

“GLORY BE UNTO THE FATHER”

NO. 1738

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 9 1883,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

***“There’s not a lamb among Your flock
I would refuse to feed!
There’s not a foe before whose face
I’d fear Your cause to plead”?***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Note that the text contains a possessive pronoun—it says, not, “The God and Father of *the* Lord Jesus Christ,” but, “of *our* Lord Jesus Christ,” who is ours in this particular sense, that He is our federal Head, just as

the first Adam, even the Adam who headed up the race and in whom we stood or fell. Jesus Christ, the second Adam, headed up and comprehended within Himself all the chosen—and we who can claim that Christ is ours are, for that reason, able to claim all that belongs to Christ, for our heavenly Bridegroom endows us with all His possessions. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; and of His fullness have we all received, and Grace for Grace.” Jesus says, “All things that the Father has are Mine,” and the Spirit says, “All things are Yours” and, therefore, we may rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

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

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

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

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

I have already told you this is the blessing of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I would remind you that it was the custom of fathers to give blessings to their sons. All through the Old Testament we find patriarchs, when about to die, calling their children together, and

pronouncing a blessing upon them. I should have liked to have received the blessing of Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob—but what must be the blessing of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as He lays His hand upon each one of our poor unworthy heads and says, “Surely, blessing I will bless you”? Jacob could not bless the beloved Joseph after the fashion in which the Lord blesses His beloved Son and those who are in Him! You could not desire a greater blessing than you have at this day, for the text says, “He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

Brothers and Sisters, there is no need for this! We do not do well to sit with the lepers at Samaria’s gate when we have but to awaken ourselves and find abundant provision for ourselves and all the King’s household. Furthermore, note well that our heavenly Father has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Spiritual blessings are heavenly things—they *come* from Heaven, they *lead* to Heaven—they are of a heavenly nature and are such as are enjoyed in Heaven itself! You

may read the text either as heavenly *places* or heavenly *things*, and be equally correct. It is a wonderful thing that, even here on earth, the saints enjoy and experience heavenly blessings, for a new nature is a heavenly thing—love, joy in God, rest, safety and acceptance in the Beloved are all heavenly things. If you read it, “places,” it is equally true that Heaven and all its mansions are ours and we have already taken possession of them in Christ Jesus, our Representative and Forerunner!

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

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

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

Here let me enquire whether you belong to the company upon whom the Divine blessing rests. Are you seeking to be saved by your own works? Then you are *not* saved by Grace through Christ Jesus! Are you without faith in Christ? Then the heavenly blessing does *not* belong to you. The

inheritance is secured to a seed who are, by faith, the children of faithful Abraham, born not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Can you say, I believe in Jesus Christ and fix my trust upon the promises of a faithful God? Then take possession of the Covenant provision and be glad in the Lord. We must not fail to note that the plenitude of spiritual and heavenly blessings only comes to us in Christ. It is not in *ourselves* that these gifts are vested—we hold them by virtue of our union with the Lord Jesus. He is that golden case in which the treasures of the Covenant are enclosed and secured.

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

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

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

God has made a *choice*, then, and you who are Believers in Christ may rest assured that you are the objects of this choice. The Lord Himself gave you your faith and brought you into living union with Jesus! Do you not bless Him for this? It seems to me that here is something for which to praise and bless the Father world without end! Carefully note that election shapes *everything*—the Father has blessed us with all spiritual blessings. “According as He has chosen us in Christ.” All the Grace of earth and the glory of Heaven come to us in accordance with the eternal choice. There is

not a single gift that comes from the blessed hand of the Divine Redeemer but is stamped with the mark of God’s electing love! We were chosen to each mercy and each mercy was appointed for us. If we will not have the Father’s election, we cannot have His blessing, for His gifts are plainly stated to be according to *His* choice—they come because of the choice and they prove the choice—they should, therefore, remind us of our election and call forth our sweetest songs. They should make us ask with David “Why all this to *me*?” A man who is elect of God ought to sing the praises of God both day and night, for he is chosen to show forth the praises of Jehovah!

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

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

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

Moreover, we are told the time when this choice was made—“Before the foundation of the world.” This is the earliest conceivable period. When this earth was fitted up for man, we know, for the Scriptures inform us, but how many ages elapsed *before* it was furnished for our race, we do not know. Yet long before that period the Father had chosen His people! The foundation of the world may mean its first creation, when it was spoken out of nothing—that must be ages of ages ago, but before *that* the Father chose us! Remember those Words, “who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” Before sun and moon had been created, or any of the visible things were formed, God had set His heart upon His people in Christ and ordained them to eternal life in Him!

God’s love is no novelty. His choice is no sudden act. Blessed doctrine! I know of none, which, if rightly considered, has a greater tendency to draw out the intense affection and reverent admiration of human hearts. Did the Lord of Glory choose *me* from before the foundation of the world? Then, by His Grace, I choose Him with all my heart to be my Lord, my All!

Did He love me from of old? Then, by His Grace, I will love Him with all my soul and strength—and pray that my heart may be enlarged to love Him more! This is mentioned here in order that you may bless the Father—let there now flow from your hearts a mighty stream of gratitude which shall cover your whole being and bear your lives along in the channel of obedience. Come, my Heart, bless the Father at this moment and never cease from His praise while life and being last, or immortality endures!

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

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

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

Oh, to be spotless and faultless! Let us bless God that He is aiming, every day, to make us holy and blameless before Himself! And He will do

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

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

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

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

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BLESSING FOR BLESSING

NO. 2266

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JULY 24, 1892.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 26, 1890.

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

GOD blesses us—let us bless Him! I pray that every heart here may take its own part in this service of praise—

*“O you, my Soul, bless God the Lord,
And all that in me is!
Be stirred up His holy name
To magnify and bless!”*

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

I. Our first occupation, at this time, will be that of BLESSING GOD.

But how can we bless God? Without doubt the less is blessed of the Greater. Can the Greater be blessed by the less? Yes, but it must be in a modified sense. God blesses us with all spiritual blessings, but we cannot give Him any blessings. He needs nothing at our hands and if He did, we could not give it. “If I were hungry,” says the Lord, “I would not tell you: for the world is Mine, and the fullness thereof.” God has an all-sufficiency within Himself and can never be *thought* of as dependent upon His creatures, or as receiving anything from His creatures which He needs to receive. He is already infinitely blessed—we cannot add to His blessedness! When He blesses us, He gives us a blessedness that we never had before—but when we bless Him—we cannot, by one iota, increase His absolutely Infinite Perfection! David said to the Lord, “My goodness extends not to You.” This was as if he had said, Let me be as holy, as devout and as earnest as I may, I can still do nothing for You! You are too high, too holy, too great for me to be really able to bless You in the sense which You bless me.

How, then, do we bless God? Well, I should say, first, that this language is *the expression of gratitude*. We say with David, “Bless the Lord, O my

Soul,” and we say with Paul, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We can bless God by praising Him, extolling Him, desiring all honor for Him, ascribing all good to Him, magnifying and lauding His holy name! Well, we will do that! Sit still, if you will, and let your heart be silent unto God, for no language can ever express the gratitude that, I trust, we feel to Him who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus! Praise Him, also, in your speech. Break the silence—speak of His Glory! Invite others to cry with you, “Hallelujah!” or “Hallels unto Jah!” “Praise to Jehovah!” Ascribe greatness unto our God! Oh, that all flesh would magnify the Lord with us!

This language is also the *utterance of assent* to all the blessedness that is ascribed to the Lord. After hearing how great He is, how glorious He is, how happy He is, we bless Him by saying, “Amen! So let it be! So would we have it! He is none too great for us, none too blessed for us. Let Him be great, glorious and blessed beyond all conception.” I think that we bless God when we say, concerning the whole of His Character, “Amen. This God is our God forever and ever.” Let Him be just what the Bible says He is—we accept Him as such. Sternly just, He will not spare the guilty. Amen, blessed be His name! Infinitely gracious, ready to forgive. Amen, so let it be! Everywhere present, always Omniscient. Amen, so again do we wish Him to be! Everlastingly the same, unchanging in His Truth, His promise, His Nature. We again say that we are glad of it and we bless Him! He is just such a God as we love! He is, indeed, God to us, because He is really God and we can see that He is so! And every attribute ascribed to Him is a fresh proof to us that Jehovah is the Lord. Thus, we bless Him by adoration!

We also bless God in *the spreading of His Kingdom*. We can win hearts to Him through His mighty Grace blessing our service. We can fight against evil. We can set up a standard for the Truth of God. We can be willing to suffer in repute and every way else, for His name’s sake. We can, by His Grace, do all this and thus we are blessing God. Surely, dear Friends, if it is well-pleasing in God’s sight that sinners should repent—if it makes Heaven more glad and makes joy in the presence of the angels that men should repent—we are in the best and most practical way blessing God when we labor to bring men to repentance through faith in Christ Jesus!

There is also another way of blessing God which, I trust, we shall all endeavor to practice, and that is by *the doing good to His children*. When they are sick, visit them. When they are downcast, comfort them. When they are poor, relieve them. When they are hard pressed by outward adversaries, stand at their side and help them! You cannot bless the Head, but you can bless the feet—and when you have refreshed the feet, you have refreshed the Head! He will say, “Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, you have done it unto Me.” If they are naked and you clothe them. If they are sick and you visit them. If they are hungry and you feed them—you do, in this respect, bless God!

David not only said, "You are my Lord: my goodness extends not to You," but added, "but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight." You can be good to them and in *that* respect you may be blessing God! He has done so much for us that we would gladly do something for Him and when we have reached the limit of our possibilities, we long to do more! We wish that we had more money to give, more talent to use, more time that we could devote to His cause. We wish that we had more heart and more brain! Sometimes we wish that we had more tongue and we sing—

***"Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise!"***

This word, "blessed," is an attempt to break the narrow circle of our capacity. It is an earnest endeavor of a burning heart to lay at God's feet crowns of glory which it cannot find—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

II. But now, secondly, we shall spend a little time in VIEWING GOD in the light in which Paul sets Him before us—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We bless the God of Nature. What beauties He has strewn around us! We bless the God of Providence. How bountifully does He send us harvests and fruitful seasons! We bless the God of Grace who has redeemed us and adopted us as His children. But here is a peculiar aspect of God which should call forth our highest praises—He is called "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

When we see God *in connection with Christ*, we see God through Christ. When we see God in Christ, then our hearts are all aflame and we burst out with, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." God apart from Christ—that is a great and glorious theme—but the human mind fails to grasp it. The infinite Jehovah, who can conceive Him? "Our God is a consuming fire." Who can draw near to Him? But in the Mediator, in the Person of the God, the Man in whom we find blended human sympathy and Divine Glory, we can draw near to God. There it is that we get our hands upon the golden harp strings and resolve that every string shall be struck to the praise of God in Christ Jesus!

But note carefully that God is described here as *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ*. When Jesus knelt in prayer, He prayed to our God! When Jesus leaned in faith upon the promises, He trusted in God that He would deliver Him. When our Savior sang on the Passover night, the song was unto God. When He prayed in Gethsemane, with bloody sweat, the prayer was unto our God. Jesus said to Mary at the sepulcher, "Go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to my God, and your God." How we ought to bless God when we think that He is the God whom our Redeemer blesses! This is the God who said of Christ, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Delightful thought! When I approach Jehovah, I approach the God or our Lord Jesus Christ! Surely, when I see His blood-stained footprints there on the ground before me, though I take my shoes off from my feet, for the place is

holy ground, yet I follow with confidence where my Friend, my Savior, my Husband, my Head has been before me—and I rejoice as I worship the God of our Lord Jesus Christ!

He is also called *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. This is a great mystery. Think not that we shall ever understand the high relationship between the First and Second Persons of the blessed Trinity, the Father and the Son. We speak of Eternal Sonship, which is a term that does not convey to us any great meaning—it simply covers up our ignorance. How God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as God, we do not know and, perhaps, to wish to gaze into this tremendous mystery were as great a folly as to look at the sun and blind ourselves with its brilliance! It is so—that ought to be enough for us. God the Father is the Father of Jesus Christ as to His Divine Nature—“You are My Son; this day I have begotten You.” He is also His Father as to the Human side of His Nature. He was begotten of the Holy Spirit. That body of His, that Human Life, came of God—not of Joseph, not of man. Born of a woman, God sent forth His Son; but He was His Son then. It was God’s Son that was born at Bethlehem. Gabriel said to the Virgin Mary, “That holy Thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God.”

Now, take the two Natures of their wondrous blending in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you see how the great God is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, sweet thought, He is *my* Father, too! My Father is Christ’s Father! Jesus Christ’s Father is our Father and He teaches us all to call Him, “Our Father, which are in Heaven.” Often in prayer, He said, “Father.” And He bids us say the same, putting the plural pronoun before it, “*Our* Father.” Now will you not bless the Lord, who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Do you not feel a glowing in your hearts, as you think of the near and dear relationship into which you are brought through Jesus Christ? The God of Jesus Christ, the Father of Jesus Christ, is *my* God, *my* Father, too! Blessed, blessed, blessed, forever blessed be that dear name!

III. Our third occupation, at this time, is that of RECOUNTING HIS GREAT MERCIES. I will read the rest of the third verse—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

This recapitulation of mercies is written with *full assurance* and you will not bless God unless you have a touch of that same experience. Paul does not say, “Who has, we *hope* and trust, blessed us,” but he writes, “Who has blessed us.” Ah, Beloved, if you have a full assurance that God has blessed you in Christ, and that now His smile rests upon you, and all the benisons of the Covenant are stored there for you, I think that you cannot help saying, “Blessed, blessed be the name of the Most High!” That doubt, that trembling—this it is that empties out the marrow from the bone of our blessedness. If you have suspicions about the Truth of this precious Book. If you have questions about the Truth of the Doctrines of Grace. If you have doubts about your own interest in these things, I do not wonder that you do not praise God—for a blessing which is only mine

by *perhaps*, well, *perhaps* I shall be grateful for it—but perhaps I shall not. But if I know whom I have believed. If I have a firm grip of spiritual mercies. If all heavenly things are mine in Christ, my Lord, I can sing, “Wake up, my Glory! Awake psaltery and harp! I myself will awake right early.” “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings.”

With this full assurance should come *intense delight*—“Who has blessed us.” God has blessed us. Come, Brothers and Sisters, He has not done some trifle for us which we can afford to ignore! He has not merely given us some absolutely necessary blessings which we must have, for we could not live without them! But He has, in Grace, dealt still more abundantly with us! He has gone beyond workhouse fare and made us a feast with saints and princes! He has given us more than home-spun garments—He has put upon us robes of beauty and of glory—even His own spotless Righteousness! He has blessed us—we are blessed—we feel that we are. Each Believer can say—

**“I feel like singing all the time,
For my tears are wiped away!
For Jesus is a Friend of mine,
I’ll praise Him every day.
I’ll praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise Him all the time!”**

We are not sitting here groaning and crying—fretting and worrying—and questioning our own salvation. He has blessed us and, therefore, we will bless Him! If you think little of what God has done for you, you will do very little for Him. But if you have a great notion of His great mercy to you, you will be greatly grateful to you gracious God.

Let me also remark, next, that as assurance and delight lead to blessing God, so does a *right understanding* of His mercies. To help your understanding, notice what Paul says—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings.” An enlightened man is grateful to God for *temporal* blessings, but he is much more grateful to God for *spiritual* blessings, for temporal blessings do not last long—they are soon gone. Temporal blessings are not definite marks of Divine favor, since God gives them to the unworthy and to the wicked, as well as to the righteous. The corn, wine and oil are for Dives—and Lazarus gets even less than his share. Our thanks are due to God for all temporal blessings—they are more than we *deserve*. But our thanks ought to go to God in thunders of hallelujahs for *spiritual* blessings! A new heart is better than a new coat. To feed on Christ is better than to have the best earthly food. To be an heir of God is better than being the heir of the greatest nobleman. To have God for our portion is blessed, infinitely more blessed than to own broad acres of land! God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings! These are the rarest, the richest, the most enduring of all blessings—they are priceless in value. Therefore, let me beg you to join in blessing the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed you with spiritual blessings.

But did you notice the word, “all”? I must bring that out clearly. I must turn the microscope on it. “Who has blessed us with *all* spiritual blessings.” Surely Paul means that we have not one spiritual blessing which God did not give. We have never *earned* one—we could never *create* one. All spiritual blessings come from the Father! He has really given us all spiritual blessings. “I have not received them,” says one. That is your own fault! He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ. A new heart, a tender conscience, a submissive will, faith, hope, love, patience—we have all these in Christ. Regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, perfection are all in Christ. If we do not take them out, it is the fault of our palsied hands that have not strength enough to grasp them! But He has given us all spiritual blessings in Christ.

Whenever you read your Bible, and see a great promise, do not hesitate to claim it! He has given us all spiritual blessings in Christ. “I am afraid,” says one, “that I should be presuming if I took some of the promises.” He has given us all spiritual blessings in Christ! You are in your Father’s house—you cannot steal, for your Father says—“Help yourself to what you like.” He has made over His whole estate of spiritual wealth to every believing child of His! Therefore take freely and you will, by doing so, glorify God! He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ.

This He has done in the “heavenly places.” What does that mean, “Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places”? Does it not mean that He is working upon us all spiritual blessings out of Heaven where He dwells? Or does it mean much more, that He is sending us all these spiritual blessings to bring us to the Heaven where He dwells and where He would have us dwell?

I want to stir up your heart by reminding you that all the spiritual blessings we receive are the richer and rarer because they are given to us “in Christ.” Here are the blessings and Christ is the golden case that holds them all. When the City of London makes a man a freeman of the city, the document giving him his liberty is usually presented to him enclosed in a golden case. Christ is that golden case in which we find the charter of our eternal liberty. He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ. If they came to us any other way, we might lose them—or we might not be sure that they were genuine. But when they come to us in Christ, they come to stay, and we know that they are real. If Christ is mine, all blessings in heavenly places are mine!

I seem, to myself, to be talking very dryly of things that ought to be swimming in a sea of joy and delight. Beloved, do not let my faint words rob my Lord of any of His Glory! He has done such great things for you—bless His name! We cannot stand up and ask for instruments of music with which to sound His praise, but we *can* sit still and each one say, “Blessed be His name! It is all true! He has blessed me—I know that He has! He has blessed me with a liberal hand with all spiritual blessings. He has blessed me just where I needed blessing, where I was poorest in spiritual things. I could make my way in business, but I could not make my own way in Grace, so He has blessed me with all spiritual blessings, and

He has made the garments all the dearer because of the wardrobe in which He has hung them! He has given me these royal things in Christ and as I look to my dear Lord and see what there is for me stored up in Him, I prize each thing the more because it is in Him. Come, Holy Spirit, set our hearts on fire with blessing and praise to God for all the great things that He has done for us!"

IV. I shall close with this fourth remark—Let us bless God, BEHOLDING THE MANNER OF HIS GIFTS. That is described in the fourth verse—"According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."

Now, Brothers and Sisters, we are to praise God because all spiritual blessings have come to us in the same way as our election came, "according as He has chosen us in Him." How did that come? Well, it came of *His Free, Sovereign Grace*. He loved us because He would love us! He chose us because He chose us. "You have not chosen Me; but I have chosen you." If there is any virtue. If there is any praise in us now—He put it there. To the bottomless abyss of His own infinite goodness we must trace the election of His Grace. Well, now, every blessing comes to us in the same way. God has not blessed you, my Brothers and Sisters, with usefulness because you deserved it, but because of His Grace. He did not redeem you, or regenerate you, or sanctify you, or uphold you because of anything in you. Again and again, by the Prophet Ezekiel, did the Lord remind His ancient people that the blessings He bestowed upon them were all gifts of His Grace. "Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake." And again, "Not for your sakes do I this, says the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel." Every blessing comes to us with the hallmark of Sovereign Grace upon it! As the Lord distributed the gifts of His Grace, He said, "May I not do as I will with My own?" He does so and we bless and praise, and adore the sovereign Grace of God which, having chosen us, continues to bless us according as He has chosen us in Christ!

Next, we have to bless God that all His gifts come to us *in Christ*. Notice Paul's words, "according as He has chosen us in Him." God *called* us in Christ. He *justified* us in Christ. He *sanctified* us in Christ. He will *perfect* us in Christ. He will *glorify* us in Christ. We have *everything* in Christ and we have *nothing* apart from Christ. Let us praise and bless the name of the Lord that this sacred channel of His Grace is as glorious as the Grace itself! There is as much Grace in the gift of Christ to save us as there is in the salvation which Christ has worked out for us. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Again, all our blessings come from *the Divine purpose*. Listen—"Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen us in Him." No spiritual blessing comes to any man by chance. No man gets a blessing from God through his "good luck"—it all comes according to the eternal purpose of God which He purposed before the earth was—

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

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

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

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

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

would be Heaven to us, then we are already on the road to Heaven—and God is working out in us His eternal purpose, which is, “that we should be holy.”

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

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

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

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”

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

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

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

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

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

5. *Having predestinated us.* Having destined us before we were born,

5. *Unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.* The chosen ones are *adopted*—they become the children of God. The *universal* Fatherhood of God, except in a very special sense, is a doctrine totally *unknown* to Scripture! God is the Father of those whom He adopts into His family, who are born again into His family—and no man has any right to believe God to be his Father except through the new birth and through adoption. And why God thus elects or adopts is declared here—“According to the good pleasure of His will.” He

does as He pleases. That old Word of God is still true—"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Men do not like that Doctrine of God—it galls them terribly—but it is the Truth of God for all that! He is Master and King and He will sit on the Throne and none shall drag Him from there.

6. *To the praise of the glory of His Grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved.* There is another precious Doctrine of God, the *acceptance* of those who are adopted. We are beloved of God—He has a complacency toward us! He takes a delight in us! We are acceptable in His sight. Oh, what a blessing this is! But remember that it is all *in Christ*—"Accepted in the Beloved." Because Christ is accepted, therefore those who are in Him are accepted.

7, 8. *In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace; wherein He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.* In the working out of the economy of Grace, God has been lavish with His love, but yet there have been wisdom and prudence in it. He did not suffer the full light of the Gospel to break in upon our eyes at first, lest we should have been blinded by it. Jesus had many things to say unto His disciples, but they could not bear them all at once, so, little by little, He has led us on and led us up, abounding always in His Grace and only limiting the display of it by our capacity to receive it!

9, 10. *Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all thing in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him.* Everything that is in Christ shall be gathered in! All His chosen, all that the Father gave Him, all that He has redeemed by blood, all that He has effectually brought into union with Himself shall be gathered together in one! There shall be one flock under one Shepherd.

11. *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance.* Not only shall we have it, but we have it *now*! We have Heaven in the price of it, in the principles of it, in the promise of it, in the foretaste of it.

11, 12. *Being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will: that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.* The enmity of men's hearts to this Doctrine of Predestination was seen in the House of Commons but a fortnight ago, when one, who ought to have known better, talked about "the gloomy tenets of Calvin." I know nothing of Calvin's gloomy tenets! But I do know that I read, here, of *predestination* and I read, here, that God has His own way and His own will—and that He reigns and rules—and so He will until the world's end! And all who are loyal subjects wish God to rule. He is a traitor who would not have God to be King, for who is infinitely good and kind as God is? Let Him have His Divine will. Who wishes to restrain Him? Whether we wish it or not, however, the Lord reigns! Let the earth rejoice and let His adversaries tremble! Our predestination is "ac-

ording to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will.”

13, 14. *In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His Glory.* Those who believe in Christ have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them—the Holy Spirit is a part of Heaven—“the earnest of our inheritance.” And wherever He dwells, it is not possible that the heart should lose the inheritance! It is entailed upon those in whom the Spirit dwells. Judge, then, dear Brothers and Sisters, whether the Spirit of God dwells in you or not.

15-23. *Why I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward, who believe; according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things in the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.* How Paul glows as He writes on this great theme! He waxes warm and rises to an enthusiasm of eloquence! We could not stop to explain his words—that were to spoil their mystic poetry! Oh, to have a heart that can glorify Christ as Paul did! Truly, if we know ourselves to be one with Christ and know the privileges which come to us through that blessed gate, we may, indeed, extol Him with all our heart and soul!

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—
232; Psalm 53, Version 1; 219 and the Doxology.**

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ADOPTION

NO. 360

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

themselves actually carried out and performed in time in the heart of every believer.

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

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

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

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

I. First, ADOPTION—THE GRACE OF IT.

Adoption is that act of God whereby men who were by nature the children of wrath, even as others and were of the lost and ruined family of Adam, are from no reason in themselves, but entirely of the pure grace of God, translated out of the evil and black family of Satan and brought actually and virtually into the family of God. They take His name, share the privileges of sorts and they are to all intents and purposes the actual offspring and children of God.

This is an act of pure grace. No man can ever have a right in himself to become adopted. If I had, then I should receive the inheritance in my own right—but inasmuch as I have no right whatever to be a child of God and can by no possibility claim so high a privilege in and of myself, adoption is the pure gratuitous effect of divine grace and of that alone. I could suppose that justification might be by works under the Old Covenant, but I could not suppose adoption to be under the Old Covenant at all. I could imagine a man keeping the law perfectly and being justified by it, if Adam had not fallen. But even upon such a supposition, Adam himself would have had no right to adoption—he would still have been only a servant and not a son.

Above all contradiction and controversy that great and glorious act whereby God makes us of His family and unites us to Jesus Christ as our Covenant Head, so we may be His children—is an act of pure grace. It would have been an act of sovereign grace if God had adopted someone out of the best of families. But in this case he has adopted one who was a

child and a rebel. We are by nature the children of one who was convicted of high treason. We are all the heirs and are born into the world the natural heirs of one who sinned against his Maker, who was a rebel against his Lord.

Yet mark this—notwithstanding the evil of our parentage, born of a thief, who stole the fruit from his master’s garden—born of a proud traitor, who dared to rebel against his God—notwithstanding all this—God has put us into the family. We can well conceive that when God considered our vile original He might have said within Himself, “How can I put you among the children?” With what gratitude should we remember that though we were of the very lowest original, grace has put us into the number of the Savior’s family. Let us give all thanks to the free grace which overlooked the hole of the pit from where we were dug. And which passed over the quarry from where we were hewn and put us among the chosen people of the living God.

If a king should adopt any into his family it would likely be the son of one of his lords—at any rate some child of respectable parentage. He would not take the son of some common felon, or some gypsy child, to adopt him into his family. But God in this case has taken the very worst to be His children. The sons of God all confess that they are the last persons they should ever have dreamed He would have chosen. They say of themselves—

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

Again, let us think not only of our original lineage, but of our personal character. He who knows himself will never think that he had much to recommend him to God. In other cases of adoption there usually is some recommendation. A man, when he adopts a child, sometimes is moved thereto by its extraordinary beauty, or at other times by its intelligent manners and winning disposition. But, Beloved, when God passed by the field in which we were lying, He saw no tears in our eyes till He put them there Himself. He saw no contrition in us until He had given us repentance. There was no beauty in us that could induce Him to adopt us—on the contrary we were everything that was repulsive.

And if He had said, when He passed by, “You are cursed, be lost forever,” it would have been nothing but what we might have expected from a God who had been so long provoked and whose majesty had been so terribly insulted. But no. He found a rebellious child, a filthy, frightful, ugly child. He took it to His bosom and said, “Black though you are, you are comely in My eyes through My Son Jesus. Unworthy though you are, yet I cover you with His robe and in your Brother’s garments I accept you.” And taking us, all unholy and unclean, just as we were, He took us to be His—His children—His forever.

I was passing lately by the seat of a nobleman and someone in the railway carriage observed that he had no children and he would give any

price in the world if he could find someone who would renounce all claim to any son he might have. The child was never to speak to his parents any more, nor to be acknowledged and this lord would adopt him as his son and leave him the whole of his estates. But he had found great difficulty in procuring any parents who would forswear their relationship and entirely give up their child.

Whether this was correct or not, I cannot tell. But certainly this was not the case with God. His only-Begotten and well-Beloved Son was quite enough for Him. And if He had needed a family, there were the angels and His own Omnipotence was adequate enough to have created a race of beings far superior to us. He stood in no need whatever of any to be His darlings. It was, then, an act of simple, pure, gratuitous grace—and of nothing else—because He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and because He delights to show the marvelous character of His condescension.

Did you ever think what a high honor it is to be called a son of God? Suppose a judge of the land should have before him some traitor who was about to be condemned to die. Suppose that equity and law demanded that the wretch should shed his blood by some terrible punishment. But suppose it were possible for the judge to step from his throne and to say, “Rebel you are guilty, but I have found out a way whereby I can forgive your rebellions—man, you are pardoned!” There is a flush of joy upon his cheek. “Man, you are made rich!—see, there is wealth!”

Another smile passes over the countenance. “Man, you are made so strong that you shall be able to resist all your enemies!” He rejoices again. “Man,” says the judge at last, “you are made a prince! You are adopted into the royal family and you shall one day wear a crown. You are now as much the son of God as you are the son of your own father.” You can conceive the poor creature fainting with joy at such a thought, that he whose neck was just ready for the halter should have his head now ready for a crown—that he who expected to be clothed in the felon’s garb and taken away to death, is now to be exalted and clothed in robes of honor.

So, Christian, think what you did deserve—robes of shame and infamy—but you are to have those of glory. Are you in God’s family now? Well said the poet—

***“It does not yet appear,
How great we must be made.”***

We do not know the greatness of adoption yet. Yes, I believe that even in eternity we shall scarce be able to measure the infinite depth of the love of God in that one blessing of “adoption by Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” Still, methinks there is someone here who says, “I believe, Sir, that men are adopted because God foresees that they will be holy, righteous and faithful and therefore, doubtless, God adopted them on the foresight of that.”

That is an objection I often have to reply to. Suppose, my Friends, you and I should take a journey into the country one day and should meet with a person and should say to him, “Sir, can you tell me why the sails of

yonder windmill go round?” He would of course reply, “It is the wind.” But, suppose you were to ask him, “What makes the wind?” and he were to reply, “the sails of the windmill,” would you not just think that he was an idiot? In the first place, he told you that the wind caused the revolution of the sails and then, afterwards, he tells you that the sails make the wind—that an effect can be the parent of that which is its own cause!

Now, any man you like to ask will say that faith is the gift of God—that good works are God’s workmanship. Well, then, what is the cause of good works in a Christian? “Why, grace,” they say. Then, how can good works be the cause of grace? By all that is rational, where are your heads? It is too foolish a supposition for any man to reply to without making you laugh and that I do not choose to do. And therefore, I leave it. I say again, Beloved, if the fruits upon a Christian be caused by the root, how can the fruit, in any degree, be the cause of the root? If the good works of any man are given him by grace, how can they, by any pretense whatever, be argued as the reason why God gives him grace?

The fact is we are by nature utterly lost and ruined and there is not a saint in Heaven that would not have been damned and that did not deserve to be damned in the common doom of sinners. The reason why God has made a distinction is a secret to Himself. He had a right to make that distinction if He pleased and He has done it. He has chosen some unto eternal life, to the praise of His glorious grace. He has let others to be punished for their sins, to the praise of His glorious justice and in one as in the other, He has acted quite rightly, for He has a right to do as He wills with His own creatures. Seeing they all deserved to be punished, He has a right to punish them all.

So too, as He has reconciled justice with mercy or mated it with judgment He has a right to forgive and pardon some and to leave the others to be unwashed, unforgiven and unsaved—willfully to follow the error of their ways, to reject Christ, despise His Gospel and ruin their own souls. He that does not agree with that, agrees not with Scripture. I have not to prove it—I have only to preach it. He that quarrels with that, quarrels with God—let him fight his quarrel out himself.

II. The second thing is, THE PRIVILEGES WHICH COME TO US THROUGH ADOPTION.

For the convenience of my young people—members of the Church—I shall, just for a moment, give you a list of the privileges of adoption as they are to be found in our old *Confession of Faith*. I know many of you have this book and I am sure most of you will study at home this afternoon if you have opportunity, looking up all the passages. It is the Twelfth Article, upon adoption, where we read—“All those that are justified, God vouchsafed, in and for the sake of His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number and enjoy the liberties and privileges of children of God, have His name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the Throne of Grace with boldness, are enabled to cry Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for and chastened by Him as a Father, yet never

cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.”

I shall commence, then, with the privileges of adoption. There is one privilege not mentioned in the Confession which ought to be there. It is this—When a man is adopted into a family and comes thereby under the regime of his new father, he has nothing whatever to do with the old family he has left behind and he is released from subjection to those whom he has left. And so, the moment I am taken out of the family of Satan, the Prince of this world has nothing to do with me as my father and he is no more my father. I am not a son of Satan, I am not a child of wrath. The moment I am taken out of the legal family, I have nothing whatever to do with Hagar.

If Hagar comes to meddle with me, I tell her, “Sarah is my mother, Abraham is my father and, Hagar, you are my servant and I am not yours. You are a bondwoman and I shall not be your bond slave, for you are mine.” When the Law comes to a Christian with all its terrible threats and horrible denunciations, the Christian says, “Law! why do you threaten me? I have nothing to do with you. I follow you as my rule, but I will not have you to be my ruler. I take you to be my pattern and mold, because I cannot find a better code of morality and of life, but I am not under you as my condemning curse.

“Sit in your Judgment-seat, O Law and condemn me. I smile on you, for you are not my judge, I am not under your jurisdiction. You have no right to condemn me.” If, as the old Divines say, the king of Spain were to condemn an inhabitant of Scotland what would he say? He would say, “Very well, condemn me, if you like, but I am not under your jurisdiction.” So, when the Law condemns a saint, the saint says, “If my Father condemns me and chastens me, I bow to Him with filial submission for I have offended Him, but, O Law, I am not under you any longer, I am delivered from you, I will not hear your sentence, nor care about your thunders.

“All you can do against me, go and do it upon Christ. Or, rather, you have done it. If you demand punishment for my sin, look, there stands my Substitute. You are not to seek it at my hands. You charge me with guilt. It is true, I am guilty, but it is equally true my guilt is put upon the Scapegoat’s head. I tell you, I am not of your family. I am not to be chastened by you. I will not have a legal chastisement, a legal punishment. I am under the Gospel dispensation now, I am not under you. I am a child of God, not your servant. We have a commandment to obey the Father that we now have. But as to the family with which we were connected, we have nothing to do with it any longer.” That is no small privilege—oh that we could rightly understand it and appreciate it and walk in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free!

But now, as the *Confession* has it, one of the great blessings which God gives us is that we have His name put upon us. He will give unto us a new name, as is the promise in the book of the Revelation. We are to be called after the name of God. Oh, Remember, Brothers and Sisters, we are men and women, but we are God’s men and women now. We are no longer

mere mortals. We are so in ourselves—but by divine grace we are chosen immortals—God’s sons, taken to Himself. Remember, Christian, you bear the name of God upon you.

Mark another thing. We have the spirit of children as well as the name of children. Now, if one man adopts another child into his family, he cannot give it his own nature, as his own child would have had. And if that child that he shall adopt should have been a fool, it may still remain so—he cannot make it a child worthy of him. But our heavenly Father, when He comes to carry out adoption, gives us not only the name of children, but the nature of children, too. He gives us a nature like His well-Beloved Son Jesus Christ. We had once a nature like our father Adam after he had sinned. He takes that away and gives us a nature like Himself as it were “in the image of God.”

He overcomes the old nature and He puts in us the nature of children. “He sends forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” And He gives us the nature and the character of children, so that we are as much by grace partakers of the spirit of children of God as we should have been if we had been His legitimately born children and had not been adopted into His family. Brethren, adoption secures to us regeneration. And regeneration secures to us the nature of children whereby we are not only made children, but are made partakers of the grace of God—so that we are in ourselves made unto God by our new nature as living children, actually and really like Himself.

The next blessing is that being adopted we have access to the Throne. When we come to God’s Throne, one thing we ought always to plead is our adoption. The angel that keeps the mercy seat might stop us on the road with saying, “What is your claim to come here? Do you come as a subject, or a servant? If you do, you have no right to come. But if you come as a son, come and welcome.” Can you say you are a son in your prayers, Christian? Then never be afraid to pray. So long as you know your sonship you will be sure to get all you want, for you can say, “Father, I ask not as a servant. If I were a servant I should expect Your wages and knowing that as a servant I have been rebellious, I should expect wages of eternal wrath.

“But I am Your son. Though as a servant I have often violated Your rules and may expect Your rod, yet, O Father, sinner though I be in and of myself, I am Your son by adoption and grace. Spurn me not away. Put me not from Your knee. I am Your own child. I plead it. The Spirit bears witness with my Spirit that I am born of God. Father, will You deny Your son?” What? When you plead for your elder Brother’s sake, by whom you are God’s child, being made an heir with Christ of all things, will He drive away His son? No, Beloved, He will not. He will turn again, He will hear our prayer, He will have mercy upon us. If we are His children we may have access with boldness to the grace wherein we stand and access with confidence unto the Throne of the heavenly grace.

Another blessing is that we are pitied by God. Think of that, children, in all your sufferings and sorrows. “Like as a father pities his children, so

the Lord pities them that fear Him.” Do you lie sick? The Lord stands by your bedside, pitying you. Are you tempted of Satan? Christ is looking down upon you, feeling in His heart your sighs and your groans. Did you come here this morning with a heavy heart, a desponding spirit? Remember, the loving heart of God sympathizes with you. In His measure, Christ feels afresh what every member bears. He pities you and that pity of God is one of the efforts that flows into your heart by your adoption.

In the next place, He protects you. Just as a hen protects her brood under her feathers from birds of prey that seek their life, so the Lord makes His own loving arms encircle His children. No father will allow his son to die without making some attempt to resist the adversary who would slay him. God will never allow His children to perish while His omnipotence is able to guard them. If once that everlasting arm can be palsied, if once that everlasting hand can become less than Almighty, then you may die. But while your Father lives, your Father’s shield shall be your preserver and His strong arm shall be your effectual protection.

Once again, there is provision as well as protection. Every father will take care to the utmost of his ability to provide for his children. So will God. If you are adopted, being predestinated thereunto, most surely will He provide for you—

***“All needful grace will God bestow,
And crown that grace with glory too;
He gives us all things and withholds
No real good from upright souls.”***

Mercies temporal, mercies spiritual you shall have and all because you are God’s son, His redeemed child, made so by the blood of Jesus Christ.

And then you shall likewise have education. God will educate all His children till He makes them perfect men in Christ Jesus. He will teach you doctrine after doctrine. He will lead you into all Truth until at last, perfected in all heavenly wisdom, you shall be made fit to join with your fellow-commoners of the great Heaven above.

There is also one thing, perhaps, you sometimes forget which you are sure to have in the course of discipline if you are God’s sons and that is God’s rod. That is another fruit of adoption. Unless we have the rod we may tremble, fearing that we are not the children of God. God is no foolish father—if He adopts a child, He adopts it that He may be a kind and wise father. And though He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men for nothing—though when His strokes are felt, His strokes are fewer than our crimes and lighter than our guilt—yet at the same time He never spares the rod. He knows He would ruin His children if He did and therefore He lays it on with no very sparing hand and makes them cry out and groan while they think that He is turned to be their enemy.

But as the *Confession* beautifully has it, exactly in keeping with Scripture, “Though chastened by God as by a father, yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, they inherit the promises, as heirs of salvation.” It is one great doctrine of Scripture that God cannot, as well as will not, cast off His children. I have often wondered how any persons can

see any consistency in Scripture phraseology when they talk about God's people being children of God one day and children of Satan the next. Now, it would startle me not a little if I should step into a lecture room and hear the lecturer asserting that my children might be my children today and his children the next. I should look at him and say, "I don't see that. If they are really mine they are mine. If they are not mine they are not mine, but I do not see how they can be mine today and yours tomorrow."

The fact is that those who preach thus *do* believe in salvation by works—though they mask and cover it with specious qualifications as much as they may. There is as much need for a Luther to come out against them as there was for him to come out against the Romanists. Ah, Beloved, it is well to know that our standing is not of that character, but if we are children of God nothing can unchild us—though we be beaten and afflicted as children we never shall be punished by being cast out of the family and ceasing to be children. God knows how to keep His own children from sin. He will never give them liberty to do as they please. He will say to them, "I will not kill you—that were an act I could not do—but this rod shall smite you. And you shall be made to groan and cry under the rod"—so that you will hate sin and you will cleave to Him and walk in holiness even to the end.

It is not a licentious doctrine because there is the rod. If there were no rod of chastisement, then it were a daring thing to say that God's children shall go unpunished. They shall, so far as legal penalty is concerned. No judge shall condemn them. But as far as paternal chastisement is concerned they shall not escape. "I have loved you above all the nations of the earth," says God, "and therefore I will punish you for your iniquities."

Lastly, as sure as we are the children of God by adoption we must inherit the promise that pertains to it. "If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." "If we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified together."

III. And now the final point—THERE ARE SOME DUTIES WHICH ARE CONNECTED WITH ADOPTION.

When the believer is adopted into the Lord's family there are many relationships which are broken off—the relationship with old Adam and the Law ceases at once. But then he is under a new Law, the Law of grace—under new rules and under a new Covenant. And now I beg to admonish you of duties, children of God. Because you are God's children it has then become your duty to obey God. A servile spirit you have nothing to do with. You are a child. But inasmuch as you are a child you are bound to obey your Father's faintest wish—the least intimation of His will.

What does He say to you? Does He bid you fulfill such-and-such an ordinance? It is at your peril if you neglect it. Then you are disobeying your Father who tells you to do so. Does He command you to seek the image of Jesus? Seek it. Does He tell you, "Be you perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect"? Then not because the Law says so, but because your Father says so, seek after it. Seek to be perfect in love and in holiness. Does He tell you to love one another? Love one another. Not be-

cause the Law says, “Love your God,” but because Christ says, “If you love Me keep My commandments. And this is the commandment that I give unto you, that you love one another.”

Are you told to distribute to the poor and minister unto the necessity of saints? Do it not because you think you are bound by the Law to do it, but do it because Christ says so—because He is your Elder Brother, He is the Master of the household and you think yourself most sweetly bound to obey. Does it say, “Love God with all your heart”? Look at the commandment and say, “Ah, commandment, I will seek to fulfill you. Christ has fulfilled you already—I have no need, therefore, to fulfill you for my salvation, but I will strive to do it because He is my Father now and He has a new claim upon me.”

Does He say, “Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy”? I shall remember what Jesus said— “The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath,” and therefore I shall not be the Sabbath’s slave. But as inasmuch as my Father rested on the seventh day, so also will I from all my works and I will have no works of legality to defile His *Rest*. I will do as many acts of mercy as ever I can. I will seek and strive to serve Him with filial homage. Because my Father rested so will I in the finished work of Christ.

And so with each of the Ten Commandments. Take them out of the Law, put them in the Gospel and then obey them. Do not obey them simply as being the Law graven on tables of stone—obey them as Gospel written on fleshy tables of the heart—“for you are not under the Law, but under grace.”

