment? Can you confront the Judge? Who among you can dwell with everlasting burning, or abide with the devouring flames? Do you shudder? Do you say, “Great God save us from our sin”?

The path is easy. The path is open—God wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn unto Him and live! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved! Trust Jesus now and you are saved at once! Death has lost its sting in that moment and the Grave its victory! We said this morning in our simple discourse, “Repent and believe the Gospel.” This is the sum of the Gospel—to repent and to know Christ. Oh, that the Spirit of God may lead everyone in this assembly to do so at this very hour and then you can walk over your graves without fear, and descend into them without dread, for you shall come up out of them with triumph! You shall ascend to Heaven with glory and so shall

you be forever with the Lord! The Lord add His own blessing for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
2 THESSALONIANS 3.**

Verse 1. *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the LORD may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you.* A most important request. What can the ministers of the Gospel do if their people cease to pray for them? Even if their own prayers are heard, as they will be, and a measure of blessing be given, yet it will be but a scant measure compared with what it would be if all the saints united in their intercessions! Whenever we see the Word of God very mighty in one place it ought to encourage us to pray that it may be the same in another place, for it is the same Word and the hearts of all men are alike. The same spirit can give the same blessing in every place. Hence Paul says, "Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified even as it is with you." Now, if any of you in your church are enjoying rich prosperity, pray for others, that they may have the same. And if you are without it, take courage from any church which you see prospering and ask the Lord to do the same things for you. Very likely if we prayed more for ministers, they would be more blessed to us. There is many a man who cannot "hear" his minister and the reason may be that God never hears him pray for his minister.

2. *And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.* I really do not know which is the worst to put up with—an unreasonable man or a wicked man. A wicked man may do you all sorts of mischief, but you soon know him. But an unreasonable man—you do not know where to find him and he can attack you from all sorts of places. Alas, there are some very unreasonable Christians—very good in some points, but very stupid—and a stupid man may set a village on a blaze quite as easily as a wicked man. The stupid man's stupidity may be as dangerous as another man's design. Pray also "that we may be delivered from wicked and unreasonable men, for all men have not faith," and all men have not sense, I may also add.

3. *But the LORD is faithful.* There is the mercy. Whether men are fools or knaves, the Lord is faithful.

3. *Who shall establish you, and keep you from evil.* We are taught to pray for this Grace. We are here told that we shall have it. Since God is faithful He will keep us from evil.

4. *And we have confidence in the LORD touching you, that you both do and will do the things which we command you.* Our obedience to Apostolic ordinances should be of the present and of the future. It should be fixed in our souls. What the Lord has commanded in His Church by His Apostles should be carefully regarded by us.

5. *And the LORD direct your heart into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* The two things go together. When we love God, we long for the Glory and the appearing of His Son. The most loving

spirits in the world have had, most, an eye to that glorious coming. Note Enoch who walked with God and prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes." Note Daniel, "a man greatly beloved," and a Seer who looked into the future and saw the Ancient of Days. Mark also John who leaned his head on Jesus' bosom—we may say of him that he spoke more of the Second Coming than all the rest of the Apostles. When the heart gets right away from earth and is set upon God, then it is that we begin to long for the manifestation of the Lord from Heaven!

6. *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.* Paul had been to Thessalonica and had given oral teaching. And now he commits to the Book what he had spoken, but he bids them take care not to associate with those who willfully broke the ordinances of the Church which he had taught them. There are some brethren with whom it is ill for us to associate, lest they do us harm—and it is ill for them that we associate with them, lest we seem to assist them in their evil deeds. Especially is this so in the case of brethren of the class that he is about to describe—mischief makers, troublers, people that can always tell you the gossip of a congregation, that can tear a neighbor's character to pieces, that are able to perceive spots on the sun—people who delight in parading the fault of God's own children and are never so happy as when they are making others unhappy by what they have to say! These are the kind of people to whom you should give a wide berth.

7-9. *For yourselves know how you ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you, neither did we eat any man's bread for nothing; but worked with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us.* The Apostle had a right to be supported by those among whom he labored. He always insists upon that right, but for their good, knowing the tendency of that age, he forfeited that right—and he is indignant that there should be others who did nothing whatever as to Christian ministry, but who availed themselves of the charity of the Church at Thessalonica so as to be able to live upon it without work.

10. *For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.* A very capital rule, indeed. There are some so very spiritually minded that to soil their hands is also to soil their conscience. They are afraid of hard work. They think it is unspiritual, whereas there is nothing in the world, next to the Grace of God, that is more likely to keep men out of mischief than having plenty to do!

11. *For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.* Not doing their own business and, therefore, putting their noses into everybody else's business. If they had minded their own affairs, they would have left other people alone. There are such people alive now. We must not be surprised if we meet them

seeing that they were alive in the Apostle's days—if they troubled him it must be small marvel if they trouble us.

12. *Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.* The best bread and the sweetest is our own. We are to work for it. We are to work with quietness. I suppose to some that is very hard work, but they must labor after it, for quietness is a Christian Grace—it is, indeed, a high Christian attainment.

13-15. *But you, brethren, be not weary in doing good. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.* This kind of Christian discipline ought to still be carried out in reference not only to this one case of busybodies, but to all other cases. When a church grows large, there can be no efficient discipline from one man, or from all his officers with him. There must be the discipline of the whole church towards itself—each Christian, according to his measure of Grace, seeking the good of the whole—for while every man must bear his own burden, yet is it said, “Bear you one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” “Look not every man upon his own things, but also upon the things of others.” The careful desire to promote the Christian welfare of all our fellow members is a very different thing from being busybodies. We must have equal desire not in any way to interfere where we should not.

16. *Now the LORD of Peace, Himself, give you peace always by all means.* What a sweet benediction! And how he heaps the words together, as if peace was one of the greatest blessings a church could have. Indeed, dear Brothers and Sisters, it is the essential to all other blessings. I am quite certain that we never would have enjoyed the long years of perpetual prosperity here which we have had if it had not pleased the Lord to keep us always in peace. So may we be for many and many a year to come! May no root of bitterness ever spring up to trouble us, but may this text be fulfilled—“Now the Lord of Peace give you peace always by all means.”

16, 17. *The LORD be with you all. The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.* I suppose he always wrote a part of each Epistle. Probably through the failure of his eyesight, he was unable to write the whole of it with his own hands, but employed some one of his brethren to be his secretary. But, in order that everyone might know the Epistle to be genuine, there was always a little of Paul's writing, sometimes in big text, as when he said to one church, “You see how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand.”

18. *The Grace of our LORD Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.* So with great courtesy and a comprehensive prayer he finishes his letter.

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

THOUGHTS ON THE LAST BATTLE

NO. 23

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, MAY 13, 1855,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
1 Corinthians 15:56, 57.***

WHILE the Bible is one of the most poetical of books and though its language is unutterably sublime, yet we must remark how constantly it is true to nature. There is no straining of a fact, no glossing over a truth. However dark may be the subject, while it lights it up with brilliance, yet it does not deny the gloom connected with it. If you will read this chapter of Paul's Epistle, so justly celebrated as a masterpiece of language, you will find him speaking of that which is to come after death with such exaltation and glory that you feel, “If this is to die, then it were well to depart at once.” Who has not rejoiced and whose heart has not been lifted up, or filled with a holy fire, while he has read such sentences as these—“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?” Yet with all that majestic language, with all that bold flight of eloquence, he does not deny that death is a gloomy thing. Even his very figures imply it. He does not laugh at it, he does not say, “Oh, it is nothing to die.” He describes death as a monster. He speaks of it as having a sting. He tells us wherein the strength of that sting lies and even in the exclamation of triumph he imputes that victory not to unaided flesh, but he says, “Thanks be to God which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

When I select such a text as this, I feel that I cannot preach from it. The thought overpowers me, my words stagger—there are no utterances that are great enough to convey the mighty meaning of this wondrous text! If I had the eloquence of all men united in one. If I could speak as never man spoke, (with the exception of that one godlike Man of Nazareth), I could not compass so vast a subject as this! I will not, therefore, pretend to do so, but offer you such thoughts as my mind is capable of producing.