There is another duty, Believer. It is this—if God is your Father and you are His son you are bound to trust Him. Oh, if He were only your Master and you ever so poor a servant you would be bound to trust Him. But when you know that He is your Father, will you ever doubt Him? I may doubt any man in this world. But I do not doubt my father. If he says a thing, if he promises a thing—I know if it is in his power he will do it. And if he states a fact to me, I cannot doubt his word. And yet, O child of God, how often do you mistrust your *heavenly* Father? Do so no more. Let Him be true. Let every man be a liar—still doubt not your Father. What? Could He tell you an untruth? Would He cheat you?

No, your Father, when He speaks, means what He says. Can you not trust His love? What? Will He let you sink while He is able to keep you afloat? Will He let you starve while His granaries are full? Will He let you die of thirst when His presses burst with new wine? Are the cattle upon a thousand hills His and will He let you lack a meal? Is the earth the Lord’s and the fullness thereof and will He let you go away empty and poor and miserable? Oh, surely not! Is all grace His and will He keep it back from you? No, He says to us today, “Son, you are ever with Me and all that I have is yours. Take what you will, it is all your own. But trust to your Father—

**“Leave to His sovereign will,
To choose and to command.**

***With wonder filled, you then shall own,
How wise, how strong His hand.”***

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

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

The Lord bless you and save you! Amen.

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

ACCEPTED OF THE GREAT FATHER

NO. 1731

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

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

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

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

The Lord has called us beloved who were not so and made us a people who were not a people. But He has not withdrawn a grain of love from Jesus, whom He still calls, "My Elect, in whom My soul delights." All the infinite love of God still flows to Jesus and *then* to us *in* Him. It pleased the Father that to Him a fullness of love should be given, that out of it we might each one receive. God's love to us is His love to His Son flowing in a hundred channels. For His sake He makes the wedding feast and we are the happy guests who sit at the table. Not for *our* sakes is this done, but for *Jesus'* sake, that so it might be all of Grace. His perpetual acceptance with God is our acceptance—that nothing legal, nothing of which we might boast—might be mingled with the work of Sovereign Grace. We are "accepted *in* the Beloved."

Do you not love that sweet title? Is it not the highest quality of the acceptance, that it comes through such an One? He is beloved in the highest conceivable degree by the Father and in this you imitate the great God, for to you, also, the Lord Jesus is altogether lovely. He is *your* Beloved as well as God's Beloved—and this is one proof that you are accepted—for all who truly love the Son are approved by the Father. Thus says the Scripture—“Because he has set His love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high because he has known My name.”

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

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

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

I. I will begin by treating the text by way of CONTRAST. Brothers and Sisters, the Grace of God has made us to be, this day, “accepted in the Beloved.” But it was not always so. As many of us as have, through Grace, believed in Christ, we are, now, to a certainty, at this very moment, “accepted in the Beloved.” But in times past it was very different. It is not a matter of question, nor of imagination, nor of sentiment, but a matter of *fact*, declared by the Holy Spirit, Himself, that the Lord has “*made* us ac-

cepted in the Beloved.” But it was far otherwise a little while ago. What a contrast is our present condition of acceptance to our position under the Law through Adam’s fall!

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

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

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

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

In our daring rebellion we might have been crying, “The better the day, the better the deed,” and so might have shown how completely we had thrown off the yoke of allegiance to the great King. Yes, by this we might

have been *dead* as the result of our own sins. The measure of our iniquity might have been full and we might have been in Hell! Be startled, my Soul, at this thought—that nothing but infinite long-suffering has kept you out of the Pit that is bottomless, “where their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched.” But, Brothers and Sisters, we are *not* in Hell and, what is more, we never shall be, for those iron gates can never close upon a soul that is “accepted in the Beloved!” And that is our condition now. We have fled for refuge to the hope set before us and now no more need we be in terror of the Great White Throne and the righteous Judge, and the stern sentence, “Depart, you cursed.” Clinging to the Cross and beholding ourselves covered with the righteousness of Christ, we know that we are saved and, what is more, we are accepted!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Again, our acceptance is “in the Beloved.” It is only as we are *in* Christ that we are accepted. Let no man steal out of Christ and then say, “God has accepted me.” Nothing of the kind! If the Lord views you apart from Christ, whoever you may be, you are a thing to be consumed and not to be accepted “in the Beloved,” that is, as it were, within the gates of a City

of Refuge. You must abide within that wall of fire of which the Cross is the center, or else you are not accepted. You must remain within the arms of the Well-Beloved, living in the very heart of Christ, and *then* you shall know yourself to be “accepted in the Beloved.” For Christ’s sake and because you are a part of Him, you shall be approved of the Father. He has taken you into Covenant union so that you can say with the favored Apostle, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” Therefore the Father accepts you because He cannot dissociate you from His Son, nor His Son from you, nor think of Christ without you, nor of you without Christ! Therefore it is, you are, “accepted in the Beloved.”

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

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

Now to come back again. If we are, indeed, “accepted in the Beloved,” does it not show how close, how *real* our union with the Beloved must be? Do we even share in Christ’s acceptance with *God*? Then we are one with Him in everything! Here is a father who has no particular interest in such-and-such a woman, but his son takes to himself that woman to be his wife. And now the loving father says, “That woman is my daughter,” and so she is received into his love for his son’s sake. He says to her, “You are

my dear son's wife; therefore you are my daughter and dear to me. You are welcome in my house at any time."

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

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

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

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

They are soon coming home for their holidays—they are glad to return home and I am sure their mothers are glad at the thought of seeing them again. Our Father is as truly pleased with us—our very persons are accepted of God. He delights in us individually! He thinks of us with joy and when we are near Him, it gives pleasure to His great heart. Being ourselves accepted, the right of access to Him is given us. When a person is

accepted with God, he may come to God when he chooses. He is one of those sheep who may go in and out and find pasture. He is one of those courtiers who may come, even, to the royal Throne and meet with no rebuff. No chamber of our great Father's house is closed against us!

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

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

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

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

into the treasury, as she says, “Will He really accept them when dropped into the offering box? Will He even know about them?”

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

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

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

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

IV. We have thus pursued our train of thought in a contrast, an explanation and an enlargement. Let us now indulge in a few “Accepted in the Beloveds.” May not each Believer talk thus with himself—I have my sorrows and grief. I have my aches and pains and weaknesses, but I must

not repine, for God accepts me. Ah me! How one can laugh at griefs when this sweet word comes in, “accepted in the Beloved!” I may be blind, but I am “accepted in the Beloved!” I may be lame, I may be poor, I may be despised, I may be persecuted, I may have much to put up with in many ways, but really, these troubles of the flesh count for little or nothing to me since I am, “accepted in the Beloved!”

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

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

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

If I were, this day, accepted in *myself*, I should fear that I might lose my acceptance, for I am a poor, changeable being! But if I am “accepted in the Beloved,” then the Beloved will never change and I always must and shall be accepted, come what may! Is not this a word to die with? We will meet

death and face his open jaws with this word, "Accepted in the Beloved." Will not this be a word to rise with amidst the blaze of the great Judgment Day? You wake up from your tomb, lift up your eyes, and as you gaze upon the terrors of that tremendous hour, you say, "I am accepted in the Beloved"—what can fill you with alarm? Forever and ever, as the cycles of eternity revolve, will not this be the core and center of Heaven's most supreme bliss—that we are still "accepted in the Beloved"?

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

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

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

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

Guilty as you are, come to Christ this morning! Come! Despise not the exhortation, for you will be accepted—it cannot but be that you will be accepted if you come! And you shall be accepted at once. If at this moment you are as vile as vile can be, if, while I speak, you know that you are black as Hell's dark night, yet the moment that you come to Christ you

are “accepted in the Beloved!” Trust Him! Trust Him! Have you done so? Your sin is gone! Righteousness is imputed! You are saved!

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

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THE GLORY OF GRACE

NO. 2763

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JANUARY 26, 1902.

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

“The glory of His Grace.”
Ephesians 1:6.

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

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

I. In the first place, then, let us meditate on THE GLORY OF DIVINE GRACE AS IT HAS BEEN DISPLAYED.

Grace has been displayed, of old, in the great council chamber, where all the attributes of God sat in solemn conclave to devise a way by which God should be glorified. Foreknowledge, as one of the attributes of God, prophesied that man, if made fallible, would sadly fall. Justice, therefore,

arose and thundered forth his word that if man fell and transgressed the Creator's command, he must be punished. Grace, however, asked whether it could not be possible that man could be saved and yet Justice should be satisfied. Wisdom, infinite Wisdom, answered the question, and God's own Son was the answer! He promised that in the fullness of time, He would become a Man for us and, for our redemption, bear the whole weight of Jehovah's justly merited wrath, that the vessels of mercy might be secured.

Now, albeit that all the other attributes displayed themselves in the council chamber, when our soul, in holy reverence, dares venture into that once secret, but now revealed counsel of the Most High, we are compelled to admire all the attributes of God, but most of all, His Grace. Why, it seems to me that Grace presided at this congress! It was Grace that pressed man's suit, it was Grace that inspired Wisdom, it was Grace that invited Wisdom to be its counselor, it was Grace that defended man when Justice might have spoken against him. Grace was our advocate! Christ Jesus, who was Grace, itself, of old, as He is now, stood then as The Wonderful, The Counselor. And He devised the plan, pleaded our cause and promised to work it out. The Glory of Grace, as it sits with its crown upon its head in the council chamber of eternity, is a subject well worthy of your devout reflection and quiet meditation.

But now the council is over, and Grace steps forth to be glorified in another manner. Now *it glorifies itself in its gifts*. Look how Grace gives man blessings, countless in number, and priceless in value, scattering them along his pathway as if they were but stones, while each is so precious that only Heaven itself can tell its worth! At last, after having given man blessings through long ages, Grace comes up to Calvary and there gives its last—no, its first, its all, its grandest gift! Grace gives up the Incarnate Son of God to die! He gives up His own life and bows His head upon the Cross. There may be much of shame and ignominy about the Cross—assuredly there is, for there we see sin punished—but how much there is of Glory and of majesty for there we see Grace triumphant over itself—Grace in the heart of Christ leading Him to save others while Himself He cannot save!

We talk of these things, nowadays, as household words, but not thus do the angels speak concerning Grace glorified in the Person of the dying Son of God! Not thus did we think when, for the first time, we saw Him to be ours in the day of our sore trouble and sorrow! We shall not think so slightingly of Grace, as I fear we sometimes do now, when we shall see His face without a veil between and then shall know what wondrous Grace that was which made that glorious face become marred with sorrow, and bowed that glorious head Divine to the depths of the grave! Grace, in its highest Glory, is to be seen best on Calvary, but I think it is rather to be seen and felt than to be talked of. My feeble tongue declines to bear the burden of a theme so weighty. I cannot stretch the wings of my imagination and rise to the height of this grand argument! I cannot adequately utter the praises of that Grace which is to be seen in the dy-

ing Son of God on Calvary. Since then, Beloved, you have had to glorify Grace in its continued gifts. You have found that He, who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, has with Him also freely given all things to us. What debtors you and I are! As Rutherford would have said, we are drowned debtors—we are head over heels in debt—we are sunken fathoms deep in an ocean of indebtedness to God!

How much do you owe my Lord? Take your pen and sit down quickly, and reckon up the amount. Ah, you may sit down quickly, but you will not rise up quickly, for the full account you can never write. There are no scales in which to weigh those ponderous blessings! Earth has no coin by which to represent their value! Talk of millions and of billions—we must get into the inconceivable before we can estimate the infinite, the unutterable value of those gifts which Jesus Christ continually gives to us, which Grace pours into our lap from the cornucopia of love!

Now we go a little further. We have had God's Grace in the council chamber, we have had His Grace in its gifts and, in both these things we may well speak of "the glory of His Grace." Now we will speak of *Grace in its triumphs*. It is a strange thing that love should be a warrior and that Grace should fight, but when Grace came to make us gracious, it found us graceless and averse to Grace. The door was shut when Jesus came, though His hand and heart were open. Jesus Himself burst open the door and stormed the passage into the heart of man. When mercy comes to bless, it finds us bent to curse. We will not receive the proffered gift—we reject the mercy—and Grace must overcome our will. It must lead us captives in silken bonds, or otherwise it cannot bless us! Man, while his will is free, is graceless. It is only when his will is bound by fetters of Sovereign Grace that he is gracious at all. If there is such a thing as free will, Luther truly hit the mark when he called free will a slave! It is only our will in bonds that is truly free. Our will constrained, ranges at liberty! When Grace binds it, then it is free, indeed, and only then—when the Son has made it free!

Think, my Brothers and Sisters, of the battles which Grace has had with men, and what glory it has gained, for, remember, it has never once been defeated! When Grace has come into the heart, there may have been a long struggle, but it has always ended in a victory. In your case and mine, how stern has been the fight! Do you not remember well the day when Jesus met you by the way and He said to you, "Soul, have you no interest in Me?" Do you remember how you spat in His face and passed Him by, and made a jest of the Crucified? Do you remember another time when He sent His black messengers, sickness and sorrow, and you lay upon your bed and He came to you, again, and you uttered words to Him which looked like truth, but, alas, they were but lying, deceptive words—and you turned your face to the wall and you vowed repentance—but you did not repent? You use no other friend so evilly as you have used Him.

And do you recollect how you were determined to be lost—how your soul set itself desperately on mischief? But you have not had your way. Grace has overcome you and here you sit, a captive—

**“A willing captive to your Lord,
To sing the triumphs of His Word.”**

Ah, this always delights me when I think about preaching the Gospel, that Grace must be a conqueror where God sends it forth! We may sing, in the language of one of those good Welsh hymns, which I think, when translated, runs something like this—

**“Ride forth, O Jesus!
Hell trembles at You,
Earth cannot withstand You!
Man’s heart will break before You
Go forth and win the day!”**

And when Jesus goes forth, He *does* win the day! The man may kick and struggle, but if his name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, he will be obliged to yield. If thus the heavenly mandate runs, “Almighty Grace, arrest that man,” that man, in God’s time, shall be arrested by the strong hand of Sovereign Grace and he, converted, changed and made a new man in Christ Jesus, shall be one of Grace’s willing captives—a trophy of its Omnipotence!

And then, my dear Brothers and Sisters, as we speak of the triumphs of Divine Grace, we must not forget the multitudes of triumphs Grace has had in each soul. If you could bear in your body a mark for every triumph that Grace has had in you and if every mark were a jewel, would you not be covered from head to foot with jewels? And then it is not merely one man in whom Grace has worked, but think of the countless myriads of souls that Grace has overcome. It has gone into every land, into every sort of habitation and it has secured its trophies. Oh, what a glorious day will that day be when Christ, who is Grace Incarnate and embodied, shall enter into Heaven with all His blood-bought saints and shall cry, “Here I am, Father, and the children whom You have given Me. Here are they whom I have rescued from the jaws of the lion and from the paws of the bear. Not one of them is missing! I have been triumphant over all their foes and I safely bring them to their promised rest.” “The glory of His Grace” is seen, then, in its triumphs.

But let me remark, further, that *the glory of Divine Grace is to be seen more fully, by-and-by*, when the whole plan of Grace shall be worked out. I take it that we have, none of us, a very clear idea of what the full design of Divine Grace is. We say it is the blessing of the elect—it is, moreover, the indirect blessing of the world through these elect ones—or, as good Elisha Coles has said, and we endorse his saying, “Grace gives some good things to all men, though it gives all good things to some men.” But I take it that we have not, any of us, fully realized the design of God’s Grace. We all have some little confusion in our minds. That confusion may be, probably, a better insight of what God is doing than if we were able to put it into an orderly system. I doubt not that, in the millennial days which are yet to come, we shall see that God’s Grace will be so

wonderfully magnified at the winding up that our little hearts have never thought of how grandly the scene shall end!

At present, I see the world continually go on in its wickedness. It seems to me that Justice is rather magnified than Grace, for multitudes are daily descending into Hell. But there are happier days to come and a brighter season, when Messiah the Prince shall stand a second time among the sons of men! Then shall the earth ring with His praise! Then shall myriads of men and women be made to know Him! Then shall they come and bow down before Him and all people shall call Him blessed! And then the enormous multitudes shall swell the roll of those chosen ones to such a marvelous degree that, at the winding up, it shall be fully known and seen that there is a number that no man can number whom Christ has redeemed out of all people, and kindreds, and tongues! And when the multitudes of infants and all the myriads of these elect ones who shall be brought in, shall be encompassed within the shining walls of Heaven, then shall we see that the number of the saved infinitely surpasses the number of the lost! Then shall we see that though the gate was narrow, though the road was strait, yet the number of those who pass along it shall be immeasurably greater than the number of those who shall go in the other road, broad as it is, and wide though its gates may be!

I believe that the songs of Heaven shall prevail over all the growls of Hell. Satan shall not be triumphant. Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied! And Divine Grace, when it counts up its numbers, shall laugh in the face of Hell and cry, "I am triumphant over you! The number of my trophies far exceeds the number of yours, for you, black tyrant, have done little in comparison with what I have accomplished! See, you have here and there a ruined soul, but I have multitudes of blood-bought ones, whom I have raised up to everlasting life and more than perfection, for it is the very perfection of Deity which I have given to them."

II. Well now, having just run briefly over these things—you may think of them at your leisure more fully—I want to talk about the subject in another way for a little while. "To the praise of the glory of His grace." I take it that we may see the Glory of this Grace if we notice **THE QUALITIES FOR WHICH IT IS DISTINGUISHED.**

Grace is glorious if we consider *its antiquity*. Grace is not a piece of new cloth put into an old garment. Grace is not an alteration which God made in His original plan. It is not some addition that He made because some unlooked-for catastrophe occurred. He foresaw the Fall from all eternity and every iota of the plan of Grace was devised of old. Before yon sun was created, long before he had been swaddled in mists, before the stars had known their resting places and had sent the rays of their light through the thick darkness. Long before the mountains knew their places, or the water was poured into its fountains, God had chosen His people, had set His heart of love upon them, had devised His plan and chosen the objects that should be embraced by it. I love to think of Grace

in its antiquity. There are certain people who have a reverence for everything that is old—the Puseyite, for instance—he likes a thing because it used to be worn some six, seven, or 800 years ago!

Now, I confess I have a reverence for that which is old, but then it must be old enough. If a doctrine or a ceremony is as old as the time of Christ, I am content. But as to doctrinal truth, I can always rejoice if I can see the fact to be old as the everlasting hills! The geologist tells us that some rocks must have been fused myriads of years ago—and we tell him it may be so, but we are certain that the Covenant of Grace is older than the oldest of these things. They are but born yesterday infants, aged though they seem to be. But Grace has hoary age upon its head. Its head and its hair are white like wool, as white as snow! Venerable for age is the Grace of God and the plan of Grace is no new chapter of modern compilation, but it is old as God's own eternity—an everlasting thing! O Grace, you are from everlasting to everlasting!

Then, again, the Glory of Grace consists not only in its antiquity, but in its Immutability. The Grace of God, old though it is, has never changed. Many a mighty river has been dried up and now, over its dry bed men can walk. The very sea has changed. There are no furrows on its brow, but it has forsaken its channels and now finds a resting place that is new to it. The very sun alters, everything grows dim with age—but Grace flows on as it did at first! Its stream is just as deep and its current just as mighty. There is no failing in Grace, any more than there is any failing in God. And I may remark that it has never failed of its objects. No, Grace runs in one direct stream and it has never been made to wind about. The chosen vessels of mercy have been washed in that stream—it has not passed by a single one, nor has one more been washed by it than those chosen ones of old. Never, never can we permit the idea of the mutability of Grace—Grace given today, and taken away tomorrow!

I repeat what I have often said. If Grace could be given to a man temporarily, and then taken away from him, I cannot imagine a more awful malediction than that Grace would really be! I would sooner perish as that fallen angel, that great sinner, Satan, than as one whom God had loved, if He did not love me forever, because to give Grace, and then to take it away would be the most awful method of tantalizing that was ever known! Better for God to send no Gospel if He did not send an everlasting one! The Arminian scheme of salvation is worse than nothing! I had rather have no Revelation than believe it if, on that hypothesis, I am but tantalized and tempted to hope that I may be saved, but it ends in blackness and darkness forever because there is a condition annexed to it which I cannot fulfill—and there is something demanded of me which I cannot give. The Grace of God, then, is greatly magnified in its Immutability as well as in its antiquity.

And then, to turn to another view of it, Grace derives great Glory from *its freeness*. The Grace of God is as free as the air we breathe. If any man here asks whether he may believe in Christ, my answer to him is—he not only may, but he is *commanded* to do so! If, as I have often declared to

you, it is the command of God that we believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent, you are guilty of sin every moment that you live without faith in Christ! It is commanded of you, therefore you can clearly say you have a right to it, for any man has a right to obey a Divine command! If we are commanded, we have a perfect right to come. He who commands us to come to the feast gives us, in that very command, the only permit we need. Oh, I would that men would believe in the freeness of Divine Grace!

I preach the sovereignty of Divine Grace and desire to preach it with reverence before God and with faithfulness to man—but the freeness of Grace is not inconsistent with the Sovereignty of it. Albeit that none ever drink of that sacred Fountain but those whom God sweetly constrains to drink—if men do not drink, the fault lies with them—and their blood will be on their own head forever. For thus cries the Gospel, “Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” The Grace of God is free—no preparation is needed before you can receive it, for God gives it even to men who do not ask for it—“I was found of them that sought not after Me.” There is no preparation needed! I tell you, the preparation that you imagine is necessary would be just that which would disqualify you! Come to Jesus now! You are commanded to come just as you are. Oh, may Divine Grace, that gives the command, induce you to obey—may it sweetly constrain you to obey! Remember that there is no barrier between you and Christ except your own depraved heart. If once you have the will, if God *gives* you the will to go to Christ, there is nothing that can keep you back and nothing that should intimidate you from coming, for the cry is, “Whoever will, let him come.”

This is, I think, one of the glories of Divine Grace—its freeness. But it is a Glory which a great many cannot see. As soon as we touch upon it, some Brother says, “Ah, he is not sound upon *that* point,” though, when we preached upon God’s Sovereignty, he liked it well enough. With regard to the matter of soundness, I do not so much consider soundness as sense. I always think if a thing is in Scripture, it little matters to me if it is not in men’s creed. They can alter their creed as quickly as they like—I shall not alter mine. I will just stand to what I always shall and always have preached, and take God’s Word as it stands, whether I can reconcile it with another part of God’s Word or not. One part of the Glory of Grace, then, consists in its freeness.

And now let me notice another thing. The Glory of Free Grace will be found in *its benevolence*. What good has Grace done? I will put it in another shape—What *hurt* has Grace ever done? There is not a man in the universe who can blame Grace for any hurt he has received by it. You know that a great public good is often a private evil, but while Grace is often a public good, it is never a private evil. No one was ever injured by it. I love a Gospel that hurts nobody. If there are none saved by it, at least they cannot point the finger at the Gospel and say, “That has destroyed me.” Their destruction lies with themselves! Grace scatters mercies, but never anything that is the reverse of good. Its path is that of a conqueror, but its garments are not stained with blood, except its own

blood. It is true that it marches over the world, beating down every high look and leveling every lofty thing. But, then, that is a blessing, for it is better to be leveled by Grace than to be exalted by pride! Good, only good are you, O Grace! You are a continually gushing fountain of mercy. Your stream is always crystal clear. There is no adulteration here, or anything that is ill to man, but, as Milton says, “It is better still, and better still, and better still in infinite progression.”

And now let me say, once more, what I think in my own soul will be one of the greatest glories of Divine Grace. I think it will be if ever I shall see the face of God with acceptance. I have said, and say it again—

***“Then loudest of the crowd I’ll sing,
While Heaven’s resounding mansions ring
With shouts of Sovereign Grace.”***

You remember the story of the three wonders in Heaven? The first wonder was that we should see so many there we did not expect to see. The second was that we should miss so many we did expect to see there. But the third wonder would be the greatest wonder of all—to see ourselves there! Oh, when I hear people censuring and condemning their fellow Christians because they are not perfect—because they see some little fault in them—I think, “Do these people know that they are saved by Grace and that they have nothing which they have not received? I think, surely, if they knew how they received what they have, they would not be quite so hard with those who have not the blessing.” When we feel right, my Brothers and Sisters, we always feel ourselves to be veritable beggars. No, the more right we come to be, the less we feel ourselves to be! That big letter, I, is so large with us all, pride is so interwoven into our nature, that I am afraid we shall never get it pulled out until we are wrapped in our winding-sheets! But if there is anything that can cure it, I think it is the fact that it is all of Divine Grace. Heaven shall show us how gracious God has been to us, but on earth we shall never know the full value of the Grace we have received. Let us continually sing—

***“Oh, to Grace how great a debtor,
Daily I’m constrained to be!”***

And, then, as a consequence, let us walk humbly with our God. Let us always be giving glory to Christ, waiting for and expecting that happy day when we shall glorify Him with all His saints, when He shall come in the Glory of His Father and all His holy angels with Him!

Brothers and Sisters, will we not sing if we once get across the Jordan? Oh, what leaps for joy! What shouts! What praise! What thanksgiving! Ah, my hoary-headed Brother, you are saying, “Would to God I were safely there!” And so you shall be before long. Ah, my dear young Friend, you are saying, “Oh, what temptations I have to battle with! Would God that I were at rest!” Your rest may be nearer than you think it is—we are, none of us, sure how near we are to Heaven. That trouble you are dreading may never come! That trial may never arrive, for Christ may come before the trial and we may be caught up to dwell with Christ before it shall come!

Let us just speed up the day by an hour or two. Ah, I shall soon be dying. Time quickly fades away. Speed on, O Time! Roll on your wheels and every year fly on apace! The shorter the road, the sooner I shall be with Him! The nearer I am to Jordan, the nearer am I to Canaan! Farewell, manna of the wilderness! Farewell, fiery serpents and Amalekites! My soul shall soon cross the Jordan! I shall see the face of Him whom, though I have not yet seen, I do unceasingly adore—in whom I have a Heaven on earth and with whom I shall have an everlasting blessedness in that day when He calls me Home to Himself!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

14-16. *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth*

in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. Every part of the body has its own special function. There are some secret vessels of which as yet the physiologists know very little. What may be the particular use of them has not yet been ascertained, but depend upon it, God has created no part of our body in vain and, in like manner, in the mystical body of Christ, every Christian has his own office, his own work, something that he can do that nobody else can do! And our great objective should be to find out what that work is and to give our whole strength to it, for the nourishing of the entire body of Christ.

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

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

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

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

26. *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.* Never let it outlive the day, but forgive before the sun goes down.

27. *Neither give place to the devil.* A man who harbors malice in his heart invites the devil to come in and keeps a place ready for him.

28. *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor.* For laziness is generally the cause of theft. If a man would work for what he needed, he would not be tempted to steal it. Paul carries his argument very far, “let him labor.”

28. *Working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs.* What a rise there is here—from a thief up to a

giver to him that needs! This is what the Grace of God does. Here is a man who used to take his neighbor's goods if he could, but, when Divine Grace transforms him, he actually gives a share of his own goods to his poor neighbor—that is a marvelous change!

29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.* I have heard unthinking people say, “Well, if it is in your heart, you may as well speak it—it is better out than in.” I do not agree with them! If you had a barrel of whiskey in your house, that would certainly be a bad thing to be in your possession, but it would not do any hurt so long as you kept it unopened so that nobody could get at it! The mischief arises when people begin to drink it. Undoubtedly, it is an evil thing for you to have anything that is corrupt in your heart, but it will not be mischievous to other people until it begins to come out. So, “let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.”

29. *But.* Since some communication is sure to come out of your mouth, let it be a good one.

29-31. *That which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.* Especially take heed of that “evil speaking” against which the Apostle warns you, for there are many people who cannot live without speaking—they must talk a great deal and they often say that which is false—they invent evil, they twist an honest action and impute wrong motives to the doer of it! A few such persons in a community can cause much of heartache and distress. They little know what servants of Satan they may become. God help us to put away all evil speaking and all malice!

32. *And be you kind, one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you.* That is, very freely, very often, very abundantly, very thoroughly, very heartily—“even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you,” so also do you.

—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.**

“ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED”

NO. 3429

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1914.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 19, 1868.**

**“Accepted in the Beloved.”
*Ephesians 1:6.***

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

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

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

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

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

I. ACCEPTED OF GOD.

It will delight you if you try in meditation to get a hold of this thought, of how infinitely acceptable Christ must be to God the Father. All other forms of acceptance must have their limit and boundary—but the acceptability of the Son of God to the First Person of the Blessed Trinity must be altogether beyond either bottom or shore!

“The Beloved” must be acceptable to God *in His own Person*. Is He not God, Himself, and how should it be that one Person in the Indivisible Unity should be otherwise than acceptable to the other? He is also Man, but He is Man born after a wondrous birth. “The Son of the Highest.” The Holy Spirit overshadowed the Virgin Mother. In His Godhead and in His Manhood, united as Mediator, He stands supreme in His Person. As Saul was head and shoulders above all the rest of the men of Israel, so has the Lord “anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows.” Who can be likened to Him in Person? Beauty, where can you draw, if your fancy shall take all its range, anything that shall be comparable to Him? Designer of all things, the Most High God, “Wonderful, The Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” What acceptance must there be in such an One as He is to the Most High God! You know that sometimes, in the sending of ambassadors, it is well to calculate whether the person chosen to be an ambassador will be adoptable to the foreign court. Now if he is a man of mean origin, a man ill-esteemed at home, it will be an insult to send him as an ambassador to another country. But if he is a man eminent and distinguished, admirable and admired, a man of high standing with his own Court, then he is the very person to represent the sovereignty of his country at another Court. See, then, what kind of Representative we have to send up to the Father’s Courts in Heaven—One who, while He is “bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,” is, nevertheless, “God over all, blessed forever.” My Soul, what better Ambassador could you have? To whom could you entrust your concerns one half as well as to One so inconceivably excellent, so superlatively blessed? He is, then, acceptable in His Person!

And then, secondly, to God He is equally acceptable *in His Character*. God is perfectly pure. He cannot bear the slightest trace of sin—and Jesus is “holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners.” God cannot look upon sin, as it is abhorrent to His Nature, but He can look

upon Christ, for “in Him was no sin.” “The prince of this world comes,” says He, “but has nothing on Me.” “God is Love,” and to be acceptable with God in Character, one must be full of love. Now Jesus is such! Was there ever One who had such pity on the ignorant and such “compassion on those that are out of the way”? Was there ever such a tender heart elsewhere as that which glowed in the Master’s bosom and gleamed from His loving eyes? He was a mass of love! He was Love performing and Love suffering. Love made Him live as He did and love made Him die as He did! And love still pervades His Nature—now that He lives on high, still loving the sons of men. Since God is Love, then, and Christ is full of love, His Character is suitable to God. You shall not find anything in Christ Jesus that does not conform with the God-like and the Divine. See Him where you will, He is humble, meek and lowly—but He is still august and sublime. Even when He puts on the garb of the peasant, “woven from the top throughout,” that garment shrouds the Deity and befits Him better than the purple robe befits Caesar on the throne! If He distributes alms, or says, “I thirst.” If He is tempest-tossed on the Sea of Galilee, if He rebukes the waves, if He feels Himself willing to die where man’s suffering and weakness is most apparent, yet there is it most consistent with the Character of God, for the Centurion, who stood beholding, said, “Certainly this was the Son of God.” There is something congruous in the Nature of Christ to the Character of God and, therefore, His Character is always acceptable to the Most High.

Then, my Brothers and Sisters, God loves that which is incorruptible. Now our Savior was often tried, but He was never corrupted! He was tempted and bribed with the offer of a kingdom and, again, threatened with all the wrath of men—but He never started aside for a single moment from the straight line of integrity! His whole life was so pure, that although God “charges His angels with folly, and the heavens are not pure in His sight,” yet in Jesus He sees no folly and no imperfection! He, even suffering as Savior, is pure, infinitely pure and incorruptible in the sight of God! So, Beloved, the *Character* of Christ is altogether acceptable to God, as well as His *Person*.

We may go a step further and say that the motive of Christ, as well as His outward Character, must have been infinitely acceptable to God. The motive of Jesus Christ, in coming here below, was altogether unselfish. “Though He *was* rich,” and had nothing to gain, “yet for our sakes He became poor, that we” (not Himself) “through His poverty might be made rich.” It can truly be said of Him, “He saved others. Himself He could not save.” “Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death.” He emptied Himself out for us, and all out of pure love to those who had no love to Him—out of disinterested affection to those whose best return is but a feeble thanks, for what can such poor worms as we ever render at our very best for “love so amazing, so Divine”? Well does Dr. Watts say in one of our best hymns—

**“Words are but air, and tongues but clay,
But Your compassion is Divine.”**

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

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

**“Such was Your truth and such Your zeal,
Such deference for Your Father’s will.
Such love and meekness so Divine,
I would transcribe and make them mine.”**

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

Now that He was so accepted is not only clearly to be seen by these reflections, but the fact is proved by this, that the Father raised Him from the dead! He saw no corruption, but He must have remained in the tomb, or the work had not been finished. He was “justified in the Spirit by the Resurrection from the dead.” His acceptance of God was proved when God brought Him from the dead! So, too, His ascending. His as-

ending up on high and leading captivity captive proves that He was accepted! His admission into Heaven proves that He was accepted! His sitting at the right hand of the Father proves that He has finished the work! And His present reigning over all the world in His mediatorial government is the reward of His sufferings—and His Second Advent, for which we look with devout anticipation—is to be a yet fuller declaration that He is “the Beloved” of God, and infinitely acceptable in the Father’s sight!

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

II. ALL BELIEVERS ARE IN CHRIST “ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED.”

They are “in the Beloved,” then, or in Christ. How are Believers in Christ? They are in Christ *as their Representative*. Just as the whole human race was in the loins of Adam, so the whole elect people were in the loins of Christ. It is said by the Apostle, “Levi was in the loins of Abraham when Melchisedec met him.” So were all of us in the loins of Jesus Christ—always there in Him, for is it not written, “He shall see His seed”? And we are His seed! We spring in our new life from Him. He is the corn of wheat which was cast into the ground to die, that it might not abide alone, and now it brings forth much fruit. We are in Christ as the branch is in the vine, as the stone is in the building. We are in Christ as the members are in the head. He represents us. When we talk of counting heads, we mean counting the whole body, so Christ, the Head, represents all the members and He stands for us. We were in Christ, Beloved, according to the words of the Holy Spirit—we were in Christ in our election, “according as He has chosen us in Him.” There is a personal election of every child of God, but that personal election is connected with Christ—

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

We were in Christ in the suretyship engagements of the eternal Covenant. What Christ spoke before the world was, He spoke as for us. His prescient eye foresaw our existence, foreknew our ruin. He espoused us unto Himself, then, and stood in the Council Chambers of Eternity, the Surety and Sponsor of His people’s souls!

We are in Christ, according to Scripture, *by judicial dealing*. That is to say, God deals with Christ as if He were dealing with us. “Awake, O sword”—against whom? Against the sinning sheep? No, “against the Shepherd, against the Man who is My Fellow, says the Lord.” “For the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.” “All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way, and the Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.” In Him in the choice, in Him in the Covenant, and then in Him in God’s dealings with Christ as a Judge!

So now, further, blessed be His name, we are in Him *by a vital union*. There is a living unity between Christ and His people, as between the husband and the wife, as between the branch and the stem. We are one

with Him by vital union. Have you realized this, Believer? Do you seek to live as one that is one with Jesus? Do you try to act as one that has learned his unity to the heavenly One, to the Second Adam? It is so. If you have believed, you are one with Him!

And we are one with Him *by a fixed decree of God that never shall be broken*. “Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?” Who shall tear one limb from the sacred body of Jesus? Who shall cut away one truly quickened branch from that celestial vine? He preserves those who are in Him! He covers us with His feathers and under His wings do we trust—His truth is our shield and buckler! You may divide and you must divide the dearest bonds of earth, but you shall never cut the knot that was tied in old eternity, which bound Christ to His people. “I in them, and they in Me, that they may be perfect in one.” There shall never come a time when He will be ashamed to call them brethren, and never to one of them whom the Father has given Him shall there come a time when they shall refuse to call Him Master and Lord. We are “in” Him, then!

Now this is a great mystery. The Apostle always speaks of it as such. But it is one of the most blessed mysteries in the whole compass of Revelation. Dear Friend, never forget that God does not deal with you as an individual—*He deals with you as in Christ*. If you stood as an individual, you would perish, for you will be sure to fall. You are so weak and frail and apt to sin, that with the best resolutions and intentions, you would be sure to turn aside and, therefore, the blessed Father has put you in a safer place—He has put you in Christ! And now your interests are Christ’s interests. As I have often told you, you cannot drown a man’s foot unless you can drown his head—and if our Head is in Heaven, we are safe. And He, our Head, is there! When your vessel tosses in the storm, you may hear a voice that says, “Fear not, the boat is safe; you carry Jesus and all His fortune.” Christ is one with His people—they must sink or swim together. Has He not, Himself, said it, “Because I live, you shall live also”? The saint, then, is “in” Him. Now we come to the full text, and that is, that—

III. THE SAINTS ARE “ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED.”

Their *persons* are accepted. You know there are some persons that are not acceptable to you. You would sooner live in Heaven with them, forever, than you would like to live a quarter of an hour with them on earth! There are some people of that kind to whom we take a very natural objection. And I suppose it is not possible, although we would treat them always with kindness and so on, that we would ever desire them as companions. They are not acceptable to us. And now it does seem amazing that we, who have not any personal recommendation, but very much in us that might render us obnoxious to God, are nevertheless acceptable in our persons, through Jesus Christ our Lord! Yes, you with no talents, you with no wealth, no position, no great friends—you who can do so little when you do your best—you, though the garment you wear is not of the finest, but of the very lowliest material, are acceptable to God! God

looks not according to the outward appearance, but He looks to the heart. And whenever He sees a simple trust in Jesus, which is a token of our being in Jesus, our person is acceptable to Him because, you see, He does not look at us as we are, but He looks at us through Christ! He looks through the wounds of Jesus upon us poor sinners, as a verse of one of our hymns runs—

**“He in them the sinner sees,
Looks through Jesus’ wounds on me.”**

If one of you were away now in India, and after you had been living there for years, you saw a person very poor and ragged, who nevertheless said, “I used to be a servant to your mother,” why, it would bring such recollections of that country homestead and of the dear old times when you were one of the happy family, that I am sure your heart would be touched and though there might be no reason whatever in the person why you should relieve him, yet because of his connection with that dear name of mother, perhaps in Heaven, you would put your hand into your purse at once! Now God sees such a connection between us and Christ that He esteems us for Christ’s sake! “My Son loved that man,” He says. “My Son died for that woman. My Son on the tree laid down His life for that poor, humble, penitent one. I love him for My Son’s sake.” Now will you try and get a hold, if you can, by faith, that sweet thought, that your person—you, you yourself, are accepted before God in the Beloved this night—and although you cannot accept yourself, but find much to complain of, yet, still, if you are in Jesus, you are—

**“So near, so very near to God,
You cannot nearer be!
For in the Person of His Son,
You are as near as He.
So dear, so very dear to God,
You cannot dearer be—
The love wherewith He loves His Son,
Such is His love to thee!”**

“Such is His love to *me*,” you may say.

Now, because the person is accepted, the next thing is *our prayers and praises* are “accepted in the Beloved.” We sometimes kneel down to pray, but we cannot pray. Those that use a book and bring God dead prayers can always be alike, but that which comes from the heart varies—and there are times with living prayers when the most you can do is to groan. A sigh, a sob, is the most you can get out. But a mother would sooner hear her own child sob than another child sing. There is music about that dear child’s voice that moves her heart and touches her spirit. And so the inward meanings of a broken heart are music in the ears of the Infinite Jehovah, and He accepts the sincere prayers of His people, let them be as broken as they may! And as for our praise, well, we do not always sing our praises—we feel them, we talk them, and when we do sing them, our voices are not, perhaps, as sweet as we would desire. Never mind. Our Lord does not judge our hymns by the same tests as gentlemen of musical tastes would do! He hears the ring of the heart and if that is

right, there may be a false note or two, perhaps, in the voice, but if the right note is in the heart, the praises are accepted, and the prayers are, “accepted in the Beloved,” for our prayers do not come up before God as they are. It is with us, as it is with some poor men. They want to get up a petition. They come, perhaps, to us. They want us to petition to some great man for some help. “Well, write our your petition.” They bring it. “Oh,” we say, “it will never do to send that—here is this word spelt wrong, that sentence is ungrammatical. You have not addressed him at all in the right style. Come, I will take it, and I will make a fair copy of it for you, and send that with my name appended. It may have some weight.” So does Christ do with us. He takes our poor blotted and blurred prayers and He just re-writes them, and then He presents them to His Father’s Throne. He takes the incense we bring and puts it into His own golden censor. He puts in the coals of fire and then, as He swings that censor to and fro in His own Priesthood before the Throne of God, your prayers and mine, your praises and mine, smoke like sweet perfume before the Presence of the Most High, “accepted in the Beloved.”

And, Brothers and Sisters, just so is it with all the work we do for Christ and all the gifts we bring. It happens on Sunday, perhaps, sometimes when the bread is bought and the supply got in for the family, that you have very little to give. “Well, here is a penny for the Orphanage.” You must give God something, you think. You would give Him more if you could. You only wish you had tens of thousands of pounds you could give. Well, it is very little, and nobody knows who gives it, still, it is “accepted in the Beloved.” If it is given for His sake, I tell you that every penny is “accepted in the Beloved.” Does not the Lord say so? The two mites that make a farthing, which were the widow’s living, were so accepted that He could not help speaking about them—and publishing to all the world in this Book, the Bible, to be handed down throughout all time—as long as there shall be a Bible in the Christian Church! The other night you talked with a little child, or you gave away a tract. You tried to do something—to lead someone to Christ. Well, that was all “accepted in the Beloved.” You did it with a single eye to God’s Glory. You thought you did it very badly and that there was much imperfection mingled with it—but Christ washed it all—and when it was all fair and clean, He presented it and it was accepted!

And here is a mercy (I will add only one other word to this line of thought)—*the whole life of the Christian*, so far as it is the outgrowth of the life within, is “accepted in the Beloved.” That morning you awoke, when the heart rose up in prayer for keeping during the day. That bended knee at the bedside, when the soul commits itself to the Father of Spirits. That family gathering, when the prayer is offered that the household may be kept during the day. That blessing at the eating of bread. That thankful heart to God, when the morning’s meal is finished. Those brief sudden prayers during the business of the day. That word put in for Christ when the conversation ran the other way. That thankful return home at night. That evening prayer. That lifting up of the soul to God in

thankfulness to carry you through another day—all that, the humblest part of it, was all “accepted in the Beloved.” Brothers and Sisters, it is very, very delightful to think that if I preach a sermon for Christ it is accepted, but I want you to think that if you housewives are about the house, doing your business there for your husband and children, you are as much accepted there as I am when I am preaching! That Prayer Meeting was very acceptable. Yes, and I know how acceptable it was when you sat up that night with a sick man. It was done for Jesus’ sake. The man who addresses thousands is accepted, but he that sits down and talks, even to a little child, is just as much accepted, and accepted in the same way, too, for it is only “in the Beloved” that either the big or the little can be at all! The bullock was offered and God accepted it. The kid was offered and God accepted that. And the reason was because they were both put upon the same altar, and both burnt with the same fire. Christ is the Altar, and Christ the Fire—and so our sacrifices are “accepted in the Beloved.”