Tonight we shall speak of three things—first, *the sting of death*. Secondly, *the strength of sin*. And thirdly, *the victory of faith*.

I. First, THE STING OF DEATH. The Apostle pictures death as a terrible dragon or monster, which, coming upon all men, must be fought with by each one for himself. He gives us no hope whatever that any of us can avoid it. He tells us of no bridge across the river Death. He does not give us the faintest hope that it is possible to emerge from this state of existence into another without dying. He describes the monster as being exactly in our path and with it we must fight—each man personally, separately and alone—each man must die. We all must cross the black stream. Each one of us must go through the iron gate. There is no passage from this world into another without death. Having told us, then, that there is no hope of our escape, he braces up our nerves for the combat. But he gives us no hope that we shall be able to slay the monster. He does not tell us that we can strike our sword into his heart and so overturn and overwhelm death. But pointing to the dragon, he seems to say, “You cannot slay it, Man, there is no hope that you should ever put your foot upon its neck and crush its head. But one thing can be done—it has a sting which you may extract. “You cannot crush death under foot, but you may pull out the sting which is deadly. And then you need not fear the monster, for monster it shall be no longer—but rather it shall be a swift-winged angel to waft you aloft to Heaven.” Where, then, is the sting of this dragon? Where must I strike? What is the sting? The Apostle tells us that, “The sting of death is sin.” Once let me cut off *that*, though death may be dreary and solemn, I shall not dread it. But holding up the monster’s sting, I shall exclaim, “O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?” Let us now dwell upon the fact that “the sting of death is sin.”

I. First, sin puts a sting into death from the fact that *sin brought death into the world*. Men could be more content to die if they did not know it was a *punishment*. I suppose if we had never sinned, there would have been some means for us to go from this world to another. It cannot be supposed that so huge a population would have existed that all the myriads who have lived from Adam down till now could ever have inhabited so small a globe as this. There would not have been space enough for them. But there might have been provided some means for taking us off when the proper time should come and bearing us safely to Heaven. God might have furnished horses and chariots of fire for each of His Elijahs. Or as it was said of Enoch, so it might have been declared of each of us, “He *is not*, for God has taken him.” Thus to die, if we may call it death. To depart from this body and to be with God, would have been no disgrace. In fact it would have been the highest honor—fitting the loftiest aspiration of the soul—to live quickly its little time in this world, then to mount and be with its God. And in the prayers of the most pious and devout man—one of his most sublime petitions would be, “O God, hasten the time of my departure, when I shall be with You.” When such sinless beings thought of their departure, they would not tremble, for the gate would be of ivory and pearl—not as now, of iron—the stream would be as

nectar, far different from the present “bitterness of death.” But alas, how different! Death is now the punishment of sin. “In the day you eat, thereof, you shall surely die.” “*In Adam* all die.” By his sin everyone of us become subject to the penalty of death and thus, being a punishment, death has its sting. To the best man, the holiest Christian, the most sanctified intellect, the soul that has the nearest and dearest communion with God, death must appear to have a sting, because sin was its mother. O fatal offspring of sin, I only dread you because of your parentage! If you did come to me as an honor, I could wade through Jordan even now and when its chilling billows were around me I would smile amidst its surges. And in the swellings of Jordan my song should swell, too—and the liquid music of my voice should join with the liquid swellings of the floods, “Hallelujah! It is blessed to cross to the land of the glorified.” This is one reason why the sting of death is sin.

2. But I must take it in another sense. “The sting of death is sin”—that is to say, *that which shall make death most terrible to man will be sin, if it is not forgiven*. If that is not the exact meaning of the Apostle, still it is a great Truth and I may find it here. If sin lay heavy on me and were not forgiven—if my transgressions were unpardoned—if such were the fact (though I rejoice to know it is not so) it would be the very sting of death to me. Let us consider a man dying and looking back on his past life—he will find in death a sting and that sting will be his past sin. Imagine a conqueror’s deathbed. He has been a man of blood from his youth up. Bred in the camp, his lips were early set to the bugle and his hands, even in infancy, struck the drum. He had a martial spirit. He delighted in the fame and applause of men. He loved the dust of battle and the garment rolled in blood. He has lived a life of what men call glory. He has stormed cities, conquered countries, ravaged continents, overrun the world. See his banners hanging in the hall and the marks of glory on his escutcheon. He is one of earth’s proudest warriors! But now he comes to die. And when he lies down to expire, what shall invest his death with horror? It shall be his sin. I think I see the monarch dying. He lies in state. Around him are his nobles and his counselors. But there is someone else there. Hard by his side there stands a spirit from Hades. It is the soul of a departed woman. She looks on him and says, “Monster! My husband was slain in battle through your ambition—I was made a widow and my helpless orphan and myself were starved.” And she passes by. Her husband comes and opening wide his bloody wounds, he cries, “Once I called you Monarch. But by your vile covetousness, you did provoke an unjust war. See here these wounds—I gained them in the siege. For your sake I mounted first the sealing ladder. This foot stood upon the top of the wall and I waved my sword in triumph. But in Hell I lifted up my eyes in torment. Base wretch! Your ambition hurried me there!” Turning his horrid eyes upon him, he passes by. Then up comes another and another and another yet—waking from their tombs they stalk around his bed and haunt him. The dreary procession still marches on, looking at the dying

tyrant. He shuts his eyes, but he feels the cold and bony hand upon his forehead. He quivers—for the sting of death is in his heart. “O Death!” he says, “to leave this large estate, this mighty realm, this pomp and power—this were somewhat—but to meet those men, those women and those orphan children, face to face, to hear them saying, ‘Have you become like one of us?’ While kings whom I have dethroned and monarchs whom I have cast down shall rattle their chains in my ears and say, ‘you were our destroyer, but how are you fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How are you brought down as in a moment from your glory and your pride!’” There you see the sting of death would be the man’s sin. It would not sting him that he had to die but that he had sinned—that he had been a bloody man, that his hands were red with wholesale murder—this would plague him, indeed, for, “the sting of death is sin.”

Or suppose another character—a minister. He has stood before the world proclaiming something which he called the Gospel. He has been a noted preacher—the multitude have been hanging on his lips, they have listened to his words. Before his eloquence a nation stood amazed and thousands trembled at his voice. But his preaching is over. The time when he can mount the pulpit is gone. Another standing-place awaits him, another congregation. And he must hear another and a better preacher than himself. There he lies. He has been unfaithful to his charge. He preached philosophy to charm his people, instead of preaching the Truth of God and aiming at their hearts. And as he pants upon his bed, that worst and most accursed of men—for surely, none can be worse than he—there comes up one, a soul from the pit of Hell and looking him in the face, says, “I came to you once trembling on account of sin. I asked you the road to Heaven and you did say, ‘Do such-and-such good works,’ and I did them and am damned! You did tell me an lie. You did not declare plainly the Word of God.” He vanishes only to be followed by another. He has been an irreligious character and as he sees the minister upon his deathbed. He says, “Ah, and are you here? Once I strolled into your House of Prayer but you had such a sermon that I could not understand. I listened. I wanted to hear something from your lips, some Truth of God that might burn my soul and make me repent. But I knew not what you said and here I am.” The ghost stamps his foot and the man quivers like an aspen leaf, because he knows it is all true. Then the whole congregation arises before him and as he lies upon his bed, he looks upon the motley group. He beholds the snowy heads of the old and the glittering eyes of the young. And lying there upon his pillow, he pictures all the sins of his past life and he hears it said, “Go! Unfaithful to your charge—you did not divest yourself of your love of pomp and dignity. You did not speak—

***As though you never might speak again,
A dying man to dying men.”***

Oh, it may be something for that minister to leave his charge, somewhat for him to die. But worst of all, the sting of death will be his sin—to hear

his parish come howling after him to Hell—to see his congregation following behind him in one mingled herd. He led them astray. He was a false prophet instead of a true one, speaking peace, peace, where there was no peace, deluding them with lies, charming them with music, when he ought rather to have told them in rough and rugged accents the Word of God! Verily it is true, it is true, the sting of death to such a man shall be his great, his enormous, his heinous sin of having deluded others!