I think these words were the favorite words of that dear man of God, Mr. Harrington Evans, “Accepted in the Beloved.” He used to often repeat them in his sermons and, if I remember rightly, when he was dying and his deacons needed a message to be given to the Church, to let them know what was the state of mind of their pastor at the time of death, he said, “Go and tell them I am accepted in the Beloved.” Oh, dear Hearer can you say this? There is more eloquence in these words than in all the eloquence of Demosthenes, or in all the glowing periods of Caesar! To say, “I am accepted in the Beloved,” is better than to be able to say, “I am the owner of the Indies, or the possessor of the world.” “Accepted in the Beloved.” Remember, there is many a religious person who is not “accepted in the Beloved,” for the moralists, the religionists that like not Christ, are not accepted! They pray, and they read the Scriptures, and they attend their place of worship. They are baptized—they come to the altar—but it is all nothing if they do not come to Christ! All these things are nothing to any of them if they are not in Christ. We hold that we should baptize none but those who profess their belief in Christ. And it seems to us that apart from a saving faith in Christ, it is a mere mockery—and if given to children, or even to an unconverted person—it is more likely to make them think there is efficacy in the sacrament than to do them any kind of good. Thus we would have you touch nothing at the Lord’s Table until you have first come to Jesus. Then the Baptism—and then the Lord’s Table will be profitable helps to you in remembering Christ, and you will be accepted in them, “in the Beloved.” But you must get “in” Him first, for Baptism is nothing, and the Lord’s Supper nothing, without Christ! First, you must get the Substance, and then the shadow will follow. And these things are only shadows—they only set forth the Substance! And if any come to the shadow, tonight, who have not got the Substance, they have no business to come and on their heads will be the guilt. We must first be in Him. Whether you are an open sinner or outwardly moral, remember you are not accepted, otherwise, for it is not

your conduct, not your outward life that will do apart from Christ. It is union to Christ—and faith brings us that! A simple trust in Jesus, and we are “in” Jesus and “accepted in” Jesus! But without that, we are “without Christ, without hope, and alien from the commonwealth of Israel.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.* After election comes adoption. Men are not by nature the children of God—they are heirs of wrath. And this is very clear because a man never adopts his

own children. But adoption in itself proves that by nature we are not the children of God—He adopts us. “Then are you begotten again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” Happy they who know the adoption—who feel in themselves the spirit of children and can cry, “Abba, Father,” as they look up to God tonight! This is in Christ Jesus, for nothing comes to us except by Him.

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

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

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

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

13-23; Chapter 2:1. *In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory. Therefore I also, after I heard of your*

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

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

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

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

“ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED”

NO. 471

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

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

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

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

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

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

We think we should not be trespassing into the realms of imagination if we ventured to say that Christ is also the Beloved of the angels. To Him cherubim and seraphim continually cry. For in that thrice-repeated strain, there is a word for the second Person of the Trinity, as well as for the first and the third—“Holy, *holy*, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.” And, certainly, the blood-bought call Him their Beloved, for their incessant strain

is, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood, unto Him be glory forever and ever.”

Yet, my dear Friends, the main reason why Christ is thus styled by the Holy Spirit, “the Beloved,” doubtless is because He is the Beloved of the Father’s heart. “This,” said the mysterious voice from Heaven in the midst of the waters of Jordan, “this is my Beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased.” And again, at the resurrection of Lazarus, there came the same voice from Heaven, announcing the perpetuity of the Father’s love. None of us can tell how dear Jesus must be to His Father. We have, however, abundant proofs of the fact that He is very near unto Him, for He is privy to all His Father’s counsels.

From the counsels of the Most High, Christ was never absent. “When there were no depths, I was brought forth. When there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was I brought forth. While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there. When he set a compass upon the face of the depth. When He established the clouds above. When He strengthened the fountains of the deep. When He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His command. When He appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him. And I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.”

“Let us make man,” said God. “in Our own image”—calling Christ into creation’s work. “Without Him was not anything made that was made,” is the declaration of John the Divine. Beside this, we know that everything which is done of the Father by His Divine decree is that He may glorify His Son. While, on the other hand, the Son lived and died, and lives again that He may glorify the Father. Such is their mutual interest in one another, that we cannot suppose a relationship closer, nor a love more intense than that which exists between the Father and the Son. It were foolish and ridiculous in me to attempt to dive into the awful depths of the Divine unity. We know that the Father is One with the Son, and that Jesus is one with Jehovah.

The Unity of Essence is a well so deep, that I cannot expect to find its bottom. And the love which springs up from this essential Unity must be more deep and profound than the wit of man can guess, or than the language of man can utter. I repeat the confession of our ignorance—it is impossible for us to form even a *guess* of the intensity of the affection that must exist between the eternal Father and Jesus Christ, His Son—since their essential Union from which this affection springs is a doctrine beyond our comprehension—and is meekly to be received of our faith. Certainly we know that never was the term, “Beloved,” so full of meaning. Never did human word become so Divinely rich as when God Himself, by the Holy Spirit, applied it to Jesus *the Beloved* of the Father.

No more, however, concerning this word, “the Beloved,” except that I trust there are many of us here who can thus salute our Covenant Head. Yes, He is very dear to us. We love Him because He first loved us. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit and it has kindled in our poor souls a flame undying, which neither life nor death shall quench, but which shall burn brighter and brighter till it consumes flesh and self, and we shall be all on flame with love to Christ.

Now, dear Friends, having thus brought forward the title of Christ, I shall, in dependence upon the Eternal Spirit, call your attention, first of all, to the words, “*in the Beloved*,” or “*positive union*.” Secondly, to the words “*accepted in the Beloved*,” or “*glorious condition*.” And then to the whole text, “*He has made us accepted in the Beloved*,” or “*Divine operation*.”

I. First then, here is a matter most worthy of your best and most profound thoughts—“IN THE BELOVED,” or, POSITIVE UNION.

A thousand sermons would never exhaust the theme of the union of the Church with Christ. No theology is sound which does not recognize this. No experience can be very profound which does not lead the soul more clearly and more fully to rejoice in this most glorious Truth of God. Probably it is a doctrine more suitable to advanced Christians than to young Believers. But where the Lord enables the heart to feed upon it, it will be found to be food at once nourishing, delicious, satisfying and strengthening. They who feed upon it will be found like Daniel and his companions, to be fairer in countenance and fatter in flesh than any others.

1. In explaining this positive union, let us begin by saying, “*in Christ*”—that is, *in His heart*, and in His heart from all eternity. With prescient eye Christ beheld His people before they were yet formed. He looked forward through eternity and the rolling years of time, and He foresaw that God would make man, and that man in Adam would fall and be ruined. His eyes looked over all the sons of Adam, and selected those whom He saw fit according to the counsel of His will—and these, at once, were put into His heart to be His darlings, His favorites forever and ever.

It was not in time that Christ first wrote the names of His people upon His heart—it was a time before all times, when there was no day but the Ancient of Days. When creation’s first year had not commenced. When all things slept in the mind of God as a thought, but had not come forth from His hands as a deed. We look upon the rocks with their long deposits of sand and shells—we go deeper down and see the long ages that must have passed while the stony strata were being formed. We wonder at the period that the aqueous and igneous rocks must have occupied in their formation. And sometimes we are staggered at the thought of what a great thing time is.

We find we cannot grasp the idea of, “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” It is so far back that the wings of our imagination flag before they reach it as a resting place. But there was an eternity before all this. And all these ages are but as the drop of a bucket compared with the deep and bottomless sea of the eternity of God. Yet, when we fly back into the dread eternity, where thought is lost and mind fails, we discover in the breast of Christ eternal thoughts of love towards His children. Is it not a joy that can make your spirits dance, like David before the ark, that we were always Jesus’ Beloved ones, always in the heart of Him whose heart was afterwards in the fullness of time pierced for us?

Has He not said, “I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you”? “As the Father has loved Me, even so have I loved you”? That is, without beginning—ever since there was a Father and a Christ. It were blasphemy to suppose that God’s love to Jesus was not always existent, or that Christ had a beginning in the Father’s affections. Even from that time Jesus had chosen His people and they were in His heart. Beloved, as they *were* in His heart, so they have

been in His heart ever since. When they fell *in* Adam they did not fall *out* of Christ. When they lived in this world a life of iniquity, yet still there was His great love with which He loved them, even when they were dead in trespasses and sins.

When they scorned His Grace, defied His love, trampled on His Cross, and despised His blood, yet still never from His heart were they erased, for they had been engraved there too deeply by the nails for sin to destroy the remembrance. And now, today, now that we are continually backsliding, nothing has been able as yet to tear us from His heart. We are there and we shall be there, in death’s dark gloom and in eternity’s mysterious splendor—near to Jesus still, for is it not written—“He hates putting away”? “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.”

So, then, Beloved, we are in Christ in the sense that we are in Christ’s heart, and we always were so if we are His people.

2. But, secondly, we are also *in Christ’s Book*. Having loved us, we were chosen in Him and elected by His Father. We were not chosen separately and distinctly and as individuals alone and apart—we were chosen *in Christ*. As Watts well puts it—

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

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

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

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

3. Thirdly, we are *in Christ’s hands*. We are in Christ’s heart as our heavenly Lover. We are in Christ’s Book as the Medium of our election. We are in Christ’s hands as our Surety. You will remember, Beloved, that when Laban gave up his flock to Jacob, Jacob took them upon the condition of suretyship. Jacob said unto Laban, “That which was torn of beasts

I brought not unto you. I bore the loss of it. Of my hands did you require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night.” Now, all those who the Father gave to Christ were bestowed upon Christ as a surety and at the Last Great Day, at the Redeemer’s hands will God require the souls of all that were given to Him.

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

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

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

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

When He was buried we were buried with Him. For we are dead with Christ unto the world and buried in Baptism with Him unto death. When Christ ascended from the tomb we rose in Him. He rose again, not as a

private individual, but for our justification. Virtually every elect soul rose from the eternal death of its deserved perdition in the day when Christ startled the keepers and rolled away the stone. And when Christ ascended up on High we ascended in Him. Up with Him we entered into the spheres. And with Him, today, we are risen in Christ, and made with Him to sit in heavenly places, even in Christ Jesus.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

you give yourselves up to the pleasures of this world, to the lusts of the flesh, to your own selfishness—then you are the servants of sin.

“Be not deceived, God is not mocked.” “Whatever a man sows that shall he also reap.” Do you of the Spirit bring forth fruits of the Spirit? Do you walk and act as the elect of God, putting on a heart of mercy and compassion? Have you a single eye to Christ’s glory, and do you live to His service? If so, then thanks to God, no pruning knife shall cut away the branch that brings forth fruit. It is the branch which brings forth no fruit, which is not in Christ vitally, that is to be severed, cast away. But if you are in Him so as to bring forth fruit unto Him, then fruit to eternal life shall you bear evermore.

Another question—Do you *love* Christ? Does your heart go out after Him? Do you pant to be in His arms? Is His company your Heaven? Is His absence your Hell? Remember, another figure which is used, is the union of the husband with the wife. Marriages that are made in Heaven are cemented not by gold or beauty, but by love. In Christ there is an infinite love towards His people, insomuch that He left His Father and did cleave unto His wife, and they two became one flesh. “This is a great mystery,” said Paul, when he spoke concerning Christ and His Church. Are you wedded to Him by an affection which no time can alter except it be to deepen it? Are there ties which bind your heart to Him, which torture and racks cannot separate?

If there are, then you are married unto One that will never put you away, One that will never leave you a widow, for your Maker is your Husband and He loves faithfully. He is One that calls you His Hephzibah, His soul delights in you. And your land He calls Beulah, for He has married it. Is there such a union? Are you thus in Christ? Then a last question and I will leave this point—Is there a *life* in you? Is Christ the life of your spirit? If you tell me you have nothing more in you than what nature gave you, then you are in nature’s death. There is a supernatural life which is imparted by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, we read in Scripture that Believers are one with Christ as the members are one with the head. They are one in living union. If you cut away the head, the whole dies. Yes, and mark you, the head dies, too. So Christ is one with us if we are really His. Because He lives we shall live also. If we die, Christ dies, and if Christ lives, we live. And since He ever lives to make intercession for us, our eternal life is sure. But, oh, we must have this life! “Except a man eat My flesh,” says He, “and drink My blood, there is no life in him,” as if there could not be spiritual life till Christ Himself were there, and Christ not there without becoming life to our souls.

II. I now turn very briefly to our second point. The text tells us we are “ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED.”

To be brief and yet explicit, let me notice that I think the acceptance here meant, includes first of all, *justification before God*. We stand on trial. When we stand in Christ we are acquitted—while standing in ourselves the only verdict must be condemnation. The term “acceptance,” in the Greek, means more than that. It signifies that we are the objects of *Divine complacency*. When God looked upon the world of old, He said it was “very good”—and when the Lord looks upon His people in Christ, He says the same. But, methinks if there could be anything better than “very good,”

He would say His people in Christ were better than the work of His own hands, since they wear not a created righteousness, but the righteousness of the Creator, Jesus Christ Himself.

They are, then, accepted by His justice, and they are viewed with complacency by His holiness. But this is not all. When it is written, “Accepted in the Beloved,” it means that those accepted are the objects of the *Divine delight*. Friends, whenever I get to this thought, (and many a time in this House of Prayer I have got to it), I always feel inclined to sit down and let you think it over, for it is such an extravaganza of Divine Grace that we—worms, mortals, sinners—should be the objects of Divine love! When princes wed with beggars the world marvels. But when God sets His affections upon sinful men and women in Christ, oh, this is the wonder of wonders! Even the angels might desire to look into it!

I do believe that when we have been in Heaven ten thousand years, this will still be a subject of rapture and surprise—that ever He should have found anything in us in which He could take delight! To pity us, to show mercy to us—that I can understand. But to *love us*! The big heart of God to love a creeping thing like man! The infinite soul of the Most High to pour itself out on such a mean, worthless creature as man! The everlasting God who fills all in all—to concentrate as it were, the powers of His Spirit and set the whole upon a creature that His own hands have made—a creature that had revolted and rebelled and at the best is worthless still! Oh, sing of this, you spirits before the Throne! We cannot speak of it today as we would.

All this is, “in the Beloved.” We are not accepted any way else but, “in the Beloved.” Let me show you that this is the best way in the world to be accepted. Each of us knows it is the only way. But even if there were another, it is the best way. Suppose we could be accepted in ourselves. Adam was, while he was obedient—he was accepted in his own works. Yes, but how soon he fell! And then his acceptance fell, too. He stood on his own feet, and therefore he soon fell to the ground. Suppose you and I had kept the Law up till now. I think I hear you say, “Oh, I wish I had! I wish I could come before God as a perfectly righteous man.” O Soul! You would not be half so safe as you are now in Christ.

But if I had no sin, yet I would ask that I might be in Christ—for I might have sin some day—and then down would go the goodly structure! That which is built upon a fallible creature is built upon the sand. And if the structure had up to now been without one rotten timber, yet, since the basis is the will of man—and that might change—damnation might shortly overtake us. After all, we had done better, surely, to stand in Christ, who cannot fall.

Now, I know some professors who seem to me to stand in their own experience, to be accepted in their own experience. At least that is their apprehension. Just now they had such visits from Christ’s faith, such gleams of His love. And now they think God accepts them, for they feel so high, so heavenly-minded, so drawn above the earth! I have seen these same persons the next day feel their souls cleave to the earth and they have said, “Now, I am not accepted.” O that these Beloved Ones would but know that God never did accept them in *their* experience—He accepted them in Christ. And He never can reject them till He rejects them in Christ, which cannot be, since He cannot reject Christ.

I would that they would see that their “ups” make them no higher before God, and their “downs” make them no lower—that all their high joys do not exalt them, and all their low despondencies do not really depress them in their Father’s sight. They stand accepted in One who never alters, in One who is always the Beloved of God, always perfect, always complete, always without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Blessed faith, that walks above experience! Joyous trust that in the dark nights still sings of Heaven’s unclouded noon, and in the midst of blackness and vileness consciously felt, still boasts of pardon bought with blood, of righteousness complete, and without flaw!

The Arminians say our being accepted before God, if I understand it correctly, is also an acceptance in *our* graces. This is the English of their doctrine of falling away—while a man walks worthily, God accepts him. If he walks sinfully, then God accepts him no more. Those of you who like this way of being accepted, may choose it. For my part, I feel there is nothing can ever satisfy the craving of my spirit but an acceptance which lies utterly and wholly *out of me* and only and entirely in *Christ Jesus*. Why, Brethren, we would be accepted one day and rejected the next! No, more—we might be accepted one *minute* and rejected the next! If it lay in anything whatever in *our* walk, or in *our* work, we should be in the Covenant and out of the Covenant fifty times a day.

But I suppose the Arminians have a difference between sin and sin. Surely, they must have the old Romish distinction between venial and mortal sin. For if sin puts a man out of Christ, I wonder when he is in—since we are sinning day by day. Perhaps there is a certain quantity of sin required to do it. Then that is only the old Romish dogma revived. Some sins, mortal on the Arminian theory, so as to put a man out of Divine Grace, and other sins venial, so that they can keep in Grace and sin, too. I glory in my God that I know—

**“Once in Christ in Christ forever,
Nothing from His love can sever.”**

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

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

Now, Christian, I want you this morning, to rejoice in this—you are accepted “in the Beloved.” You look within and you say, “There is nothing acceptable here!” Man, look at Christ, and see if there is not *everything* acceptable *there*. Your frame depresses you, but look to Jesus, and hear Him cry, “It is finished!” Will not that death-note reassure you? Your sins trouble you. But remember they were laid upon the Scapegoat’s head of old and they no more exist, for He has cast your sins behind His back and thrown them into the depths of the sea—

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

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

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

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

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

III. Now, one minute upon the last point. That is, DIVINE OPERATIONS. *He has made us* accepted in the Beloved.”

Do not you see, Beloved, the whole way through, it is *all* of God and not of man? It was Christ who at first put us in His heart to be accepted there. It was the Father who put us in His Book according to the good pleasure of His own will to be accepted there. It was Christ that took us into His hands, according to His suretyship engagement, that we might be accepted there. It is Christ that took us into His loins, begetting us again unto a lively hope that we might be accepted there. And it is Grace that has united us in the Person of Christ that we may stand accepted there. You see, it is all of God from first to last. Jonah learned sound Divinity when he went into the whale’s belly, for he said, “Salvation is of the Lord.” And before the Throne of God in Heaven they always sing sound theology, for a part of the song is, “Salvation unto God and unto the Lamb.” Not of man, neither by man—not of the will of man, nor blood, nor birth. But according to the counsel of Him that works all things according to the good pleasure of His will.

Sinner! Does that suit you? You that are not in Christ in your own experience, does that suit you? It ought to do so. If you had to put yourself into Christ, you could not do it. Men and women, if God asked anything of you to qualify you for Christ, you could not do it. But He asks nothing of you whatever. His mercy comes to you, not when you have made yourselves alive, but while you are yet dead. It comes to you, not merely when you seek it, but it first *seeks you* and then makes you seek it—

“No sinner can be beforehand with You—

Your Grace is most sovereign, most rich and most free.

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

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

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

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

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

And if you believe in Him, by His Grace, your eternal life is sure, because you are one in Him, and, “accepted in the Beloved.”

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DEI GRATIA

NO. 958

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 30, 1870,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

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

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

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

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

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

I. We shall draw from the text our first observation—IN SALVATION AS A WHOLE WE SEE THE GLORY OF GOD'S GRACE. So the Apostle tells us, “To the praise of the glory of His Grace.” Every attribute of God has its own appropriate opportunity for displaying itself. To each quality of the Divine Nature there is a glory, and the Lord takes care that there shall be

a time when this glory shall be so seen as to become the subject of praise to intelligent creatures.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Glorious shall be the attribute of Justice, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of

our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.”

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

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

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

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

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

He sent a thick darkness over all the land, even darkness that might be felt. The king’s heart was cowed for awhile, but in desperate obstinacy he hardened his heart yet more, put on a brazen forehead and again said, “Who is Jehovah that I should obey His voice? I will not let His people go.” Volley after volley the artillery of Heaven was discharged upon him. The Lord mighty in battle gave His enemy no respite. One by one He brought

up His reserves, and fitted fresh arrows upon His bow. The lordly monarch found himself stunned with the repeated blows, and bewildered by the terrors of his Omnipotent Adversary.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight," is the Savior's answer to the question why God has hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. If any man is chosen, it is

not because of a natural worthiness or claim to preference—or any essential excellence in him which demanded that God should make the choice. We were heirs of wrath even as others. No works were taken into account whatever. The Divine choice, according to Paul in the ninth of Romans was, “not of works, but of Him that calls.” “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.”

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

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

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

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

My dear Brethren, take the next step from effectual calling to *pardon* and *justification*. I think it is not necessary that I should say that the pardon of sin must always be the effect of Grace. That statement is self-evident. It cannot be due to any man that he should have his sins pardoned, for sin that *deserves* a pardon is no sin. It cannot be due to any

man that God should make him righteous, he being himself unrighteous. That must be a spontaneous action on God's part, flowing from His pure bounty and love. No man can claim forgiveness, it were sacrilege to suggest that he could.

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

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

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

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

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

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

What are the peculiar glories of Divine Grace? This is not a fashionable doctrine, but we will speak it plainly and honestly. In the first place, it is a peculiar glory of Grace that it is Sovereign, that the favor of God is given

to man according to the absolute will of the Almighty God, and for no reason known to us but the good pleasure of His will. When a man gives away anything in kindness to the poor, he likes to exercise his own sovereignty in the gift, but no man is so absolutely a possessor of the good things of this life as to have a right to the exercise of an altogether absolute sovereignty over his goods.

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

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

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

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

Another glory of this Grace is its unfailing *continuance*. Where once the Grace of God has fallen, it is never taken away. If God, in His mercy, visits a man with Grace, He never afterwards revokes the pardon He gives, or recalls the favor He has bestowed. “The gifts and calling of God are with-

out repentance.” Grace is no intermittent brook flowing today and dried up tomorrow, no fleeting meteor dazzling all beholders and then vanishing in thick darkness—

**“Whom once He loves he never leaves,
But loves them to the end.”**

His Grace is unchanging, His mercy endures forever.

Another glory of it is that it is unalloyed and unmingled. God’s Grace in saving souls rules alone. Human merit does not intrude here and there to make a patchwork of the whole. Grace triumphant can say, “I have trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Me.” Grace is Alpha. Grace is Omega. It is Grace’s glory that no mortal finger touches her work, and no human hammer is lifted up thereon. This is what men cannot bear. They will have it that man must have *some* merit, must *do* some little. But it must not be. The Grace of God demands a clear stage. It saves and it, alone, from first to last.

Need I add that it is one glory of this Grace that while it thus reveals itself so fully, it never interferes with any other attribute of God? Interfere, did I say? It only tends to *illustrate* all the other glories of the Divine Character. God is absolute in His favor, but He is never unjust. He gives justice to all. He allots to each one his portion due. “What?” You say, “is He just to those whom He favors? Does He not pass by their sins?” I answer, “Yes,” but I also say, “No.” He does pass by their sins so far as *they* are concerned, but He does so *justly*. For He first laid their sins upon their Surety, and exacted from Christ the vengeance due for their transgressions.

He is as just towards His saints as if He had no mercy upon them, for in their Substitute His Justice has received the full payment of His demands. There is no attribute of God that Grace ever slights. It is on the best terms with God’s Truth, though Truth said, “I will by no means spare the guilty.” God has *not* spared the guilty, for He laid the guilt on Christ and did not spare Him. And now His people are not guilty—they are absolved, there is no condemnation to them, their transgression is forgiven—their sin is covered.

I say, again, this is the glory of Grace—one of its special crowns and adornments—that though it has its way and works as freely as if Justice were dead, and holiness were withered, yet it never does invade the realm of any one of those bright attributes. God is as just, and as holy as if He were not gracious, and yet His Infinite Sovereignty sways its undisputed scepter in the realm of salvation.

IV. I have brought you thus far, into the very heart of the text, and now, in the fourth place, THIS GRACE OUGHT TO BE THE SUBJECT OF PRAISE. It is “to the praise of the glory of His Grace.” Here needs a tongue far more fluent than mine. Or rather, here is wanted no tongue but a warm heart and grateful thought to sit down and contemplate.

As many of you as have been bought with blood and washed in it. As many of you as have been taken from among men and made to be the Lord’s own peculiar people, I ask you now, in silence, to praise God while your mind surveys the whole plan of your salvation. Chosen before the earth was—Grace, free Grace! Given into the hands of Christ to be His

treasure—all of Grace! Redeemed with the heart's blood of Immanuel, all out of His free favor to you!

Preserved when you were running into sin, slaves of Satan, mad on your idols—preserved in Christ Jesus by long-suffering Grace! Called with that voice which wakes the dead, and endowed with spiritual life—altogether of Grace! Adopted into the Divine family, made partakers of the Divine Nature because Grace so willed it—what wonders are here! Brothers and Sisters, in your case it was Grace of the most eminent degree. If you do not say so of your case, I must say so of mine.

Above all the sons of men I humbly claim to be most indebted to the Grace of God. But I doubt not, my Brothers and Sisters, you also claim the same. There were specialties about our character, there were peculiarities about our sin, there were difficulties about our constitution which all tended to make it very remarkable that we should be the subjects of the Divine Love. Each one of us can say, "What was there in *me* that could merit esteem, or give the Creator delight?" Now, you will glorify God if you let your soul in silence muse at the foot of the Throne of Grace, and worship Him of whose mercy you have so largely been made a recipient.

When you have done this, may I ask you, in the next place, to let all men see the result of Grace in you! It has been a common slander against the Doctrine of Grace that it makes light of good works, and leads men to licentiousness—a slander which the lives of the people of God have amply answered in the past. Now you to whom this mercy has been shown—by your watchfulness, your hatred of the very appearance of evil, your careful walking, your close fellowship with Christ—prove to those who ridicule us, by your lives, that Grace is a holy thing wherever bestowed, for it renews the heart and sanctifies the life.

You are degrading the Grace of God when you are not walking as becomes the household of faith. You are honoring God better by holiness than by writing the sweetest poetry, or by uttering the most seraphic sentences upon it. Holy *living* is "to the praise of the glory of His Grace." Add to your holy living your own personal testimony. I do not care to hear people who are converted talking much about what they were before conversion. I am not sure that the records of horrid lives of base men are ever profitable if they are written. Perhaps the best thing to say is, "Of which things we are now ashamed."

But at the same time tell it to others that the Grace of God has saved you. If you were, before conversion, given to great sins, be ashamed of them, but do tell that Grace has saved such as you are. Be bold to testify in all companies that the Grace of God is equal to all emergencies and can save the lost from going quite down into the jaws of perdition. Publish it everywhere that the mercy of God can blot out the grossest and vilest sins—that no man need despair—that the great heart of God is large enough to receive the most devilish of sinners. Proclaim that he passes by transgression, iniquity, and sin for Jesus Christ's sake. Let the angels know it! When you are introduced to Heaven, publish there what God's Grace has done—and till you get there let men know it here below—to the praise of the glory of His Grace."

V. And now, lastly, let me say that the doctrine which we have taught this morning, THE TRUTH WHICH WE HAVE TRIED FULLY TO PREACH, IS THE GREAT GROUND OF HOPE FOR SINNERS. For, in the first place, if it is so that salvation is all of the free favor of God, then here is hope for every man!

You will enquire “How?” I will reply thus. Suppose there is here a man who has been guilty of some gross crime, yet others who have been guilty of the like crime have been pardoned, and have been the subjects of Divine Grace—why should he not be? If salvation were by *merit*, such a man clearly would be shut out of hope, and rightly considered, *every* man would be. We have, none of us, a half-a-grain of merit if we were ransacked through and through. But if it is of Grace, why should not the Grace of God stick on me as well as on any other man?

And if it is proved that the Grace of God is so Sovereign that it has often fallen on the very worst of men, why not on me, if I am the very worst of men? And if I find it written that him that comes to Christ He will in nowise cast out, then I, even if I am the worst of men, am encouraged to come to Christ. He has saved others—the worst of men. He tells me if I come, if *anyone* comes, He will not cast him out. Then why should not I go? Why not, indeed?

If there were anything like preparation, or readiness, or merit, or adaptation, then there would be no hope for me. But if it is a matter altogether of a pure, gratuitous gift—then why should it not be given to me as well as to another? It holds out a bright encouragement to every sinner, and it holds out hope even to the exceedingly gross transgressor because Grace is evidently magnified in changing the nature of great sinners. If I am a great transgressor and have desperately sinned, what room there will be for Grace to glorify itself in me! Here is hope for me. Why should I not go to God in prayer and ask to be made a trophy of His Grace?

And if any should say, “But if we are not the grossest of sinners, then we seem to be shut out!” I answer, No, but rather to be included, because if any will say, “God saves the greatest of sinners, because they glorify His Grace most,” I should reply, God is not actuated by any selfish motive. He does not save men that He may get anything by it, and you from whom He can derive nothing are the very people He is likely to save, to prove the utter freeness and disinterestedness of His love.

Do not, for a moment, imagine we are going to put *sin* in the place of *merit*, and make it appear that the greatness of their sin is the reason why the Lord will save men! If there is no reason for Grace in human merit, much less is there in the degree of demerit. If you have never gone into gross sin, thank God for it, but for all that, you are sinner enough. If you see yourself as you are, you are filthy enough in all conscience—you need not be any viler. And because your case does not, to you, appear as though you could glorify God, it is not, therefore, to be argued that it appears so to Him who sees not as man sees.

When a surgeon meets with a case which apparently will bring no credit to him in vulgar eyes if he cures it, it is the highest honor to him that he was not deterred by the fear that it would bring him no honor. It is highly glorious to God that He is not affected by the praise of men. There

is hope, then, for you who cannot be numbered with the grossest of transgressors. If all is of Grace then it neither shuts out big nor little. And while the gracious promises ring like a peal of silver bells, “Come unto Me all you that labor,” and that with a general and universal note to every sinner under Heaven, “Whosoever believes in Him is not condemned,” “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved,” “He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved,” and such like passages, why, we are greatly encouraged to come to Jesus!

This doctrine that salvation is all of Grace, and not of us at all, is one of the very best reasons why I, though I do not feel right, nor act right, nor am right, but am just a lump of sin, a mass of filthiness, and nothing else—should come as I am, even now, and put my trust in the blood and righteousness of Christ! And I, even I, can trust that I shall find acceptance in the Beloved. O that some hearts, today, may, by the Holy Spirit, be encouraged to come to Christ!

If you have any goodness, this sermon is a death knell for you. If you have any merits, away with you, away with you! Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. If you are not sick, what are you doing here? The physician is come to heal the sick, not those who are in health. But if you have nothing that could deserve anything of God, then to *you* is the word of this salvation sent, “To the praise of the glory of His Grace.”

My last word shall briefly indicate what is the privilege of each sinner who would rejoice in the Sovereign Grace of God. Often as we explain faith, we still need to explain it again. I met with an illustration taken from the American war. One had been trying to instruct a dying officer in what faith was. At last he caught the idea, and he said, “I could not understand it before, but I see it now. It is just this—I surrender, I surrender to Jesus.”

That is it! You have been fighting against God, standing out against Him, trying to make terms more or less favorable to yourself. Now here you stand in the Presence of God, and you drop the sword of your rebellion and say, “Lord, I surrender, I am Your prisoner. I trust to Your mercy to save me. I have done with self, I fall into Your arms.”—

***“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Christ’s kind arms I fall.
Be You my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all.”***

May God bless you. Amen.

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THE GLORIES OF FORGIVING GRACE

NO. 1555

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

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

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

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

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

Nothing can be more practical than the doctrine which deals with sin and its removal and no news can be more pleasant than the tidings of remission! Why, the very sound of that word, "Forgiveness of sins" is a joy forever! No marriage bell has more music in its notes. To the guilty, for-

giveness is a tone of joy which their jaded ears are able to hear without strain. It ministers refreshment to the weary heart. High joys and rare delights are apt to send forth raised notes which terrified consciences cannot endure—their very sweetness is sharp and distressing to the sorrowful—and their harmony causes a deeper discord in the broken heart!

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

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

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

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

As the giving of Jesus Christ, by whom justice is satisfied, was an act of free favor on the part of God, so the giving of the pardon which comes *through* Jesus Christ is, in the same manner, a matter of absolute Grace

and by no means of debt or obligation. Do not, therefore, whenever you speak of our Lord's satisfaction which He made to justice, think that justice has eclipsed mercy. Or, on the other hand, whenever you speak of the Grace of God in pardoning sin, do not imagine that mercy has blinded the eyes of justice, for it is a part of the Christian faith that in the death of Christ, justice shines out full-orbed like the sun at midday while mercy is glorified after a like fashion.

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

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

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

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

Suppose I were asked, at this present time, to reconcile two persons who are at enmity—if the one who evidently had been injured was one of certain Brethren around me whose forgiving spirits I have long relied upon, I should feel my task to be easy—whatever the offense might have been. But I know some others about whom I would say, "I don't know. I

am afraid I shall not get on the right side of them. I shall have to approach them very carefully. However small the offense, it will be hard to remove their anger." I know certain persons of old—they are quick-tempered and ready to be aggrieved for small reasons and they are slow in burning out, having fine memories for an affront. It is hard to get a forgiving word out of such sour spirits. You see, the nature of a pardon materially depends upon the character of the pardoner.

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

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

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

God's love is not to be measured by a mercer's yard, nor His mercy to be weighed in the balances of the merchant! He has riches of Grace surpassing all the wealth which the imagination could ascribe to Him whose name is Love. When He gave His dear Son, His other Self, that He might bleed and die, He gave us proof that there was no penury of love in the coffers of His heart. "He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" The measure of mercy, then, is not our conception of God, but

God as He really is—and who is he that can tell us how large is His love, how wide is His Grace, how high is His goodness, how deep is His favor?

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

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

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

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

Another comfortable conclusion follows from this—no limit is set to the time in which a man has sinned so as to bind the reach of Grace by the lapse of years. Our text does not say that there is forgiveness of sins according to such-and-such a time of life, but “according to the riches of His Grace.” It is a blessed thing to come to God when you are young, a thing to sing of throughout the rest of your existence. Happy day when my young heart first leaped at the sound of the Savior's name! But oh, if gray

hairs are covering your head and years have plowed their furrows on your brow, think not the forgiveness of sin to be impossible for you! Though your remaining days are so few that a little child may write them and the last of them will soon flicker away into darkness, yet if you will come and put your trust in Jesus, your transgressions shall vanish and your soul shall be even as a new-born child, for Christ makes all things new!

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

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

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

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

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

faithful and true? It is black presumption to refuse your confidence to God who cannot lie!

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

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

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

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

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

Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards men! Thanks be unto God for such amazing Grace!

II. In the second place, I am going to spend a little time, as God may help me, in speaking upon THE MANNER OF FORGIVENESS. The manner of forgiveness is “according to the riches of His Grace.” Then I see in the mode and manner of forgiveness, first of all, absolute freeness, “According to the riches of His free favor,” for that is the meaning of the word, “Grace.” God forgives none because of payment made by them in any form. If we could bring Him mountains of gold and silver, they would be nothing to Him—if we bring Him tears in rivers or alms in alps, or resolves, vows and promises in countless numbers—all will amount to nothing as a bribe for Grace.

Forgiveness, like love, is unpurchaseable by us. God’s pardons are absolutely free. He forgives because He chooses to forgive out of sheer pity to the sinner, out of clear, unmixed compassion, but with no adulteration of anything like bribe or price. Forgiveness is absolutely free! Then why should you not have it? Oh, you who have said, “It will never come to me”—why not to you? “Oh,” you have said, “I am not prepared.” Why should it not come to you though you are unprepared? Isn’t preparedness a sort of price? Since it comes *freely*, why not to you? “But I have scarcely thought of it! I dropped in here this morning merely to spend an hour”—and why not spend that hour in singing of Free Grace and pardoning love? Why not let this be the first hour of your true life—the hour in which you begin to live unto God? Pardon is absolutely free—“Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” “According to the riches of His Grace”—this hints a royal ease!

When you and I give away money to the poor, we have to pause and see how much is left in our purse. We have to calculate our incomes to see whether we may not be spending too much in charity. But those who have great riches can give and not calculate! Even so, God, when He grants forgiveness, gives it “according to the riches of His Grace.” He never has to think whether He will have Grace enough left—He will be none the richer if He withholds it, none the poorer if He bestows it! There is a magnificent ease about the benefactions of God—He scatters the largesse of His mercy right and left with unstinted liberality! The Roman conquerors, traversing the Via Sacra in triumph, were accustomed to scatter gold and silver with both hands as they rode along and the eager crowd gathered up the shower of gifts. Our Lord, when He ascended on high and led captivity captive, scattered gifts among men with royal splendor and munificence.

So does God pardon sinners as if it were everyday work with Him! His goodness flashes on all sides as water from a fountain in full play, or as

light and heat from the noonday sun. You have not to extract forgiveness from a palm fast closed—God is more pleased to pardon than we are to be pardoned! When the prodigal son laid his head on his father's bosom and his father kissed him, who had the more joy, do you think—the son or the father? I know the prodigal's heart overflowed with gladness, but then the father's heart was more capacious and when he said, "This, my son, was dead and is alive again; was lost and is found," there was an *incalculable* depth of delight in the expression. It was the *father* who called for music and dancing, feasting and merriment—I fear the son was hardly so demonstrative in his delight.

O poor weary Seekers, hear this inspired Word of God and be glad—"He delights in mercy." Come home! Come home, poor wanderer! It is harder work to you to come home than for your Father to receive you. It is more trouble for you to ask for mercy than for God to give it to you! It is harder work for you to believe that He can save than it is for Him to do it. To Him mercy is *pleasant* work, the cunning art of His right hand which He can never forget. Oh, come and receive the mercy which the Lord gives lavishly, according to the wealth of His goodness! "According to the riches of His Grace"—that means unquestionable fullness. The man who is forgiven of the Lord is not *half* forgiven, but altogether absolved.

There is a theology which teaches that when a man believes in Jesus Christ he is pardoned up to a point, but in the future he may get into arrears again and if he does not see to it, he may again be accused and summoned before the Judgment Seat. This is not *our* theology. We believe in Him who said, "I give unto My sheep *eternal* life; and they shall *never* perish, neither shall *any* pluck them out of My hand." I believe that when Jesus Christ died for His people, He did not make Atonement for half their sins, but for *all* of them! And on that day when He said, "It is finished," there was a virtual wiping out of *all* the sins of *all* His redeemed from the book of God's remembrance. Hence His salvation is complete and those who have it are altogether delivered from the ruin which sin involves!

If you come to Christ He will grant you deep, full, living, substantial pardon, such pardon as will put you among God's children—such pardon that God will have no reckonings for *past* sins with you, no calling of you to account at some *future* time—such pardon that you shall be as much accepted as if you had never sinned and God shall love you as though your whole life had been spent in His fear! The blood of Jesus makes us whiter than snow and absolute innocence cannot be more white than that! There shall be no sin left against you to be, in the future, quoted to your dismay. Thus says the Lord, "In those days and in that time, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for and there shall be none: and the sins of Judah and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve." Such a mode of pardon is "according to the riches of His Grace."

Again, the text implies irreversible certainty. "According to the riches of His Grace." For God to pardon and then, afterwards to condemn, would not be "according to the riches of His Grace." If Her Majesty were to issue a free pardon for a criminal and then, afterwards, hang him, it would be poor work. It would certainly not be according to the riches of her favor! And if you and I get pardon through Jesus Christ, we can no more be lost than God can become poor in love. Believe in Christ Jesus and get a pardon for your transgressions under the sign manual of Jehovah and you

are clear forever! “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us”—and how far is that? It is an infinite distance and from an infinite distance our sins can never be brought back. They are gone! They are blotted out! Drowned like the Egyptians in the Red Sea, we shall never see their faces again! That pardon must be irreversible which is given “according to the riches of His Grace.”

Once more, it suggests unfailing renewal. It is “forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His Grace.” It does not mean forgiveness up to a certain point and then, if you sin again, no more forgiveness—but daily forgiveness for daily sin—a fresh spring rising for fresh thirst. Joseph Hart sings—

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

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

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

III. Our last word is to be upon THE MANIFESTATION OF THIS PARDON. “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace.” Here we see that forgiveness of sin comes to us entirely through Jesus Christ, our Savior, and if we go to Jesus Christ, fixing our eyes especially upon His atoning Sacrifice, we have pardon by virtue of His blood. I see nothing here about any human priest—Christ is Priest enough for us. I see nothing about absolution by man. No—“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

It must be a very dangerous thing to be hoping for pardon because you have confessed to a *man*! Whatever manipulations may have been performed upon his shaven head, it must be a very risky thing to have your salvation depend upon whether or not he was properly ordained by a priest of higher rank! We escape all such perils by going to the Fountain-head, even to Christ, Himself, the *one* Mediator between God and man! According to God’s command, we trust Jesus and receive pardon—not in word only—but in spirit and in truth. There is no danger in faith in Jesus, for all those who have tried it will tell you how blessed the result has been in their own cases! Pardon by any other means is impossible, but by Je-

sus Christ it is certain! Everything else fails, but faith in Christ never fails. Only trust Him! Only trust Him and you are pardoned, pardoned *at once* through His most precious blood!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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REDEMPTION THROUGH BLOOD— THE GRACIOUS FORGIVENESS OF SINS NO. 2207

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

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

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

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

And here let me say what a charming thing it is to deal with experimental divinity—not with theories, but with matters of fact—great facts which are dear to you because they have been worked *in you*, and you have not been merely a delighted spectator of them, but you have been the subject and object of them! “In whom we have redemption.” Whether others have it or not, *we* have “redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” We do not *hope* for it, but we *have* it. We do not merely *think* so, but we

know that we have it. We are redeemed! We are free from bondage! We are forgiven and are no longer under condemnation!

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

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

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

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

“I will praise You every day,

***Now Your anger's turned away;
Comfortable thoughts arise
From the bleeding Sacrifice.***

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

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

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

I do not speak, now, what I have merely heard of, though, if you will read Mr. Bunyan's, “Grace Abounding,” you will find a striking account of it there. I speak of what I have felt in my own soul. No pains of body can rival, for a moment, the agonized feeling of the heart when the hot irons of conviction burn their way through the soul. When God sets up the conscience and makes it a target for His arrows, they drink up the life blood of our spirit till we cry out and wonder how such anguish can come to a creature so insignificant. Our soul seems too small a cup to contain such

an ocean of misery—too narrow a field for so cruel a battle. It is not the Lord that is the author of the misery, but He is giving us up, for a while, that we may be filled with our own ways and learn the bitterness of our own sin. When the Lord comes to us with a forgiving word, these sorrows are gone like the mists of the morning when the sun arises. We still grieve to think that we have sinned, but that gnawing remorse, that vulture eating up the liver, is smitten with death and the man breathes hopefully again. Though the penitence remains, the torment is removed from me, when God has forgiven me.