Thus, then, having painted two full-length pictures, I might give each one of you miniatures of yourselves. I might picture, O drunkard, when your cups are drained and when your liquor shall no longer be sweet to your taste. When worse than gall shall be the dainties that you drink—when within an hour the worms shall make a carnival upon your flesh. I might picture you as you look back upon your misspent life. And you, O swearer, I think I see you there with your oaths echoed back by memory to your own dismay. And you man of lust and wickedness—you who have debauched and seduced others. I see you there and the sting of death to you, how horrible, how dreadful! It shall not be that you are groaning with pain, it shall not be that you are racked with agony, it shall not be that your heart and flesh fails. But the sting, the sting shall be your sin! How many in this place can spell that word, “remorse?” I pray you may never know its awful meaning. Remorse, remorse! You know its derivation—it signifies to bite. Ah, now we dance with our sins—it is a merry life with us—we take their hands and sporting in the noontide sun, we dance, we dance and live in joy!

But then those sins shall bite us. The young lions we have stroked and played with shall bite. The young adder, the serpent whose azure hues have well delighted us, shall bite, shall sting when remorse shall occupy our souls. I might, but I will not tell you, a few stories of the awful power of remorse—it is the first pang of Hell, it is the ante-chamber of the pit of Hell. To have remorse is to feel the sparks that blaze upwards from the fire of the bottomless Gehenna. To feel remorse is to have eternal torment commenced within the soul. The sting of death shall be unforgiven, unrepented sin!

3. But if sin in the retrospect is the sting of death, what must *sin in the prospect be?* My Friends, we do not often enough look at what sin is to be. We see what it is—first the seed, then the blade, then the ear and then the full corn in the ear. It is the wish, the imagination, the desire, the sight, the taste, the deed. But what is sin in its next development? We have observed sin as it grows. We have seen it at first a very little thing but expanding itself until it has swelled into a mountain. We have seen it like, “a little cloud, the size of a man’s hand,” but we have beheld it gather until it covered the skies with blackness and sent down drops of bitter rain. But what is sin to be in the *next* state? We have gone so far, but sin is a thing that cannot stop. We have seen where it *has* grown, but where *will* it grow? For it is not ripe when we die. It has to still go on. It is set, going, but it has to unfold itself forever! The moment we die the voice

of Justice cries, "Seal up the fountain of blood, stop the stream of forgiveness! He that is holy, let him be holy, still. He that is filthy, let him be filthy, still." And after that the man goes on growing filthier and filthier! His lust develops itself. His vice increases. All those evil passions blaze with ten-fold more fury and, amidst the companionship of others like himself, without the restraints of Divine Grace, without the preached Word of God, the man becomes worse and worse! And who can tell where his sin may grow? I have sometimes likened the hour of our death to that celebrated picture which I think you have seen in the National Gallery—of Perseus holding up the head of Medusa. That head turned all persons into stone who looked upon it. There is a warrior there with a dart in his hand—he stands stiffened, turned into stone, with the javelin even in his fist. There is another with a knife beneath his robe about to stab. He is now the statue of an assassin, motionless and cold. Another is creeping along stealthily, like a man in ambush—and there he stands a consolidated rock—he has looked only upon that head and he is frozen into stone!

Well, such is death. What I am when death is held before me, that I must be forever. When my spirit goes, if God finds me hymning His praise, I shall hymn it in Heaven. If He finds me breathing out oaths, I shall follow up those oaths in Hell. Where death leaves me, Judgment finds me. As I die, so shall I live eternally—

***"There are no acts of pardon passed
In the cold grave to which we haste."***

It is forever forever, forever! Ah, there are a set of heretics in these days who talk of short punishment and preach about God's transporting souls for a term of years and then letting them die. Where did such men learn their doctrine, I wonder?

I read in God's Word that the angel shall plant one foot upon the earth and the other upon the sea and shall swear by Him that lives and was dead, that *time* shall be no longer. But if a soul could die in a thousand years, it would die in *time*. If a million of years could elapse and then the soul could be extinguished, there would be such a thing as *time*. Talk to me of *years* and there is *time*. But, Sirs, when that angel has spoken the word, "*Time* shall be no longer," things will then be eternal. The spirit shall proceed in its ceaseless revolution of weal or woe, never to be stayed, for there is no time to stop it. The fact of its stopping would imply time—but everything shall be eternal—for time shall cease to be! It well becomes you, then, to consider where you are and what you are. Oh, stand and tremble on the narrow neck of land between the two unbounded seas, for God in Heaven, alone, can tell how soon you may be launched upon the eternal future. May God grant that when that last hour may come, we may be prepared for it! Like the thief, unheard, unseen, it steals through night's dark shade. Perhaps, as here I stand and rudely speak of these dark hidden things, soon may the hand be stretched and dumb the mouth that lisps the faltering strain. Oh, you

who dwell in Heaven. You Power supreme! You everlasting King—let not that hour intrude upon me in an ill-spent season, but may it find me wrapped in meditation high, hymning my great Creator!

So in the last moment of my life I will hasten beyond the azure, to bathe the wings of this, my spirit, in their native element and then to dwell with You forever—

**“Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in.”**

II. “THE STRENGTH OF SIN is the Law.”

I have attempted to show how to fight this monster—it is by extracting and destroying its sting. I prepare myself for the battle. It is true I have sinned and, therefore, I have put a sting into death, but I will endeavor to take it away. I attempt it, but the monster laughs me in the face and cries, “The strength of sin is the Law. Before you can destroy sin you must in some way satisfy the Law. Sin cannot be removed by your tears or by your deeds, for the Law is its strength and until you have satisfied the vengeance of the Law, until you have paid the uttermost farthing of its demands, my sting cannot be taken away for the very strength of sin is the Law.” Now, I must try and explain this Doctrine, that the strength of sin is the Law. Most men think that sin has no strength at all. “Oh,” many say, “we may have sinned very much, but we will repent and we will be better for the rest of our lives. No doubt God is merciful and He will forgive us.” And we hear many divines often speak of sin as if it were a very venial thing. Inquire of them what is a man to do—there is no deep repentance required, no real inward workings of Divine Grace, no casting himself upon the blood of Christ. They never tell us about a complete Atonement having been made. They have, indeed, some shadowy idea of Atonement—that Christ died just as a matter of form to satisfy justice—but as to any liberal taking away of our sins and suffering the actual penalty for us, they do not consider that God’s Law requires any such thing. I suppose they do not, for I never hear them assert the positive satisfaction and substitution of our Lord Jesus Christ. But, without that, how can we take away the strength of sin?

1. The strength of sin is in the Law, first, in this respect, *that the Law, being spiritual it is quite impossible for us to live without sin.* If the Law were merely carnal and referred to the flesh. If it simply related to open and overt actions, I question even then, whether we could live without sin. But when I turn over the Ten Commandments and read, “you shall not covet,” I know it refers even to the wish of my heart. It is said, “you shall not commit adultery.” But it is said, also, that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed that sin. So that it is not merely the *act*, it is the *thought*. It is not simply the *deed*, it is the very *imagination* that is a sin! Oh, now, Sinner, how can you get rid of sin? Your very thoughts, the inward workings of your mind—these are crimes—this is guilt and desperate wickedness. Is there not, now, strength in sin? Has not the Law put a potency in it? Has it not nerved

sin with such a power that all your strength cannot hope to wipe away the black enormity of your transgression?

2. Then, again, the Law puts strength into sin in this respect—that *it will not abate one tittle of its stern demands*. It says to every man who breaks it, “I will not forgive you.” You hear persons talk about God’s mercy. Now, if they do not believe in the Gospel, they must be under the Law, but where in the Law do we read of *mercy*? If you will read the commandments through, there is a curse after them, but there is no provision made for pardon. The Law, itself, speaks not of that. It thunders out, without the slightest mitigation, “the soul that sins, it shall die.” If any of you desire to be saved by works, remember, one sin will spoil your righteousness. One speck of this earth’s dross will spoil the beauty of that perfect righteousness which God requires at your hands! If you would be saved by works, Brothers and Sisters, you must be as holy as the angels, you must be as pure and as immaculate as Jesus. For the Law requires perfection and nothing short of it. And God with unflinching vengeance will smite every man or woman low who cannot bring Him a perfect obedience! If I cannot, when I come before His Throne, plead a perfect righteousness as being mine, God will say, “you have not fulfilled the demands of My Law. Depart, accursed one! You have sinned and you must die.” “Ah,” says one, “can we ever have a perfect righteousness, then?” Yes, I will tell you of that in the third point. Thanks be unto Christ, who gives us the victory through His blood and through His righteousness, who adorns us as a bride in her jewels, as a husband arrays his with ornaments.