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

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

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

Do you ask—"How is it that there should always need to be redemption by blood in order to the forgiveness of sin?" I call your attention to the expression, "Redemption through His blood." Observe, it is not redemption through His power, it is *through His blood*. It is not redemption through

His love, it is through His *blood*. This is insisted upon emphatically, since, in order to the forgiveness of sins, it is redemption through His blood, as you have it over and over again in Scripture. “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” But they say—*they* say—that Substitution is not just! One said, the other day, that to lay sin upon Christ and to treat Him as guilty—and let Him die for the unjust—was not just! Yet the objector went on to say that God forgave men freely without any atonement at all! Of this wise critic I would ask—Is *that* just? Is it just to pass by breaches of the law without a penalty? Why any law at all? And why should men care whether they keep it or break it? It was stated by this critic that God, out of His boundless love, treated the guilty man as if he were innocent. I would ask—if that is right, where is the wrong of God’s treating us as innocent because of the *righteousness of Christ*?

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

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

This is according to the folly of man! Sometimes it may even be wisdom in a fallible man to reverse his word and retract his declaration, but with God this cannot be! It is necessary for the vindication of His own justice, His wisdom and His holiness, that He shall not forego one of His threats any more than one of His promises! And, since it is just that sin should be punished and that, though the sinner should, in wondrous mercy be permitted to go free, it is wise and just that Another should step in—God

Himself should step in—and bear for the sinner what is due to the justice of the Most High. The Substitution of our Lord in our place is the central Doctrine of the Gospel and it greatly glorifies the name of God.

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

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

Besides that, the Lord meant to save us in a safe way *for the promotion of our future reverence for the Law.* Now, if sin had been blotted out so readily and nothing more said of it, what effect would that have had on us in the future? I think that everyone who has felt the burden of sin, has

stood at the foot of the Cross, heard the cries of the great Sacrifice and read God's wrath against sin written in crimson lines upon the blessed and perfect Person of the innocent Savior—every such person feels that sin is an awful thing! You cannot trifle with transgression after a vision of Gethsemane. You cannot laugh at it and talk about the littleness of its demerit, if you have once stood on Golgotha and heard the cry, "Eli, Eli, lame Sabachthani?" The death of the Son of God upon the Cross is the grandest of all moral lessons because it is a lesson that affects the very soul of the man and changes his whole idea of sin. The Cross straightens him from the desperate twist which sin gave him at the first. The cure of the first Adam's fall is the second Adam's death—the second Adam's Grace, which comes to us through His great Sacrifice! We love sin till we see that it killed our best Friend—and then we loathe it forevermore.

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

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

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

III. But now, thirdly—and the text is very clear upon this, as upon the other two points—THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN IS STILL A MATTER OF GRACE—AND OF RICH GRACE. "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, *according to the riches of His Grace.*"

I admit that the forgiveness of sins, on God's part, is a matter of justice, now that the redemption by blood has been completed. The man believes. The man confesses his sin. And it is written, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." The Sacrifice is so great that it justly puts away the sin and it is righteously forgiven. But observe this—

the act of God in forgiving is not one atom the less gracious, because, in His infinite wisdom, He has so contrived that it is unquestionably just. If any make this assertion, they will be called upon to prove it—and they *can* prove it.

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

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

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

Besides, Beloved, let this always be remembered, that it is in the application of redemption and the personal pardon of any sinner, through the blood of Jesus, that the Grace of God is best seen by that sinner. To each one, that pardon through the Lord Jesus comes, not only according to Grace, but "according to the riches of His Grace." I can understand that

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

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

IV. Thus far have I brought you, then, in three remarks. Kindly follow me in the fourth one, upon which I will not be long.

Fourthly, THIS FORGIVENESS OF SINS IS ENJOYED BY US NOW. “In whom we have”—*we have*—“redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace.” I remember the astonishment with which I felt as I sat in a ministers’ meeting and heard one who professed to be a preacher of the Gospel, assert that he did not think that any of us could be sure that he was forgiven. I ventured at once to say that I was sure—and I was pleased, but by no means surprised, to find that others dared to say the same. I hope I have hundreds before me who enjoy the same assurance!

Brothers and Sisters, if there is no consciousness of the forgiveness of sins possible, *how can there be any rest for the conscience?* Yet Jesus says, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” What rest is possible to the condemned? Can you go to bed tonight with your sins unforgiven? Some of you may have the foolhardiness to do that, but I would not dare to do it! Look where you are. Within a moment you may be dead. Within that moment you will be in Hell, past all hope. In a single instant you may be eternally lost—can you endure the thought? Our breath has but to stop, or the heart to cease beating and instantly life is over! How can you be at peace while sin is unforgiven?

Unless sin had made men mad, they would never rest till they were cleared from their sins. There cannot be any true rest without a consciousness of forgiveness. Yet that rest is promised—therefore the present enjoyment of an assurance of forgiveness must be possible!

And, next, *where could there ever be that great love in the hearts of men and women which we read of in Scripture?* She that washed the Savior's feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head—would she have done so if she had not known that she was forgiven? She loved much because she had had much forgiven her! And the stimulus, the zeal, the fervor that spurs on a man in his service and suffering for the Lord Jesus must arise out of the consciousness that the Lord has done great things for him—and the conclusion that, therefore, he must do great things for his Lord. Surely, you have robbed Christianity of its highest moral force if you have denied the possibility of knowing that you are pardoned!

Moreover, *where is there any testimony of the power of Grace?* We that come and preach to you would be liars if we, ourselves, have never tasted and handled pardoning Grace. We do, at any rate, but preach to you a second-hand Gospel, which we have never tested and proved for ourselves. If I did not know, in my very soul, that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin, how could I dare to face you with the Gospel message? I have not impudence enough to tell you of what is, or is not the Truth of God, about which I am uncertain myself! God grant me Grace to break stones, or sweep chimneys sooner than come and tell you a cunningly-devised fable, or a tale about which I have no assured certainty, derived from personal knowledge! Could I say to you, "I dare say there is bread, but I myself am hungry and I have never eaten a mouthful of the provision which I offer you"? Think of my saying to one perishing of thirst, "There is Living Water flowing from the Rock, but personally I am thirsty." You might say to me at once, "Then go home to your house and next time you appear, be sure of the truth of what you tell us. If *you* do not believe it, how should we believe it?" Beloved, there are thousands, there are still *tens of thousands* on earth who know that the Son of God has power on earth to forgive sins! And there are myriads in Heaven who passed to their happiness confident that they had been forgiven—and they sang on earth the same song that they sing in Heaven, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! They know it, they have no doubt about it! Many of us know it here and rejoice therein at this moment.

Dear Friend, what would you give to have this assurance? You may have it—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." "Whoever believes in Him is justified from all sin." "He that believes in Him has everlasting life." Oh, that God's Grace may lead you to cast away all other confidences and to lay your guilty spirit down at Jesus' feet! Then shall you go your way rejoicing that you, also, with us, can say, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."

V. Fifthly—and this is only a brief head, but it is a point that must not be left out—THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS BINDS US TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. Let us read the text again. “*In whom* we have redemption through *His* blood.” We have *nothing* apart from Jesus! Every blessing of the Covenant binds us to Christ. Covenant gifts are so many golden chains to fasten the soul of the Believer to his Lord. Our wealth of mercy is all in Christ. There is nothing good outside of Christ. When are we pardoned, Brothers and Sisters? When have we forgiveness? Why, when we are in Him, “*in whom* we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” O son of Adam, living without Jesus, hear and take warning! So long as you are out of Christ, you must bear your own burden till it crushes you to the dust! But as soon as you have touched the hem of His garment there is a link of connection—and if you can rise from that to holding Him by the feet—the union is closer! And if you can, from that, become like Simeon, who took Him up in his arms, then may you cry, “My eyes have seen Your salvation!” When you have Christ to the fullest, you have Grace to the fullest! It is as you are in Christ—in connection and communion with Christ—that you receive the pardon of sin, for all the pardon is in Him. Do you see that?

“*In whom* we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” The forgiveness is not so much in His office and in His work, as in *Himself*. When you get Christ, you have redemption, for He *is* Redemption. When you get Christ, you have forgiveness of sins, for He is the Propitiation for our sins. He has put the sin away by the Sacrifice of Himself. Get Christ and you have the proof, the evidence, the sum, the *substance* of perfect pardon. If you accept the Beloved, you are “accepted in the Beloved.” When you are in Him, then you are forgiven, but your forgiveness is only in Him. In Him you have redemption—out of Him you are in bondage.

Beloved, every day, as we go afresh to God for a sense of pardon, let us know that we can never get it unless we come viewing Jesus. I notice that some Believers, when they get rather dull and cold, begin the work of self-examination. This may appear very proper, but it is dreary work. I do not believe, dear Friends, if you are very poor, that you will ever get rich by looking through all your empty cupboards. If it is very cold and you have no coals in the cellar, you will not become warm by going into the cellar and seeing that there is nothing below but an empty coal hole. No, no—if our Graces are to be revived we must begin with a renewed consciousness of pardon through the precious blood—and the only way to get that sense of pardon is to go to the Cross, again, even as we went at first! I sometimes wonder that you do not get tired of my preaching because I do nothing but hammer away on this one nail. I have driven it in up to the head and I have gone round to the other side to clinch it—but I still keep at it. With me it is, year after year, “None but Jesus! None but Jesus!” Oh, you great saints, if you have outgrown the need of a sinner’s trust in the Lord Jesus, you have outgrown your sins! But you have also outgrown your

Grace and your saintship has ruined you! He that has the mind of Christ within him must still come to his Lord, just as he came at the first.

I frankly confess that still I cry to my Lord Jesus—

***“Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Your Cross I cling.”***

Still, to this day, I have no redemption in myself, but only in Jesus! I am not an inch forwarder as to the ground of my trust. Is it not so with you? Do we not still say of Jesus—“In whom we have redemption through His blood”? To this day we find no reason for forgiveness in ourselves. The precious blood is still our one plea! Lost and condemned are we apart from the one offering of our Great High Priest. But cleansed and justified are we in Him—

***“Oh, how sweet to view the flowing
Of His sin-atonement blood!
With Divine assurance knowing,
He has made my peace with God.”***

You know the story of the poor bricklayer who fell from a scaffold, and when they took him up, he was so much injured that they fetched a minister to him, who, stooping over him, said, “My dear Man, you have a very short time to live. I entreat you to make your peace with God.” To the surprise of the minister, the man opened his eyes and said, “Make my peace with God, Sir? It was made for me nearly 1,900 years ago, upon the Cross of Calvary, by Him that loved me and gave Himself for me.” Oh, the joy which this creates in the heart! Yes, it is in *Jesus* that the peace is made—effectually made, made for me, made for you, made for all Believers! In Jesus is perfect redemption! In Jesus pardon is provided, proclaimed, presented and sealed upon the conscience! Go and live on Jesus; live with Jesus; live in Jesus; never go away from Jesus and may He be dearer to you every day of your lives! Blessed be His adorable name! Amen, and Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Ephesians 1.*
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—289, 293, 296.**

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

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

GREAT FORGIVENESS FOR GREAT SIN NO. 2863

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

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

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

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

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

had Christ in it, just as, on a bright summer's day, everything has sunshine in it. And, like the Apostle, we can never exaggerate when we rightly speak of Jesus, "for in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," and in Him is stored up all manner of riches and treasures for poor sinful creatures like ourselves.

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

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

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

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

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

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

But there is one thing I want you to remember. If there has been nothing done, or said, or thought by you of which you can convict yourself, yet, if you are not now loving God—if for another year you have been God's enemy, if for another year you have refused Christ and have lived without prayer, without repentance and without seeking to be right with God. If for another year you have been indifferent to the claims of the

Most High and careless of His commands—if you have done nothing else but forget God—*that one sin* would be enough to cast you into Hell forever! Remember David's words, "the wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God."

II. Now I turn to the much more joyful side of my subject which is that THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN IS ALSO A GREAT THING.

Is there such a thing as forgiveness of sin? When Martin Luther was in great trouble because of his sin, he obtained much consolation from the remark of a brother monk, who, observing him so cast down, asked to him, "Martin, can you say the Credo?" Martin, of course, answered, "Yes." "Then, do you not remember," said the monk, "that in the Credo it is written, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins?'" Light seemed to break in upon Luther's darkness by that simple question, as I pray that it may break upon yours while I speak upon that blessed article of a true Christian's creed.

First, you may judge the greatness of the forgiveness *by the greatness of the sin which God forgives in a single moment*. I do not know your age, my dear Friend. Say, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, 80 years—possibly, even 90—but, if you now believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, this very instant the whole mass of your sin will disappear forever! I have heard of one who had lent much money to a debtor and who had received from him many bonds. And when he found the debtor sinking into hopeless bankruptcy, he sent for him and, after showing him the bonds, the amount of which he was unable to meet, even to the extent of a penny in the pound, the generous creditor said, "There is only one way in which we can settle all this debt." And, gathering up all the bonds in his hand, he cast them into the fire. "Now," he said, "I wish you a happy new year. Go your way, for you are out of debt to me." That was a noble thing for anyone to do, and I feel sure that the bond for a thousand pounds would burn as fast as a bond for 50 pounds. So the Lord takes all the bonds of our sin throughout our whole lifetime and puts them into the blaze of His Infinite Mercy—and they all disappear so that, if our sins are searched for, they cannot be found!

Next, measure the greatness of the forgiveness *by the guilt of the sin forgiven*. I always feel that I must speak guardedly upon this point, but I will be as bold as I may. Sinner, if you trust in Christ, He will forgive you the blackest sin into which you have ever fallen. If (God grant that it may not be true!) the crime of murder should be on your conscience. If adultery and fornication should have blackened your very soul. If all the sins that men have ever committed, enormous and stupendous in their aggravation, should be rightly charged to your account, yet, remember that "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all our sin." And remember, also, "he that believes in Him is justified from all things," however black they may be. I like the way Luther talks upon this subject, though he is sometimes rather too bold. He says, "Jesus Christ is not a sham Savior for sham sinners, but He is a real Savior who offers a real Atonement for real sin, for gross crimes, for shameless offenses, for transgressions of every sort and every size."

And a far greater One than Luther has said, "Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." I have set the door of Mercy open wide, have I not? There is no one here who will dare to say, "Mr. Spurgeon said that I was too guilty to be forgiven." I have said nothing of the kind! However great your guilt, though your sins, like the great mountains tower above the clouds, the floods of Divine Mercy can roll over the tops of the highest mountains of iniquity and drown them all! God give you Grace to believe this and to prove it true this very hour!

In the third place, the greatness of God's forgiveness may be judged *by the freeness of it*. When a poor sinner comes to Christ for pardon, Christ does not ask him to pay anything for it, or to *do* anything, or to *be* anything, or to *feel* anything, but He freely forgives him. I know what you think. "I shall have to go through a certain penance of heart, at any rate, if not of body. I shall have to weep so much, or pray so much, or do so much, or feel so much." That is not what the Gospel says—that is only your fancy. The Gospel is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." Trust Jesus Christ, and the free pardon of sin is at once given "without money and without price"!

Another thing that indicates its greatness is *its immediateness*. God will forgive you at once, as soon as you trust Christ. There was a daughter, well beloved by her father, who, in an evil hour, left her home and came to London. Here, having no friends, she soon fell prey to wicked men and became an utter wreck. A city missionary met with her and spoke faithfully to her about her sin—and the Holy Spirit brought her to the Savior's feet. The missionary asked for her father's name and address, and at last she told him. But she said, "It is no use for you to write him. I have brought such dishonor on my family that I am quite certain he would not reply to any letter." They wrote to the father and stated the cases—and the letter that came back bore on the envelope, in large text hand, the word, "IMMEDIATE." Inside, he wrote, "I have prayed every day that I might find my child and am rejoiced to hear of her. Let her come home at once. I have freely forgiven her, and I long to clasp her to my bosom."

Now, Soul, if you seek mercy, this is just what the Lord will do with you. He will send you mercy marked, "IMMEDIATE," and you shall have it at once! I recollect how I found mercy, in a moment, as I was told to look to Jesus and I would be forgiven. I did look and, swift as a lightning flash, I received the pardon of sin in which I have rejoiced to this very hour! Why should it not be the same with you—the blackest and worst sinner here—the most unfeeling and the least likely to repent? Lord, grant it, and You shall have the praise!

Again, the greatness of God's forgiveness may be measured *by the completeness of it*. When a man trusts Christ and is forgiven, his sin is so entirely gone that it is as though it had never been! Your children bring home their copy-books without any blots in them, but if you look carefully, you can see where blots have been erased. But when the Lord Jesus Christ blots out the sins of His people, He leaves no marks of erasure

and the forgiven sinners are as much accepted before God as if they had never sinned!

Perhaps someone says, "You are putting the matter very strongly." I know I am, but not more strongly than the Word of God does. The Prophet Micah, speaking to the Lord under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says, "You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Not into the shallows, where they might be dredged up again, but into the great deeps, as in the middle of the Atlantic. Then Isaiah says to the Lord, "You have cast all my sins behind Your back." Can you tell me where God's back is? God's face is everywhere—then where is His back and where are His people's sins? Why, nowhere at all! Daniel says that the work of the Messiah is to finish the transgression—and it is finished for all who believe in Him. Daniel also says that He is to make an end of sins—then there is an end of them for all who trust in Him! Then there is that glorious passage which cannot be quoted too often—"In those days, and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none." What? All my sins gone? Yes, they are all gone if you believe in Jesus, for He cast them into His tomb where they are buried forever. This is enough to make you dance, like David did before the Ark, for, when God once pardons a man, He never condemns him again. It is not God's way to play fast and loose with people. If I am in Christ Jesus, the verdict of, "No condemnation," must always be mine, for who can condemn the one for whom Christ has died? No one, for, "whom He justified, them He also glorified." If you have trusted your soul upon the Atonement made by the blood of Christ, you are absolved and you may go your way in peace, knowing that neither death nor Hell shall ever divide you from Christ! You are His and you shall be His forever and ever!

"Well," asks one, "that is a great thing. How is it to be obtained?" It is to be had for nothing, simply for the asking, simply by trusting Christ. If that is done, all is done and all these blessings are yours, and yours forevermore!

Now I close by showing you how really God forgives sin. I am sure He does, for I have proved it in my own case and I have heard of many more like myself. I have known the Lord to take a man full of sin and renew him and, in a moment to make him feel, and feel it truly, too, "God loves me." And he has cried, "Abba, Father," and he has begun to pray and has had answers to prayer! And God has manifested His Infinite Grace to him in a thousand ways. By-and-by, that man has been trusted by God with some service for Him, as Paul and others were put in trust with the Gospel—and as some of us also are. With some of us, the Lord has been very familiar and very kind and has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

Now I have done when I have just said that, as these things are true, then nobody ought to despair. Come, Sister, smooth those wrinkles out of your forehead! You have been saying, "I shall never be saved," but you must not talk like that, for Christ's forgiveness of sin is "according to the riches of His Grace." And, Brother, are you in trouble because you have sinned against God? As He is so ready to forgive, you ought to be sorry

that you have grieved such a gracious God! As He is so ready to forgive, let us be ready to be forgiven! Let us not leave this house, though the midnight hour is about to strike, until we have received this great redemption, this great forgiveness for great sin!

Perhaps someone says, "When I get home, I will ask God's forgiveness." Do not wait until you get home! Suppose that I had done some wrong to any of you and that I sat next to you—I do not think that I should wait until we entered the new year before asking you to forgive me. Do so with God—say to Him, "Since You are so ready to forgive, I ask to be forgiven. I trust that I shall be forgiven through Jesus Christ, Your Son." It is a grand thing to begin the new year with a new heart and a new spirit! That would set all the bells of your soul ringing. The question is, Will you believe on the Son of God? In the name of Jesus Christ who died upon the Cross, I demand your faith in Him! He is no impostor. He is no pretender, He is worthy of your heart's trust, so believe in Him. I pray the Holy Spirit to work this faith in you, that you may be saved, and saved now, and receive at once the forgiveness of all your sins!

Thus have I preached the Gospel to you. If you reject it, it is at your peril. I draw a ring round you as the Roman ambassador drew one round the Eastern monarch and said to him, "Step out of that ring, and it will mean war with Rome." So I draw a ring round the seat where you are sitting and say to you, in the name of God, "You must not rise up from that seat until you have peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ, or else have taken upon yourself the responsibility of remaining an enemy of God, for I can say no more to you till the Judgment Day breaks and I have to give account for preaching this sermon—and you have to give account for hearing it! I can say no more than this! There is pardon to be obtained by believing! Jesus Christ is fully worthy of your confidence—trust Him now and you shall receive full and free forgiveness! The Lord help you to do so, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—548, 562, 595.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
LUKE 15.**

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

Verses 1-3. *Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners, to hear Him, and the Pharisees, and scribes murmured, saying, This Man receives sinners, and eats with them. And He spoke this parable unto them.* The deepest feelings of our Savior's heart seem to have been brought out by the two classes of persons here mentioned—His pity and compassion towards the sinful—and His righteous anger at the perpetual objections of the hypocritical Pharisees and scribes. The one class caused His heart to overflow with love, the other excited His burning in-

dignation, yet, even then, His soul was moved with pity and tenderness toward the wandering and erring. We ought to be grateful to the Pharisees for having led our Lord to utter the three wonderful parables which we are about to read. Luke says, "He spoke this parable unto them," implying that the three are really one, a picture in three panels. The whole plan of salvation is not to be found in either of the parables by itself, but in all three combined. Some points omitted in any one of them will be found in one of the others. "He spoke this parable unto them, saying."

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

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

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

revealed to us. I think it is for this reason that the work of the Son of God is here set forth first.

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

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

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

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

have filled our belly with them—and if we *did not*, it was not because we *would not*, but because we *could not*.

17. *And when he came to himself.* For sin is insanity! He was out of his mind while he was acting so foolishly—“When he came to himself.”

17-19. *He said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son: make me as one of your hired servants.* It was the knowledge that there was plenty in his father’s house that led him back! And you may depend upon it that the preaching of full salvation rich in blessing is a strong inducement to a sinner to cry, “I will arise and go to my Father.” This prodigal son might never have gone back if his father had kept a miserly house with a scanty table. But he knew that even the servants in the kitchen had “bread enough and to spare.” His father never stinted them—they had what they needed, and there was always more than they could eat—so there was no need for his son to “perish with hunger.” In like manner, the extraordinary bounty of God in Christ Jesus—the richness of His free Redemption is, I doubt not, the means of bringing many a starving soul to Christ.

The prodigal said that the servants had “bread enough and to spare.” There are some who seem to think that in Christ there is only just bread enough, but we believe that the largest possible idea of the value of His Redemption may be indulged and, oftentimes, the thought that first enters the sinner’s ear and heart is that there is “bread enough and to spare,” so why should he not have some of the spare bread, at any rate? That was the way that the prodigal argued. He felt sure that his father could feed another hired servant, so he resolved that he would ask to be engaged in that capacity. Yet you know that he never asked that—his father stopped him before he could make that request.

20. *And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him.* Perhaps before he saw his father—“his father saw him.”

20. *And had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him.* Matthew Henry’s comment on this verse is excellent—“His father saw him.’ Here were eyes of mercy. ‘And had compassion.’ Here was a heart of mercy. ‘And ran.’ Here were feet of mercy. ‘And fell on his neck.’ Here were arms of mercy. ‘And kissed him.’ Here were lips of mercy.” It was all mercy from first to last!

21. *And the son said unto him.* The father kissed his son before he had time to say anything! And Divine compassion is swifter even than our prayers.

21, 22. *Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him.* He did not let him finish his prayer with the request that he might be taken on as a hired servant. That part which was legal he stopped with a kiss on his mouth and then he said to his servants, “Bring forth the best robe and put it on him.”

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

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

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

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

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

into which others have fallen—and it was wrong for them to talk as if they were sheer legalists, as this Pharisaic elder brother did!

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

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

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

—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.**

END OF VOLUME 49.

THE TREASURE OF GRACE

NO. 295

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

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

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

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

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

Among his compeers he outstripped them all in declaring the grace that brings salvation. The sense of grace pervaded all his thoughts as the life-blood circulates through all the veins of one’s body. Does he speak of conversion, “he was called by grace.” No, he sees grace going before his conversion and “separating him from his mother’s womb.” He attributes all his ministry to grace. “To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is

this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." See him at any time and under any circumstances, whether bowed down with infirmity, or lifted to the third heavens with revelation, he has but one account to give of himself, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

***“His swifter hand shall first arrive,
And there arrest the fugitive.”***

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

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

what they have on hand stored up in their treasury. I must take you now, my Brethren, to the glittering treasury of Divine Grace.

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

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

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

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

The riches of great kings again, may often be estimated by the munificence of the monuments which they reared to record their feats. We have been amazed in these modern times at the marvelous riches of the kings of Nineveh and Babylon. Modern monarchs with all their appliances, would fail to erect such monstrous piles of palaces as those in which old Nebuchadnezzar walked in times of yore. We turn to the pyramids, we see there what the wealth of nations can accomplish. We look across the sea

to Mexico and Peru and we see the relics of a semi-barbarous people but we are staggered and amazed to think what wealth and what mines of riches they must have possessed before such works could have been accomplished.

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

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

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

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

***"Then loudest of the crowd I'll sing,
While hearers resounding mansions ring
With shouts of Sovereign Grace."***

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

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

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

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

Now we turn to another point to illustrate the greatness of the riches of God's grace. A man's riches may often be judged of by the equipage of his children, the manner in which he dresses his servants and those of his household. It is not to be expected that the child of the poor man, though he is comfortably clothed, should be arrayed in like garments to those which are worn by the sons of princes. Let us see, then, what are the

robes in which God's people are appareled and how they are attended. Here again I speak upon a subject where a large imagination is needed and my own utterly fails me.

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

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

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

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

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

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

That last point may stagger you, but I believe, with John Kent, that in the blood of Christ—

***“There’s pardon for transgressions past,
It matters not how black their cast.
And, oh, my soul, with wonder view,
For sins to come there’s pardon, too.”***

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

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

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

“Well, but,” says one, “how is it that God does punish His children?” I answer, He does not. He *chastises* them as a father, but that is a different thing from the punishment of a judge. If the child of a judge were brought up to the bar and that child were freely forgiven all that he had done amiss—if justice exonerated and acquitted him—it might nevertheless happen that there was evil in the heart of that child which the father, out

of love to the child, might have to whip out of him. But there is a great deal of difference between a rod in the hand of the executioner and a rod in a father's hand. Let God smite me, if I sin against Him. Yet it is not because of the guilt of sin—there is no punishment in it whatsoever—the penal clause is done away with. It is only that He may cure me of my fault—that He may fetch the folly out of my heart.

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

***“The moment a sinner believes,
And trusts in His crucified God,
His pardon at once he receives,
Redemption in full through Christ's blood.”***

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

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

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

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

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

“Oh,” says one, “I would give all I have for that.” And you might give all you have, but you would not have it at *that* price. You might give the first-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the first place, you will have peace of conscience. That heart of yours that throbs so fast when you are alone will be quite still and quiet. You

will be least alone when you are alone. That fear of yours which makes you quicken your step in the dark because you are afraid of something and you do not know what, will all be gone. I have heard of a man who was so constantly in debt and continually being arrested by the bailiffs, that once upon a time, when going by some area railings, having caught his sleeve upon one of the rails, he turned round and said, "I don't owe you anything, Sir."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is faith, dear Brothers and Sisters! May we all have it and receive forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace.

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

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

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

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

ated by the power of His Grace, according to His purpose through faith! Is it not enough result of being if we are to His praise?

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

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

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

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

Now, dear Friends, *this was the mark of those who were first saved by the great Redeemer* and I want you to notice how the Holy Spirit sets them in a class by themselves. He makes a distinction between those who first trusted and those who trusted afterwards because it is a noteworthy honor to have been among the first that trusted Christ. It is a privilege to be led by Jesus, to trust Him first in order of time by beginning in your earliest youth. Happy are those who enter the Lord’s vineyard amid the dews of the morning, for these redeem years of time from the bitter servi-

tude of sin and turn them to blessed account in the delightful service of the Lord Jesus. Such are usually distinguished in the Church—early piety makes eminent piety—early consecration often leads to abounding usefulness. The Lord evidently delights to be found in a high degree of those who seek Him early. They come to Him, first, and He remembers the kindness of their youth and the promptness with which they obeyed His call.

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

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

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

Now, as this was the mark of the elder born, the text goes on to tell us that *it was the mark of the younger born*—“In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation.” The

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

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

Note, before I leave this portion of the subject, that *trust in Christ is of the same nature in all Believers*. It is not the same in *degree*, nor in constancy, nor in energy, but it is the same *faith*. “You received like precious faith,” said Peter. Paul’s faith and your faith are the same faith if your faith is true faith. The faith of Abraham and the faith of a little child who has newly believed in Jesus are the same *faith*. A diamond is a diamond whatever its size may be and so, little faith and great faith are of the same essence! Whether it is a grain of mustard seed or a mountain-moving faith, it is still faith of the operation of God, faith in the same Object and faith working to the same end. Therefore John, speaking to his converts,

prays, "That you may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." If you are a Believer, you have a right to the same fellowship with God as the Apostle had. You have the same perfect cleansing by the precious blood. You have the same adoption, the same regeneration, you stand in the same place of love and acceptance—you shall be blessed with the same blessings on earth—and you shall enter into the same joy at the right hand of God. See, then, dear Friends, that trust in Christ is the invariable and the Infallible mark of the saved ones!

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

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

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

This trust includes obedience to Him—we have not trusted Him at all unless we are prepared to accept His commands as the rule of our lives. The ship is on fire; the bales of cotton are pouring forth a black, horrible smoke; passengers and crew are in extreme danger, but a capable captain is in command and he says to those around him, "If you will behave yourselves, I think I shall be able to effect the escape of you all." Now, if they trust in the captain they will do precisely as he orders. No sailor or engi-

neer will refuse to work the pumps, or to prepare the boats. Neither will any passenger disobey a rule. In proportion to their confidence in their leader will be the alacrity with which they obey him at once. They believe his orders to be wise and so they keep to them. Neither their fear, nor their rashness will lead them to rush to and fro contrary to his bidding if they have a firm trust in him. When the boats are lowered and are brought, one by one, to the ship's side, those who are to fill them wait till their turns come—in firm reliance upon the captain's impartiality and prudence they will get into the boats or they will wait on board—for they consider that his orders are dictated by a better judgment than their own. So far as each man and each woman firmly believes in the superior officer, discipline will be maintained. Do you not see this?

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

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

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

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

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

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

"What shall we do," said one, "that we may work the work of God?" Meaning thereby a God-like work, a work so great as to bear a heavenly

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

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

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

Observe, first, that we are bound to trust Him from *His very name*. His name is, "Christ," that is, the "Anointed." God has sent Him. God has commissioned Him. God has equipped Him. He is the Anointed of God—dare I distrust Him? An Ambassador from Heaven, with the Divine war-

rant at His back, known to speak in the name of the Lord God, how dare I say I have no confidence in Him? By the glorious name of Christ I claim for Him that you who seek salvation should trust Him implicitly and trust Him at once!

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

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

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

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

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

Besides, *He lives and He has gone up into Glory with the same purpose of Grace upon His heart*. When men change their places, they often change their minds. But He that loved us when He was despised and rejected, loves us now that He is highly exalted. He is not like the chief butler who forgot in the palace the promise which he made in the prison. The love of Calvary is with the Lamb in the midst of the Throne of God! On earth He bleeds, in Heaven He pleads. You Sinners, come and trust the ever-living Christ, for He makes intercession for transgressors! I stand here this

morning and I say to all of you in this house, that I claim your confidence in the Lord Jesus! I do not humbly ask for it as a beggar asks for alms—I *demand*, for the Christ of God—that you put your trust in Him! God has set Him forth to be a Propitiation for sin, that through faith in His blood everyone that believes in Him should be saved. I demand your trust in the name of God! Christ deserves it at your hands and you cannot refuse it without doing Him a gross injustice!

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

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

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

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

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

himself—and he is brought to acknowledge that he is a feeble and dependent creature. I think I see in this consideration an adaptation in faith to be the means chosen of God in the matter of salvation.

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

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

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

Moreover, Brothers and Sisters, trust saves us, because *it grasps the promises of God and pleads them*. It says to God, “You have promised this, therefore I pray You do as You have said.” The God of Truth cannot lie

and, therefore, He must keep His Word. Trust pleads the Sacrifice of Jesus and says—"Lord, the blood of Your Son was shed for the remission of sins, therefore, I pray You let my sins be remitted. You have said that You have laid on Him the iniquity of us all. I pray You let me be unburdened of my load because You have laid it on Him." Trust *must* save, for it has all the promises of the Covenant at its back and the Christ of the Covenant at its side, exhibiting His own precious blood! How can trust but save the soul when God declares it shall do so?

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

"Hold You Your Cross before my failing eyes."

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

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

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Ephesians 1.*
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—909, 531, 559.**

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THE TRUE POSITION OF ASSURANCE NO. 592

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

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

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

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

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

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

Perhaps they will not fall into this error again if they get a right understanding of the text before us. The Apostle Paul here explains the process

by which sealing—the sealing of assurance—is obtained. There are three steps by which the hallowed elevation is reached. The first is *hearing*—they heard first the preaching of the Word. The second is *believing*. And then, thirdly, “after that you believed, you were *sealed* with the Holy Spirit of promise.”

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

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

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

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

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

No doubt that the expression signifies the highest truth, truth as much the truth among other truths, as the Bible is the book above all other books. What I must hear for my salvation is not an important doctrine which may or may not be believed, but the Word without which men must

perish in their sins. We may also remind you that the “Word of Truth” is a phrase peculiar to the contradistinction to the Law. Compare the Revelation of Christ with that of Moses—Moses revealed much Gospel Truth, but it was in shadows, not by a plain word of teaching—and therefore we now declare that the Law was given by Moses—but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.

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

But the text also adds, “the Gospel”—“the Gospel of your salvation.” You are to listen to the Gospel—to that which is good news—to a something totally new to the world’s natural religion—a something which came fresh from God—God’s great novelty—something good—good in the deepest sense—ininitely good—good for your soul’s best interests—good in answering the craving appetite of your poor hungry spirit. It must be good news—it must be evangelical doctrine to which you must listen if you would get faith!

Faith does not come by *seeing*. Men do not get faith by looking at a priest manipulating bread and wine, or sprinkling drops of baptismal water. The symbols of the Church of Rome do not beget faith. They *may* beget *attention*. They *may* please the fancy and delight the taste, but they do *not* beget the faith of God’s elect. It is the Gospel—the Gospel preached and heard which does this through the power of the Holy Spirit! We do not get faith through ordinances—no matter if God Himself prescribed them. They are not the channel through which faith comes. The Apostle expressly declares that, “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”

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

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

Gospel, it certainly will—and that the moment it is accepted by the heart it is the Gospel of your salvation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The process of faith may be thus illustrated. You know a friend of yours to be perfectly reliable—you are in debt. He tells you that if you will trust him to pay the debt, he will give you, on the spot, a receipt for it. Now you look at him. You consider his ability to pay it. You consider the probability

that he means what he is saying. Having once made up your mind that he is truthful, you could not then say, "I cannot believe you." If you once know that person to be truthful, I utterly deny that you can hold any argument about your power to believe him!

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

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

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

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

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

If I have a person here who is ignorant and I teach him—when he acquires knowledge, that knowledge is my gift to him and my work in him.

At the same time he acquires that knowledge himself, and it would never have been his if he had not yielded up his faculties to be taught. Man believes. And whenever persons say to you, "Well, if it is the work of the Holy Spirit, how can it be the duty of man?" remind them that while it is the *work* of the Holy Spirit, it is not the *act* of the Holy Spirit, The Holy Spirit does not believe—it is the *man* who believes.

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

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

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

Faith is not to be estimated by its quantity but by its *quality*. If you have no more faith than a smoking flax has of fire, yet He will not quench you—if you have no more power of faith than a bruised reed has of strength, yet He will not break you! If you are not a man, but an infant in Grace—no, if you are scarcely a healthy infant, if there is but faith in you, though you are cast out as unswaddled and unwashed—yet He passes by and looks upon you! Can you but trust Him? THAT is the thing. If you do but trust Him as a drowning man clutches a rope. If you look to Jesus, as it were, out of the corner of your eye, though there are so many tears in your eyes that you cannot see Him so completely as you desire—though you cannot see Him at all to your comfort—yet you see Him to salvation! If you have received Him, desire great faith, but remember that little faith will carry you to Heaven through Jesus Christ.

Observe, further, that this faith is very variable, but it is not perishable. Faith may go to an ebb, as the tide does, but it will come to a flood again. When faith is at its flood, the man is not, therefore, more saved! And when faith is at its ebb, the man is not, therefore, less saved! For, after all, salvation does not lie in faith, but in *Christ*. And faith is but the connecting link between the soul and Christ. Faith may take Christ up in its arms, like Simeon, and it is true faith. But, on the other hand, faith may only venture to touch the hem of Jesus' garment and that faith makes men whole.

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

When God works upon matter, He works according to the laws of matter. I do not find, apart from miracles, that God violates gravitation—that He breaks any of the great laws with which He has stamped matter. And when the Spirit of God comes to work on man, He does not break the laws with which He regulates the mind. Now, it seems to be one of the laws of the mind that a man should believe a thing not by trying to believe it, but by force of *evidence*. If you now sit down, for instance, and try to believe in the explosion of the powder magazines yesterday—if you have any doubt about it, you may try, as long as you like, to believe it—you cannot do it by *trying*. You must go through another process. You cannot pump faith up from your own mind.

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

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

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

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

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

**“I do believe, I must believe,
That Jesus died for me.**

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

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

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

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

document valid. Notice the difference between the activeness and the passiveness.

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

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

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

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

So it seems there are some of God’s saints who do not get assured till even the last moment and I will not say that there are not some of them who even, like some children, are put to bed in the dark. Christ went up to Heaven in a cloud—Gideon saw the angel ascending in the smoke of the incense and many a good man ascends with clouds of darkness round about him—but still he goes to Heaven! I hope these cases are very few—still we bring them forward to show you that assurance is not to be looked for before faith. You might as well look for the pinnacle before the founda-

tion, for the cream before the milk, for the apples before you plant the tree—for the harvest before you sow the seed. Assurance follows faith.

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

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

This assurance, like faith, is the work of the Spirit of God. “You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” He does this in various ways. Sometimes we get the seal of the Spirit through experience. We know that God is true because we have proved Him. Sometimes this comes through the hearing of the Word—as we listen our faith is confirmed. But there is doubtless, besides this, a special and supernatural work of the Holy Spirit whereby men are assured that they are born of God. You will observe in one place the Apostle says, “The Spirit also bears witness with our spirit, that we are born of God,” so that there are *two* witnesses—first, our spirit bears witness, that is, by evidences. I look at my faith and see myself depending upon Christ and then I know, because I love the Brethren and for other reasons, that I am born of God.

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

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

degree, for it is the earnest of the inheritance. It is a part of Heaven on earth to get an assurance worked by the Spirit!

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

But if assurance is gone, still hang onto Jesus—

***“When your eye of faith is dim,
Still hold onto Jesus, sink or swim.
Still at His footstool bow the knee,
And Israel’s God your peace shall be.”***

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

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

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

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THE SEALING OF THE SPIRIT

NO. 1284

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

soldier of Jesus Christ is to be at war with sin. We are wrestlers and our normal condition is that of “striving according to His working who works in us mightily.” This side of Heaven, if there is a place for nest-building and ease-taking it is not the place for you—you are a pilgrim—and a pilgrim’s business is to be on the road, pressing forward to the home beyond.

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

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

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

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

YOU are the writing which has the stamp put upon it! YOU, yourselves, are sealed! It is not even stated that the Spirit of God seals up Covenant blessings as gold is sealed up in a bag and reserves them for the chosen Seed. The text tells us that Believers, themselves, are thus reserved and marked as the Lord’s peculiar treasure—and it is upon Believers, themselves, that this seal of the Holy Spirit is set. No, Brothers and Sisters, the Holy Spirit does not make the promises sure—they are sure of themselves! God, who cannot lie, has uttered them, and therefore they cannot fail. Nor, my Brethren, does the Holy Spirit make sure *our interest* in those

promises—that interest in the promises was sure in the Divine decree, before the earth was, and is a matter of fact which cannot be changed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Further, the fourth effect of the seal upon Christ was that *it was to the world a witness*. The Spirit of God upon Jesus Christ was not recognized by the ungodly world to be, indeed, Divine, but they perceived and were astonished at a *something* about Him which they did not understand. He spoke with authority and not as the scribes and they confessed, “Never

man spoke like this Man.” They did not know what spirit He was of, but they knew they hated it and straightway they began to oppose Him. Now, Brothers and Sisters, if you have the same seal as your Lord which is described in the text as, “the Spirit of promise,” the same result will follow! Men will wonder at you, misunderstand you and oppose you!

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

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

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

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

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

will the sealing of the Spirit confer upon us—“in Christ Jesus after that you believed, you were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.”

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

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

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

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

Doctrines in the Word which you never understood before become clear to you—“the eyes of your understanding being enlightened.” The blessings promised are more distinctly discerned and you see, “the hope of your calling, and the riches of the glory of the Lord’s inheritance in the saints.” The deeper Truths of God, which at first quite staggered and puzzled you, gradually open up to you and you see and appreciate them. More especially, you discover the Glory of Christ and see the exceeding greatness of the power with which the Lord works in the saints, “according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly

places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come." You drink deep into the blessed thought that Jesus is the Head over all things to His Church and you obtain some glimpses into the mysterious doctrine that the Church is His fullness, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.

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

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

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

Go on a little further and you will notice upon the one seal a further mark, namely—fellowship. "You were without Christ, being aliens from the

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

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

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

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

I am distinctly conscious, somehow, that 20 years ago I was not what I now am. I sometimes feel like a bird in the eggshell! I am chipping it away bit by bit. I believe it will break, one of these days, and the bird will come out. But I often feel my wings fretted and cramped by the shell. I want the

life in me to be developed and set free! Do you never feel the same? Have you not felt as if you, yourself, were big with a far more glorious nature and longed for deliverance from flesh and frailty? These groans, aspirations, hopes and desires are all seals of salvation!

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

***"Do You not dwell in all the saints,
And seal them heirs of Heaven?"***

Yes, that is the manner of the sealing, according to the prayer of our hymn—

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

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

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

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

edge and that life you are perfectly conscious—you do not need to ask anybody else about them. A man may ask me whether I know So-and-So—I am the best witness whether I do or not. If I am asked, “How do you know you are alive?” Well, I walk about, that is all, and I am quite sure about it—I do not need any further evidence.

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

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

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

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Ephesians 1*.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—168, 458, 728.**

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THE EARNEST OF HEAVEN

NO. 358

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

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

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

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

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

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

If we paused here we might give up all idea of beholding from our houses of clay that goodly land and Lebanon. But we do not pause, for like the Apostle we go on with the text and we add, “But He has revealed it unto us by His Spirit.” It is possible to look within the veil. God's Spirit *can* turn it aside for a moment and bid us take a glimpse—though it be but a distant one—at that unutterable glory. There are Pisgahs even now on the surface of the earth, from the top of which the celestial Canaan can be

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Heaven, spirits are always on the wing. Their lips are always singing the eternal *hallelujahs* unto the great *Jehovah* that sits upon the Throne. Their fingers are never divorced from the strings of their golden Harps. Their feet never cease to run in obedience to the eternal will—they rest, but they rest on the wing. As the poet pictured the angel as he flew—not

needing to move his wings but resting and yet darting swiftly through the ether, as though he were a flash shot from the eye of God.

So shall it be with the people of God eternally. Ever singing—never hoarse with music. Ever serving—never wearied with their service. “They rest not day and night.” Have there ever been times with you, when you have had both the pledge and the earnest of this kind of Heaven? I have when I have preached once and again and again and again in one day. But some have said to me, “But the constitution will be destroyed, the mind will be weakened. Such toil as this will bring the man low.” But we have been able to reply, “We do not feel it. For the more toil has been cast upon us, the more strength has been given.”

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

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

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

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

I always say to my Strict Baptist Brethren who think it a dreadful thing for baptized believers to commune with the unbaptized. “But you cannot help it. If you are the people of God you must commune with all saints, baptized or not. You may deny them the outward and visible sign, but you

cannot keep from them the inward and spiritual grace.” If a man is a child of God I do not care what I may think about him—if I be a child of God I *do* commune with him and I must. We are all parts of the same body, all knit to Christ and it is not possible that one part of Christ’s body should ever be in any state but that of communion with all the rest of the body.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At any rate, if that was the aim of the different authors they have most of them admirably succeeded. I do not believe in great commentaries upon the whole Bible—no one man can write such a book so that all of it shall be valuable. When a man gives his whole life to some one book, that one is worth reading. When a man has taken up, as some have done, the Epistle to the Romans, or the Book of Genesis and gone on year after year toiling through it, then such a book has been a monument of labor and has been valuable to the Christian student. But generally large commentaries give little information where most it is needed.

Well, disappointed, you have gone back to your Bible and have said, “I must not meddle with this text, it is above me.” But it has repeated itself in your ears. You could not make it out. It has followed you—dogged your steps—it would not go away from you. At last you thought, “There was a message from God in that text.” You prayed over it. While you were pray-

ing, some one word in the text seemed to lift itself right out of the connection and shone upon you like a star. And in the light of that one word you could see the meaning of all the words that preceded and followed and you rose up from your knees feeling that you knew the mind of the Spirit there and had got a step forward in Scriptural knowledge.

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

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

6. But further than this—to put two or three thoughts into one, for brevity's sake—whenever, Christian, you have achieved a victory over your lusts—whenever after hard struggling you have had a temptation dead at your feet—you have had in that day and hour a foretaste of the joy that awaits you, when the Lord shall shortly tread Satan under your feet. That victory in the first skirmish is the pledge and the earnest of the triumph in the last decisive battle. If you have overcome *one* foe, you shall overthrow them all. If the walls of Jericho have been dismantled, so shall every fort be carried and you shall go up a conqueror over the ruins thereof.

And when, Believer, you have known your security in Christ—when you have been able to say, “I *know* that my Redeemer lives and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him”—when you have felt sure that earth and Heaven might die, but *His love* could never pass away—when you have sung out the strong lines of Top-lady—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Their love of Christ and Christ’s love to them, had overcome them. Their soul was something in the state of John, whom we described last Lord’s-Day morning: “When I saw *Him*, I fell at His feet as dead.” A sacred faintness overcomes my soul, I die—I die to prove the fullness of redeeming love, the love of Christ to me. Oh, these seasons! Talk not of feasts you son of mirth! Tell us not of music, you who delight in melodious sound.

Tell us not of wealth and rank and honor and the joys of victory. One hour with Christ is worth an eternity of all earth's joys. May I but see *Him*, may I but see *His* face, but behold *His* beauties—come winds, blow away all earthly joys I have—this joy shall well content my soul.

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is another world for the *wicked*, as well as for the righteous. They who believe not in Christ are no more annihilated than those who do believe in Him. Immortality awaits us all. We die, but we die not. We live *for-*

ever. And if we fear not God, that immortality is the most frightful curse that ever fell on creature—

***“To linger in eternal death,
Yet death forever fly.”***

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

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

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

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

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

He fancies you cannot see through him. But you can plainly discover that he is as afraid of dying as ever he can be. I know at this moment a family where the governess was instructed, when she took the situation,

never to mention the subject of death to the children or else she would be instantly discharged. Oh, that fear of dying which haunts some men! Not when their blood boils and they are excited—then they could rush to the cannon's mouth, but when they are cool and steady and look at it. When it is not the sword's point and glory, but dying, mere dying—then they shiver.

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

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

With these men one may pray. They bid you pray *for* them and then they say. "Get up, Sir, it is of no use.; God will never hear you for me." They will ask you to go home and pray. But assure you that it will be useless to do so. You read the Bible to them. "Don't read the Scriptures," they say, "every text cuts me to the quick, for I have neglected the Word of God and all my time now is past." You tell them that—

***"While the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return."***

No, no, *they* cannot. You may tell them that there is hope—that Jesus Christ calls many at the eleventh hour. You picture to them the thief on the cross.

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

Oh, may God deliver you from ever knowing this vilest premonition of destruction! And how shall you be delivered, but by this? "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. For he that believes and is bap-

tized shall be saved”—so says the Scripture—“He that believes not shall be damned.” Trust Christ and you are saved, be you whom you may. Come to the foot of the Cross and cast yourself where His blood is dropping and you are saved. Give your heart to Him, believe in Him, repose your confidence in Him.

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

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

THE THREE WHATS

NO. 1466

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

**[On a night when the Tabernacle was thrown open to all comers,
the ordinary hearers vacating their seats for the occasion.]**

***“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.”
Ephesians 1:18-20.***

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

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

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

Now, the prayer of our text was offered for Christians—for converted persons, for those who had faith in Christ Jesus and love to all the saints—yet Paul says that he never ceased to pray that their eyes might be

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

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

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

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

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

Our first point is, "*What is the hope of His calling?*" A great many persons never think about religion because they cannot believe that there is much in it. If they had half an idea of what is to be gained by it, even now, and of the unspeakable blessedness which will come of it throughout eternity, surely their own desire to benefit themselves would incline them diligently to *consider* it even if they went no further. So promising a matter is at least worth looking into, for it would be a great pity to miss present and eternal happiness if it can be had. But no, they suppose it to be a very small and trifling thing, fit only for the thoughts of priests and women and such weak folk—and so they neglect it, despise it and look after other business.

Tonight, while I try to tell what is the hope of the Christian man's calling, I boldly claim your best consideration! If the preacher may not request it on his own account, he may assuredly ask it on the ground that

his theme deserves it. Perhaps while we are speaking of the worth of this hope and you are lending an attentive ear, the Lord may lead you to seek His face. Is it not written, "Incline your ear and come unto Me, hear and your soul shall live"? Many a man has been tempted to start upon a voyage by hearing much of the land to which he sails. Praise his goods and you will find buyers for the merchant. Such is our desire at this time—we would so speak of the hope of our calling as to allure those who are eager after sweets to taste and see that the Lord is good!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The hope of a man who sings on forever—living in the circle of Divine Love, dying beneath the protection of Divine Power and abiding in the

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

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

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

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

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

What else is the hope of our calling? Why, that being thus cleared in judgment and made absolutely perfect, we shall forever—for eternal duration is the glory of our heritage—we shall *forever* enjoy infinite happiness! We do not know what form, the joys of eternity will take, but they will take such form as shall make us the most happy. We shall have Heaven's best, yes *God's* best, and what that is, who among us can guess, though he uses all his knowledge and gives the reins to his expectancy? “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him; but He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.”

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

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

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

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

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

And now I turn to the second, "what," of the text and that is more marvelous, still! I am sure I cannot preach the text out—it is too great for me, but here it is—"That you may know *what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.*" Mark well that God's people are, by Grace, made to be His saints, His select, His holy ones—and then they are viewed as

His inheritance! The whole world is God's. The cattle on a thousand hills and all lands and seas are His and yonder starry worlds which in profusion are sown in space are all His! But He deigns to call sanctified *men* and *women* His inheritance in a special sense! They are His peculiar treasure, His crown jewels, dear and precious to Him. "The Lord's portion is His people, Jacob is the lot of His inheritance."

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

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

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

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

As the Lord looks over all that He has made, He sees nothing that has cost Him suffering and death till He comes to His people! Jesus knows

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

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

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

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

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

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

Think, again, dear Friends. There once stood a bright spirit in Heaven, leader of the angels, but the place was too high for him and the Son of the Morning fell from Heaven and dragged others with him. God is making, by His Grace, beings who will stand next to His Throne, but will remain forever reverently loyal. They will be peers in His kingdom, but they will never be proud or ambitious. We, my Brethren, though in full possession of our free agency, shall never fall from our eternal glory, but shall be forever faithful! We shall have passed through such an experience of sin; we shall so intensely feel our indebtedness to Grace; we shall so fervently love the dear Redeemer that we shall cast our crowns at His feet and we shall ascribe our joy to Him, alone, and so shall never dream of revolting from Him.

God is thus making beings whom it will be safe to exalt to honors so near His own—will not this be a triumph of power and goodness? Can you think of it, that you will be one of such favored creatures, if indeed you are a Believer? These beings will have known evil. Think of that! The un-fallen angels have never actually known evil, but in restored man shall be fulfilled the devil's lie made into God's truth—"You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." They shall hate evil as the burnt child dreads fire and they shall love righteousness because by righteousness they have been saved—and in righteousness they have been created anew! How wonderful will that creature be which has known sin and remains a free agent—and yet will never yield to folly but abide forever in holiness held by bonds of love!

Oh, when I think of the destiny of a child of God, my eyes sparkle, but my tongue refuses to utter what I think! What a being are you, O man! What are you that God should visit you? He has made you "a little lower than the angels," but in Christ Jesus He has crowned you with glory and honor and given you dominion over all the works of His hands, yes, in Christ He has raised you up and made you to sit with Him in the heavenly places, far above principalities and powers and your time to reign and triumph forever is hard at hand! How glorious is God in His people! God in Christ Jesus, seen in the Church, who is like unto you?

Now, the point is that if this is the riches of God's Glory in His inheritance in the saints, you may read it in another way and say, "This is the riches of our inheritance, too, for what shall *we* be if God is to have *us* for an inheritance?" Will you miss it? Will you miss it? Will you miss it? If this is a dream, I could wish to die rather than have the illusion dispelled! But it is fact, as God's Word is true! Will you miss it, then? Oh, if there were crowns to be scrambled for, most men are ambitious enough to seek for one, though it might be a curse to them! If there is gold, or if there is fame, men have but to hear the chink of the metal or the blast of the

trumpet and many stir themselves to win! But here is honor, glory and *immortality* in Christ—and it is to be had for the *asking*, it is to be had by simply believing and trusting in Jesus Christ—will you have it? Oh, foolish hand that is not stretched out to receive it! Oh, foolish heart that does not pray for it! God grant you to know what is the “riches of His inheritance in the saints,” that you may seek to be a part in that inheritance and seek it now!

Now, the third “what”—“*What is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.*” I thought I heard somebody saying, “Woe is me! Woe is me! I hear of what man may be. I hear of what God may make of him, but, woe is me—it will never come to my lot! I am so weak, so fickle, so irresolute, so frail! Woe is me! I am undone. I have no strength!”

Now, the third “what” is this—“that you may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us, who believe.” Now, learn this and know it, that in the conversion, preservation and salvation of any one person, God exhibits as great a power as He manifested when He raised Jesus Christ from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places! The salvation of no man in the world is by his own strength. It is by the power of God, “for we are His workmanship.” This fact should greatly relieve you who are discouraged—the thing is impossible with you—but it is *not* impossible, or even difficult with God! He that has worked *us* to the same thing is God and He is quite as able to work it in you, my dear Hearer, as to work it in the Apostle Paul himself. God can do all things!

Now, when our Lord Jesus lay in the tomb, He was dead, but God quickened Him. Jesus was imprisoned in the sepulcher and the stone at the grave’s mouth was sealed and guarded—but the stone was rolled away, the guards were frightened and the Lord of Life rose from among the dead! Every sinner is shut up in the tomb of sin by evil habits, but Christ can roll away the stone and the sinner can come forth a living man! Our Lord continued on earth among men for several days and, despite human enmity, no man hurt Him, for He had received a Life and a Glory which they could not approach. The saints also abide here among men and many seek to destroy them, but God has given them a new life which can never be destroyed, for He has hedged it about from all its adversaries.

All the powers of darkness fought against the Lord Jesus Christ, but, through the power of God, He conquered them all. I think I see Him, now, ascending up on high leading captivity captive in the power of God. So, my Brothers and Sisters, you will be opposed by the powers of darkness and by your own evil heart, but you shall conquer, for God will put forth the same power in *you* which He manifested in His dear Son and you, too, shall lead captivity captive! I see the Lord Jesus entering the pearly gates and climbing to His Throne. There He sits and none can bring Him down! And *you*, too, believing in Jesus, shall have the same power to tread down all your foes, your sins, your temptations, till you shall rise and sit where Jesus sits at the right hand of God!

The very same power which raised Christ is waiting to raise the drunk from his drunkenness; to raise the thief from his dishonesty; to raise the Pharisee from his self-righteousness and to raise the Sadducee from his unbelief. God has power among the sons of men and this power He puts forth in making them to be a people that shall show forth His praise. Oh, that you knew what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, because then you would fling away despair. There remains nothing for you in this case but to submit to the Divine power! God will work in you—be willing to be worked upon!

O Spirit of the Lord, work in our hearers this good will! Drop yourselves like plastic clay at the Potter's feet and He will put you on the wheel and mold you at His pleasure. Be willing, it is all He asks you—be trustful, it is all His Gospel requires of you and, indeed, both will and trust He *gives* you! "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land." Be willing to let go of the sin which ruins you! Be willing to learn the Truth of God which will renew you! Be willing to sit at Jesus' feet; be willing to accept a finished salvation at His hands and all the power that is needed to lift you from this place to the starry gates of Heaven is waiting to be shed upon you! God give you to know this and so to rest in Jesus and be saved!

II. The last word is to be upon the second head—WHY WE WISH YOU TO SEE AND KNOW ALL THIS. I have, in effect, been all along enforcing this second head as the sermon has progressed and so I shall not need to detain you many minutes, except with a practical recapitulation. We want you to know *the hope of His calling* that you may not neglect it, nor set anything in competition with it. I tried, as my poor words enabled me to tell you, what a hope the calling of God gives the Christian. I charge you, do not let it go! I shall probably never meet the most of you again and if any shall say to you afterwards, "Well, what did the man say?" I would like you to be compelled to say, "He said this—that there is a future before us of such Glory that he charged us not to lose it. There are the possibilities of such an intense delight forever and ever that he besought us to ensure that delight by accepting Christ and His way of salvation."

Next we want you to believe *the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints*, that you may see where *your* hope lies. Your hope lies in not being your own any more, but in being the Lord's and so realizing "the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints." The saints belong to their Lord—your salvation will be found in experimentally knowing that you are not your own because you are bought with a price—yes, in admitting at this moment that your honor and happiness are found in being the Lord's! If you are your own, you will spend yourself and be ruined—but if you are Christ's—He will take care of you. Oh, if I thought that I had a hair of this head that belonged to only myself, I would tear it out! But to be owned by Jesus altogether—spirit, soul and body—to be Christ's man in the entirety of my being, this, I say, is glory, immortality and eternal life! Be your own, and you will be lost! Be Christ's and you are saved!

The closing thought is this. We want you to know *the exceeding greatness of God's power* that you may not doubt, or despond, or despair, but come now and cast yourselves upon the Incarnate God and let Him save you! Yield yourselves unto Him that the great Glory of His power may be

manifest in you as in the rest of His people. I don't want you to go until you have really hidden these things in your hearts to ponder them in the days to come. I set bread before you—do not merely look at it, but eat a portion now and carry the rest home to eat in secret! Our preaching is often too much like a fiddler's playing. People come to see how it is done and then they pass round the question, "What did you think of him?"

Now, I do not care two straws what you think of *me*, but I do care a whole world what you think of Christ and of yourselves and of your future state! I pray you forget the way in which I put things, for that may be very blundering and faulty! But if there is anything in the things, *themselves*, consider them with care. If you judge the Bible to be a fraud and that there is no Heaven to be had, then go—sport and laugh as you please—for you will only act consistently with your erroneous imagination! But if you believe God's Word to be true and that there is a glorious hope connected with the Christian's high calling, then in the name of prudence and common sense why do you not seek it? Give no sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids till you find it!

I ask the Lord's people here present and I know that there are many such in the audience tonight, to pray that this appeal may have an effect upon many in this great crowd—that they may seek the Lord at once with full purpose of heart. O Spirit of God, work it, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Ephesians 1; 2:1*
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—176, 757, 728.**

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:

DEAR FRIENDS—Accept my most loving salutations. May all Grace abound towards each one of you and may your joy and peace be multiplied thereby. I feel daily improving in health and strength; only my knees remain feeble. I still adhere to my determination, if the Lord wills, to preach on Lord's-Day, April 13. May His Presence, then, be with us. I earnestly entreat the prayers of all who know how to plead with God that when I return among you it may be in the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit and that my usefulness may be increased a hundredfold. Surely all the suffering I have endured and all the rest I have enjoyed should bring forth some fruit unto God! Yet so feeble are we that we profit nothing unless the Spirit of the Lord quickens us. By all the affectionate interest which you have up to now shown in my ministry, intercede for me, I beseech you, that I may yet be made a blessing to myriads,

Yours in heartiest love,
C.H. SPURGEON
Mentone, March 27, 1879

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THE MIGHTY POWER WHICH CREATES AND SUSTAINS FAITH NO. 534

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 11, 1863,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“The exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And has put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.”
Ephesians 1:19-23.*

To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all our heart is one of the simplest things imaginable. To trust Christ, to depend upon His power and faithfulness is such a childlike act that one sees no extraordinary difficulty in it. Yet, to bring the human mind to exercise simple faith in Jesus is a work of the most astounding power. To bring down the pride of man, to subjugate his will and to captivate his passions so that he shall cheerfully accept that which God presents to him in the Person of Christ Jesus, is a labor worthy of God.

How strangely vile are they who cannot be brought to know their own mercies, except by an Omnipotent power! The blessed Spirit of God is always the secret Author of faith. It is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. Our text twice over uses the strongest words which could be employed to set forth the Almighty power exhibited in bringing a soul to believe in Jesus and in bringing that believing soul onward till it ascends to Heaven. You will carefully notice we have first of all this expression, “The exceeding greatness of His power.” And then we have on the other side of the word “Believe,” lest it should escape from the sacred barrier, these words, “According to the working of His mighty power.”

Now, the first expression is a very amazing one. It might be read thus—“The superexcellent, sublime, overcoming, or triumphing greatness of His power.” And the other is even more singular—it is a Hebrew mode of speech forced to do duty in the Greek tongue—“The effectual working of the might of His strength.” Or, “The energy of the force of His power,” or some such strong expression as that. As if the Apostle was not content to say, “You believe through the power of God,” nor “through the greatness of that power,” but “through the *exceeding* greatness of His power.”

And not satisfied with declaring that the salvation of man is the fruit of God's might, he must needs put it, His mighty power—no, as if that were not enough, he writes the energy, the efficacious activity of the power of that might. No amount of straining at the passage can ever get rid of the grand doctrine which it contains, namely, that the bringing of a soul to simple faith in Jesus and the maintenance of that soul in the life of faith displays an exercise of Omnipotence such as God alone could put forth.

Nor need we, dear Friends, be at all surprised at this, when we recollect what the work of salvation really is. Be it never forgotten by us that the salvation of a soul is *a creation*. Now, no man has ever been able to create a fly, nor even a single molecule of matter. Man knows how to fashion created substance into many forms. But to create the minutest atom is utterly beyond his might. Jehovah alone creates. "All things were created by Him and for Him." No human or angelic power can intrude upon this glorious province of Divine power—creation is God's own domain.

Now, in every Christian there is an absolute creation—"Created anew in Christ Jesus." "The new man, after God, is created in righteousness." "Regeneration is not the reforming of principles which were there before, but the implantation of a something which had no existence. It is the putting into a man a new thing called the spirit, the new man—the creation not of a soul, but of a principle higher still—as much higher than the soul as the soul is higher than the body. Since the life and principle created are the most glorious of all God's works, being in fact a part of the Divine nature itself, I may say most boldly that in the bringing of any man to believe in Christ, there is as true and proper a manifestation of creating power, as when God made the heavens and the earth.

Further than this, there is more than creation—there is *destruction*. No man can destroy anything. Since the world began, not a single particle of matter has ever been annihilated. You may cast matter into the depths of the sea, but there it is. It still exists. Cast it into the fire and the fire consumes it—but either in the ash or in the smoke, every atom survives. Fire does not destroy a single particle. There is as much matter in the world now as when God first spoke it out of nothing. It is as great an exercise of divinity to destroy as it is to create—

***"Know that the Lord is God alone—
He can create and He destroy."***

In the regeneration of every soul there is a destruction as well as a creation. The old man has to be destroyed—the stony heart has to be taken away out of our flesh. And though this is not done in all of us—no, nor in any of us completely—yet the day shall come when sin shall be utterly destroyed—both root and branch and all evil principles shall be torn up by the roots and, like our sins, they shall cease to be—so that if they were searched for they could not be found. When the morning stars sang together because a world was made, creation was their one theme.

God made the world out of nothing. That was an easy task compared with making a new heart and a right spirit, for "nothing" at least could not oppose God—"nothing" could not stand out against Him. But here, in salvation, God had to deal with an opposing something which He has to fight

with and to destroy. And when that has been reduced and overcome, then comes in the creating power by which we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus. So that it is a *double miracle*, something more than creation—it is creation and destruction combined.

The work of salvation is most truly a *transformation*. “Be you transformed by the renewing of your mind.” You who have been made anew in Christ Jesus know in your own hearts how great that transformation is. The wolf, with all its bloodthirsty tendencies, feeds quietly with all the amiable gentleness of the lamb. The lion eats straw like the ox. The desert becomes a garden, and the dry land springs water. What is more wonderful still, stones of the brook become children unto Abraham. The Lord takes the man who is like the leopard—covered with spots—and cleanses him till he is whiter than snow.

He takes the Ethiopian, black as night, and does but touch him with the matchless blood of Jesus and he becomes all together fair and lovely. None of the fanciful transformations of which Ovid sang of old could ever rival the matchless work of God when He displays His power upon the human mind. Oh, what a difference between a sinner and a saint, between “dead in trespasses and sins,” and quickened by Divine Grace! If God should speak to Niagara and bid its floods in their tremendous leap suddenly stand still—that were a trifling demonstration of power compared with the staying of a desperate human will. If He should suddenly speak to the broad Atlantic and bid it be wrapped in flames, we should not even, then, see such a manifestation of His greatness as when He commands the human heart and makes it submissive to His love.

Remember, too, as if this were not enough, that the conversion of a soul is constantly compared to *quickenings*—the quickening of the dead. How great the miracle when the dry bones in Ezekiel’s vision suddenly became a great army! Greater still is the transcendent work of night when dead souls are quickened and made to serve the living God! Indeed it is not only the first act of conversion which displays Divine power—but the whole of the Christian’s career, until he comes to perfection—is a clear display of the same. The spiritual life may be likened unto *the burning bush* which Moses saw in Horeb. It burnt, but it was not consumed. Such is the Christian—like a bush, he is most fitting fuel for the flame. Yet the flame does not hurt him. It kindles about him, but he is not destroyed.

Or the Christian life may be likened to *walking upon water*. As Peter trod the waves and did not sink so long as his faith looked to Jesus, so the Believer, every day, in every footstep that he takes is a living miracle. Faith, too, in its life may be compared to *flying*—“They shall mount up on wings as eagles.” “I bear you as upon eagles’ wings.” The Believer every day takes venturesome flights into the atmosphere of Heaven, rises above the world, leaves its cares and its wants beneath his feet and that, too, with no other wings but those of faith and love. Herein is a continued and splendid miracle of the Divine power.

But to come to our text—laying it down, then, as being most certain that the work of the conversion and sanctification of a Believer is an amazing display of Divine might—we have in the text given to us a most

singular analogy. The Apostle declares to us by the Holy Spirit that the very same power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead and exalted Him to the highest Heaven is seen in the conversion and preservation of every individual Believer. Now, we shall first *notice the analogy*. Secondly, we shall *consider the reason of it*. And thirdly, we shall observe the *inferences which come from it*.

I. First of all, we shall consider THE ANALOGY WHICH THE APOSTLE HERE POINTS OUT. Conceive that you hold a great pair of golden compasses. You are to put one foot of the compass here upon the grave of Christ. You are to open those compasses till you reach Christ ascending up into Heaven. Widen them again and again and again, till you put down the other foot of the compass where Christ is Head over all things to the Church, which is His fullness. Now, can you imagine such a stretch as that? You have to conceive of the power by which the dead body of Christ is brought to all that pre-eminence of honor—and then to remember that just such power is seen in you if you are a Believer.

In examining the wonderful picture before us, we begin with Christ in the grave, by noticing that it was in Christ's case *a real death*. Those loving hands have taken Him down from the Cross. Those weeping eyes have let fall hallowed drops upon His face. Tenderly have the women wrapped Him about with spices and fine linen, and now He is about to be put into the tomb. He is assuredly dead. The pericardium of the heart has been pierced—blood and water have both freely flowed. Lift up the pierced hand and it falls at once to His side. The lids of yonder eyes, so red with weeping, do but cover eyes glazed with death. The foot has no power of motion.

Take up the Corpse, you loving bearers, carry it and put it into the tomb—this is no trance, but a most certain death. So is it with us—by nature we are really dead. We were dead in trespasses and sins. Try to stir the natural man to spiritual action and you cannot do it. Lift up his hand to good works, he has no power to perform them. Try to make the feet run in the ways of righteousness. They will not move an inch. The fact is that *the heart* is dead. The living pulse of spiritual life which was in our parent Adam has long ago ceased. Neither can the eyes perceive any beauty in Immanuel, nor can the nostril discover the fragrance of the Lord's sweet spices, nor can the ear hear the voice of the Beloved. The man is absolutely and entirely dead as to anything like spiritual life. There he lays in the grave of his corruption and must lay there, and rot, too, unless Divine Grace shall interpose.

In Christ's case, He was not only dead, but as the text tells us, He was *among the dead*. "He has raised up Jesus Christ *from the dead*." Do notice that. He lay for some time sleeping among those who dwelt in the tomb—among the dead. Three days and nights He is a denizen of the lonely shades. He was numbered among the victims of death's dart. "He made His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death." Such were some of us—we were among the dead—and "were by nature the children of wrath," even as others in the case of some of us, our outward life was just that of other ungodly men. Were they drunkards? So were we. Were

they immoral? So were we. Did they take delight in the flesh? So did we. Did they follow the desires of the mind? So did we.

Were they hard-hearted and impenitent and unbelieving? So were we. Whatever may be said of any ungodly man, may be said of at least some of those whom God has quickened by His Divine power. We, like Jesus, were reckoned among the dead. If you had seen His Corpse, you would have discovered no difference between it and the body of another, save only that He saw no corruption. Dear Brothers and Sisters, in this our case is lower than that of our Lord, for we *did* see corruption. The old man is "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." Yes, more, we were "children that are corrupters," and in nothing did we differ from others, save that the Lord had predestinated that no bands of death should hold us forever, for He was determined to save and to bring us to His right hand.

Come with me again to the new tomb in the garden. Will that sleeper ever rise? Will that hallowed tomb ever be burst? No, never while time and eternity shall last, unless God shall interfere. Here comes a *heavenly messenger*. His face is like lightning and his raiment white as snow—and for fear of him the keepers do quake and become as dead men. So, when the time comes, in God's great power, He sends His messenger—it is no angelic spirit whose face is like lightning but it is some humble minister of Christ, who, nevertheless, is clothed with power.

He has in his mouth a sharp two-edged sword and when he speaks of Christ, for fear of Him sins tremble and the prejudices and enmities of men's hearts become as dead men. The Divine power is seen all the more in the fact that the messenger in the second case is an earthen vessel, a poor creature of flesh and blood. There is a Divine mandate for *our* resurrection, as much as for that of Jesus Christ.

There came with that messenger *a mysterious life*. You cannot see it, but inside that tomb a Spirit has fallen upon those once bleeding limbs and entered that lifeless Corpse. The eyes shall soon see the light, for the hands are already unwinding the napkin from the brow. The cerements are unbound, one by one. The feet are free and the whole frame is clear of every encumbrance. No one saw the life come back. If anyone had watched that Corpse, they could not have seen the vital spark of heavenly flame return to its proper altar. No, it was a mysterious thing.

Ah, there was a time with us when the messenger of God came, but *he* could not quicken us. He could only make the keepers shake and tremble. But a mysterious life from God the Holy Spirit fell into our souls and we were as we never were before. We trembled with a new fear, rejoiced with a new joy, believed with a fresh confidence and hoped with a Divine hope. We lived! And oh, can we ever forget the moment when first we began to live unto God? Divine Spirit, You did it. Let all the glory be unto Your name.

Then came an *earthquake*, by which the stone was rolled away, showing that the power put forth was enough to shake the earth and to make all the elements obedient. Surely when God shakes but common dust and clay, and rock and stone, we wonder and men stand in awe. But when he rends the harder marble of our hearts and moves the grosser cast and

heavier earth of our spirits, *there* is reason to praise and bless His name! The stone being removed, *forth came the Savior*. He was free—*raised up no more to die*. He stood erect, beheld by His followers, who, alas, did not know Him. And even so we, when the Divine life has come and the Divine energy has burst our tomb, come forth to a new life—no more to die.

Then men of the world know us not, because they knew *Him* not. They misunderstand our motives, they misrepresent our actions, they contort our words—because now we have a life of which *they* are not the subjects and have come into a resurrection-state to which they are utter strangers. You see the parallel holds. We, too, in the same manner as Christ was raised from the dead, have been made to live in newness of life, even as the Master Himself said, “As the Father raises up the dead and quickens them. Even so the Son quickens whom He wills.”

Please to note here, dearly beloved Friends, that in the resurrection of Christ, as in our salvation, there was put forth nothing short of a *Divine power*. It was not angelic or arch-angelic, much less was it human. What shall we say of those who think that conversion is worked by the free will of man? Who ascribe man’s salvation to his own goodness of disposition, or to his willingness to accept that which God presents to him? Beloved, when we shall see the dead in the graves rise by their own power, then expect to see ungodly sinners turn to Christ. It is not the ministry, it is not the Word preached, nor the Word heard in itself. All the power proceeds from the Holy Spirit.

Observe again, that this power was *irresistible*. All the soldiers and the high priests could not keep the body of Christ in the tomb. Death himself could not hold Christ in his bonds. When the life-pangs first began to move in Jesus, he could no longer be held by death. Then was death swallowed up in victory. The Father brought forth His begotten Son and said, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” He was the first begotten from the dead. Irresistible is the power put forth, too, in the Christian. No sin, no corruption, no temptation, no devils in Hell, nor sinners upon earth can ever stop the hand of God’s Grace when it intends to convert a man. If God says, “You shall,” man shall not say, “I will not,” or, if he does, as the trees of the woods before the hurricane are torn up by the roots, so shall the human will give place to the irresistible power of Divine Grace.

Observe, too, that the power which raised Christ from the dead was *glorious*. It reflected great honor upon God and brought great dismay upon the hosts of evil. So there is great glory to God in the conversion of every sinner.

Lastly, it was *everlasting power*. “Christ being raised from the dead dies no more. Death has no more dominion over Him.” So we, being raised from the dead, go not back to our dead works nor to our old corruptions, but we live unto God. Because He lives, we live also, for we are dead and our life is hid with Christ in God. The parallel will hold in every point, however minute. “Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

You see I have not stretched the compasses half-way yet. We have only proceeded so far as to see Christ raised from the dead. But the power ex-

hibited in the Christian goes farther than this—it goes onward to the ASCENSION. If you will carefully read the story of the ascension, you will notice first that Christ's ascension was *contrary to nature*. How should the body of a man without any means be borne upward into the air? "While He blessed them He was taken out of their sight." So the Christian's rising above the world, his breathing another atmosphere, is contrary to nature. How would you marvel if you saw a man suddenly rise up into the sky? Wonder more when you see a Christian rise above temptation, worldliness, and sin. When you discover him forsaking those things which once were his delight and mounting towards Heaven!

You will observe again, that the disciples *could not long see the rising Savior*. "A cloud received Him out of their sight." So in our case, too, if we rise as we should rise, if the Spirit of God works in us all the good pleasure of His will, men will soon lose sight of us. They will not understand us. They will be certain to run here and there, wondering at this and marveling at that. They will call us mad, fanatical, wild, enthusiastic, and I know not what else. And we, on our part, must not wonder at it, for now we look down and wonder at them as much as they wonder at us. They think it strange that we should be looking for unseen things, and hoping for that which we see not. We, on the other hand, look down upon them and wonder how it is that they can heap together things of clay, and find a living joy in dying things and fix eternal hopes on shadows that are soon—so soon—to melt away forever.

Jesus Christ continued to ascend by that same Divine power until He had reached the seat of Heaven above. He was gone, really gone from earth altogether. Such is the Christian's life. He continues to ascend—the Lord makes him dead to the world and the carnal multitude know him no more. Where his treasure is, his heart is also. He is risen with Christ and his affection is set on things above, not on things on the earth. See, Beloved, we have stretched our compass somewhat wide now, when we say that there is as much Divine power seen in raising the Christian above the world, as in raising Christ from the grave into Heaven.

But that is not all. When the Master had come to Heaven, we are told in the text, that He was made *to sit down at the right hand of God*. Sitting at the right hand implies *honor, pleasure and power*. Conceive the change! "He was despised and rejected of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief." They spat in His face and bowed the knee, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews." He has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High. He was full of misery—"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death," said He. The plowers made deep furrows upon His back and His visage was more marred than that of any man. But now His joy is full. He is at the right hand of God, where there are pleasures forevermore.

He was a worm and no man—the despised of the people. "All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn." They shake the head. They thrust out the lip, saying, "He trusted in God that He would deliver Him. Let Him deliver Him, seeing He delights in Him." But see Him now! He has sat down forever at the right hand of God, even the Father. Note the change from depths of reproach to heights of Glory! From fearful deeps of sorrow to

glorious summits of bliss! From weakness, shame and suffering, to strength and majesty and dominion, and glory! Such is the change in the Christian—just such a change.

You, too, what were you? Were you worthy to have been cast upon a dunghill? No, scarcely fit for that. You were like salt which had lost its savor, neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill. God and man might have cast you out. You were utterly worthless and fit for nothing. As for suffering, ah, how were your bones broken by convictions of sin! The sorrows of death compassed you and the pains of Hell get hold upon you, for the arrows of God stuck fast in your loins, and the sword of God pierced to the dividing asunder of your soul and spirit.

As for power, what power had you? You could not lift a finger. You could not pray. You could not believe. And yet, where are you now? Why, if you know where you are, you are this day as a Believer sitting down at the right hand of God—God's Beloved One, ministered unto of angels—God's Son, endowed with power and made to sit and reign together with the Lord Jesus Christ! All that sitting at the right hand of God can mean in respect to the Man Christ Jesus, it means in respect to every Believer.

The Apostle Paul, in Hebrews, writes concerning man in Christ Jesus, "What is man, that You are mindful of him? Or the son of man, that You visit him? You made him a little lower than the angels. You crowned him with glory and honor and did set him over the works of Your hands—You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." At the right hand of God is the Believer's place at this very day. May an act of faith give you a sweet enjoyment of it.

But note next, that Christ was not only put at God's right hand, but He had a complete triumph given—*far above all principalities and powers*, that neither good angels have eminence compared with Him, nor evil angels any power in contrast with Him. It is not only said that He was above them, but *far* above them. And so is the Believer. As for evil angels, the Lord shall tread Satan under your feet shortly. As for holy angels, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation?" So that we, in the Person of our Lord, are far above all principalities and powers.

You will not fail to observe that man has also universal dominion, Follow the passage—"*And has put all things under his feet.*" And so has the Lord put all things under His people's feet. Their sins and corruptions, their sorrows and afflictions, this world and the world to come, are all made subject unto us, when He makes us kings and priests, that we may reign forever. No, as if this were not enough, Christ is then honored with a gracious Headship. He is made to be Head over all things to His Church and He is made the fullness of that Church for, "He fills all in all."

But, as if the Believer must be made like his Lord even here, observe that if Christ fills all in all, the Church is His fullness in Christ, the Church is the head of the universe under God. For You have made him a

little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands. You have put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field. The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea and whatever passes through the paths of the sea.

I do not know whether I have brought forth the parallel completely. If you view our Lord as descending in His agony ever so deep and then behold Him in His glory ever so high. If by combining judgment and imagination, hope and fear, you can get some glimmering of a thought of how low the Savior went and how loftily He climbed, then you may transfer that to your own state—the same power is at work today, has been at work and will be at work in you—to lift you up from equal depths to equal heights, that in all things you may be like unto Christ. And having been like He is, numbered with the transgressors, you may like He obtain the lot and the heritage to reign forever and ever at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

I cannot speak on such a topic as this—it overpowers me—it is by far too grand for my limited gifts of utterance, but I trust not too great for human delectation. We can delight in it and suck honey, marrow and fatness from it.

II. Now we must note, in the second place, THE REASON OF THIS. Why does God put forth as much power towards every Christian as He did in His beloved Son? Well, my Brothers and Sisters, I believe the reason is not only that the same power was *required*, and that by this means He gets great glory, but the reason is this—*union*. It lays in the word—union. There must be the same Divine power in the member that there is in the Head, or else where is the union? If we are one with Christ, members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones, there must be a likeness.

Note, first, that *there cannot be a body at all*—I mean not a true living body—unless the members are of the same nature as the Head. If you could conceive a human head joined to bestial limbs, you would at once understand that you were not looking upon a natural body. If here were a dog's foot, and there a lion's mane, and yet a man's eyes, and a human brow, you could never conceive of it as a body of God's creation. You would look upon it as a strange monstrosity, a thing to be put out of sight, or to be shown for fools to gaze at as a nine-day wonder. But certainly not as a thing to display Divine wisdom and power.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream, you remember, had an image of which the "head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay." Do you think that the person of Christ is to be so odd a medley? Our Head, we know, is like much fine gold. Thanks be unto God, we are well persuaded that a body of God's making will be of the same material all the way through. He will not have, I say, a perfectly glorious Head allied to members in which the Divine energy has never been seen. The same power which sparkles about the Head must shine in the members, or else it cannot be a body constituted according to the analogy of nature, or according to the usual methods of the Divine Worker.

This is not the most forcible mode of putting it. Let us notice that if all the members were not like the Head and did not display the same power *it would not be glorious to God*. Some of the old tapestries were made at different times and in different pieces and occasionally the remark is heard, "That part of the battle-scene must have been worked by a different needle from the other. You can see here an abundance and there a deficiency of skill. That corner of the picture has been executed by a far inferior hand."

Now, suppose in this great tapestry which God is working—the great needlework of His love and power—the mystical Person of Christ—that we should say, "The Head has been worked, we can see, by a Divine hand—that glorious brow, those fire-darting eyes, those honey-dropping lips are of God, but that hand is by another and an inferior artist and that foot is far from perfect in workmanship." Why, it would not be glorious to our Great Artist. But when the whole picture is by Himself we see that He did not begin what He could not finish and that He had not inserted a single thread of inferior value.

Note again, that *it would not be glorious to our Head*. I saw the other day a cathedral window in the process of being filled with the richest stained glass. Methinks the great person of Christ may be compared to that great cathedral window. The artists had put in the head of the chief figure in the most beautiful glass that ever human skill could make, or human gold could purchase. I have not seen it since, but imagine for an instant that the workers afterward found that their money failed them and they were obliged to fill in the panes with common glass.

There is the window, there is nothing but a head in noble colors and the rest is, perhaps, white glass, or some poor ordinary blue and yellow. It is never finished. What an unhappy thing, for who will care to see the head? It has lost its fullness. There is the head, but it is strangely circumstanced. If you complete it with anything inferior, you mar and spoil it. It is the head of an imperfect piece of workmanship. But, dear Friends, when all the rest of the picture shall have been worked out with just the same costly material as the first part, then the head itself shall be placed in a worthy position and shall derive glory as well as confer glory upon the body. You can read this parable without an interpreter.

I must add that if anything, the power manifested in the member should be greater than that manifested in the Head—*if anything, it should be greater*. A marble palace is to be built. Well, now, if they build (and oh, how many people do this kind of thing in their houses) the front with costly stone and then erect the back with common stock bricks. If the pinnacles are made to soar with rich Carrara to the skies, and then down in the walls common stone is seen, everybody says, "This was done to save money." But if the whole structure throughout, from top to bottom, is of the same kind, then it reflects much honor upon the great builder and declares the wealth which he was able to expend upon the structure.

But suppose that some of the blocks of marble used in the foundation have lain in a very dark quarry and have been subject to damaging influences, so that they have lost their gloss and polish—then surely they will want more polishing—more workmanship to make them look like that

bright cornerstone, that noble pinnacle which is brought out with shouts. Christ Jesus was in His nature *fit*, without any preparing, to be a part of the great temple of God. We in our nature were unfit. And so, if anything, the power should be greater. But we are constrained to rejoice that we find in Scripture that it is just the same power which lifted the man Christ Jesus to the throne of God, which now shall lift each one of us to live and reign with Him.

Moreover, to conclude this point, the loving promise of our Lord will never be fulfilled (and He will never be contented unless it is), unless His people do have the same power spent upon them as He has. What is His prayer? "I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am. That they may behold My glory." And then He adds, "The glory which You gave Me I have given them." You know how the union stands—"I in them and You in Me." We must be like our Head. Is He crowned—we must be crowned, too.

He is a good Husband. He will enjoy nothing without His spouse. When she was poor, He became poor for her sake. When she was despised, He was spit upon, too. And now that He is in Heaven, He must have her there. If He sits on a throne, she must have a throne, too. If He has fullness of joy and honor and glory forever—then so must she. He will not be in Heaven and leave her behind. And He will not enjoy a single privilege of Heaven without her being a sharer with Him. For all these reasons, then, you see it is clear why there should be the same power in the Believer as there was in Christ.