3. Yet again, the Law gives strength to sin from the fact that *for every transgression, it will exact a punishment*. The Law never remits a farthing of debt—it says, “Sin—punishment.” They are linked together with adamant chains. They are tied and cannot be severed. The Law speaks not of sin and *mercy*. Mercy comes in the Gospel. The Law says, “Sin—die. Transgress—be chastised. Sin—Hell.” Thus are they linked together. Once let me sin and I may go to the foot of stern Justice and, as with blind eyes, she holds the scales. I may say, “Oh, Justice, remember, I was holy *once*, remember that on such-and-such an occasion I did keep the Law.” “Yes,” says Justice, “all I owe you, you shall have. I will not punish you for what you have not done. But do you remember *this* crime, O Sinner?” And she puts in the heavy weight. The sinner trembles and he cries, “But can you not forget that? Will you not cast it away?” “No,” says Justice, and she puts in another weight. “Sinner, do you recollect *this* crime?” “Oh,” says the sinner, “will you not for mercy’s sake forget that one?” “I will not have mercy,” says Justice. “Mercy has its own palace, but I have nothing to do with forgiveness here. Mercy belongs to Christ. “If you will be saved by Justice you shall have your full of it. If you come to me for salvation, I will not have mercy brought in to help me, she is not my vicegerent. I stand here alone without her.” And again, as she holds the scales, she puts in another iniquity, another crime,

another enormous transgression. And each time the man begs and prays that he may have that passed by—Justice says, “No, I must exact the penalty. I have sworn I will and I will. Can you find a Substitute for yourself? If you can, there is the only room I have for mercy. I will exact it of that Substitute, but even at His hands I will have the utmost jot and tittle. I will abate nothing, I am God’s Justice—stern and unflinching, I will not alter, I will not mitigate the penalty.” She still holds the scales. The plea is in vain. “Never will I change!” She cries, “bring me the blood, bring me the price to its utmost. Count it down, or else, Sinner, you shall die.”

Now, my Friends, I ask you, if you consider the spirituality of the Law, the perfection it requires and its unflinching severity, are you prepared to take away the sting of death in your own persons? Can you hope to overcome sin yourselves? Can you trust that by some righteous works you may yet cancel your guilt? If you think so, go, foolish one, go! O madman, go! Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, without the God that works in you. Go, twist your rope of sand, go, build a pyramid of air. Go, prepare a house with bubbles and think it is to last forever. But know it will be a dream with an awful awakening, for as a dream, when one awakes will he despise, alike, your image and your righteousness. “The strength of sin is the Law.”

III. But now, in the last place, we have before us THE VICTORY OF FAITH. The Christian is the only champion who can smite the dragon of death and even he cannot do it himself. But when he has done it, he shall cry, “Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” One moment and I will show you how the Christian can look upon death with complacency through the merits of Jesus Christ.

First, Christ has taken away the strength of sin in this respect, *that He has removed the Law*. We are not under bondage, but under Grace. Law is not our directing principle, Grace is. Do not misunderstand me. The principle that I must do a thing—that is to say, the principle of Law—“do, or be punished. Do and be rewarded,” is not the motive of the Christian’s life. His principle is Grace. “God has done so much for me, what ought I to do for Him?” We are not under the Law in that sense but under Grace.

Then Christ has removed the Law in this sense, *that He has completely satisfied it*. The Law demands a perfect righteousness. Christ says, “Law, you have it. Find fault with Me. I am the sinner’s Substitute, have I not kept your commandments? Wherein have I violated your statutes?” “Come here, My Beloved,” He says and then He cries to Justice, “Find a fault in this man? I have put My robe upon him. I have washed him in My blood. I have cleansed him from his sin. All the past is gone. As for the future, I have secured it by sanctification. As for the penalty, I have borne it Myself. At one tremendous draught of love, I have drunk that man’s destruction dry. I have borne what he should have suffered! I have endured the agonies he ought to have endured. Justice, have I not satisfied you? Did I not say upon the tree and did you not coincide with it, ‘It

is finished! It is finished!?” Have I not made so complete an Atonement that there is now no need for that man to die and expiate his guilt? Did I not complete the perfect righteousness of this poor, once-condemned but now, justified spirit?” “Yes,” says Justice, “I am well satisfied and even more content, if possible, than if the sinner had brought a spotless righteousness of his own.” And now what says the Christian after this? Boldly he comes to the realms of death and entering the gates there, he cries, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect!” And when he has said it, the dragon drops his sting. He descends into the grave. He passes by the place where fiends lie down in fetters of iron. He sees their chains and looks into the dungeon where they dwell. And as he passes by the prison door, he shouts, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect!” They growl and bite their iron bonds and hiss in secret, but they cannot lay anything to his charge. Now see him mount aloft. He approaches God’s Heaven, he comes against the gates and Faith still triumphantly shouts, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” And a voice comes from within—“Not Christ, for He has died. Not God, for He has justified.” Received by Jesus, Faith enters Heaven and again she cries, “Who,” even here among the spotless and ransomed, “shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” Now the Law is satisfied. Sin is gone. And now surely we need not fear the sting of the dragon but we may say as Paul did, when he rose into the majesty of poetry—such beautiful poetry, that Pope, himself, borrowed his words, only transposing the sentences—“O grave, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

If it were necessary, tonight, I might speak to you concerning the *Resurrection* and I might tell you how much that takes away the sting of death. But I will confine myself to the simple fact that “the sting of death is sin,” that, “the strength of sin is the Law,” and that Christ gives us the victory by taking the sting away and removing the strength of sin by His perfect obedience.

And now, Sirs, how many are there here who have any hope that Christ Jesus died for them? Am I coming too close home, when most solemnly I put the question to each one of you, as I stand in God’s Presence this night, to free my head of your blood? As I stand and appeal with all the earnestness this heart is capable of? Are you prepared to die? Is sin pardoned? Is the Law satisfied? Can you view the flowing—

**“Of Christ’s soul-redeeming blood
With Divine assurance knowing
That He made your peace with God?”**

Oh, can you now put one hand upon your heart and the other upon the Bible and say, “God’s Word and I agree. The witness of the Spirit here and the witness there are one. I have renounced my sins, I have given up my evil practices. I have abhorred my own righteousness. I trust in nothing but Jesus’ doings. Simply do I depend on Him—

Nothing in my hands I bring

Simply to Your Cross I cling.

If so, should you die where you are—sudden death were sudden glory!

But, my Hearers, shall I be faithful with you? Or shall I belie my soul? Which shall it be? Are there not many here who, each time the bell tolls the departure of a soul, might well ask the question, “Am I prepared?” And they must say, “No”? I shall not turn Prophet tonight but were it right for me to say so, I fear not one half of you are prepared to die. Is that true? Yes, let the speaker ask himself the question, “Am I prepared to meet my Maker face to face?” Oh, sit in your seats and catechize your souls with that solemn question! Let each one ask himself, “Am I prepared, should I be called to die?” I think I hear one say with confidence, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” “Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” I hear another say with trembling accents—

***“A guilty, weak and helpless worm,
On Christ’s kind arms I fall.
He is my Strength and Righteousness,
My Jesus and my All”***

Yes, sweet words! I would rather have written that one verse than Milton’s “Paradise Lost.” It is such a matchless picture of the true condition of the believing soul. But I hear another say, “I shall not answer such a question as that. I am not going to be dull today. It may be gloomy weather outside today, but I do not want to be made melancholy.” Young man, young woman, go your way! Let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. But for all this the Lord shall bring you to judgment! What will you do, careless spirit, when your friends have forsaken you, when you are alone with God? You do not like to be alone, now, do you? A falling leaf will startle you. To be alone an hour will bring on an insufferable feeling of melancholy. But you will be alone—and a dreary alone it will be—with God your enemy! How will you do in the swellings of Jordan? What will you do when He takes you by the hand at eventide and asks you for an account? When He says, “What did you do in the beginning of your days? How did you spend your life?” When He asks you, “Where are the years of your manhood?” When He questions you about your wasted Sabbaths and inquires how your latter years were spent? What will you say then? Speechless, without an answer you will stand. Oh, I beseech you, as you love yourselves, take care! Even now begin to weigh the solemn matters of eternal life. Oh, say not, “Why so earnest? Why in such haste?”

Sirs, if I saw you lying in your bed and your house was on fire, the fire might be at the bottom of the house and you might slumber safely for the next five minutes. But with all my might I would pull you from your bed, or I would shout, “Awake! Awake! The flame is under you.” So with some of you who are sleeping over Hell’s mouth, slumbering over the pit of perdition, may I not awake you? May I not depart a little from clerical rules and speak to you as one speaks to his fellow whom he loves? Ah, if I loved you not, I need not be here. It is because I wish to win your souls

and if it is possible, to win for my Master some honor, that I would thus pour out my heart before you! As the Lord lives, Sinner, you stand on a single plank over the mouth of Hell and that plank is rotten! You hang over the pit of Hell by a solitary rope and the strands of that rope are breaking! You are like that man of old, whom Dionysius placed at the head of the table—before him was a dainty feast, but the man ate not, for directly over his head was a sword suspended by a hair. So are you, Sinner. Let your cup be full, let your pleasures be high, let your soul be elevated—do you see the sword? The next time you sit in the theater, look up and see that sword! The next time you are in a tavern, look at that sword. When next in your business you scorn the rules of God’s Gospel, look at that sword. Though you see it not, it is there. Even now you may hear God saying to Gabriel—“Gabriel, that man is sitting in his seat in the hall. He is hearing, but as though he heard not—unsheathe your blade. Let the glittering sword cut through that hair, let the weapon fall upon him and divide his soul and body.” *Stop! Gabriel, stop!* Save the man a little while. Give him yet an hour that he may repent! Oh, let him not die! True, he has been here these ten or a dozen nights and he has listened without a tear. But stop—perhaps he may yet repent!

Jesus backs up my entreaty and He cries, “Spare him yet another year, till I dig about him and feed him and though he now cumpers the ground, he may yet bring forth fruit, that he may not be hewn down and cast into the fire.” I thank You, O God, You will not cut him down tonight. But tomorrow may be his last day. You may never see the sun rise, though you have seen it set. Take heed! Hear the Word of God’s Gospel and depart with God’s blessing—“Whoever believes on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” “He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto Him.” “Whosoever comes unto Him, He will in no wise cast out.”

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

MOTIVES FOR STEADFASTNESS

NO. 1111

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 11 1873,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be you steadfast, unmovable,
always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing
that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”
1 Corinthians 15:58.***

THE Apostle had been putting forth all his strength to prove the doctrine of the Resurrection, yet he was not diverted from his habitual custom of making practical use of the doctrine which he established. He proves his point and then he goes on to his, “therefore,” which is always an inference of godliness. He is the great master of doctrine—if you want the Christian creed elaborated and its details laid out in order, you must turn to the epistles of Paul. But at the same time he is always a practical teacher. Paul was not like those who hew down trees and square them by rule and system, but forget to build the house. True, he lifts up a goodly axe upon the thick trees, but he always makes use of that which he hews down—he lays the beams of his chambers and forgets not the carved work.

He brings to light the great stones of Truth and cuts them out of the live rock of mystery—but he is not content with being a mere quarryman—he labors to be a wise master builder and with the stones of Truth to erect the temple of Christian holiness. If I shift the figure I may say that our Apostle does not grope among the lower strata of the Truth of God, hunting out the deep things and spending all his force upon them, but he plows the rich upper soil. He sows, he reaps, he gathers in a harvest and feeds many. Thus should the practical ever flow from the doctrinal like wine from the clusters of the grape. The Puritans were known to call the end of the sermon, in which they enforced the practical lessons, the “improvement” of the subject and, truly, the Apostle Paul was a master in the way of “improvement.”

Therefore in this present chapter, though he has been dealing with the fact of the Resurrection and arguing with all his might in defense of it, he cannot close till he has said, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” My Brothers and Sisters, this is a lesson for us! Let us never reckon that we have learned a doctrine till we have seen its bearing upon our lives. Whatever we discover in God’s Word, let us pray the Holy Spirit to make us feel the sanctifying influence of it. You know not a man because you recognize his features—you must also know his spirit. And so the mere acquaintance with the letter of Truth is of small account—you must feel its influence and know its tendency.

There are some Brethren who are so enamored of doctrine that no preacher will content them unless he gives them over and over again clear statements of certain favorite Truths—but the moment you come to speak of *practice* they fight shy of it at once and either denounce the preacher as being legal—or they grow weary of that which they dare not contradict. Let it never be so with us. Let us follow up Truths of God to their practical, “therefores.” Let us love the practice of holiness as much as the belief of the Truth and, though we desire to know, let us take care *when* we know, that we act according to the knowledge. For if we do not, our knowledge, itself, will become mischievous to us. It will involve us in responsibilities, but will bring to us no effectual blessing. Let everyone here who knows anything, now pray God to teach him what He would have him to do as the consequence of that knowledge.

This morning our subject will be the practical outflow of the Resurrection, the great inference which should be drawn from the fact that death is swallowed up in victory. There should be fine flour from the grinding of such choice wheat. The text has in it two things—first, it mentions two great points of Christian character—“steadfast, unmovable,” and “always abounding in the work of the Lord.” And, secondly, it gives us a grand motive for the cultivation of these two characteristics—inasmuch as the doctrine of the Resurrection is true, “you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

I. First, then, let us consider THE TWO GREAT POINTS OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER here set before us.

1. The first one is “be you steadfast, unmovable.” Two things are needed in a good soldier—steadiness under fire and enthusiasm during a charge. The first is the more essential in most battles, for victory often depends upon the power of endurance which makes a battalion of men into a wall of brass. We need the dashing courage which can carry a position by storm—that will be used up in the second characteristic—“always abounding in the work of the Lord.” But in the commencement of the attack, and at critical points all through the campaign, the most essential virtue for victory is for a soldier to know how to keep his place and, “having done all, to stand.”

The Apostle has given us two words descriptive of godly firmness and we may be sure that as Holy Scripture never uses a superfluity of words, each word has a distinct meaning. “Steadfast,” alone, would not have sufficed, but, “unmovable” must be added. Let us look at the word, “steadfast,” first. Beloved, be you steadfast. By this the Apostle means, first, be you steadfast in the doctrines of the Gospel. Know what you know and, knowing it, cling to it. Hold fast the form of sound doctrine. Do not be as some are, of doubtful minds, who know nothing and even dare to say that nothing can be known. To such the highest wisdom is to suspect the truth of everything they once knew and to hang in doubt as to whether there are any fundamentals at all.

I should like an answer from the Broad Church divines to one short and plain question. What Truth of God is so certain and important as to justify a man in sacrificing his life to maintain it? Is there any doctrine for

which a wise man should yield his body to be burned? According to all that I can understand of modern liberalism, religion is a mere matter of opinion and no opinion is of sufficient importance to be worth contending for. The martyrs might have saved themselves a world of loss and pain if they had been of this school—and the Reformers might have spared the world all this din about Popery and Protestantism.

I deplore the spread of this infidel spirit! It will eat as does a canker. Where is the strength of a Church when its faith is held in such low esteem? Where is conscience? Where is love of Truth? Where, soon, will be common honesty? In these days with some men in religious matters, black is white and all things are whichever color may happen to be in your own eye—the color being nowhere but in your eye. To them theology is only a set of opinions, a bundle of views and persuasions. The Bible to these gentry is a nose of wax which everybody may shape just as he pleases. Beloved, beware of falling into this state of mind! For if you do so I boldly assert that you are not Christian at all, for the Spirit which dwells in Believers hates falsehood and clings firmly to the Truths of God.