III. Well, WHAT ARE THE INFERENCES FROM ALL THIS? Two or three—they will only be hinted at, so do not grow weary. The first inference is this—*what a marvelous thing a Christian is*. A marvelous personage am I if I am a Believer in Christ. I am by doubting and fearing led to look down upon myself as despicable—but when I reflect that the Eternal has put His engraving tool upon me—no, that He has exerted the whole of His Omnipotence in me and will continue to exert it till He brings me to Himself—Lord, what is man? How strangely honored! How near have You brought him to Yourself, so that now there is no creature between God and man!

God first—man as a creature far distant but yet second—as an adopted and regenerated being, brought as near to God as a son is brought to a father. And who shall tell how near this may be? Lord, what a mighty thing can Your Grace make out of that poor crawling worm called man! How have You exalted him and made him to be higher even than principalities and powers! Let us love and bless God who has done this much for us.

Then, secondly, *why should I doubt God's power for others?* If God has put forth so much power to save *me*, cannot He save *anyone*? The might which brought Christ from the dead and took Him to Heaven is such a tremendous power that it surely can bring the drunkard, the harlot, the blasphemer to Christ. Let me pray, then, for the chief of sinners. Let me encourage the vilest of the vile to believe in Jesus, for there is ability in Christ to save just such.

Again, *why should I ever have any doubts about my ultimate security?* Is this irresistible power engaged to save me? Then I must be saved. Does the devil vow that he will destroy me? Do my corruptions threaten to overwhelm me? Who can stay Omnipotence? Who shall come into the struggle with the Most High, or match himself with the Eternal? Aha! Aha! You enemies of my soul. I laugh you to scorn. If God is with us, who can be against us?

And lastly, *how doleful the state of those who are not converted.* See where you lie—so dead, so helpless, so ruined, so undone—needing nothing less than this eternal power to save you from the wrath to come! Ah, indeed I know this to be the case with many present here. Our preaching does you very little good. You come here in the morning and I know what you do in the afternoon. You would not be absent from listening to the morning's sermon, nor would you be absent from the evening's pleasure!

And when the Bible and the hymnbook have been put up, the newspaper will take the place. There are some who sit under our earnest appeals (and thank God they are earnest and often prevalent) and yet they are as unmoved as slabs of marble when oil runs down them. In a state of death and ruin are you. I see no human power that can help you—in vain the minister, in vain the preaching. Your damnation is sure, you will go down to Hell and perish and that without mercy.

Yet gladly would I hope that God would have pity upon you yet. Still Christ is lifted up and, "whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." If you can now believe in Christ, the mighty power of God is working in you. Trust Him now and you give the best evidence that Jesus' irresistible might has been displayed upon you, as it was upon the Person of the King of kings. The Lord bless you with His mercy, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION

NO. 127

A SERMON DELIVERED ON EASTER SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 12,
1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

“And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”
Ephesians 2:1.

IT might naturally be expected that I should have selected the topic of the Resurrection on what is usually called the Easter Sabbath. I shall not do so—for although I have read portions which refer to that glorious subject, I have had pressed on my mind a subject which is not the Resurrection of Christ but which is in some measure connected with it—the resurrection of lost and ruined man by the Spirit of God in this life.

The Apostle is here speaking, you will observe, of the Church at Ephesus and, indeed, of all those who were chosen in Christ Jesus, accepted in Him and redeemed with His blood. And he says of them, “You has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

What a solemn sight is presented to us by a dead body! When last evening, trying to realize the thought, it utterly overcame me. The thought is overwhelming that soon this body of mine must be a carnival for worms. That in and out of these places where my eyes are glistening, foul things, the offspring of loathsomeness, shall crawl! That this body must be stretched in still, cold, abject, passive death—must then become a noxious, nauseous thing, cast out even by those who loved me, who will say, “Bury my dead out of my sight.” Perhaps you can scarcely, in the moment I can afford you, appropriate the idea to yourselves. Does it not seem a strange thing that you who have *walked* to this place this morning shall be *carried* to your graves? That the eyes with which you now behold me shall soon be glazed in everlasting darkness? That the tongues which just now moved in song, shall soon be silent lumps of clay? And that your strong and stalwart frame, now standing in this place, will soon be unable to move a muscle and become a loathsome thing—the brother of the worm and the sister of corruption? You can scarcely get hold of the idea! Death does such awful work with us—it is such a vandal with this mortal fabric—it so tears to pieces this fair thing that God has built up that we can scarcely bear to contemplate its works of ruin!

Now, endeavor, as well as you can, to get the idea of a corpse—and when you have done so, please understand that that is the metaphor employed in my text—to set forth the condition of your soul by nature.

Just as the body is dead, incapable, unable, unfeeling and soon about to become corrupt and putrid, so are we, if we are unquickened by Divine Grace! We are dead in trespasses and sins, having within us death which is capable of developing itself in worse and worse stages of sin and wickedness until all of us here, left by God's Grace, should become loathsome beings! We are as loathsome through sin and wickedness, even as the corpse through natural decay! Understand that the Doctrine of the Holy Scripture is that man, by nature, since the Fall, is dead. He is a corrupt and ruined thing! In a *spiritual* sense he is utterly and entirely dead. And if any of us shall come to spiritual life, it must be by the quickening of God's Spirit vouchsafed to us sovereignly through the good will of God the Father. Not for any merits of our own, but entirely of His own abounding and Infinite Grace!

Now, this morning I trust I shall not be tedious. I shall endeavor to make the subject as interesting as possible and also endeavor to be brief. The general Doctrine of this morning is that every man who is born into the world is spiritually dead and that spiritual life must be given by the Holy Spirit—and can be obtained from no other source! That general Doctrine, I shall illustrate in rather a singular way. You remember that our Savior raised three dead persons. I do not find that during His lifetime He caused more than three resurrections. The first was the young maiden, *the daughter of Jairus* who, when she lay on her bed, dead, rose up to life at the single utterance of Christ, "*Talitha cumi*"! The second was the case of *the widow's son* who was on his bier, about to be carried to his tomb. And Jesus raised him up to life by saying, "Young man, I say unto you, Arise." The third and most memorable case was that of Lazarus, who was not on his bed, nor on his bier, but in his tomb! Yes, and corrupt, too! But notwithstanding that, the Lord Jesus Christ, by the voice of His Omnipotence, crying, "Lazarus, come forth," brought him out of the tomb!

I shall use these three facts as illustrations of *the different states of men*, though they are all thoroughly dead. Secondly, as illustrations of *the different means of Divine Grace used for raising them*, though, after all, the same great agency is employed. And in the third place, as illustrations of *the later experience of quickened men*, for though to a great degree they are the same, yet there are some points of difference.

I. I shall begin by noticing, then, first of all, THE CONDITION OF MEN BY NATURE. Men by nature are all dead. There is Jairus' daughter. She lies on her bed. She seems as if she were alive. Her mother has scarcely ceased to kiss her brow, her hand is still in her father's loving grasp and he can scarcely think that she is dead—but she is dead—as thoroughly dead as she ever can be! Next comes the case of the young man brought out of his grave. He is more than dead, he has begun to be corrupt, the signs of decay are upon his face and they are carrying him to his tomb.

Yes, though there are more manifestations of death about him, he is no more dead than the other! He is just as dead—they are both dead and death really knows no degrees. The third case goes still further in the manifestation of death, for it is the case of which Martha, using strong words, said, “Lord, by this time he stinks, for he has been dead four days.” And yet, mark you, the daughter of Jairus was as dead as Lazarus, though the manifestation of death was not so complete in her case! All were alike dead. I have in my congregation some blessed beings, fair to look upon. Fair, I mean, in their character, as well as their outward appearance. They have about them everything that is good and lovely. But mark this, if they are unregenerate they are still dead! That girl, dead in the room, upon her bed, had little about her that could show her death. Not yet had the loving fingers closed the eyelids. There seemed to be a light still lingering in her eyes, like a lily just nipped off. She was as fair as life itself! The worm had not yet begun to gnaw her cheek, the flush had not yet faded from her face. She seemed well-near alive. And so is it with some I have here. You have all that heart could wish for, except the one thing necessary! You have all things save love to the Savior! You are not yet united to Him by a living faith. Ah, then, I grieve to say it, you are dead! You are dead! As much dead as the worst of men, although your death is not so apparent!

Again, I have in my presence young men who have grown to riper years than that fair damsel who died in her childhood. You have much about you that is lovely, but you have just begun to indulge in evil habits. You have not yet become the desperate sinner. You have not yet become altogether noxious in the eyes of other men. You are but beginning to sin. You are like the young man carried out on his bier. You have not yet become the confirmed drunk—you have not yet begun to curse and blaspheme God. You are still accepted in good society. You are not yet cast out. But you are dead, thoroughly dead, just as dead as the third and worst case! But I dare say I have some characters that are illustrations of that case, too. There is Lazarus in his tomb, rotten and putrid. And so there are some men not more dead than others but their death has become more apparent. Their character has become abominable, their deeds cry out against them! They are put out of decent society, the stone is rolled to the mouth of their tomb. Men feel that they cannot hold acquaintance with them, for they have so utterly abandoned every sense of right, that we say, “Put them out of sight, we cannot endure them!” Yet these putrid ones may live! These last are not more dead than the maiden upon her bed, though the death has more fully revealed itself in their corruption. Jesus Christ will quicken the one as well as the other and bring them all to know and love His name!

1. Now, then, I am about to enter into the details of the difference of these three cases. I will take the case of the young maiden. I have her

here today. I have many illustrations of her present before me. At least, I trust so. Now, will you allow me to point out all the differences? Here is the young maiden. Look upon her. You can bear the sight. She is dead but oh, *beauty lingers there*. She is fair and lovely though the life has departed from her. In the young man's case there is no beauty, the worm has begun to eat him, his honor has departed. In the third case, there is absolute rottenness. But here, there is beauty still upon her cheek! Is she not amiable? Is she not lovely? Would not all love her? Is she not to be admired, even to be imitated? Is she not fairest of the fair? Yes, that she is—but God the Spirit has not yet looked upon her. She has not yet bent her knees to Jesus and cried for mercy. She has everything except true religion. Alas for her, alas, that so fair a character should be a dead one! Alas, my Sister, alas! That you—the benevolent, the kind one—should yet be, after all, dead in your trespasses and sins! As Jesus wept over that young man who had kept all the Commandments and yet he lacked one thing, so I weep over you this morning! Alas, you fair one, lovely in your character and amiable in your carriage—why should you lie dead? For dead you are unless you have faith in Christ! Your excellence, your virtue and your goodness shall avail you nothing! You are dead and dead you must be, unless He makes you live!

Note, too, that in the case of this maiden whom we have introduced to you, the daughter of Jairus, *she is yet caressed*. She has only been dead a moment or two and the mother still presses her cheek with kisses. Oh, can she be *dead*? Do not the tears rain on her, as if they would sow the seeds of life in that dead earth again?—earth that looks fertile enough to bring forth life with but one living tear? Yes, but those salt tears are tears of barrenness. She lives not, but she is still caressed. Not so the young man. He is put on the bier. No man will touch him anymore, or else he will be utterly defiled. And as for Lazarus, he is shut up with a stone! But this young maiden is still caressed—so it is with many of you. You are loved even by the living in Zion. God's own people love you. The minister has often prayed for you. You are admitted into the assemblies of the saints, you sit with them as God's people, you hear as they hear and you sing as they sing. Alas for you! Alas for you, that you still are dead! Oh, it grieves me to the heart to think that some of you are all that heart could wish, except that *one thing*, yet lacking that which is the *only thing* that can deliver you! You are caressed by us, received by the living in Zion into their company and acquaintance, approved of and accepted. Alas, that you should yet be without life! Oh, in your case, if you are saved, you will have to join with even the worst in saying, "I have been quickened by Divine Grace, or else I had never lived."

And now will you look at this maiden, again? Note, *she has no grave clothes on her*. She is dressed in her own raiment—just as she retired to her bed a little sick—so lies she there. Not yet have the napkin and the

shroud been wrapped about her. She still wears the clothes of sleep—she is not yet given up to death. Not so the young man yonder—he is in his grave clothes. Not so Lazarus—he is bound hand and foot. But this young maiden has no grave clothes upon her. So with the young person we wish to speak, this morning. She has as yet, no evil habits. She has not yet reached that point. The young man yonder has begun to have evil habits. And yonder gray-headed sinner is bound hand and foot by them. But as yet *she* appears just like the living—she acts just like the Christian! Her habits are fair, goodly and comely. There seems to be little ill about her. Alas, alas, that you should be dead, even in your fairest raiment! Alas, you who have set the chaplet of benevolence on your brow, you who do gird yourself with the white robes of outward purity—if you are not born-again—you are still dead! Your beauty shall fade away like a moth. And in the Day of Judgment you will be severed from the righteous, unless God shall make you live! Oh, I could weep over those young ones who seem, at present, to have been delivered from forming any habits which could lead them astray but who are yet unquickened and unsaved. Oh, would to God, young Man and young Woman, you might in early years be quickened by the Spirit!

And will you notice, yet once more, that this young maiden's death was *a death confined to her chamber*? Not so with the young man. He was carried to the gate of the city and many people saw him. Not so Lazarus. The Jews came to weep at his tomb. But this young woman's death is in her chamber. Yes, so it is with the young woman or the young man I mean to describe now. His sin is as yet a secret thing, kept to himself—as yet there has been no breaking forth of iniquity, but only the conception of it in the heart. Just the embryo of lust, not as yet broken out into act. The young man has not yet drained the intoxicating cup although he has had some whisperings of the sweetness of it. He has not yet run into the ways of wickedness, though he has had temptations thrust upon him. As yet he has kept his sin in his chamber and most of it has been unseen. Alas, my Brother! Alas, my Friend, that you who in your outward carriage are so good, should yet have sins in the chamber of your heart and death in the secrecy of your being which is as true a death as that of the grossest sinner, though not so thoroughly manifested! Would to God that you could say, "And He has quickened me, for with all my loveliness and all my excellence, I was by nature dead in trespasses and sins." Come, let me just press this matter home. I have some in my congregation who I look upon with fear. Oh, my dear Friends, my much-loved Friends, how many there are among you! I repeat, they have all that the heart could wish except that one thing—they love not my Master! Oh, you young men who come up to the House of God and who are outwardly so good. Alas for you, that you should lack the root of the matter! Oh, you daughters of Zion, who are always at the House of Prayer!

Oh, that you should yet be without Divine Grace in your heart! Take heed, I beseech you, you fairest, youngest, most upright and most honest—when the dead are separated from the living, unless you are regenerated—you must go with the dead! Though you are ever so fair and goodly, you must be cast away unless you have been quickened by the Holy Spirit!

2. Thus I have done with the first case. Now we will go to the young man, who stands second. He is not more dead than the other, but *he is further gone*. Come, now, and stop the bier. You cannot look upon him! Why, the cheek is sunken—there is a hollowness there, not as in the case of the maiden whose cheek was still round and ruddy. And the eyes—oh, what a blackness is there! Look on him, you can see that the gnawing of the worm will soon burst forth. Corruption has begun its work! So it is with some young men I have here. They are not what they were in their childhood, when their habits were proper and correct. But maybe they have just been enticed into the house of the strange woman. They have just been tempted to go astray from the path of rectitude. Their corruption is just breaking forth—they disdain, now, to sit at their mother's apron strings. They think it foul scorn to keep to the rules that bind the moral! They—they are *free*! They say they are and they will be free. They will live a jolly and a happy life. And so they run on in boisterous, yet wicked merriment and betray the marks of death about them! They have gone further than the maiden. She was still fair and comely, but here there is something that is the after-work of death. The maiden was caressed, but the young man is untouched—he lies on the bier and though men bear him on their shoulders, yet there is a shrinking from him. He is dead and it is *known* that he is dead! Young man, you have got as far as that—you know that good men shrink from you. It was but yesterday that your mother's tears fell fast and thick as she warned your younger brother to avoid your sin! Your very sister, when she kissed you but this morning, prayed to God that you might get good in this House of Prayer. But you know that of late she has been ashamed of you. Your conversation has become so profane and wicked that even *she* can scarcely endure it. There are houses in which you were once welcome—where you once bowed your knees with them at the family prayer and your name was mentioned, too. But now you do not choose to go there, for when you go, you are treated with reserve—the good man of the house feels that he should not let his son go with you, for you would contaminate him! He does not sit down now side by side with you as he used to do and talk about the best things. He lets you sit in the room as a matter of mere courtesy. He stands far away from you, as it were. He feels that you have not a spirit congenial with his own. You are a little shunned. You are not quite avoided. You are still received among the

people of God, yet there is a coldness that manifests that they understand that you are not a living one.

And note, too, that this young man, though carried out to his grave, was not like the maiden. She was in the garments of life but *he was wrapped in the cerements of death*. So many of you have begun to form habits that are evil. You know that already the screw of the devil is tightening on your finger! Once it was a screw you could slip off or on. You said you were master of your pleasures—now your pleasures are master of you! Your habits are not now commendable, you know they are not. You stand convicted while I speak to you this morning! You know your ways are evil. Ah, young Man, though you have not yet gone so far as the open profligate and desperately profane, take heed—you are dead! You are dead! And unless the Spirit quickens you, you shall be cast into Hell, to be the food of that worm which never dies but eats souls throughout eternity! And ah, young Man, I weep, I weep over you! You are not yet so far gone that they have rolled the stone against you. You have not yet become obnoxious. You are not yet the staggering drunkard, nor yet the blasphemous infidel. You have much that is ill about you, but you have not gone all the way yet! Take heed! You will go still further—there is no stopping in sin. When the worm is there, you cannot put your finger on it and say, “Stop! Eat no more.” No, it will go on to your utter ruin! May God save you, now, before you shall come to that consummation for which Hell so sighs and which Heaven can alone avert!

One more remark concerning this young man. The maiden’s death was in her chamber. The *young man’s death was in the city gates*. In the first case I described, the sin was secret. But, young man your sin is not! You have gone so far that your habits are openly wicked. You have dared to sin in the face of God’s sun! You are not as some others—seemingly good—you go out and openly say, “I am no hypocrite. I dare to do wrong. I do not profess to be righteous. I know I am a rascal. I have gone astray and I am not ashamed to sin in the street.” Ah, young Man, young Man! Your father, perhaps, is now saying, “Would to God that I had died for him—would to God that I had seen him buried in his grave before he should have gone to such a length in wickedness! Would to God that when I first saw him and my eye was gladdened with my son, I had seen him the next minute smitten with disease and death! Oh, would to God that his infant spirit had been called to Heaven, that he might not have lived to bring in this way my gray hairs in sorrow to the grave!” Your sport in the city gates is misery in your father’s house! Your open merriment before the world brings agony into a mother’s heart! Oh, I beseech you, stop! Oh, Lord Jesus! Touch the bier this morning! Stop some young man in his evil habits and say to him, “Arise!” Then will he join with us in confessing that those who are alive have been quickened by Jesus, through the Spirit, though they were dead in trespasses and sins!

3. Now we come to the third and last case—LAZARUS DEAD AND BURIED. Ah, dear Friends, I cannot take you to see Lazarus in *his* grave. Stand, oh stand away from him! Where shall we flee to avoid the noxious odor of that reeking corpse? Ah, where shall we flee? There is no beauty there. We dare not look upon it. There is not even the gloss of life left. Oh, hideous spectacle! I must not attempt to describe it—words would fail me—and you would be too much shocked. Nor dare I tell the character of some men here present—I would be ashamed to tell the things which some of you have done! This cheek might mantle with a blush to tell the deeds of darkness which some of the ungodly of this world habitually practice! Ah, the last stage of death, the last stage of corruption—oh, how hideous! But the last stage of SIN—hideous far more! Some writers seem to have an aptitude for playing in this mud and digging up this miry clay. I confess that I have none. I cannot describe to you the lust and vice of a full-grown sinner. I cannot tell you what are the debaucheries, the degrading lusts, the devilish, the bestial sins into which wicked men will run when spiritual death has had its perfect work in them and sin has manifested itself in all its fearful wickedness! I may have some here. They are not Christians. They are not, like the young maiden, still fondled—nor even, like the young man, still kept in the funeral procession. No, they have gone so far that decent people avoid them! Their very wife, when they go into the house, rushes upstairs to be out of the way. They are scorned. Such an one is the harlot from whom one's head is turned in the very street. Such an one is the openly profligate to whom we give wide quarters, lest we touch him. He is a man that is far gone. The stone is rolled before him. No one calls him respectable. He dwells, perhaps, in some back slum of a dirty lane—he knows not where to go! Even as he stands in this place, he feels that if his next door neighbor knew his guilt, he would give him a wide berth and stand far away from him, for he has come to the last stage. He has no marks of life—he is utterly rotten!

And mark—as in the case of the maiden, the sin was in the chamber, secret. In the next case it was in the open streets, public. But in this case it is secret again. It is in the tomb, for you will mark that men, when they are only half gone in wickedness do it openly—but when they are fully gone their lust becomes so degrading that they are obliged to do it in secret. They are put into the grave in order that all may be hidden. Their lust is one which can only be perpetrated at midnight, a deed which can only be done when shrouded by the astonished curtains of darkness. Have I any such here? I cannot tell that I have many. But still, I have some. Ah, in being constantly visited by penitents, I have sometimes blushed for this city of London! There are merchants whose names stand high and fair. Shall I tell it here? I know it on the best authority and true, too! There are some who have houses large and tall, who on the exchange

are reputable and honorable and everyone admits them and receives them into their society—but ah, there are some of the merchants of London who practice lusts that are abominable! I have in my Church and congregation—and I dare to say what men dare to do—I have in my congregation women whose ruin and destruction have been worked by some of the most respected men in respectable society! Few would venture on so bold a statement as that! But if you boldly do the thing, I must speak of it! It is not for God's ambassador to wash his mouth beforehand—let him boldly reprove as men do boldly sin! Ah, there are some that are a stench in the nostrils of the Almighty—some whose character is hideous beyond all hideousness! They have to be covered up in the tomb of secrecy, for men would ban them from society and hiss them from existence if they knew all!

And yet—and now comes a blessed interposition—yet this last case may be saved as well as the first and as easily, too! The rotten Lazarus may come out of his tomb as well as the slumbering maiden from her bed. The last—the most corrupt, the most desperately abominable—may yet be quickened and he may join in exclaiming, “And I have been quickened, though I was dead in trespasses and sins.” I trust you will understand what I wish to convey—that the death is the same in all cases, but the manifestation of it is different—and that the *life* must come from *God* and from *God* alone!

II. And now I will go on to another point—THE QUICKENING. These three persons were all quickened and they were all quickened by the same Being—that is by Jesus. But they were all quickened in a different manner. Note, first, the young maiden on her bed. When she was brought to life, it is said, “Jesus took her by the hand and said, Maiden, arise.” It was a still small voice. Her heart received its pulse, again, and she lived! It was the gentle touching of the hand—no open demonstration—and the soft voice was heard—“arise.” Now, usually when God converts young people in the first stage of sin, before they have formed evil habits, He does it in a gentle manner. Not by the terrors of the Law, the tempest, fire and smoke. He makes them like Lydia, “whose heart the Lord opened,” that she received the Word. On such, “it drops like the gentle dew from Heaven upon the place beneath.” With hardened sinners Divine Grace comes down in showers that rattle on them. But in young converts it often comes gently. There is just the sweet breathing of the Spirit. They perhaps scarcely think it is a true conversion, but true it is, if they are brought to life.

Now note the next case. Christ did not do the same thing with the young man that he did with the daughter of Jairus. No. The first thing He did was He put His hand, not *on him*, mark you but *on the bier*. “And they that bore it stood still,” and after that, without touching the young man, He said in a louder voice, “Young man, I say unto you, Arise!” Note

the difference—the young maiden’s new life was given to her secretly. The young man’s was given more publicly. It was done in the very street of the city. The maiden’s life was given gently by a touch. But in the young man’s case it must be done, not by the touching of *him*, but by the touching of the *bier*. Christ takes away from the young man his means of pleasure. He commands his companions, who by bad example are bearing him on his bier to his grave, to stop. And then there is a partial reformation for a while and after that, there comes the strong out-spoken voice—“Young man, I say unto you, Arise!”

But now comes the worst case. And will you please, at your leisure, at home notice what preparations Christ made for the last case of Lazarus? When He raised the maiden, He walked up into the chamber, smiling and said, “She is not dead, but sleeps.” When He raised the young man, He said to the mother, “Weep not.” Not so when He came to the last case. There was something more terrible about that—it was *a man corrupting in his grave*. It was on that occasion you read, “Jesus wept,” and after He had wept, it is said that, “He groaned in His Spirit.” And then He said, “Take away the stone.” And then there came the *prayer*, “I know that You hear Me always.” And then, will you notice, there came what is not expressed so fully in either of the other cases. It is written, “Jesus cried *with a loud voice*, Lazarus, come forth!” It is not written that He cried with a loud voice to either of the others. He spoke to them—it was His word that saved all of them. But in the case of Lazarus, He cried to him in a loud voice! Now, I have, perhaps, some of the last characters here—the worst of the worst. Ah, Sinner, may the Lord quicken you! But it is a work that makes the Savior weep. I think when He comes to call some of you—from your death in sin—who have gone to the utmost extremity of guilt, He comes weeping and sighing for you. There is a stone to be rolled away—your bad and evil habits—and when that stone is taken away, a still small voice will not do for you. It must be the loud crashing voice, like the voice of the Lord which breaks the cedars of Lebanon—“Lazarus, come forth!” John Bunyan was one of those rotten ones. What strong means were used in his case! Terrible dreams, fearful convulsions, awful shakings to and fro—all had to be employed to make him live! And yet some of you think, when God is terrifying you by the thunders of Sinai, that really He does not love you. It is not so—you were so dead that it needed a loud voice to arrest your ears!

III. This is an interesting subject—I wish I could dilate upon it but my voice fails me. And, therefore, permit me to go to the third point very briefly. THE LATER-EXPERIENCE OF THESE THREE PEOPLE WAS DIFFERENT—at least you gather it from the commands of Christ. As soon as the maiden was alive, Christ said, “Give her meat.” As soon as the young man was alive, “He delivered him to his mother.” As soon as Lazarus was alive, He said, “Loose him and let him go.” I think there is something in

this. When young people are converted who have not yet acquired evil habits—when they are saved before they become obnoxious in the eyes of the world—the command is, “*Give them meat.*” Young people need *instruction*, they need building up in the faith. They generally lack knowledge. They have not the deep experience of the older man or woman. They do not know as much about sin, nor even as much about salvation as the older man that has been a guilty sinner. *They need to be fed.* So our business as ministers, when the young lambs are brought in, is to remember the injunction, “Feed My lambs.” Take care of them, give them plenty of meat! Young People, search after an instructive minister! Seek after instructive books. Search the Scriptures and seek to be instructed—that is your principal business! “Give her meat.”

The next case was a different one. He gave the young man up to his mother. Ah, that is just what He will do with you, young man, if He makes you live. As sure as ever you are converted, He will give you up to your mother again. You were with her when you first, as a baby sat on her knee. And that is where you will have to go again. Oh, yes, Divine Grace knits together again the ties which sin has loosed. Let a young man become abandoned—he casts off the tender influence of a sister and the kind associations of a mother—but if he is converted, one of the first things he will do will be to find the mother and the sister and he will find a charm in their society that he never knew before! You that have gone into sin, let this be your business, if God has saved you—*seek good company.* Just as Christ delivered the young man to his mother, so you seek after your mother, the Church! Endeavor as much as possible to be found in the company of the righteous for as you were carried before to your grave by bad companions, you need to be led to Heaven by good ones.

And then comes the case of Lazarus. “*Loose him and let him go.*” I do not know how it is that the young man ever was loosened. I have been looking through every book I have about the manners and customs of the East and have not been able to get a clue to the difference between the young man and Lazarus. The young man, as soon as Christ spoke to him, “sat up and began to speak.” But Lazarus, in his grave clothes, lying in the niche of the tomb, could do no more than just shuffle himself out from the hole that was cut in the wall. And then stand leaning against it. He could not speak. He was bound about in grave clothes. Why was it not so with the young man? I am inclined to think that the difference lay in the difference of their wealth. The young man was the son of a widow. Very likely he was only wrapped up in a few common things and not so tightly bound about as Lazarus. Lazarus was of a rich family—very likely they wrapped him up with more care. Whether it was so or not, I do not know. What I need to hint at is this—when a man is far gone into sin, Christ does this for him—He breaks off his evil habits.

Very likely the old sinner's experience will not be a feeding experience. It will not be the experience of walking with the saints. It will be as much as he can do to pull off his grave clothes—to get rid of his old habits. Perhaps to his death he will have to be taking off bit after bit of the ceremonies in which he has been wrapped. There is his drunkenness. Oh what a fight will he have with that! There is his lust. What a combat he will have with that for many a year! There is his habit of swearing—how often will an oath come into his mouth and he will have as hard work as he can to thrust it down again! There is his pleasure-seeking—he has given it up—but how often will his companions be after him to get him to go with them? His life will be ever afterwards a loosening and letting go, for he will need it till he comes up to be with God forever and ever!

And now, dear Friends, I must close by asking you this question—*have you been quickened?* And I must warn you that—good, bad, or indifferent—if you have never been quickened, you are dead in sins and must be cast away at the last! I must bid you, however, who have gone the furthest into sin, not to despair. Christ can quicken you as well as the best. Oh, that He would quicken you and lead you to believe! Oh, that He now would cry to some, “Lazarus, come forth!” and make some harlot virtuous, some drunk sober! Oh, that He would bless the Word, especially to the young and amiable and lovely, by making them now the heirs of God and the children of Christ!

And now but one thing I have to say to those who are quickened. And then adieu this morning and may God bless you! My dear Friends, you who are quickened, let me advise you to be aware of the devil. He will be sure to be after you. Keep your mind always employed and so you will escape him. Oh, be aware of his devices! Seek to “keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” The Lord bless you, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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.**

LIFE FROM THE DEAD

NO. 2267

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JULY 31, 1892.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 13, 1890.

“And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”
Ephesians 2:1.

OUR translators, as you observe, have put in the words, “has He quickened,” because Paul had thrown the sense a little farther on and it was possible for the reader not to catch it. They have but anticipated the statement of the fourth and fifth verses—“God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ.”

Here is the point. God has quickened us who were dead in trespasses and sins, spiritually dead. We were full of vigor towards everything which was contrary to the Law of God or the holiness of God—we walked according to the course of this world, but as for anything *spiritual*, we were not only somewhat incapable and somewhat weakened, but we were actually and absolutely *dead*. We had no sense with which to comprehend spiritual things. We had neither the eyes that could see, nor the ears that could hear, nor the power that could feel.

We were dead, all of us, and yet we were not all like one another. Death may be universal over a certain number of bodies and yet those bodies may look very differently. The dead that lie on the battlefield, torn by dogs or birds, rotting, corrupting in the sun—what a horrible sight! The corpse still looks like life, yet your beloved one in the coffin is as dead as the mangled bodies on the battlefield. Corruption has not yet done its work and tender care has guarded the body from what will surely come to it, yet there is death—sure, complete death—in the one case as well as in the other.

So we have many who are lovely, amiable, morally admirable, like he whom the Savior looked upon and loved, yet they are dead for all that. We have others who are drunks, profane, unchaste—they are dead, but not more dead than the others—it is only that their death has left its terrible traces more plainly visible. Sin brings forth death and death brings forth corruption! Whether we were corrupt or not is not a question that I need to raise here—let everyone judge concerning himself. But dead we were, most certainly. Even though trained by godly parents, though well instructed in the Gospel scheme, though saturated with the piety that surrounded us, we were dead, as dead as the harlot of the street, as dead as the thief in the jail.

Now, the text tells us that though we were dead, yet Christ has come and, by His Spirit, He has raised us out of the grave. This text brings us Easter tidings! It sings of resurrection! It sounds in our ears the trumpet of a new life and introduces us into a world of joy and gladness. We were dead—but we are quickened by the Spirit of God! I cannot help stopping a minute to know whether it is so with you, my dear Hearers, and praying that what I might have to say act as a kind of sieve, separating between the really living and those who only *think* that they are alive, so that, if you have not been quickened—if you are only “a child of nature, finely dressed,” but not spiritually alive—you may be made aware of it. If you have been quickened, even though your life is feeble, you may cry to the living God with the, “Abba, Father,” which never comes from any lips but those which have been touched and quickened by the Holy Spirit!

I. First, let us talk a little about OUR QUICKENING. You who have been quickened will understand what I say. To those who have not, I daresay it will seem as an idle tale.

Well, dear Friends, if we have been quickened, we have been *quickened from above*. “You has HE quickened.” God, Himself, has had dealings with us. He has raised us from the dead! He made us at the first and He has new-made us! He gave us life when we were born, but He has given us, now, a higher life which could not be found anywhere else. He must always give it. No man ever made himself to live. No preacher, however earnest, can make one hearer to live. No parent, however prayerful, no teacher, however tearful, can make a child live unto God. “You has HE quickened,” is true of all who are quickened! It is a Divine spark, a Light from the great central Sun of Light, the great Father of Lights. Is it so with us? Have we had a Divine touch, a superhuman energy, a something which all the learning and all the wisdom and all the godliness of man could never work in us? Have we been quickened from above? If so, I daresay that we remember something of it! We cannot *describe* it—no man can describe his *first* birth—it remains a mystery. Neither can he describe his *new* birth—that is still a *greater* mystery, for it is a secret inward work of the Holy Spirit, of which we feel the effect, but we cannot tell how it is worked.

I think that, usually, when the Divine Life comes, the first consciousness that we get of a quickening is *a sense of pain*. I have heard that when a man is nearly drowned, while he lies under the power of death, he feels little or nothing—perhaps even has pleasurable dreams—but when, in the process of restoring him, they have rubbed him till the blood begins to flow and the life begins to revive a little—he is conscious of pricking and great pain. One of the tokens that life is coming back to him is that he wakes up out of a pleasant sleep and feels pain! Whether it is so or not with every person restored from drowning, I do not know, but I think that it is so with every person restored from drowning in the river of sin! When the life begins to come to him, he feels as he never felt before—sin that was pleasant becomes a horror to him! That which was easy to him becomes a bed of thorns. Thank God, dear Hearer, if you have living pangs! It is an awful thing to have your conscience hardened, as in the very fires

of Hell, till it becomes like steel. To have consciousness is a great mercy, even if it is only *painful* consciousness and if every movement of life within seems to harrow up your soul. This Divine Life usually begins with pain.

Then, *everything surprises you*. If a person had never lived before and had come into life a full-grown man, everything would be as strange to him as it is to a little child—and everything is strange to a new-born man in the spiritual realm into which he is born. He is startled a hundred times! Sin appears as sin—he cannot understand it. He had looked at sin, before, but had never seen it to be sin. And Christ now appears so glorious to him—he had heard of Christ, before, and had some apprehensions of Him—but now he is surprised to find that the One who he said had no form nor comeliness is, after all, altogether lovely! To the new-born soul, everything is a surprise. He makes no end of blunders. He makes many miscalculations because everything is new to him. He that sits upon the Throne says, “Behold, I make all things new”—and the renewed man says, “My Lord, it is even so.” One said to me, when joining the Church, “Either I am a new creature, or else the world is altogether altered from what it was. There is a change somewhere.” And that change is from death to life, from darkness into God’s marvelous Light!

Now, as life comes thus with strange surprises, and mingled with pain, so, dear Friends, it comes often *with many questions*. The child has a thousand things to ask—it has to learn everything. We little think of the experiments that children have to go through before they arrive, even, at the use of their eyes. They do not know that things are at a distance—they have to learn that fact by looking many times. So long as the object falls upon the retina, the child is not aware of whether it is distant or a near object till some time later. What you think that you and I knew from our birth, we did not know—we had to *learn* it. And when a man is born into the Kingdom of God, he has to learn everything and, consequently, if he is wise, he questions older and wiser Believers about this and about that. I pray that you who are instructed and have become fathers never laugh at babes in Grace if they ask you the most absurd questions. Encourage them to do so! Let them tell you their difficulties. You, by God’s Grace, are a man—this little one is but a new-born babe—hear what he has to say.

You mothers do this with your little children. You are interested, you are pleased, you are amused with what they say. Thus ought instructed saints to deal with those who have been newly quickened. They come to us and ask, “What is this? What is that? What is the other?” It is a time of asking, a time of enquiring! It is well, also, if it is a time of sitting at Jesus’ feet, for there is no other place so safe to a new-born Believer as the feet of Jesus! If he gets to the feet of anybody else, he is apt to get ill-instructed at a time when everything warps his judgement—when he is exceedingly impressionable—and not likely to forget the mistakes that he has made if he has borrowed them from others. So you see what the Divine Life does when it comes into the soul. It comes to us with pain. It gives us many surprises. And it suggests a large number of questions.

We begin, then, to *make a great many attempts* at things which we never attempted before. The new-born child of God is just like the new-

born child of man in some things and, after a time, that child begins to walk. No, it does not—it begins to *crawl*—it does not walk first. It creeps along, pleased to make any kind of progress, and when it gets up on its little feet, it moves from one chair to another, trembling at every step it takes and, presently, down it goes! But it gets up, again, and so it learns to walk.

Do you remember when the new life came into you? I do. I remember the first week of that new life and how, on the second Sabbath, I went to the place where I had heard the Gospel to my soul's salvation, thinking that I would attend there. But, during that week, I had made a great many experiments and tumbled down a great many times, and the preacher took for his text, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" I thought, "Yes, I know all about that—that is *my* case." When the preacher said that Paul was *not* a Christian when he wrote those words, though I was only seven days old in Divine things, I knew better than that, so I never went there again! I knew that no man but a Christian could ever or would ever cry out against sin with that bitter wail! And I knew that if the Grace of God was *not* with him, he would have rested satisfied and content—but if he felt that sin was a horrible thing and he was a wretched man because of it and must be delivered from it—then he surely must be a child of God, especially if he could add, "Thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Beloved, we make many mistakes and we shall continue to do so. At the same time, we learn by our experiments. You remember when you began to pray—would you like to have your first prayer printed? I believe that God liked it better than many of the collects! You might not like it so well—it would not look well in print. You remember when you first began to confess Christ to a friend? Oh, you stuttered and stammered over it! There were more tears than words. It was not a "dry" discourse—you wet it well with tears of grief and anxiety. That was the new life putting forth powers with which it was not, itself, acquainted, and I believe that there are some of God's children who have powers that they will never find unless they try to *use* them! I should like some of you young men who do not pray at the Prayer Meeting to make a start. And some of you older men, perhaps, have never preached—but you might if you tried—I wish you would. "I would break down," one says. I wish you would! A breakdown sermon—that breaks the *preacher* down—might break the people down, too! There might be many advantages about that kind of discourse.

This, then, was the way in which the new life, spiritual life, came into us. We did not know what it was when it came. We had never felt like that before. We could not think that we had really passed from death to life and yet, in looking back, we are persuaded that the throes within—the anguish of heart, the longing, the pleading, the wrestling and the crying would never have been in a dead heart—but were the sure marks that God had quickened us and we had passed into newness of life!

II. Now, secondly, let us think of OUR PRESENT LIFE. “You has He quickened.” Well, then, we have a new life! What is the effect of this life upon us? I speak to you who are quickened by Grace.

Well, first, we have become now *conscious towards God*. The unconverted man lives in God’s world, sees God’s works, hears God’s Word, goes up to God’s House on God’s Day—and yet he does not know that there is a God! Perhaps he believes that there is because he was brought up to believe it. But he is not cognizant of God—God has not entered into him—he has not come into contact with God.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I think that you and I can say that to us the surest fact in all the world is that there is a God! No God? I live in Him! Tell a fish in the sea there is no water! No God? Tell a man who is breathing that there is no air! No God? I dare not come downstairs without speaking to Him! No God? I would not think of closing my eyes in sleep unless I had some sense of His love shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit. “Oh!” one says, “I have lived 50 years and I have never felt anything of God.” Say that you have been *dead* 50 years—that is nearer to the mark! But if you have been quickened by the Holy Spirit 50 *minutes*, this would have been the first fact in the front rank of all facts—God is, and He is my Father, and I am His child! Now you become conscious of His frown, His smile, His threat, or His promise! You feel Him—His Presence is photographed upon your spirit—your very heart trembles with awe of Him and you say with Jacob, “Surely God is in this place.” That is one result of spiritual life.

Now you have also become *sympathetic with similar life in others*. You have a wide range, for the life of God—His life in His new-born child—is the same life that is in every Christian! It is the same life in the new-born Believer as in yonder bright spirits that stand before the Throne of God. The life of Christ, the life of God, is infused into us in that moment when we are quickened from our death in sin. What a wonderful thing it is to have become sympathetic with God! What He desires, we desire. His glory is the first objective of our being. He loves His Son and we love His Son. We desire to see His Kingdom come as He does and we pray for His will to be done on earth, even as it is in Heaven. We wish that death did not remain—the old nature hampering us—but in perfect proportion as the new life is really in us, we now run parallel with God. The holiness which He delights in we aspire after. Not with equal footsteps, but with tottering gait we follow in that same path that God has marked out for Himself. “My soul follows hard after you; Your right hand upholds me.”

The new life that made us sympathetic with God, holy angels, holy men and with everything that is from above, has also made us *capable of great pleasure*. Life is usually capable of pleasure, but the new life is capable of the highest conceivable pleasure! I am certain that no ungodly man has any conception of the joy which often fills the Believer’s spirit. If worldlings could only know the bliss of living near to God and of basking in the light of His Countenance, they would throw their wealth into the sea—and 10,000 times as much—if they might but get a glimpse of this joy that can never be bought, but which God *gives* to all who trust His dear Son! We

are not always alike. Alas! We are very changeable, but when God is with us—when the days are spiritually bright and long and we have come into the midsummer of our heavenly bliss—we would not change places with the angels, knowing that, by-and-by, we shall be nearer to the Throne of God than they are and, while they are God's honored servants, yet they are not beloved sons as we are! Oh, the thrill of joy that has sometimes gone through our spirits! We could almost have died with delight at times when we have realized the glorious things that God has prepared for them that love Him! This joy we never knew till we received the new life.

But I must add that we are also *capable of acute pain* to which we were once strangers. God has made our conscience quick as the apple of the eye. He has made our soul as sensitive as a raw wound so that the very shadow of sin falling on the Believer's heart will cause him great pain and, if he does go into the actual sin, then, like David, he talks about his bones being broken and it is not too strong a figure of the sorrow that comes upon the believing heart when sin has been committed and God has been grieved. The heart, itself, then, is broken and bleeds at thousands of wounds! Yet this is one of the results of our possessing the new life and I will say this—the sharpest pang of *spiritual* life is better than the highest joy of *carnal* life! When the Believer is at his worst, he is better than the unbeliever at his best! The Believer's reasons for happiness are always transcendently above all the reasons for joy that worldlings can ever know.