Our great Lord and Master taught mankind certain great Truths plainly and definitely, stamping them with His, “Verily, verily.” And as to the marrow of them He did not hesitate to say, “He that believes shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned”—a sentence very abhorrent to modern charity—but Infallible, nevertheless! Jesus never gave countenance to the base-born charity which teaches that it is no injury to a man’s nature to believe a lie! Beloved, be firm, be steadfast, be positive! There are certain things which are true—find them out and grapple them to you as with hooks of steel. Buy the Truth at any price and sell it at no price.

Be steadfast also in the sense of not being changeable. Some have one creed today and another creed tomorrow, variable as a lady’s fashions. Indeed, we once heard a notable Divine assert that he had to alter his creed every week—he was unable to tell on Monday what he would believe on Wednesday—for so much fresh light broke in upon his receptive intellect. There are crowds of persons nowadays of that kind described by Mr. Whitfield when he said you might as well try to measure the moon for a suit of clothes as to tell what they believed. Always learning but never coming to a knowledge of the Truth of God. Shifting as sandbanks are their teachings and as full of danger. The Apostle says to us, “Be you steadfast.”

Having learned the Truth hold it, grow into it, let the roots of your soul penetrate into its center and drink up the nourishment which lies there, and do not be forever transplanting yourselves from soil to soil. How can a tree grow when perpetually shifted? How can a soul make progress if it is evermore changing its course? Do not sow in Beersheba and then rush off to reap in Daniel. Jesus Christ is not yes and no—He is not today one thing and tomorrow another—but the “same today, yesterday, and forever.” True religion is not a series of guesses at Truth, but, “we speak what we do know and testify what we have seen.” That which your experience has proven to you, that which you have clearly seen to be the Word of God, that which the Spirit bears witness to in your consciousness—that

hold with an iron grasp. Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has will he give for his life, and to us the holding of the Truth of God is essential to our life. The Holy Spirit has given His unction unto the people of God and they know the Truth—and moreover they know that no lie is of the Truth. Were it not for this anointing the very elect would have been deceived in this age of falsehood. Brethren, be you steadfast.

But the Apostle meant much more. He intended to urge us to be steadfast in character. Right in the middle of the chapter upon the Resurrection he speaks about character. He shows that a change of view upon the doctrine of the Resurrection would legitimately lead to a change of action, for if the dead rise not, then it is clearly wisdom to say, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” But inasmuch as the Resurrection doctrine is true, he urges us to keep to that holy living which is the natural inference from belief in eternal life and the judgment to come. As you have looked to the recompense of the reward hereafter and have sought to order your conversation by a sense of the coming judgment, so do you still, and be you steadfast.

Alas, we might preach tearful discourses to many Christians upon steadfastness of behavior, for they have started aside as a deceitful bow. There was a time when their integrity was unquestioned, but now they have learned the ways of a faithless world. Truth was on their lips, but now they have learned to flatter. They have lost the pure speech of the New Jerusalem and speak in the Babylonian tongue. How many professors were once exceedingly zealous, but are now careless? The fire of their love burns dimly, its coal is all but quenched. Prayer was their delight, but now it wearies them. The praises of God were perpetually in their mouths, but now they forget their Benefactor. They labored abundantly in the Redeemer’s service, but now they can scarcely be stirred out of their luxurious indolence.

Beloved, if God has sanctified you by His Spirit, be you steadfast in character! Suffer not your divinely-worked sanctity to be stained. Be not just *sometimes* watchful, but always so, by the help of the good Spirit. If you have attained in the things of God, walk by that rule. Be not corrupted by evil communications. Make your private and public life the same. Let not the worldling peep into your house and discover that your godliness is an article intended only for foreign consumption. Be such that if you are watched anywhere and at any time, your sincerity will be manifested. O for consistency among professors! Its absence is the weakness of the Church and its restoration will bring to us unnumbered blessings.

In addition to being steadfast in doctrine and character, we need to be exhorted to steadfastness in attainments. O Brothers and Sisters, if we were now what we sometimes have been, how ripe for Glory should we be! If we could but keep the ground which we conquer, how soon would all Canaan be ours! But is not Christian life, with a great many, much like the condition of the sea? The sea advances, it gains gradually upon the beach—you would think it was about to inundate the land. But after it has reached its highest point it retires and so it spends its force in per-

petual ebb and flow. Are not ebb-and-flow Christians common as sea-shells? Life to them is the unprogressive change of advance and recede—today all earnest, tomorrow all indifferent, today generous, tomorrow mean—today filled with the fullness of God, tomorrow naked, poor, and miserable. What they build with one hand they pull down with the other. Sad that it should be so.

I must confess I find it far easier to climb the greatest heights of Grace and especially of communion, than to maintain the elevation. For a flight, now and then, our wings are sufficient. We mount, we soar, we rise into the spiritual regions and we exult as we rise. But our pinion droops, we grow weary of the heights and we descend to earth like stones which have been thrown into the air. Alas, that it should be so! Be you steadfast. When you climb, ask for Grace to stay there. When your wing has borne you up ask that you may be poised there till the Lord shall call you to your nest in Heaven. Is your faith strong? Why should it decline again? Is your hope vivid? Why should those bright eyes of yours grow dim and look no more within the golden gates?

Is your love fervent? Why should it be chilled? Cannot the breath of the Eternal Spirit keep the fire at full blaze? Why is it that we run well and then are hindered? We are short-winded—we cannot watch with our Lord one hour—we grow weary and faint in our minds. Alexander could not thus have won a world if, after fighting the battle of Issus, he had stopped short of the Granicus. If the Macedonian hero had said, “I have done enough, I will go back to Greece and enjoy my victories,” his empire had never become universal. Nor would Columbus have discovered a new world if he had sailed a little way into the unknown ocean and then had turned his timid prow towards port. “Onward!” is the motto of the earnest all the world over, and should it not be the watchword of the Christian? Shall we be content with a wretched poverty of Grace? Shall we be satisfied to wear the rags of inconsistency? God forbid! Let us bestir ourselves and when we make headway along the river of life, may God grant us Grace to cast anchor and hold our place, lest we drift back with the next tide, or be blown back by the next change of wind. “Be you steadfast.”

We shall not have brought out the full force of the text unless we say that the Apostle evidently refers to Christian work, for he says, “be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” So that he means be steadfast in your work which the Lord has laid upon you to do. Perseverance is at once the crown and the cross of service. It is very easy to preach for a little while, but I can assure you that preaching to a congregation year after year involves no little toil. Yet are we bound to be steadfast in this ministry. A spurt, a leap, a bound—these are easy, but to press on continually is the difficulty. Have you taken a class in the Sunday school? The novelty of it may carry you through a month or two, but, dear Friend, be steadfast and hold on year after year, for *there* will lie your honor and success.

If you should be discouraged because you meet with no present success, yet persevere, yes, endure to the end. If God has given you any work to do, it is yours to press forward in it, whether you prosper in it or not.

The young convert said, you remember, that if God bade him jump through a wall, whether he could go through it or not was no business of his. "Here I go," says he, "right at it." We may rest assured that the Lord never did command us to leap through a wall without causing it to give way when our faith brought us to the test. We have to obey the precept and leave the consequences. If God says, "Do it," the command is both the warrant for our act and the security for our being aided with all necessary help.

Noah preached for 120 years and when his term of warning ministry was over, where were his converts? He may have had a great many, but they were all dead and buried—and with the exception of himself and family, after 120 years of ministry—there remained not one that God would preserve alive. But into the ark he went, the grandest unsuccessful preacher that ever lived! Noah was faithful unto death, to be rewarded of his God as much as if he had induced half the world to flee from the wrath to come. Let us, therefore, remain steadfast in doctrine, in character, in attainment and in labor. To this end help us, O Holy Spirit.

But the Apostle adds, "unmovable." He supposes that our steadfastness will be tried and he bids us remain unmovable. Be "steadfast" in times of peace, like rocks in the midst of a calm and glassy sea. Be unmovable if you are assailed like those same rocks in the midst of the tempest when the billows dash against them. Brethren, when you are assailed by argument, be unmovable. I say, "argument," but I am complimenting our adversaries—their objections do not deserve the name. It will never be possible for any man living to answer all the queries which others can raise, or reply to all objections which may be brought against the most obvious facts. If any person here were skeptical as to my standing at this present moment upon this platform, I am not certain that I should be able to convince him that I am here. I am quite sure of it myself, but I have no doubt a skeptic would be able to advance objections which would require a keener wit than mine to remove, notwithstanding that the matter would be plain enough if the objector would throw away his logic and use his common sense.

Now the arguments against the Resurrection which the Apostle mentions were such as he could easily remove. Such a one as this, for instance—How are the dead raised up? Paul seems to have lost his patience in answering it and he called the man a fool—and you may depend upon it, he was a fool, or else the Apostle would not have called him so. Granted the existence of a God, you need never ask, "How?" If there is Omnipotence, there is no room for the question, "How?" God the Almighty can do what He wills and he is a fool who asks, "How?" after once he has believed in God. Most of the objections against the articles of our holy faith are contemptible, yet none the less difficult to answer because contemptible for an argument is not always apparently strong in proportion to its reasonableness. It may be easier to answer an objection which has some force in it than to overthrow another which has positively no force at all.

In fact, the most difficult arguments to answer are those which are insane at the core, for you must be insane, yourself, before you can quite

catch the thought which insanity has uttered. And as you do not wish to qualify for controversy with fools by becoming a fool yourself, you may not be able to reply to your antagonist. It will be your right course to be steadfast and unmovable, that your adversary may see that his deceptions are of no avail. Whatever may be said against our faith we can afford to ignore it since we know that our Lord Jesus Christ *has* risen from the dead—the evidence of that fact is beyond dispute—and that being proven, our faith rests on a rock. Prove the Resurrection (and we say it is proved by the best witnesses, and plenty of them), then our faith is true and we will hold it in the teeth of all opposition.

Do not be carried away, therefore, by the sophistry of cunning men, neither be cast down. When it is rumored at any time that a learned man has found out some very wonderful thing which is to put an end to the Bible, you should calmly reply—“Let him find out another wonderful thing, if so it pleases him.” If our wise men have discovered a new origin for the human race, or if they have invented a new way of making a world, we hope their new toy will please them, but such things are of no concern to us—we have other and weightier concerns besides fiddling or philosophizing. We have no more reverence for these profane dreamers than they have for the Bible—they are nothing to us. Christ has risen from the dead. Nothing in physiology or geology can ever contradict that! And if He has risen from the dead, they, also, that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him, and in that faith we abide.

We shall be met, in addition to argument, by what is far more powerful, namely, by surrounding example. The world never overcame the Church, yet, by argument, for it has always refuted itself. When let alone, the unbelieving world has eaten its own words, like Saturn devouring his own children. Whenever any smith in the world’s armory has forged a weapon against the Truth of God, there has always been another smith at work in the same smithy preparing another weapon with which to break the first in pieces! The man has done it not in the interests of the Gospel, but in his own interest and with desire only for his own honor—but he has done the work of the Lord—not knowing that he did!

The bad example of the world has often told upon the soldiers of Christ with far more powerful effect. What the arms of Rome could not do against Hannibal, his Capuan holidays are said to have accomplished—his soldiers were conquered by luxury, though invincible by force. When the Church lies down at ease, she is apt to feel the diseases of abundance. The current of the world runs furiously towards sin and the fear is lest the Lord’s swimmers should not be able to stem the flood. It is sad when professors of our holy religion do as others do. It is folly to be singular except when to be singular is to be right—but it often happens that we forget the rightness of the thing in the fear of being singular. Brothers and Sisters, care nothing about custom, for custom is no excuse for sin! Be you steadfast, and if all men are turned to this or that, listen not to their, “Lo, heres,” and, “Lo, theres,” but stand inflexible for holiness, God and Truth. “Be you steadfast, unmovable.”

As you are not moved by the world's custom, so take care not to be moved by its persecutions. Today the persecutions which we meet with are very petty. They amount to little more than here and there the loss of a situation, the denial of trade, the being turned out of a farm, or more commonly they go no further than a sneer, a bad name, or a slander. But be you steadfast, unmovable whatever may be. Never let a man, who is but a worm, frown you away from your God! Bid defiance to his fierce looks and angry words and like a man of God continue in the right way whether you offend or please. And equally be unmovable to the world's smiles. It will put on its sweetest looks and tempt you with its painted cheeks and artful fascinations. Like Jezebel it will attire its head and look out of the window, but like Jehu do you say, "Fling her down!" No peace or truce are you to hold with this crooked and perverse generation.

If God prospers you in business let not your riches make you proud. If you have to toil and there should come in your way an easy escape from hard labor by some crooked path, accept it not—be unmovable! Let neither the soft south wind nor the boisterous north wind stir you from your foothold. God help you to be faithful unto death! If ever there was a period in the Christian Church when professors needed to be exhorted to be "steadfast, unmovable," it is just now, for the foundations are removed and all things are out of course. Men remove the old landmarks, they break down the pillars of the house. All things reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man and only He who keeps the feet of His saints can preserve our uprightness.

I see the tackling loosed and the mast unstrengthened, and the brave vessel of the Church is in an evil case. Many have left their moorings and are drifting here and there, their helmsmen all amazed. No longer does the squadron of the Lord sail in order of battle, but the lines are broken and the vessels yield to the tossing of winds and waves. Alas, that it should be so! O where is He that trod the sea? The Pilot of the Galilean lake? I see Him walking the waters and He cries to us who still stand true to the one Lord, the one faith and the one Baptism, "Be you steadfast, unmovable." Whatever other denominations of Christians do, be you true to your Lord in all things, for those who forsake Him shall be written in the dust. Beloved, never stir away from the Truth of God!

Some are changeable by constitution like Reuben, "unstable as water, they shall not excel." A mind on wheels knows no rest, it is as a rolling thing before the tempest. Struggle against the desire for novelty, or it will lead you astray as the will-o'-the-wisp deceives the traveler. If you desire to be useful, if you long to honor God, if you wish to be happy, be established in the Truth and be not carried about by every wind of doctrine in these evil days. "Be you steadfast, unmovable."

II. The second characteristic of a Christian, however, we must speak upon. He is described as "always abounding in the work of the Lord," in which we will briefly show that there are four things. First, dear Brothers and Sisters, every Christian ought to be engaged "in the work of the Lord." We should all have work to do for our Divine Master. True, our everyday labor ought to be so done as to render honor to His name. But in addition

to that every Christian should be laboring in the Lord in some sphere of holy service. I shall not enlarge, but I shall pass the question round to each one. "What are you doing for Jesus Christ?" I pray each one here who makes a profession of faith in Jesus to answer the question, "What am I doing in the work and service of the Lord?" If you are doing nothing, I pray you bewail your slothfulness and escape from it, for talents wrapped in napkins will be terrible witnesses against you.

Then the Apostle says, secondly, we are not only to be, "in the work of the Lord," but we are to *abound* in it. Do much, very much—all you can do and a little more. "How is that?" asks one. I do not think a man is doing all he can do if he is not attempting more than he will complete. Our vessels are never full till they run over. The little over proves our zeal, tries our faith, casts us upon God and wins His help. That which we cannot do of ourselves leads us to call in Divine strength—and then wonders are worked! If you are only aiming at what you feel able to accomplish, your work will be a poor one, lacking in heroism and deficient in the noble element of confidence in the unseen Lord. Abound, then, and super-abound in the work of the Lord!

Next note that the Apostle says, "always abounding." Some Christians think it enough to abound on Sundays—Paul says, "always abounding." That has reference to Mondays—to which day does it *not* refer? When you are young and in your vigor, abound in service! I recommend all young men to work for God with all their might while they can, for all too soon our energies flag and the sere and yellow leaf forbids any more young shoots. I would equally urge every man of middle age to use all his time, gifts and energies at once for the Lord—"always abounding." Nor should the old man retire—he is to bring forth fruit in old age. The Apostle says nothing about retiring from the work of the Lord, but "always abounding."