Now, dear Friends, if we have received spiritual life, you see what a range of being we have—how we can rise up to the seventh Heaven or sink down into the abyss. This new life makes us *capable of walking with God*—that is a grand thing! We speak of Enoch walking with God and we look at the holiness of his life. But did anybody ever think of the majesty of his life? How does God walk? It needs a Milton to conceive of the walk of God! But he that has the Divine Life walks with God—and sometimes he seems to step from Alp to Alp, from sea and ocean, accomplishing what, unaided, he would never even attempt! He that has the Divine Life is lifted up into the infinities—he gets to hear that which cannot be heard and see that which cannot be seen—for, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit,” when He has given us the new life!

One effect of this Divine life is to *put life into everything that we do*. They tell me that “creeds are dead.” Yes, yes! It is a pleasant thing to hear an honest confession—they *are* dead to dead men! I hold nothing as the Truth of God that I can put away on a shelf and leave there. My creed is part of my being! I believe it to be true and, believing it to be true, I feel its living force upon my nature every day! When a man tells you that his creed is a dead thing, do not deny it for a minute—there is no doubt of the fact. He knows about himself better than you do. Oh, dear Friends, let *us* never have a dead creed! That which you believe, you must believe up to the hilt! Believe it livingly, believe it really—for that is not believed at all which is only believed in the letter, but is not felt in the *power* of it!

If you have been quickened by the Spirit of God, your prayers are living prayers. Oh, the many dead prayers that are heard at the bedside—so many good words rushed through at a canter! He that is alive unto God asks for what he needs and believes that he shall have it—and he gets it. That is living prayer. Beware of dead prayers! They are a mockery to the Most High. I do not think that a living man can always pray by clockwork, at such a time and such a time—that would be something like the minister's sermon which he "got up" beforehand—and upon which he wrote in the margin "weep here," or, "here you must show great emotion." Of course that was all rubbish—it cannot be done to order! You cannot resolve to "groan at one o'clock and weep at three o'clock." Life will not be bound like that!

I love to have an appointed season for prayer and woe unto the man who does not have his time for prayer! But, at the same time, our living prayer bursts out hours *before* the appointed time, or sometimes it will not come at the time! You have to wait till another season and then your soul is like a hind let loose. Why, sometimes we can pray and prevail, and come off conquerors—and at another time, we can only bow at the Throne and groan out, "Lord, help me; I cannot pray; the springs seem to be all sealed." That is the result of life! Living things change. There are some persons in St. Paul's Cathedral—I have not seen them, lately, but I have seen them. When I lived in the country I came up to look at the notabilities in St. Paul's Cathedral. I have heard that they have never had a headache in the last hundred years! They have had no rheumatic pains, nor have they been troubled with the gout, The reason is that they are cut in marble and they are dead! But a *living* man feels the fog and the winds. He knows whether it is an east wind or a west wind that is blowing. Before he gets up in the morning, he begins to feel, sometimes, lively, and sometimes ill. He does not understand himself. Sometimes he feels merry and can sing hymns. At another time he can do nothing else but sigh and cry, though he scarcely knows why! Yes, life is a strange thing—and if you have the Life of God in your soul, you will undergo many changes and not always be what you want to be.

If we are alive unto God, every part of our worship should be living. What a deal of dead worship there is! If we go on with our services in regular routine, a large number of our friends find it difficult to stay awake. I fear that some people go to a place of worship because they get a better sleep there than anywhere else. That is not worship which consists in doing as Hodge did, when he said, "I like Sunday, for then I can go to Church, put my legs up and think of nothing at all." That is all the worship a great many render to God—just getting to a place of worship and there sitting still and thinking of nothing at all. But if you are a living child of God, you cannot do that! If, sometimes, through the infirmity of the flesh, you fall into that state of slumber, you loathe yourselves for it! And you rouse yourself up and say, "I must worship my God; I must sing, I must praise God. I must draw near to Him in prayer."

III. I must come to my third point, for our time flies. Notice what OUR PRESENT POSITION IS if God has quickened us.

Our present position is this, first, that *we are raised from the dead*. “He has quickened us together with Christ, and has raised us up together.” We cannot live where we used to live. We cannot wear what we used to wear. There is nobody here who would like to go and live in a grave. If you have been raised from the dead, after you had been buried in Norwood Cemetery, I would guarantee you that you would not go there to sleep tonight! So the man who has once been raised by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit quits the dead—his old company does not suit him. If you had been raised from the dead and had come out of your tomb, you would not go about London streets with your shroud on! You are a living man! How is it that I find some who say they are people of God but are rather fond of wearing their grave clothes? I mean that they like the amusements of the world. They like to put on their shroud, sometimes, just for a treat. Oh, do not do it! If God has made you to live, come away from the dead! Come away from their habits, manners and customs! Life sees no charm in death. The living child of God likes to get as far as he can away from the death that once held him bound. “Come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” That is the first part of our position—that we have come to live a separate life, now, and have quit the path we trod before.

Next to that, we are *one with Christ*. He has “quickened us together with Christ, and has raised us up together.” I told you just now that the life which the Holy Spirit gives us when we are born again is the Life of God. We are made partakers of the Divine Nature, but, of course, in a modified sense, but still in a true sense. The life everlasting, the life that can never die, is put into us, then, even as Christ said, “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” The Believer’s life is the Life of Christ in the Believer! “Because I live, you shall live, also.” What a mystic union there is between the Believer and his Lord! Realize that! Believe in it! Rejoice in it! Triumph in it! Christ and you are now one and you are made to live together with Him! God grant you to know the joy of this condition!

Once more, we are told, “He has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” That is very wonderful! We have not only left the dead and become joined to Christ, but we are made to *sit in Heaven with Christ*. A man is where his head is, is he not? And every Believer is where his Head is. And if we are members of Christ’s body, we are in Heaven! It is a very blessed experience to be able to walk on earth and look up to Heaven. But it is a higher experience to live in Heaven and look down on the earth—and this is what the Believer may do! He may sit in the heavenlies—Christ is there as his Representative. The Believer may take possession of what his Representative is holding on his behalf. Oh, to live in Heaven, to dwell there, to let the heart be caught up from this poor life into the life that is above! This is where we should be—where we *may* be if we are quickened by the Divine Life!

One thing more and I have done. We are in this position, that God is now working in us, through this Divine Life, to make us *the most wonderful reflectors of His Grace* that He has yet formed. He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, “that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” The ages to come will have for their wonder the quickened children of God! When God made the world, it was a wonder, and the angels came from afar to see His handiwork. But when Christ makes the new creation, they will say no more that God made the Heaven and the earth, but they will say in higher strains, “He made these new-born men and women! He made for them, and in them, new heavens and a new earth.”

Ah, Beloved, “It does not yet appear what we shall be.” God has given us a life that is more precious than the Kohinoor, a life that will outlast the sun and moon! When all things that are shall be like an old ocean’s foam which dissolves into the wave that bears it and is gone forever, we shall live—and we shall live in Christ and with Christ, glorified forever! When the moon has become black as a sackcloth of hair, the life that is within us shall be as bright as when God first gave it to us! You have the dew of your youth, O child of God, and you shall have yet more of it! You shall be like your Lord when He shall take you away from every trace of death and the corrupt atmosphere of this poor world! And you shall dwell with the living God in the land of the living forever and forever!

The practical outcome of all this is that some of you do not know anything at all about it. If you do not, let the fact impress you. If there is a Divine Life to which you are a stranger, how long will you be a stranger to it? If there is a spiritual death and you are dead, be startled, for within a little while God will say, “Bury My dead out of My sight.” And what will happen to you when the Word of God is, “Depart, depart, depart, depart,” and unto the graveyard of souls, to the fire that never shall be quenched, you and the rest of the dead are taken away? “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” and, unless we are made alive unto Him, He cannot be our God either here or hereafter! The Lord impress this solemn Truth on all your hearts by His own Spirit, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON **EPHESIANS 2.**

Verse 1. *And you He has quickened.* Is it so? Could the Apostle say that to you and to me?

1. *Who were dead in trespasses and sins.* Look back to what you used to be, to the hole of the pit from where you were lifted—“You has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

2. *Wherein in time past you walked.* With a terrible activity of spiritual death.

2. *According to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.* He makes them to be his forge. There he blows his coals, there he fabricates his instruments. Do you not hear the noise of the infernal bellows

when “the children of disobedience” swear and use unclean language? Ah, such were some of us, but we are cleansed! The evil spirit has been driven out and he no more works in us.

3. *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.* You that now commune with God at the Mercy Seat, you that are now His favored children and have received power to become the sons of God—you were once heirs of wrath—“By nature the children of wrath, even as others.” Holy Scripture is not complimentary to unregenerated human nature. You may search it through and through to find a single flattering word to unregenerate man, but you will search in vain! This style of speech is left to those who ignore Divine Inspiration. They draw their inspiration from another fountain—from a desire to walk according to the course of this world—according to the Prince of the power of the air. They can use flattering speeches in addressing the ungodly, but the Holy Spirit never does.

4, 5. *But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.* God loved us even when we were dead in sins. His love does not depend upon what we are—it flows from His own heart. It is not love of something good in us—it is love of us because of everything good in Him! Here you see the greatness of His Grace, in that, “He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.”

5. *Has quickened us together with Christ.* Ah, That accounts for everything—“together with Christ.” When we get “together with Christ,” then are we made alive, then are we saved! Are *you*, my dear Hearers, “quickened together with Christ”?

5-7. *(By Grace you are saved), and has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.* See how Paul’s language grows and swells and rises as he proceeds! Just now, we read of “God, who is rich in mercy.” Now the Apostle speaks of “the exceeding riches of His Grace,” exceeding expression, exceeding comprehension, exceeding, even, sin, itself, though that is all but infinite. “The exceeding riches of His Grace” are infinity, itself! But they all come to us “through Christ Jesus.” Paul will speak of nothing good except that which comes “through Christ Jesus.” This is the one conduit through which the streams of Living Water flow to the dead in sin. God’s Grace comes to us “Through Christ Jesus,” and through Him, alone.

8. *For by Grace are you saved through faith.* We have this expression, “by Grace are you saved,” twice over in this chapter. Paul knew that he needed to repeat himself, or people would forget what he taught. At bottom, all the wanderings from the faith at the present day amount to this—salvation by *works* instead of salvation by Grace. The battle of the Reformation has to be fought over again! Men are justified by Grace through faith in Christ Jesus. All the enmity of natural men is against that Truth of God. They want to be saved by their own morality and all sorts of things

that they put instead of salvation by Grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

8, 9. *And that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.* “Oh!” said one to me just now, “the man who is saved by his own righteousness cannot do much in the line of praising.” “No, my dear Brother,” I replied, “except he praises *himself*—and he can generally do that pretty well.” Your self-made man usually worships his creator very earnestly—and your self-saved man glorifies him that saved him.

10. *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.* Nothing without Christ Jesus, you see. The mark of the pierced hand is on everything—“We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.”

10. *Unto Good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.* God has decreed that He will have a holy people. This is His purpose, His ordinance to which He will always stand. He will make it good. He will make sinful people holy and disobedient people obedient to the faith.

11. *Therefore remember, that you, being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision in the flesh made by hands.* Remember what you were. You were not the chosen Israelites, you have not the Covenant mark in your flesh.

12. *That at that time you were without Christ.* Which is the worst state of all, far worse than being without circumcision.

12. *Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.* Outsiders, rank outsiders, far away from any rights, or any participation in the rights of God’s children.

12. *And strangers from the Covenants of promise.* Utter strangers to the Covenants made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

12. *Having no hope, and without God in the world.* It is an awful description, but a truthful description of what we were.

13. *But now.* The Apostle has turned over a new leaf in the book of our history—“but now.” Oh, what a change from the past to the present! “But now”—

13. *In Christ Jesus.* See how Paul keeps harping on that one string? Note how he links us with Christ Jesus. There is nothing for us without Christ and His Cross.

13. *You who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ.* Paul can never have too much of Christ. It is Christ, Christ, Christ, Christ—like the harp of Anacreon’s—he wished to sing of Cadmus, but his harp resounded love, alone. And so the harp of Paul resounds with Christ, alone—Christ, alone! He always comes back to that theme. It was said of one eminent commentator that he could not find Christ in the Scripture where He was. But it was said of Cocceius that he found Christ where He was not. I would rather find Christ where He is not, than not to find Him where He is! There are plenty who err in that second direction, nowadays.

14. *For He is our peace.* Paul cannot do without Christ, you see. He will bring Him in everywhere.

14. *Who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us.* There is no longer the division between Jews and Gentiles.

15. *Having abolished in His flesh.* See, it is always Christ—His flesh, His blood, His life! There must always be something about Him—“Having abolished in His flesh.”

15. *The enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of two one new man, so making peace; and that He.* I cannot help reminding you that you must not overlook the fact that Paul will not go a hair's breadth away from Christ.

16-18. *Might reconcile both unto God in one body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.* There is the whole Trinity in that one verse! Christ, the Spirit, the Father. It needs the Trinity to make a Christian! And when you have got a Christian, it needs the Trinity to make a prayer! You cannot pray a single prayer aright without Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

19. *Now, therefore.* Another of Paul's blessed, “nows.” It was, “but now,” a little while ago. Now he has another “now.” “Now therefore”—

19. *You are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.* You are not only in the Kingdom, but you are in the royal household, which is still better! You are princes of the blood imperial! You are peers of the court of Heaven—“and the household of God.”

20. *And are built.* You are not loose stones—you are built—

20, 21. *Upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone; in whom.* You see, it is always that, in Him, in Christ—“in whom”—

21. *All the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord.* There is no Church without Christ, no temple without Him as its Cornerstone, its Priest, its Glory.

22. *In whom you also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.* And all this hangs upon that first sentence, “You has He quickened.” Is it so, Beloved? If you are spiritually dead, nothing here belongs to you. But if He has quickened you, you may take every single sentence of the chapter and say, “That is mine, and glory be to the Grace of God!”

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—463, 476, 461.

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ONCE DEAD, NOW ALIVE

NO. 2388

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY,
 NOVEMBER 25, 1894.
 DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
 ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 30, 1888.

“And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”
Ephesians 2:1.

I PREACHED to you, this morning, [Sermon #2046, Volume 34—*Consolation from Resurrection*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org> .] the Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead and its various bearings. But unless you have experienced *spiritual* resurrection, you do not understand that doctrine and you cannot grasp its meaning. Spiritual resurrection may be understood in theory, but it cannot be really comprehended until we, ourselves, have been raised out of spiritual death. Always remember that in the things of God, knowledge is only to be gained by personal experience. If you would understand regeneration, you must be born again. If you would understand faith, simple as it is, you must, yourselves, believe.

Tonight I want to give you another exposition of spiritual quickening as it is described in my text—“And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” There are three things about which I am going to speak to you. First, *you were dead*. Secondly, *some of you have been quickened*. And, thirdly, of those of you who *have* been quickened, it can be truly said that *you are now alive*.

I. First, then, YOU WERE DEAD.

I think that I must, in imagination, take you into that death chamber. The blinds are all drawn, there is a great hush about the room. Here is a coffin covered with a white cloth—turn it back, gently, and stand with me—and look at the person who lies sleeping there. He is dead. Alas, there is woe in the family, for the brother is dead. Here is the terribly true picture of what we were by nature—I mean, what we *all* were—and what many still are. God grant that they may be delivered from this sad condition!

To find out what spiritual death means, I shall ask you to remember that this dead body, here, is characterized by an *absence of sense*. Be not afraid, it is your brother man. Come close to him and speak. He does not hear you. Speak more loudly. He does not answer you, he gives no sign of recognition. Shout at the very top of your voice—stoop down and speak into his ear. Alas, it is the clay-cold ear of death upon which no effect whatever is produced! I remember when I was spiritually just like that. I could not hear, even, the voice of Jesus, though it was very soft and tender. He said, “Come unto Me,” but I did not respond to His call. There

were others near me who did, but I was dead and took no notice. Then there came a louder sound, a voice of threatening, a message of condemnation! God spoke from the top of Sinai and hurled at me the ten great thunderbolts of His Law. But I still did not hear. I had broken all those commands and I must bear the penalty of disobedience—the Law told me so, but I did not hear. Friends led me, sometimes, dead as I was, where both the Law and the Gospel were fully preached, but I did not hear. I *could not* hear. Sounds went past the drums of my ears and my body heard, but the ear of my *heart* was not reached. I could not hear, for I was dead.

Let us see if our friend in the coffin can see. Here, lift up the coffin lid, wave a lighted candle before his eyes. Pull up that blind, let in the sunlight. He does not see and he cannot see. There are none so blind as the dead. And there was a time with me—and I use myself sorrowfully as an example—when I could not see. I could not see my Lord, I could not see His love, I could not see His bleeding heart, I could not see His thorn-crowned head. I saw no beauty in the Altogether Lovely One. I was wrapped up in my own worldly pleasure and in myself—and I was not alive unto God. Ah, me, this is, indeed, death—to be unable to hear or to see!

Can this dead body perceive anything by smelling? Here, bring that smelling bottle and place it close to the man's nostrils. It contains the strongest volatile salts that would make the tears come to some of our eyes—but it does not affect him. Burn the rarest incense, fill the chamber with the smoke, yet he recognizes nothing as to what sweet perfume is in the room. And well do I remember when my mother told me that there had been much unction about the sermon and my father said that the Lord was there, and that it was as when one breaks a box of ointment and the house is filled with the sweetest odors—but I declare to you that I discerned nothing of its fragrance! There was, to me, no spiritual sweetness, no subtle delight about the doctrines of the Gospel, for I was dead!

Perhaps this man may have lost the power of sight, hearing and smelling, but yet he may be alive. Let us see if he has any sense of taste. Bring here the most nauseous drug, or give me gall and wormwood, and I will put a few drops on his lips. These things are not loathsome to him! Now let us try sugar and honey and all things that are luscious and sweet. Evidently you might as well lay these things upon a slab of marble, for the dead man has no taste for them! It was just so with me *spiritually*. I knew not, in those days, the sweetness of the Gospel of Christ, nor even the bitterness of sin. I had no taste, for I was dead—and that is what you all were, my Brothers and Sisters! That is what some are who are sitting at your side in the pew—dead—having no taste for heavenly joys.

But, perhaps, after all, these senses may be gone and yet life may remain. Let me see if the man can feel. Let me press his hand very gently. No, he does not press mine in return. I will stoop down and kiss the face of this, my brother, but there is no smile upon his countenance, though he would have smiled in other days. He is dead. He can feel nothing of pain or joy. It is a dreadful thing to be sitting in God's House as, per-

haps, some of you are, feeling nothing whatever! I would give my eyes, no, I would give even my *life* to save this company if I knew how to speak so as to reach men's hearts! But there is no mode of human language that can make a dead heart live, or make a stony heart to beat with the pulsations of life. This comes from another and a higher Power than mine. But, apart from the operations of the Spirit of God, all are, by nature, dead, and this is what some of you are even now, *spiritually dead* and, therefore, devoid of holy senses.

There is another test that we may apply to see if there is an *absence of desire*. I will speak to this dead man and say, "Friend, you lie here dead—do you know it? You who cannot feel, or hear, or see—do you wish to live? Do you desire to live? There is no answer to my question. But I can tell you that because he is dead, he does not even *desire* to live—and this, too, is the state of many spiritually. They have not any wish after heavenly things. You are quite content if you have money enough to pay your way, or if you have enough to enjoy yourself at the theater, or in some worldly gaiety. But as for God, Christ and Heaven—these may all go as far as you are concerned. You have no desire for them, you are dead—dead to the very things for which men were made to live, and by which, alone, men *do* live! You are dead and you have no desire after life.

Shall I speak to the corpse, again? It is no use, for the man has no senses and no desire. Beside that, there is an *absence of power*. Has not this man the power to get life, the power to do something good? I lift his hand—it drops down powerless. I try the other hand—it is no sooner up than it falls down, again. It is evidently useless to attempt to force him to any action, for he is without power. We, also, were "without strength." Oh, how can this dead man live if he can do nothing towards making himself alive? I will tell you that, by-and-by, but, meanwhile, this is an essential part of death—that the man is "without strength."

Further, in those who are naturally or spiritually dead there is an *absence of fellowship with the living*. If this man cannot do anything for himself, let us get him up and dress him! Come here, good woman, you who washed him, come, and put on his best clothes and make him sit up. It was not long ago that we saw the picture of a dead emperor lying dressed in his warrior's garments. So dress this man up in his Sunday suit and let him sit at the table with his wife and children! You shudder at the suggestion and tell me that it is impossible. Yet the Egyptians set a skeleton at their feasts, so as to remind themselves of death—and it was not altogether unwise. But if I had my choice of a place at the table, I would not elect to have our bony friend next to me! And I think that if the dead were seated at our festivals, we would all naturally shrink from that part of the table.

Thus you can see what death does *spiritually*—it shuts you out of fellowship with the living people of God. You were in a room, the other night, where there were half-a-dozen Christian people and you said to yourself, "This is about the dullest evening I have ever spent." You went to a service, the other day, where there was much prayer, and you made fun of it when you came away, it was so dreary to you. Yes, of course it was, and if you were condemned to go to Heaven—no, I have not made a

mistake, I mean what I say—if you were *condemned* to go to Heaven, it would be a Hell to you! You would not be able to endure that constant praise of God, that perpetual adoration of Him which is the occupation of the blessed! You would have no heart for that. “Let me out,” you would say, “I had rather go to my own place than stay here.” Thus, you see, you are dead. And the dead are shut out from fellowship with the living.

Then, once more, there are *tokens of decay*. We will not take this man from the coffin—we will let him lie there. Look at him. It is now four days since he was pronounced dead. I noticed, when I came into the room just after his death, that his face looked, perhaps, more sweet than it did during his lifetime. It often happens that when the time of the extreme pain which brought on death has come altogether to an end, the face seems to regain its former sweetness which was obliterated by the pain, and the man looks more beautiful than before. And often the countenance appears restful, though the heart, before death, was full of anguish. Yes, but that was a little while after death when I noticed this sweet expression of face. How is it with the corpse four days, five days, say, six days after death? Ah, me, come, Undertaker, nail this coffin lid down—it is not meet that any other eyes should look at this ghastliness, or that anyone else should see these tokens of decay!

It is just so spiritually. The young man who is dead in sin, may, under his mother’s care at home, look very beautiful. There may be no trace of spiritual death about him. You might think him—and he may think himself—better than a great many Christians! Have I not heard him say that it is so? But give him time to show what he really is! Bring him to London—place him in a large warehouse. Let him go out in the evening and let there be nobody to meet him but the strange woman. Ah, within how short a time the destructiveness of horrible sin may be seen in his character! Could that fond mother, who sent him from her fireside comparatively pure, see what he has become, she might almost say, “Bury him out of my sight!” This is the way we were *all* going to decay till our Lord Jesus appeared to us and stopped the corruption by dethroning Death and putting spiritual life into us through faith in Himself!

I think, perhaps, I have said enough on this part of my subject, so I will not take you back to the death chamber.

II. Now, in the second place, dear Friends, to all who have believed in Christ it can be truly said, “YOU HAVE BEEN QUICKENED.” So the text says, “You has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

Do you remember how that happened? I can only speak about myself in such a matter as this, because one man cannot enter into another’s experience, but I think that what I see in myself, you have seen in yourselves, you who are alive unto God. There came a time when I began to live! I remember it well—I not only remember when the new life first came into my soul, but I can distinctly recall the first effect of it. I am told that when a man has been drowning and he begins to return to consciousness, when they rub him back to conscious life, the first sensation is that of exquisite pain as the blood begins to flow, again, in the channels in which it had been latent.

When the life-blood began to flow in my heart *spiritually*, it gave me nothing but pain. I was lost and I felt that it was so. I was not dead, was I, if I *felt*? Then I heard the Gospel, and I *did* hear it, too, with awful distinctness! I remember to have had, on one occasion, a slight deafness, and when the surgeon had attended to my ears and I went into the street, I wished myself deaf again, for all the noises were so dreadful to my ears, so intense was every little sound! We ought to thank God that we do not hear more than we do—if we heard more, we would not hear anything at all—we would hear so much that the different sounds would not convey any meaning to our mind! So was it with me, I heard too much. The thunder of the Law of God deafened me and when I heard the voice of the Savior, it seemed to say, “You have rejected Me and I have left you to perish! The door of mercy is now shut and will not be opened to you.” I began to feel what sin really was and to realize that I could not escape from it—and that a just God must punish me! Yet I consented to the punishment, dreadful as it was, and confessed that I did not wish the Lord to be unjust even to save me. This was the tremendous terror of my state—that I had received a living consciousness of what was right, and sided with the right—yet all the while felt that the righteous Judge condemned me!

What happened after that? Being quickened and having felt this pain, after a while I woke up as out of an awful sleep and I seemed to say to myself, “Where am I?” *I had been born into a new world!* Some of you know the egg-shell of this poor sinful world, but you do not know the real *life* of it. A man may go dreaming on through this world, seeing the sun, moon, stars and all things that are visible, but he may never have discovered the true *life* which is invisible. So it was with me. If, all of a sudden, this lamp, here, could be made into a living thing, it would be a strange change for it to find itself alive in the midst of this crowd of people, where it has stood so long a poor, dead, metallic thing! There was some such change as that worked in me—I thought that if the world was not new, I was! Something wonderful had happened to me! I can tell you that I had a sort of twist that day and I have never got over it—and I have no wish to get over it!

Everything seemed different to me. I looked at all things through new eyes and heard with new ears and, somehow, I discovered what I had never dreamed of, for I talked to God! Christ was near me! His Spirit was within me! I saw living men and women in this new world and I began to wish to get among them and would have been glad to have washed the feet of any of them so long as they would but permit me to be in their company! I remember that experience. Do you? We must all have felt something like that if we have really been born from above!

And then, being thus alive, we had *to learn everything*. You see, a person just born into the world and knowing nothing is like a newborn infant. I suppose that when an infant first sees, it cannot measure distances. It does not know whether a thing is close to it, or far away. All that the eyes can bring to it seems flat at the first. Mothers do not always reflect how little their children know—and how all the things that we know as a matter of course were really learned by experience. Once we

did not understand much, just like babies that do not, at first, comprehend what is said to them, and could not reply even if they understood. There are a few simple words, or syllables, by which they speak to mother and father—and you are very pleased when they are able to say them—and you talk of it to one another as a great achievement when baby has uttered a whole sentence!

I have heard you and I remember doing the same thing, myself. It is so natural for us to like to hear the first words of our children. That is just how it was with God and ourselves *spiritually*—we had everything to learn. We were alive, but we did not know much. We were rather puzzled by some of our big Brothers and Sisters, but our heavenly Father accepted our broken utterances and our oft-mistaken words. We did see, though we did not know much about the laws of perspective. We did hear, though we did not understand music and harmony. We did feel—and that was a proof that we were alive. Oh, what a mercy that was!

Very soon, we began to have *new needs*. Do you remember that experience? We felt a new hunger—we had never had that while we were dead. We needed to feed on the Truth of God! Do you remember when you went to hear a certain popular preacher deliver one of his wonderful sermons and everybody else spoke of it as, “splendid,” but you said to yourself, “I do not know what there was in it, but certainly I did not get any food for my soul”? Another time, you were taken to hear a plain, simple minister who talked about Jesus and His love, and others exclaimed, “He is a poor preacher, with no name, and no fame,” but you said, “I do not know how it is, but I am satisfied with the feast I have had, I feel as if I had been sitting at the King’s banqueting table.” Ah, God’s people know the difference between flowers and fruit! They know the difference between meat and mere plate, spoon and fork—and they are not to be deceived! You remember when you began to hunger and to thirst, and oh, when you drank your first draught of the Living Water, you could not make out what it was! You see, you had been dead, and all these things were new to you. What was hunger? What was thirst? How did you come to have such sensations? You never hungered after Christ, you never thirsted after the Gospel while you were dead in sin! But now you have many things that are quite new to you—new fears, new cares, new doubts, new aspirations.

Let me remind you that you also had *new joys*. Your heart began to dance at the sound of Christ’s name! You never danced at the sound of that name while you were dead, but when you had received spiritual life, that dear name had all the music of Heaven in it when it rang in your ears, and your heart responded, “Jesus, precious Jesus—

**“No music’s like Your charming name,
Nor half so sweet can be.”**

Oh, what rapture you had in those early days! You went forth with joy and were led forth with peace. The mountains and the hills broke forth before you into singing and all the trees of the field clapped their hands! That delight has not gone from you now, has it? You are still happy in the Lord, you can sing as joyously as ever—

**“Oh happy day, that fixed my choice
On You, my Savior, and my God!**

***Well may this glowing heart rejoice
And tell its raptures all abroad!***

You see how it is with you now—life has brought you, as a new creature, into a new world—old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new! So far, I hope that many have been able to follow me.

II. Now comes the closing point and I must say only a few words upon it, for I should like you to sing a verse of “Happy Day,” before we separate. The third division is **YOU ARE NOW ALIVE**. Yes, as many as have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ are spiritually alive! Does not He say, “He that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live”?

You are spiritually alive. Very well, then, *do not go back to the grave*. It was a madman’s taste to go and live in a cemetery. The demoniac from the country of the Gadarenes had his habitation among the tombs and, surely, nobody in his right mind would think of having such an abode as that! If you are alive, do not go and live in the grave. Sometimes a person says to me, “Tell me, Sir, may I go to such and such a place of amusement?” When I hear the name of it, I say, “Well, if you want to go, go. If you are dead, go and be buried with the dead—we do not need any dead souls among the living in Zion. If that sort of thing is to your taste, go and enjoy it. But if you are a child of God, it will not be your taste. If you are alive from the dead, you will not want to go and live in a morgue.” I once was in a place where there were said to be at least ten thousand skulls heaped up, one above another, from floor to ceiling. I should think that there must have been quite that number, and as I walked along through those rows of skulls, every one of them seeming to be grinning at me, I did not ask to be allowed to stay there all night! So, he that is spiritually alive does not wish to dwell with sinners in ungodliness! Their merriment would be his misery. That which is their delight would cause him the most exquisite pain. “Let me get out of this,” he would say, “this is no place for me.” To chain a living man to a skeleton would be a horrible torment—do not, I pray you, be chained to a dead man, or a dead woman, either—and do not seek your company among the dead. You are alive! Therefore, do not go back to the tomb.

Next, you are alive, therefore, *do not be carried on a bier*. I have seen living men carried about on biers. Here is a man who has long heard the good old-fashioned Gospel, but, the other day he met with a believer in evolution, one of the monkey-worshippers of whom I told you last Thursday night, [Sermon #2056, Volume 34—*Idols Found Wanting, But Jehovah Found Faithful*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org> .] whose father is not in Heaven, but up a tree! “Oh!” said the foolish man, as he listened to the heresy monger, “this evolution theory is a very wonderful thing!” And so three or four of them bore him off on a bier, carried him away from the Truth of God as it is in Christ. Of course, if the man is dead, the proper place for him is on a bier! But you are alive—therefore you know what the dead do not and, I pray that you may know it from the sole of your feet to the crown of your head, and stand up for the Truth of God, defend it valiantly, and not be driven to and fro with every wind of doctrine, just as if you were only a stray straw in the street! Know what God has taught you and be pre-

pared to live by it, and to die for it, if need be! You are alive, therefore, be alive for the Truth of God and be not carried away on a bier.

Further, you are alive, therefore, *do not be wrapped up in grave clothes*. Have you any on now? I should not wonder if you have. There is a piece of red stuff that many living persons still wear—it is called, “bad temper.” Oh, get rid of that fragment of grave clothes, I entreat you! It smells of the tomb! The Lord help you to be sweet, gentle and meek! Do not wear your old grave clothes, now that you are alive from the dead! Were you covetous? Were you lustful? Were you false? Get rid of all these grave clothes. Oh, that God the Holy Spirit may sanctify you—spirit, soul and body—till you are clean delivered from these cerements of the sepulcher! Lazarus came out of the tomb with his grave clothes on, but the Savior said, “Loosen him and let him go,” and they took the napkin from his head, the winding sheets from about his body and the man was free. Do not go about in a winding sheet! Put off the old man, with his deeds, and put on the new man. The Lord help you so to do!

You are alive—then another exhortation is, *get up and work*. You are alive unto God. Are you so alive that you mean to sit down and take it quietly? Are you going to Heaven in an easy chair? You have climbed up the Gospel coach, sat down on the box seat and you say that you mean to sit there as long as you live? Oh, you good-for-nothing wretch! Do not talk about being saved! Why, you are not yet saved from selfishness! When we are really saved, we begin to love other people as well as to love God and we desire with all our might to spend and to be spent in the Lord’s service. You do not suppose that the Lord Jesus Christ came here to be a lackey to the lazy, do you? We are *not saved by works*, but if we have not works, we are not saved! We are saved by Grace, but Grace makes us a people *zealous for good works*! God grant that this purpose of mercy may be fulfilled in each one of us who was dead, but is now alive!

You are alive, now, therefore *glorify Him who quickened you*. If I had lived in the days of our Lord, I would have liked, if it had been possible, to have had a cup of tea with Lazarus. I think that I would have asked him down to my house and would have said to him, “Lazarus, tell me all about your resurrection. You were dead and your sisters buried you, and Martha said to the Lord Jesus, ‘By this time he stinks: for he has been dead four days.’ Tell me, did you really hear that voice that said, ‘Lazarus, come forth,’ and did you know the sweet tones of the dear Master’s call? Were you dead and did that sound bring life with it? How did you feel when you found yourself lying on that cold stone shelf in the sepulcher, and when the light came streaming in where there had been a stone, before, to shut it out? Do you remember how you felt when you shuffled out and came from the sepulcher all wrapped up in the grave clothes?” “Oh!” Lazarus would say, “my dear Brother, I cannot tell you much about these things, but I remember that the first thing I saw, when they took the napkin off my eyes, was that blessed Man, my Lord and my God! And I knew that He had raised me from the dead, and I felt that I could lie at His feet and die again of overwhelming love! I loved Him so—for He had raised me from the dead! Do not talk about me, speak about Him! Go forth and preach about Him to others, wherever you have an

opportunity! Say that He raised me from the dead, that He can raise others from the dead, and He can make death yield up all his spoils, through the power of His resurrection life!”

That is what I want all you, who are spiritually alive, to do—go forth and tell what Jesus has done in raising the dead to life!

I have finished when I have said just this word to the unsaved. Trust Jesus. Trust Him now! Come to Him, now, even by one gracious stride of faith, for He is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him!

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

Verse 1. *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you.* Paul puts force into the argument by his manner of speaking. You can hear in his words the rattle of his chains! Here is a man who, for Christ’s sake, has lost his liberty and who, for that reason, pleads with his fellow Christians. “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you”—

1. *That you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called.* “Do not dishonor the good cause. Let not your lives bring disgrace upon Christ—if you are called Christians—be Christians.”

2. *With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.* This is the very spirit of Christianity—to be able to bear and forbear, to be gentle—not to be selfish or self-seeking, or angry and passionate, but full of lowliness and meekness. Brothers and Sisters, do not seek the highest place! If you do, you will at least have a contested election, for many want that position. But if you choose the lowest place, you shall have it, and nobody will try to run in opposition to you. There is always plenty of room in the lowly places and there is peace there! Let me whisper to you—they are really the highest places in the Church of God! If we will go *down*, we shall ascend! But if we are striving to be great—to be masterful—we shall not gain the ends we are seeking and we shall not honor our Master.

3. *Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* That is a living ligature which binds the members of the body together. Try to keep in one spirit, united by “the bond of peace.”

4. *There is one body.* Christ never had two.

4. *And one Spirit.* There never were two Holy Spirits. The one Spirit that quickened the whole Church of Christ is by Himself, alone.

4. *Even as you are called in one hope of your calling.* You have only one ground of confidence and you have only one Heaven in which you hope to meet all your fellow Believers.

5. *One Lord, one faith, one baptism.* There is only one Lord in the Christian Church! And there is only one faith. There may be many *forms* of faith, but there is only one true faith. “One baptism.” There may be many baptisms, so-called, but there can be only one that is the true baptism.

6. *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* So that if we are one in all these things, we ought to be one in a hearty affection towards one another!

7. *But unto every one of us is given Grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.* That is, to every one of us who are members of His mystical body. The living members of the living body receive according to each one's function and place in the body a measure of Grace for the benefit of the whole.

8-10. *Therefore He says, When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now this, "He ascended," what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same, also, who ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things).* When He received gifts for men, and gave them to men, what did He give?

11. *And he gave some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.* Different gifts to different races.

12. *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.* The early Church could not have been without Apostles and we cannot do without Evangelists. May the Lord send many faithful men who will range over the whole country preaching the Word! Neither can we do without pastors and teachers and it is idle to attempt to do so. Would God we had many more of the sort that Jesus gives! Those whom *men* make are worth nothing, but those whom Jesus gives are worth everything!

13. *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.* When all Christian people shall be well developed, mature, then the whole body of Christ will come unto the stature of a perfect man. When will that be? There are some who are always looking for the perfect Church of Christ, but they have not seen it, yet. When Eve was in the making, Adam did not see her—it was only when she was complete that she became visible—and today the real Church of Christ is only in the making! When she has been fashioned out of the side of Christ, then she will be presented to Him without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. All the various agencies which God has appointed are working together for the fashioning of this perfect body of the Church.

Meanwhile, it is equally true that all Believers are intended to grow "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Some of them are, in spiritual things, only like children of a span long. Others are but as boys and girls in the streets of Jerusalem, while some are half-developed men and women! Oh, that we could all come "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ!" You know how the sergeants stand the recruits against a wall and then measure them to see whether they are up to the army standard. Now stand upright and see whether you have come "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Alas! How very short we are! Oh, that we could grow! Spirit of God, make us more like Christ!

14. *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning*

craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. There are plenty of so-called Christians of that sort, nowadays, who are too weak to know anything for themselves. They are not settled and grounded—the last person who comes near them and pulls their ear a little hard, turns their head his way. The next person who will pull their ear a little harder, will turn their head another way! Be no longer children, I beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, but be men and women—know what you know—hold it with the tenacious grip of a Divinely-implanted faith and God help you to escape from those who lie in wait to deceive!

15, 16. *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.* Every part of the body supplies something that is essential to the whole. There are certain sacs and vessels, the use of which we cannot tell. Even the best anatomist does not know what are their uses, but he does know that if they are not there, health cannot be maintained and, in some instances, life, itself, would expire if some vessel, quite insignificant, should be taken away! Let us believe that all God's people are essential to the completion of the body of Christ and that all the workers and all the sufferers, too, are needed to make up the Church of which Christ is the Head.

17-19. *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling—*That is a dreadful condition for anyone to reach! Let us pray to God to save us from that terrible state of heart!

19. *Have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.* Oh, dear Friends, we must come away from everything that is impure and unclean! May we never, by any conduct of ours, give countenance to unchastity and impurity! Christian people must be clear of these things!

20-25. *But you have not so learned Christ; if so be that you have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. Therefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members, one of another.* They who lie in jest will find out that God puts it down as sinning in earnest. Let us never attempt to deceive. In the East, in olden times, and I might say as much of the present day, it was not usually reckoned a great sin to lie—the great evil was when the liars were discovered. Oh, but the Christian man must be true in every word that he speaks. He must faithfully keep his promises and be known to be a trustworthy, reliable man. If you are not true, Christ will not acknowledge you as belonging to Him.

26. *Be you angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.* If ever angry, be only angry with evil and never retain anger in

your heart. It must not last more than a day. They say that a wasp's sting dies at night, so, let every resentful thought die away as the sun sets.

27. *Neither give place to the devil.* He will knock at your door and try to get in, but do not offer him a chair. If he forces his company upon you, let him know he is not welcome!

28. *Let him who stole steal no more.* If he has only been a petty pilferer, "Let him who stole steal no more." He that steals a pin will one day steal an ox if he can.

28. *But rather let him labor.* If he must have something that he does not at present possess, this is the way to get it—not by stealing it—but by laboring for it.

28. *Working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs.* Observe that our trade must be a right one, not one that injures others—"Working with his hands the thing which is good." But what a remarkable verse this is! A man has been a thief and he is to go and get to work! What for? To supply his own necessities? Yes, but he is to rise to something *higher* than that! He is to work "that he may have, to give to him that needs." What changes the Grace of God makes in a man! He who once took from other people is taught to work that he may *give* to other people! This is, indeed, a turning of things the right side uppermost.

29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.* Do not utter a dirty or corrupt word, no, though it has a merry jest appended to it, do not speak it! "He pares his apple who would cleanly feed," is a good proverb. Take away all that is corrupt about the story.

29. *But that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the hearers.* What sweet talking there would be if we all spoke in this way—to "minister Grace unto the hearers!" Ah, then, my dear Friends, it would not matter how much we talked, if every word were salted with salt.

30. *But grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.* The Holy Spirit's being in you is your seal that you are the child of God—and the power by which you will be preserved till the resurrection! Therefore, do not grieve that blessed Spirit.

31, 32. *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be you kind, one to another.* "Kind" is a good old Saxon word! It means *kinned*. Be you kind, like men who are akin to one another—look on *all men* as your brothers!

32. *Tenderhearted, forgiving one another.* You will have something that will need to be forgiven, and your brother will have something which you will need to forgive.

32. *Even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you.* The Lord write all these words upon our hearts, for Christ's sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—408, 897, 288, 658.

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WHAT CHRISTIANS WERE AND ARE

NO. 3198

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“And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”
Ephesians 2:3.

“The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.”
Romans 8:16, 17.

[See Sermon #339, Volume 6—THE SONS OF GOD—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

THESE two texts will furnish me with two familiar but most important themes—*what Christians were* and *what they are*. There are great and vital differences between what they once were and what they now are—and these are implied or indicated by the two expressions, “the children of wrath” and, “the children of God.” There is so much instruction in each of our texts that we will proceed at once to consider them without any further introduction.

I. So, first, let us consider WHAT CHRISTIANS WERE.

The Apostle tells us that we “were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” “*By nature,*” mark you, not merely by practice, but, “by nature *the children of wrath.*” The expression is a Hebraism. When a person was doomed to die, he would be called by the Jews, “the child of death.” One who was very poor would be called by them, “the child of poverty.” So because we were, by nature, under the wrath of God, we are called “the children of wrath.”

When the Apostle says that we “were by nature the children of wrath,” he means that *we were born so*. David expressed what is true of us all when he said, “Behold, I was shapened in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Our first parent, Adam, sinned and fell as the representative of the whole human race. “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men.” If any object to this principle of representation, that does not affect its truth of it—and I would also remind them that by this very principle of representation, a way was left open for our restoration! The angels did not sin representatively—they sinned personally and individually—and, therefore, there is no hope of their restoration, but they are “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” But men sinned *representatively*, and this is a happy circumstance for us, “for as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience

of One shall many be made righteous.” As we fell through one representative, it was consistent with the principles upon which God was governing mankind that He should allow us to rise by another Representative! At first, we fell not by our own fault, so now, by Grace, we rise not by our own merit. Death by sin came to us through Adam when we were born, so did life come to us through Christ Jesus. Thus our first text sets before us this terrible fact—as true as it is terrible, and as terrible as it is true—that we were by nature under the wrath of God from the very first. The whole race of mankind was regarded by God as descended from a disgraced traitor! We were all born children of wrath.