"Oh, but we must give the young people an opportunity of doing something for God!" Do you mean that you will give the young people an opportunity of doing *your* work? Because if you do I am in arms against so gross an error, for Christian work can never be done by proxy! Throw such an idea away with abhorrence! This is the age of proxy. People are not charitable, but they beg a guinea from somebody else to be charitable with. It is said that charity nowadays means that A finds B to be in distress and therefore asks C to help him. Let us not, in this fashion, shirk our work! Go and do your own work, each man bearing his own burden, and not trying to pile a double load on other men's shoulders. Brothers and Sisters, from morn till night sow beside all waters with unstinting hand.

The text calls this service "the work of the Lord" and we must ever bear this in mind, so that if we are enabled to abound in Christian service we may never become proud, but may remember that it is God's work in us rather than our own work—and whatever we accomplish is accomplished by God in us rather than by us for God. Jesus tells us, "Without Me you can do nothing." "Always abound," my Brothers and Sisters, not only in work for the Lord, but in the work of the Lord in yourselves, for only as He works in you to will and to do will you be able to work in His name ac-

ceptably. Put these two things together, the man is to be steadfast and to abound in work.

To come back to my figure of a soldier, these two things are needed—we need a soldier who can hold his position under a galling fire, but we need him, also, to dash to the front and lead on a forlorn hope. We need many spiritual cavalymen who can ride ahead and pioneer for others with dauntless courage, but we cannot dispense with the heavy-armed infantry who hold their own and wait till the battle turns. It is said that the French had courage enough on the spur of the moment to have rushed up to the cannon's mouth, but that the German was the victor because he could quietly abide the heat of the battle and when affairs looked black, he doggedly kept his post.

In the long run *stay* is the winning virtue—he that endures to the end—the same shall be saved. He who can wait with hope is the man to fight with courage. He crouches down until the fit moment comes and then he leaps like a lion from the thicket upon the foe. God grant that we may have in this place a body of Christian people who shall be steadfast and unmovable, yet at all times as diligent as they are firm, as intensely zealous as they are obstinately conservative of the Truth as it is in Jesus. “Steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

III. Our last point is THE MOTIVE WHICH URGES US TO THESE TWO DUTIES. There are a great many other motives, but the one mentioned in the text is, “knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” If we derive our motives for Christian labor or steadfastness from the things which we see, our spirit will oscillate from ardor into coldness—it will rise and fall with the circumstances around us. It is comparatively easy for a successful man to go on preaching or otherwise laboring for the Lord. But I admire the perseverance of the man who remains faithful under defeat. To get such a faithfulness we must disentangle ourselves from the idea of being rewarded *here*—we must be steadfast and unmovable though nobody praises us. And we must abound in the work of the Lord though no fruit should come from it, because we have looked beyond this present realm of death and have gazed into another world where the Resurrection shall bring with it our reward.

Dear Brethren, let us be steadfast, for our principles are true. If Christ has not risen from the dead, then we are the dupes of an imposition and let us give it up! Why should we credulously adhere to that which is false? But if Christ has risen from the dead, then our doctrines are true and let us hold them firmly and promulgate them earnestly. Since our cause is a good one, let us seek to advance it! Only that which is true will live. Time devours the false—the death warrant of every false doctrine is signed. A fire is already kindled which will consume the wood and hay and stubble of error, but our principles are gold and silver and precious stones and will endure the flame. “Therefore, let us be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, therefore what we do is not done for a dead Christ! We are not fighting for a dead man's cause. We are not contending for an effete dynasty, or a name to conjure by, but we have a

living Captain, a reigning King, One who is able both to occupy the throne and to lead on our hosts to battle! Oh, by the Christ in Glory, I beseech you, Brethren, be you steadfast! If it could be proven tomorrow that Napoleon still lived, there might be some hope for his party, but with the chieftain dead, the cause faints. Now Jesus lives! As surely as He died He rose and lives again and His name shall endure forever! His name shall be continued as long as the sun and men shall be blessed in Him! All generations shall call Him blessed! The colors of that grand old red-cross flag, which your fathers bled to defend, have not in any degree become faded. It has braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze, but its history is as yet in its infancy.

Our grand cause is imaged this day, not by a baby in the Virgin's arms, nor by a dead man in the hands of His enemies, but by a living, reigning, triumphant, glorified Christ full of splendor and of majesty! Let us rally to His call, for He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. Behold, He comes! Even now the angels bring forth the white horse for the Conqueror—He who is called the faithful and True One shall ride at the head of His elect armies! Even at this moment we see the ensign gleaming above the horizon. The Lord is on His way! Our Captain puts on His vesture dipped in blood, while on His head are many crowns. He shall smite the nations and rule them with a rod of iron and He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Let us continue true to Him, for evil would be our case if we were to desert His cause and *then* we should see Him come in the glory of His Father, attended by cohorts of angels. It would be a dreadful thing to have deserted the army just when the shout of "victory" was about to be raised! Be you steadfast, unmovable, for He is risen and He ever lives to secure the victory. Our work of faith is not in vain because we, too, shall rise again! If what we do for God were to have its only reward on earth, it were a poor prospect. Strike out the hope of the hereafter and the Christian's reward would be gone. But, Beloved, we shall rise again! Our work is ended when our eyes are closed in death, but our life is not ended with our work. We shall preach no more, we shall no more teach the little children, we shall no more talk with the wayfarer about the Savior—but we shall enjoy better things than these, for we shall sit upon our Savior's Throne even as He sits upon His Father's Throne!

Our heads shall have crowns to deck them. Our hands shall wave the palm of victory. We shall put on the white robe—the victors apparel. We shall stand around the Throne in triumph and shall behold and share the glories of the Son of God. O Brethren, shrink not, for the crown is just within your reach! Never think of diminishing your service—rather increase it—for the reward is close at hand. And remember that as you will rise again, so those whom you come in contact with will also rise again. When I have preached the Gospel on a Sunday I have thought, "Well, I shall never see many of these people again," and the reflection has flashed across my mind, "Yes, I shall! And if I have faithfully, as God's servant, preached the Truth of God, I shall not need to be afraid to see them ei-

ther!” If they have received benefit and found Christ through the witness I have borne, they shall be my reward hereafter in the land of the living.

And even if they reject the testimony, yet shall they bear their witness to my faithfulness in having preached to them the Word of God, for they shall rise again. O Beloved, what is this poor world? There, shut your eyes to it, for it is not worth your gaze. What is there here below? What do I see but fleeting shadows, dreams and phantoms? What shall I live for? What is there worth living for beneath yon stars? What if I hoard up wealth—I shall have to leave it to ungrateful heirs! What if I get fame, yet how can the breath of man add to my comfort when I lie tossing on the verge of eternity? What is there worth living for, I say, beneath yon stars?

But there is a something that makes it worthwhile existing and makes life grand and noble! It is this—if I may crown with praise that head which for my sake was crowned with thorns. If I may honor Him who was dishonored for my sake. If to the manifestation of the glories of Jehovah I may have contributed a share. If at the reading of the records of all time it may be found that I put out my talent as a faithful servant and gained interest for my Master, it shall be well! Saved not of debt—far from the thought!—but of Grace alone! Yet shall it be no small thing, out of a sense of indebtedness to Grace, to have lived and loved and died for Jesus! What more can I say? Are there no ambitions among you? I know there are!

Young men, consecrate yourselves to God this day. If you have looked to Jesus and trusted Him, serve Him forever! Preach Him if you can. Go abroad into the foreign field if you may. If you cannot do that, make money for Him that you may give it to His cause. Open your shop for His sake. Let everything be done for Jesus. Take this, from now on, for your motto—“All for Jesus, always for Jesus, everywhere for Jesus!” He deserves it! I should not so speak to you if you had to live in this world only. Alas, for the love of Jesus, if you were all and nothing beside, O Earth!

But there is another life—live for it. There is another world—live for it. There is a Resurrection, there is eternal blessedness, there is Glory, there are crowns of pure reward—live for them! By God’s Grace live for them. The Lord bless you, and save you. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Corinthians 15.

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