This expression also implies that *there was within us a nature which God could not look upon except with wrath*. The way in which some cry up the excellence of human nature is all idle talk. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Our Lord Jesus Christ has told us that “out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” Everything that is evil lurks within the heart of everyone that is born of a woman! Education may restrain it, imitation of a good example may have some power in holding the monster down, but the very best of us, apart from the Grace of God, placed under certain circumstances which would cause the evil within us to be developed rather than restrained, would soon prove to a demonstration that our nature was evil, and only evil, and that continually! You may take a bag of gunpowder and play with it if you care to do so, for it is quite harmless as long as you keep the fire from it, but put just one spark of fire to it and then you will discover the force for evil that was latent in that innocent-looking powder! You may tame a tiger if you begin training it early enough. And you may treat it as if it was only a big cat—but let it once learn the taste of blood and you will soon see the true tiger nature flashing from its eyes and seeking to destroy all that come within reach of its cruel claws! In a similar fashion to that, sin was originally latent within everyone of us and whatever better qualities God may, by His Grace, have planted there, it is still true that we were, by nature, “the children of wrath, even as others.”

I need not say any more about the original sin of Adam, or about the sinfulness of our nature, for those of us who have been saved know that *our practice was according to our nature*. Who can deny that the fountain was defiled when he is compelled to confess that polluted streams flowed from it? Can you look back with complacency upon the days of your unregeneracy? I feel sure that you cannot think of the sins that you committed, then, without weeping over them, and especially sorrowing over that sin which so many forget—the sin of not believing on the Son of God, the sin of so long rejecting the Savior, the sin of not yielding to the gentle calls of His Grace, the sin of bolting and barring the door of your heart while He stood outside and cried, “Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled: for My head is filled with dew and My locks with the drops of the night.” But we would not rise and let Him in! What a horrible sin it was not to see the loveliness of Christ and not to admire the infinitude of His love! Had we not been sinful by nature and by prac-

tice, too, our opposition or our indifference would have been melted concerning the coming of Jesus—and we would have at once opened our hearts to receive Him.

Not only were we “children of wrath” by descent, by nature and by practice, but had not God, in His long-suffering patience, spared us until we were converted, *we would have had to endure the wrath of God forever* in that dark realm where not a single ray of hope or one cooling drop of consolation will mitigate the miseries of any child of wrath who hears the dread sentence, “Depart from Me; I never knew you.” We cannot bear even to think of the doom of those who have died impenitent! I confess that my flesh creeps when I read those terrible Words of the Lord Jesus concerning the worm that never dies and the fire that never shall be quenched. And yet, instead of sitting in these seats at this moment, rejoicing in the good hope through Grace, we might have been there! Yes, and without any very great change in the order of God’s Providence before our conversion, we might have been there! We were sick with the fever and if only the disease had taken an unfavorable turn, we would have been there! We were shipwrecked—and if only the waves had washed us out to sea instead of washing us up upon a rock—we would have been there! Possibly some of us have been in battle and as, “every bullet has its billet,” if one had found its billet in our brain or heart, we would have been there! Some of us have been in many accidents—if one of them had been fatal before we knew the Lord, we would have been there! All of us are in jeopardy every day and every hour—we are constantly being reminded of the frailty of human life, yet God spared us, by His Grace, and did not cut us off, as so many others were, while we were unrepentant and unregenerated. Had He done so, we would, indeed, have been “the children of wrath” in the most terrible of all senses, for we would even now have been enduring the wrath of God on account of our sin! Children of God, as you realize the truth of what I have been saying to you, I trust that you will feel intensely grateful to the Lord who has so graciously interposed on your behalf and delivered you from going down into the Pit!

Notice also that Paul says that we “were by nature *the children of wrath, even as others.*” God’s Grace has made a great difference between His children and others, but there was no such difference *originally*—they were “the children of wrath, even as others,” that is, in the same sense as others were children of wrath. I know that God’s children have been from eternity the objects of His distinguishing love, for there never was a period when He did not love those whom He had chosen as His own. But regarding us as sinners, unforgiven sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, we, “were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

We were also “the children of wrath, even as others” who remain unconverted. You have, perhaps, a daughter for whose conversion you have long prayed. You have brought her to hear the Gospel since she was a child, but up to the present moment, it has not touched her heart. Do not forget that you, also, were a child of wrath, even as she is. You have

a friend who ridicules the Gospel, even though he comes with you to listen to it. Yet you were an heir of wrath, even as he is—and if it had not been for the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, you, also, would have been only a hearer and not a doer of the Word. You would have been like so many others in this congregation and you might have said, with Cowper—

***“I hear, but seem to hear in vain.
Insensible as steel.”***

But you are not “insensible as steel” now! You feel the power of the Word. It makes you tremble, but it also makes you rejoice, for you know that it is the Word of your Father in Heaven who has loved you with an everlasting love and who, therefore, with loving kindness has drawn you to Himself. While you remember all this with devout gratitude to Him who has made you to differ from others and also to differ from what you, yourself, used to be, never forget that you were once a child of wrath, even as others still are!

Yes, Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you “were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” who still revel in sin. As you pass along the street you see such sights and hear such language that you are shocked and horrified that men and women can so grievously sin against the God who made them, and who still permits them to live! Yet do not look down upon them with an affectation of superior holiness and say, “What shameful sinners those people are in comparison with us!” But rather say, “We, too, were by nature the children of wrath, even as others still are.”

Yes, and to emphasize what I have previously said, “we were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” who pass away impenitent and in due time must stand before the Judgment Bar of God! They will stand shivering before that Great White Throne whose spotless luster will reveal to them, as in a wondrous mirror, the blackness of their lives and the guiltiness of their impenitence! And when the King sits down upon His Throne, even though it will be the Lamb, Himself, who died for sinners, who will sit as their Judge—they will cry to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the Throne and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the Great Day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?” There is nothing so terrible to look upon as injured love. Fiercer than a lion leaping upon its prey is love when once it is incensed. Oil flows smoothly, but it burns furiously—and when the love of Jesus has been finally rejected—then the sight of Him whose head was once crowned with thorns will be more terrifying than anything else to the eyes of those who have rejected Him. They will wish they had never been born and, indeed, it would have been better for them if they had never had an existence! Had it not been for the Grace of God, their portion would also have been our portion, for by nature we were the children of wrath even as they were—and amidst that shivering, trembling crowd we would have taken our station. But, believing in Jesus, our place shall be at His right hand “when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe.” We shall be

among those to whom the King will then say, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Yet, by nature, we were "the children of wrath, even as others."

II. Now I must turn from that sad, solemn knell—"Children of wrath, even as others," to the joyous peal that rings out from our second text which tells us **WHAT CHRISTIANS ARE**—what we now are if we have believed in Jesus—"The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

It is such a wonderful thing that those who were the children of wrath should now be the children of God and that *there are two witnesses to it*. First, our own spirit says that we are the children of God and then the Holy Spirit comes and says, "Yes, and I also bear witness that you are the children of God."

Now, Beloved, do you realize that God has worked this great miracle of mercy in you? *Does your spirit bear witness that you are now a child of God?* When you go out of this building and look up at the stars, will you say to yourself, "My Father made them all"? Will you feel that you must talk to your Father? And when you go to your bed tonight, should you lie sleepless, will you begin to think of your heavenly Father as naturally as a little child, when it lies awake in the dark, thinks of its mother and calls to her? If you are a true Believer, this is the case with you. The Spirit of adoption is given to you by which you are enabled to cry, "Abba, Father." Do you not also know what it is, sometimes, when you are sitting down quietly by yourself, to think, "The God who made the heavens and the earth, and who upholds all things by the Word of His Father, is my Father"? Then very likely a flood of tears will come as you stand silently before the Lord just as the lilies do, for at times there is no form of worship that seems possible to our joyous spirit except standing still and letting the love of the heart silently breathe itself out before the Lord like the fragrance of flowers ascending in a gentle breeze. In such a frame of mind as that, your spirit may well bear witness that you are a child of God!

Then comes the Holy Spirit, the Infallible Witness, and through the Word and through His own mysterious influence upon our heart, *He bears witness that we are the children of God*. Two witnesses were required, under the Law of God, to establish a charge that was made against any man. And under the Gospel, we have two witnesses to establish our claim to be the children of God—first, the witness of our own spirit—and then the second and far greater Witness, the Holy Spirit, Himself! And by the mouth of these two witnesses shall our claim be fully established. If our own spirit were our only witness, we might hesitate to receive its testimony, for it is fallible and partial. But when the Infallible and impartial Spirit of God confirms the unfaltering witness of our own heart and conscience, then may we have confidence toward God and believe without hesitation that we are, indeed, the children of the Most High God! One of the points on which the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God is this—"We know that we have

passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.” When we really love those who are God’s children, it is strong presumptive evidence that we are, ourselves, members of His family! And when we truly love God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—when we have a compassionate love to the souls of men and an intense love of holiness and hatred of sin, and desire for God’s Glory—all these are the further witness to the Spirit with our spirit that we are the children of God.

Then, as there are two witnesses that we are the children of God, so are there *two ways in which we become the children of God*.

First, we are the children of God *by adoption*. When God asked Himself the question, “How shall I put the children of wrath among My children?” He answered Himself by saying, “I will do it by adopting them into My family.” We were far off from God by wicked works, “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” Yet, by the Grace of God, we have been adopted into the Divine family!

Now you know that a child may be adopted into a nobleman’s family, and yet he will not really be one of the nobleman’s kindred. So there is a second way in which we become the children of God, that is, *by regeneration*. We are born into the family of God as well as adopted into it, and thus we become “partakers of the Divine Nature.” So Peter writes, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in Heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” *Adoption* gives us the *privileges* of the children of God. *Regeneration* gives us the *Nature* of the children of God! Adoption admits us into the Divine family. Regeneration makes us akin to the Divine Father—it creates us anew in Christ Jesus and puts into us a spark from the eternal Spirit, Himself, so that we become spiritual beings. Before regeneration, we are only body and soul—but when we are born-again, born from above—we become body, soul and spirit. Being born of the Spirit, we understand spiritual things and have spiritual perceptions which we never possessed before.

Becoming the children of God, we are entitled to all the privileges of childhood. It is the privilege of a child to enjoy its father’s love, its father’s care, its father’s teaching, its father’s protection, its father’s provision and last, but by no means least, its father’s chastening. Whatever a child receives as its right from its father, we also receive from our Father who is in Heaven. “If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give to you who are His children every blessing that you can possibly need while you are here on earth, and Heaven itself to crown it all?”

Then the Apostle further says, “*and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.*” Now, in this country, it is not always true that, if children, then heirs, because we have laws, (of which some may approve, though I fail to see the justice of them), which make one

son to be the heir just because he happens to be the first-born. It is not so in God's family! It is, "if children, then heirs," that is to say, all the children in the Divine family are God's heirs! The last one who ever will be born into the family of God will be as much an heir as the first who said, "My Father, who are in Heaven." And the least of the children of God—Little-Faith, Ready-to-Halt and Miss Much-Afraid, are just as much the heirs of God as Faithful, Valiant-for-Truth and Mr. Great-Heart, himself! "If children," that is all, "if children, then heirs." Are they true-born children of God? Have they the faith which is the characteristic mark of all who are in God's family? Are they truly converted? Have they been born-again, born into the family of God? If so, then it follows of necessity that, "if children, then heirs." Does not this Truth of God encourage poor Miss Despondency over there, and you, Mr. Fearing, and friend Little-Faith over yonder?" If children, then heirs." Not, "if big children," nor, "if first-born children," nor, "if strong children," but simply, "if children, then heirs"! If you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby you cry, "Abba, Father," you are an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ!

There is another remarkable thing in the family of God. If we, who were by nature the children of wrath, become by Grace, the children of God, we thereby become, all of us, the heirs of all that God has! Now, this can never happen in an earthly family. If the father were rich and all his children were his heirs, one son would have one farm and another son would have another farm. And each of the girls would have so many thousands of pounds for her dowry, but each one of them could not have all that there was—it would have to be divided between them—one would have what the others had not, and could not have anything that they had. But, in God's family, all the children are heirs of all that is His. My dear Brother or Sister in Christ, if you have a choice privilege that is yours because you are a Christian, I rejoice that you have it, but I have it, too! And if I have a precious promise that belongs to me because I am one of the Lord's children, you may be thankful for it, for it belongs equally to you! No child of God can keep Christ all to himself, for He is the portion of all His people! Some dear brethren whom I know would like to plant a very prickly hedge around their little gardens, so as to keep all their Christian privileges to themselves—but God's birds of paradise can fly over those hedges and share in all the good things they are intended to enclose!

"If children, then heirs, *heirs of God.*" You, my dear Brother or Sister, have Christ, and I have Christ! You have the Spirit, and I have the Spirit. You have the Father, and I have the Father. You have pardon, you have peace, you have the righteousness of Christ, you have union with Christ, you have security in life, you have safety in death, you have the assurance of a blessed resurrection and of eternal glory, but so have all those who have believed in Jesus! There is the same inheritance for all the children of God—not a part for one, and another part for another. The Covenant is not, "Manasseh shall have this portion of the promised land, and Issachar that portion, and Zebulun that other portion." But to every

Believer the Lord says, "Lift up now your eyes to the North, and to the South, to the East, and to the West, for all this goodly heritage have I given to you by a Covenant of salt forever."

There is another thing about this inheritance that makes it still more precious to us, and that is that everyone of the heirs shall certainly inherit it—and that is more than you can say about any earthly inheritance. If you know that somebody has made a will in your favor, do not reckon that the estate or money is really yours until you are actually in possession of it, for "there is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip." The will may be revoked and the new one may leave you out, or there may be a flaw in it so that the estate will get into Chancery, and remain there for the term of your natural life. Even if there is no doubt that you are the heir, there may be many who will dispute your right to the inheritance. But if you are really a child of God, not even the devil, himself, shall be able to rob you of your heavenly inheritance! Satan may deny that you are an heir of God, but your heavenly Father will say, "Yes, he is, indeed, My child, and heir to all I have. I remember his first tear of penitence and I have preserved that in my bottle. I remember his first true prayer, his first look of faith, his first note of praise—they are all registered in My records that none can erase. I have his name here in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and it can never be blotted out! Yes, he is My child and My heir—all that I have belongs to him." There is a day coming when all Christ's sheep shall pass again under the hand of Him that counts them—and in that day, not one of the whole redeemed flock shall be missing! As the long roll of God's ransomed family is called, it shall be asked, "Is Little-Faith here?" And he will answer to his name not at all in the trembling way in which he used to speak when he was upon earth. When it is asked, "Is Miss Much-Afraid here?" she will reply, in jubilant tones, "Glory be to God, I am here!" No matter how weak and feeble you may be, if you are a child of God, you shall certainly be there and the inheritance shall assuredly be yours!

I have not yet done with this expression, "heirs of God." Paul does not say that the children of God are heirs of Heaven. Our inheritance is much bigger than that, for Heaven has its bounds, but God has none. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but God never will! We are heirs, therefore, of unending bliss, for we are "heirs of God." There is no one here, there is no one on earth, there is no man or angel in Heaven who can tell the full meaning of this expression, "heirs of God." The words are simple enough for even a child to utter, but only God fully understands what they mean. And we shall go on learning throughout eternity all that is included in those three short words. To have God Himself as our inheritance, to be able to say, "The Lord is my portion," is a thousand heavens in one! And all the children of God are the heirs of God—no one of them will ever have to say, "My portion will have to be stinted because my elder brother has taken such a large share"—but everyone shall have God to enjoy here on earth, and then to enjoy forever in Heaven!

Finally the Apostle says, “*and joint heirs with Christ.*” It always adds to our enjoyment of any pleasure if we have someone whom we greatly love to share it with us. Then how much more shall we enjoy our heavenly inheritance because we are to occupy it with Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior, to whose Incarnation, life, death, Resurrection and intercession we are indebted for it all! Oh, who would not be a child of God, to have such bliss forever and to enjoy it in such blessed Company? Yet is there anyone here who despises his inheritance? Is there anyone here like Esau, “who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright,” and who, “afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears”? Is there someone here who was once a professor of religion, who has gone back to the world in the hope of getting a better living or a little praise among men? Poor Soul, pour Soul, how I pity you! But, O child of God, have you been kept faithful even to this hour? Then let Naboth rather than Esau be your model! Ahab offered Naboth a better vineyard than his own, or the worth of it in money if he would sell it, but he would neither exchange nor sell his inheritance even though his refusal to do so cost him his life—and it would be better for us to die a thousand deaths than to think of parting with our heavenly inheritance! Happily, if we are really the children of God, He who has, by His Grace, made us His children, will keep us His children! And He will both keep us for the inheritance and keep the inheritance for us!

There is, however, such a danger of being only children of God in name, and not in truth, that we shall all do well to give heed to the Apostle’s warning, “Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” Having put our hand to the plow, let us not even *think* of looking back, but may we be proved to be the living children of the living God by walking in His ways until we come into His blessed Presence to go no more out forever for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: EPHESIANS 2.

Verse 1. *And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.* [See Sermons #127, Volume 3—SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION; #2267, Volume 38—LIFE FROM THE DEAD and #2388, Volume 40—ONCE DEAD, NOW ALIVE—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Then you owe your very life to Him! You were dead, you were like a corrupt carcass, but His life has been breathed into you. “You has He quickened.” Then you are no longer dead—you are a living soul before the living God—and as you owe this to Him, praise Him with all the life you have! You “were dead in trespasses and sins.”

2, 3. *Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: among whom we, also, all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of*

the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. It does us good to remember what we used to be. There was no reason in us, by nature, why we should be made the children of God. There were in us no distinguishing traits of character by which we were separated from our fellow sinners. We ran in the same course. We were possessed by the same spirit. We worked the same works. We had the same nature. We were under the same condemnation—“children of wrath, even as others.”

4, 5. *But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by Grace you are saved).* [See Sermons #2968, Volume 52—“HIS GREAT LOVE”; #805, Volume 14—RESURRECTION WITH CHRIST and #2741, Volume 47—SALVATION BY GRACE—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] “By Grace you are saved.” I know that you feel that it is so. Our quickening out of our death in sin must have been by Grace—and as God has done it—unto Him must be ascribed all the glory of it! There can be no merit in those who are dead in sin that they should be quickened out of their sin! This must be the work of the Lord, alone, and unto Him be all the praise. He “has quickened us together with Christ,” so that our life is mystically linked with the life of Christ, as He said to His disciples, “Because I live, you shall also live.” Until He can die, those who are one with Him cannot die.

6. *And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* It is all in Him and it has a sevenfold sweetness about it because it is in Him. To live unto God is a wondrous mercy, but to live *together* with Christ is an unspeakable honor! To be raised up into the heavenly places would be a surpassing blessing, but to be raised up there *together with Christ*, and to be made to sit there with Him, is a gift that is above the superlative! I know not how else to speak of it.

7, 8. *That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by Grace are you saved through faith.* [See Sermons #1064, Volume 18—SALVATION ALL OF GRACE and #1609, Volume 27—FAITH—WHAT IS IT? HOW CAN IT BE OBTAINED?—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] It must be all of Grace because of the greatness of the favor bestowed. A man dead in trespasses and sins cannot deserve to be made alive. And when he is made alive, he cannot deserve to be raised up to sit with Christ in the heavenly places! That is too great a gift to come to us by the way of the Law—it must come to us emphatically as the gift of the Grace of God in Christ Jesus! “For by Grace are you saved through faith”—

8. *And that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.* “Not of yourselves.” What do those people mean who keep on crying up the power of the human will, the wonderful dignity of human nature and all that kind of foolish talk? Salvation is not of ourselves! “It is the gift of God,” not a reward which we have earned, but a free gift which God bestows according to the riches of His Grace!

9. *Not of works, lest any man should boast.* God will not have a boaster in Heaven! He will not have the creature exalting himself in His Presence. The command, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the

earth.” is backed up by this reason, “for I am God, and there is none else.” Therefore unto God, Himself, must be the praise and glory for all who are saved.

10. *For we are His workmanship.* [See Sermons #1829, Volume 31—THE SINGULAR ORIGIN OF A CHRISTIAN and #2210, Volume 37—THE AGREEMENT OF SALVATION BY GRACE WITH WALKING IN GOOD WORKS—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Salvation cannot be of works, for if we have any good works, it is because we are God’s workmanship.

10-12. *Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. Therefore remember that you being in time past, Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ.* Certainly we were poor sinners of the Gentiles, having no participation whatever in the old Mosaic dispensation.

12. *Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.* For us there was no paschal lamb, for us there was no high priest at Jerusalem, no altar smoked with a sacrifice for us—we were “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel”—

12. *And strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.* That is where the whole Gentile world stood! And this is experimentally where you and I stood till Sovereign Grace interposed for our salvation. What knew we about the Covenants of promise? We knew nothing and we did not care to know anything! What did we know about a hope? We would have died without a hope if God’s mercy had not come to us! What knew we, or what cared we about a God in the world? We may have thought that there was a God in Heaven, but as actually operating upon the daily life of man, we knew no such God! We were “without God in the world.”

13. *But now.* Oh, what a blessed, “but”! How much hangs upon it! Think of what God has done for you by His Grace! “But now”—

13. *In Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ.* [See Sermon #851, Volume 15—NEARNESS TO GOD—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] What a power there must be about that blood—that God not only hears it speaking in Heaven, that it makes a way of access for all the saints, that it cleanses from all sin—but that it brings the far-off ones near! We will never cease to speak of the precious blood of Jesus! There are certain people who cannot bear to hear it mentioned, but a bloodless theology is a lifeless theology, and a ministry that can do without mentioning the blood of Christ has no power to bless the sons and daughters of men.

14. *For He is our peace.* We find in Christ, peace with God, peace with our own conscience, peace with all mankind!

14. *Who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us.* So making Jews and Gentiles one—

15. *Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the Law of Commandments contained in ordinances; so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, so making peace.* Our Lord Jesus Christ was a Jew, yet I venture to say that there was nothing Jewish about Him. He was

the model of what man ought to have been and His words and His actions made Him worthy to be called cosmopolitan. He belongs to all mankind. He is the Man in whom all races are summed up! And when we come to Christ, there is a link between us and the ancient people of God. I do not care about Anglo-Israelism, what I care for is Christo-Israelism—to belong to the Israel of God in Christ Jesus!

16-17. *And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were near.* Christ is the Preacher of peace as well as the Maker of peace—and no man ever knows the peace of God unless Christ preaches it to him.

18, 19. *For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore—Here is another sweet “now.”*

19. *You are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.* A part of the family of the great Householder, even God! Citizenship is well enough in its place, but citizens do not always know one another. But we are of the household of God—we are brought into an intimate relationship with one another through our Elder Brother who makes us to be the children of the great Father in Heaven!

20, 21. *And are built upon the foundations of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ, Himself, being the chief cornerstone in whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord.* We are put so close together, if we are really in Christ, that we are like the stones of the temple—so united as to become one. In Christ Jesus our union is not only that of relationship, but we enter into a perfect unity with one another and with the Lord.

22. *In whom you also are being built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.* [See Sermon #267, Volume 56—THE TABERNACLE OF THE MOST HIGH—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] That is the most wonderful Truth of all—that God Himself should come and dwell among His people and in His people, and that, being sanctified by Grace, we become the dwelling place of the Most High! God grant that it may be so! Amen.

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
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“HIS GREAT LOVE”

NO. 2968

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 29, 1905.

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***“His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.”
Ephesians 2:4, 5.***

You notice, in this chapter, the remarkable change of subject which commences at the 4th verse. Paul had been giving a very sad description of what even the saints are by nature and of their conduct before conversion. And then, as if he was quite weary of writing upon that painful topic, he says, “But God”—and goes on to tell what God has done. What a relief it is to turn from ourselves and from our fellow men, to God! And I do not know when God, in His rich mercy, ever seems so lovely in our eyes as when we have just gazed upon our own abundant sins. The diamond shines all the more brilliantly when it has a suitable foil to set off its brightness—and man seems to act as a foil for the goodness and the mercy of God! Perhaps you remember that the Psalmist, when he had said in his haste, “All men are liars,” turned abruptly from that theme and said, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?” It is as if he had said, “I will not have anything more to do with man. I find him to be only like a broken cistern that can hold no water—but as for my God, He has never failed me and He never will—so, ‘I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord.’”

I want, at this time, to intertwine these two subjects—ourselves in our fall and God in His Grace—ourselves in our sin and God in His love—“His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.” I shall not need so much to preach as just to refresh your memories—to revive your recollections of the great tidings which the Lord, in His Grace, has done for you. I want you who know the Lord to remember what you were—and what God has done for you. Those two themes will bring out the greatness of His love, so they shall be our two objects for meditation. First, *what we were*. And secondly, *what God did for us*.

I. First, then, WHAT WE WERE. The text says that “we were dead in sins.”

O Believer, whatever life of a spiritual kind you have in you, today, was given to you by God! It was not yours by nature. Before God looked upon you in love and pity and said unto you, “Live,” you were dead! That is to say, as far as spiritual things are concerned, *you were insensible*—insensible alike to the bearers of Divine Wrath and to the melodies of Divine Love. You could even lie at the foot of Sinai and not shake with

fright, although Moses did exceedingly fear and quake. And you could lie at the foot of the Cross and yet not be melted by the death-cries of Immanuel, although the earth did quake and the rocks were rent and the graves were opened at that doleful sound! Do you not remember, Beloved, when you passed through such a time as that? I do—when utter callousness and coldness of heart reigned supreme within us, when the world—painted harlot as she is—could attract us, but we were insensible to the inexpressible beauties of Him who is altogether lovely, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior!

And as we were insensible to spiritual things, being dead, so *we were, at that time, without power to do anything*. We were preached to, called and bid to come, but, as far as all goodness was concerned, we were like a corpse—unable to hear the sweetest music, or the crack of doom resounding overhead! Do you not remember, dear Friends, when it was so with you? You thought then that you could do something good in your own strength, but it was a dreadful failure when you attempted it! Your resolutions, when you got as far as resolving, all fell to the ground, for you were, in the emphatic words of Paul, “without strength.” Yes, you were insensible and powerless.

And, what is worse still, we were then *without will or desire to come to God*. We had no disposition to move towards the Lord, no aspirations after holiness, no longing after communion with our Creator. We loved the world and were content to fill our treasury with its paltry pelf. This seemed to be the only portion for which we cared. If we could have become rich and increased with goods, we would have said, “Soul, take your ease—there is nothing more for you to desire.”

That was our state by nature. We were dead. And did the Lord love us *then*, when there was nothing whatever in us to commend us to Him—nothing by which we could possibly rise into a condition that would be estimable in His sight? Did He love us then? Yes, He did—and there must have been surprising Grace in that “great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.”

While we were dead as to spiritual things, *there was, alas, a life in us of another kind*. If you read the chapter from which our text is taken, you will find that the dead people are described as walking. They were walking corpses—a strange commingling of metaphors, and yet most certainly true with regard to all ungodly men. They are dead to goodness, but, as for the evil within them, how full of life it is! The devil within them and the flesh within them were active and, as the corpse gives forth corruption and fills the tomb with putridity, so did our sin continually give forth evil emanations which must have been most nauseous to God! Yet, notwithstanding all this, “He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.”

Let me just mention some of the unlovely and unlovable things which God saw in us while we were in that dead state. One of the first was this—*we were ungrateful*. It is very difficult to continue to love ungrateful persons. If you seek to do them good and yet you receive no thanks from them—if you persevere in doing them good and yet, for all that, they are

unkind to you—it is not in flesh and blood to continue to love them. Yet, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, what ingratitude to God was once in our hearts! What favors the Lord bestowed upon us—not merely daily bread and temporal blessings, but there were real spiritual gifts of His Grace presented to us—yet we turned our backs upon them all and, still worse, we turned our backs upon Him who gave them to us! How sad it is that many people live year after year without ever recognizing the God who gives them so many mercies and blessings! Perhaps, now and then, there is a “thank God” uttered in idleness or as a compliment—but there is no heart in it. The ingratitude of some of us was greater even than that of others, for we were born of godly parents, we were nurtured in the home of piety, we heard scarcely a sound in our infancy that was not mingled with the name of Jesus and yet, as we grew up, these very things we regarded as restraints! And sometimes we wished that we could do as other people’s children did and half regretted that we had godly friends who watched so carefully over our conduct. The Lord might have said to us, “I have done so much for you, yet you exhibit no gratitude. I will, therefore, leave you and give these favors to others.” But, in His great mercy, although we were so ungrateful, He did not act like that.

What is even worse, *we were complaining and murmuring*. Do you not remember, in your unconverted state, my Friend, how scarcely anything seemed to please you? This thing happened quite contrary to your wishes and that was not at all to your liking—and the other was not according to your notion of what should be. The Prophet Jeremiah asked, “Why does a living man complain?” But we seemed to ask, “Why should we *leave off* complaining?” We murmured against the Lord notwithstanding the great mercies that He gave us. We rebelled against Him and waxed worse and worse. It is a difficult thing for us to love a murmurer. When you try to do a man good and he only grumbles at what you do for him, you are very apt to say, “Very well, I will take my favors where they will be better appreciated.” But God did not act like that towards us—“His great love with which He loved us” was not to be turned away from us even by our murmuring and complaining!

And all that while, dear Friends, *we were trifling with spiritual things*. Like those people mentioned in the parable who, when they were invited to the marriage feast, “made light of it,” so did we. We were warned to escape from Hell, but it seemed too like an idle tale! We were bid to seek after Heaven, but we loved the things of this world too well to barter them for joys unseen and eternal. We were told that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and it seemed to be a story that we had heard so often that we called it “a platitude.” We were earnestly entreated to lay hold on Christ and to find eternal life in Him, but we said, “Perhaps we will tomorrow,” proving that we did not care about it, but would make God wait at our beck and call when it should be convenient for us! You know that if a man is in an ill state of health and you, as a doctor, go to help him, but he merely laughs at his illness and says that

he does not care about it, you are very apt to say, “Then, why should I care? You are sick and I am anxious to heal you, but you say that you do not care to be healed. Very well, then, I will go to some other patient who will entreat me to use my best skills on his behalf and who will be grateful to me when I have used them.” But the Lord did not act like that with us. Notwithstanding our trifling, He was in earnest. He meant to heal our soul-sickness and He did heal it! Determined to save us, He would not heed the rebuff of our carelessness and callousness, but still persevered in manifesting toward us that “great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.”

To make the deformity of our character still worse—*we were all the while proud*—as proud as Lucifer! We had not any righteousness of our own, yet we thought we had. We were far off from God by wicked works, yet we stood before Him like the Pharisee in the Temple and thanked Him that we were not as other men! We were quite content though we had nothing to be content with. We were “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” yet we said that we were “rich, and increased with goods, and had need of nothing.” As for shedding penitential tears, we left that work to those who had sinned more deeply than we had, for we imagined that we had kept all the Commandments from our youth up! Thus we despised the Savior because we exalted *ourselves*. We thought little of Christ because we thought much of ourselves. And so, in our pride, we dared to strut before the eternal Throne of God as if we were some great ones, though we were but worms of the dust! I think that it is one of the most difficult things in the world to love a proud man. You can love a man even though he has a thousand faults if he is not proud and boastful—but when he is very proud, human nature seems to start back from him. Yet God, in His “great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins,” loved us although we were proud and loved us out of that sinful state.

If worse could be, there was something even worse than pride in us, for *we were deceptive* as well as proud. “No,” says one, “surely you cannot truthfully lay that to our charge.” Well, I have to confess that it was so with myself. I remember that when I was ill, I said that if God would only spare my life, I would live differently in the future. But my promise was not kept, though God did spare my life. Often, after hearing a stirring sermon, I sought a place where I could weep in secret and I said, “Now I will be decided for the Lord.” But it was not so. Oh, how many times have we broken the promises and vows we made to the Lord! Child of God, before your conversion, how many vows and covenants you made—yet your goodness was like the morning cloud or the early dew which soon passes away. Who can love one who is not to be trusted? Yet, God, in “His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins,” loved us while we so many times deceived Him!

These things which I have mentioned have appertained to all the children of God, but there are some of them whose sins have been even greater than these. I ask every converted man here to look through his own biography. Some of you were, perhaps, converted while you were

young and so were kept from the grosser sins into which others fall. But there were some who were allowed to go into drunkenness, or into uncleanness and all manner of iniquity. God has forgiven you, my Brothers and Sisters, and has washed all that evil away in the precious blood of Jesus, but you feel that you can never forgive yourself. I know that I am bringing some very unhappy memories before you, of which you say, “Would God that night had never been, or that day had never passed over my head!” The Lord grant that as you look back upon those sins of yours, you may feel deeply humbled and, at the same time, may be devoutly grateful to God for “His great love” with which He has loved you!

There have been some who seem as if they had gone to the utmost extremity of sin—as if they dared and defied the Most High. And yet, notwithstanding their atrocious sins, Free Grace has won the day! There has seemed, in some cases, to be a stern struggle between sin and Grace, as if sin said, “I will provoke God till Grace shall leave Him,” but Grace has said, “Provoked as the Lord is, yet still will He stand to His purpose of mercy—He will not turn away from the decree of His love.” Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I ask you to think this subject over in your own private meditations. There are some things that it would not be right to mention in any ear but the ear of God, for it certainly was a horrible pit out of which He took us, and miry clay, indeed, out of which He drew us—so we may well praise “His great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in sins.”

II. The second subject for our meditation is WHAT GOD DID FOR US “even when we were dead in sins.”

Well, first of all, *He remained faithful to His choice of us.* He had chosen His people before the earth was and He did not choose them in the dark. He knew right well what their nature would be and also the practice which would grow out of their nature—so that nothing that has happened has ever surprised the Lord concerning any one of His people. He was well aware beforehand of all their corruption and filthiness. So, when He saw them acting as I have described, He did not turn from His purpose to save them. Blessed be His name for this! It is one of the wonders of His Grace that God proves the greatness of His love.

Then, next, as He did not repent of His choice, *so neither did He repent of His redemption of His people.* You will find it recorded in Scripture that “it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart,” but you never read that He repented of Redemption! Nowhere in Scripture is there such a passage as this, “It grieved the Lord at His heart that He had given His Son to die for such unworthy ones.” No, my Friends, He had bought us with a price beyond all calculation, even the heart’s blood of His only-begotten Son, so that, although we went from sin to sin and, for a time resisted all the calls of the Gospel, He did not turn from His purpose of love and mercy, nor make His Atonement for us null and void.

Then, further, in His great love for us, *God would not let us die till He had brought us to Christ.* We possibly passed through many perils and had many escapes. John Bunyan, you will remember, was to have stood as sentinel one night, but another soldier took his place, and was shot. John Bunyan did not know, at the time, why the exchange was made, but God had ordained that he should not die till he had been brought to Christ. So fool-hardy was he that on one occasion he plucked the sting out of a viper with his bare hand, yet he was unhurt, for God would not let him die while he was such a desperado! And what amazing escapes from shipwreck, from murder, from fever, from “accidents” in a thousand forms some men have had simply because God will not let them perish, for He means that they shall yet be brought as sheep into His fold! I told you, some time ago, that I once talked with a gentleman who was in the famous charge at Balaclava—and I felt moved to say to him, “Surely God had some designs of love toward you, or He would not have spared you when so many were being taken away.” Well, in whatever way our lives have been spared, we ascribe it to the great love with which God loved us even when we were dead in sins.

We see that great love also manifested in *the way in which God restrained us from many sins.* There have been times in our history when, if it had not been for a mysterious check that was put upon us, we would have sinned much worse than we ever did. Something of that kind happened in the case of the well-known Colonel Gardiner. He had made an appointment for the commission of a very gross sin, but the Lord had chosen him unto eternal life—so that night, which he intended to spend in sin—became the time of his conversion to God! And you know what a devout and earnest Christian he became. The Lord knows the right time to say to anyone, “Thus far shall you go, but no farther.” He makes men’s minds and hearts, like the sea, to know His will and to move or be still at His Divine command. Cannot some of you, my Brothers and Sisters, recollect the way in which God thus restrained you from going to an excess of riot?

And, then, His great love was seen *by the way in which He kept on calling us by His Grace.* Some of us can scarcely tell when we were first bid to come to the Savior. A mother’s tears and a father’s prayers are, however, among the fondly-cherished memories of that early call. Do not some of you remember that loving Sunday school teacher and the earnestness with which she pleaded with you? And that godly minister and how he seemed to throw his whole soul into the work of entreating you to yield yourself to the Savior? Others of you cannot forget how with good books, letters, entreaties and persuasions from Christian friends, you have been followed as if the Lord had hunted you out of your sins by all the agencies that could possibly be used—yet you dodged, twisted and doubled this way and that way, trying to escape from your gracious Pursuer! You were like a bird that the fowler cannot take for a long while, or like a wandering sheep that the shepherd cannot find for many a day!

But the Good Shepherd never gave up the search—He meant to find you and He did. He had determined to save you—and from that

determination He would not be turned aside, do whatever you might! And, at last, there came the blessed day when He subdued you unto Himself! The weapons of your rebellion fell from your hands, for Christ had conquered you! And how did He do it? By “His great love”—His Omnipotent Grace. You were dead in sins when His Spirit came to work them upon you, but the Spirit came, in the name of the risen Savior, with such almighty force of Irresistible Love that you were carried captive—a willing captive—at the chariot wheels of your Divine Conqueror! Shall we ever forget that blessed time? We sing “Happy day! Happy day!” and well we may, for that conquest is the chief and foremost token of “His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.”

I will not say more about this precious Truth of God, but I will use the few minutes still at my disposal in making a practical application of my subject.

If, dear Friends, the Lord loved us with such great love even when we were dead in sins, *do you think that He will ever leave us to perish?* Have you indulged the notion that under your present trial, whatever it may be, you will be deserted by your God? My dear widowed Sister, do you fear that the Lord will forsake you now that your husband is dead? My friend over there—you who have had heavy losses in business—do you not believe that the Lord will help you through? Did He love you when you were dead in sins and is He going to desert you now? Do you think you will ever have to ask, with the Psalmist, “Is His mercy clean gone forever? Does His promise fail forevermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies?” If you do talk like that, then ask yourself why the Lord ever began His work of love upon you if He did not mean to finish it, or if He meant, after all, to cast you off? Do you think, if that was His intention, He would ever have begun with you? He knew all that would happen to you and all that you would do, so that nothing comes unexpectedly to Him! Known unto the Lord from the beginning, were all your trials and all your sins so that, as He still loved you, in the foresight of all that was to happen to you, do you think that He will now, or ever, cast you away from Him? You know that He will not!

Again, if He so loved you even when you were dead in sins, *will He deny you anything that is for His own Glory and for your own and other’s good?* You have been praying, but you have feared that the mercy you asked would never come. Think for a moment—He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for you centuries before you were born—will He not freely give to you all that you ought to ask of Him now that you are alive unto Him? George Herbert speaks of the dew that falls upon the grass, although the grass cannot call for the dew—but you do call upon God to give you His Grace—so shall not His Grace come copiously to you as the dew falling when God sends it? Does He water the earth when its dumb mouth opens? Does He provide food for the “dumb driven cattle?” Then will He not attend to your cries and prayers when you call

upon Him in the name of His well-beloved Son? If He loved you when you were a man of corruption, will He not answer your supplications, now that He has made you to be an heir of Heaven and formed you in the likeness of His Son? O, Beloved, be of good comfort and let no thought of despondency, or of unbelief ever cross your mind!

Further, if the Lord loved you thus even when you were dead in sins, *ought you not now love Him very much?* Oh, the love of God! The Apostle does not say that God pitied us, though that is true. He does not say that the Lord had compassion upon us, though that is also true. But Paul speaks of “His great love.” I can perfectly understand God’s pitying me. I can perfectly understand God’s having compassion on me. But I cannot comprehend God’s *loving* me—nor can you. Think what it means—He loves you! Sweet above all other things is love—a mother’s love, a father’s love, a husband’s love, a wife’s love—but all these are only faint images of the love of God! You know how greatly you are cheered by the earthly love of one who is dear to you—but Paul says that God loves you! He that made the heavens and the earth, before whom you are as an ant, has set His heart’s affection upon you! He loves you so much that He has made great sacrifices for you. He is daily blessing you and He will not be in Heaven without you! So dear, so strong is His love to you—and it was so even when you were dead in sins! Oh, then, will you not love Him much in return for His “great love” to you? Is anything too hard for you to bear for His dear sake, or anything too difficult for you to do for Him who loved you so? Dear Lord, we give *ourselves* to You—‘tis all that we can do!

Another reflection for you, my Christian Friend, is this. If God so loved you even when you were dead in sins, *ought not you to love those who treat you badly?* There are many people in this world who seem as if they could not do anything but ugly things. They have not a generous spot in their nature. They are cross-grained, always quarrelling and he who would gladly live peaceably with them sometimes finds it very hard work. I know some gentle spirits that are deeply wounded by the hard and cruel things that are said or done to them by their relatives or companions. Well, dear Friends, if any of us are treated thus, let us love these cruel people! Let us cover their unkindness over with our love, for, if God loved us even when we were dead in sins—when He could not see anything in us to love—we also ought to love others for His sake! Even when we see a thousand faults in them, we must, say, “As God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven us, so do we forgive you.” It is a grand thing to be able to bury in eternal forgetfulness every unkind word or act that has ever caused us pain. If any of you have any thought of anger in your heart against anyone—if you have any feeling of resentment—if you have any recollection of injuries. If there is *anything* that vexes and grieves you, come and bury it all in the grave of Jesus—for if He loved you when you were dead in sins—it cannot be half so wonderful for you to love your poor fellow sinner whatever ill treatment you may have received at his hands!

My last word is to the unconverted and it is a very sweet and precious word. Do you see, unconverted man, that you need never say, “I dare not

come to God through Jesus Christ because then is nothing good in me”? You need never say that, for Paul speaks of “His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.” Now, if all His people were loved by Him when they were dead in sins, how can you think that God requires anything good in man as the cause or reason for His love? Of all the saints in Heaven it may be said that God loved them because He would do it, for, by nature, there was nothing more in them for God to love than there was in the very devils in Hell! And as to His saints on earth, if God loves them—and He does—it is simply because He will do it, for there was no goodness whatever in *them* by nature! God loves them in the Infinite Sovereignty of His great loving Nature. Well, then, poor Soul, why should not God love *you*? And since He bids you come to Him, however empty you may be of everything that is good, come to Him, and welcome! Let the text knock on the head, once and for all, all ideas of *doing* anything to win the love of God! And if you feel yourself to be the very worst, lowest and meanest of the human race, I rejoice that you feel that, for the Lord loves to look upon those who are self-emptied and who have nothing good of their own to plead before Him! These are the people who will value His love and upon such people as these it is that He bestows His love. “The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick.” The hospital is for the man who is diseased, not for the one who is in health. And the Lord Jesus Christ has opened a Hospital for incurables—for those who cannot be cured by all the medicines of human morality and outward religion! Christ bids them come to Him that He may make them whole!

I wish I had the power to speak of the love of God to the sinner in such a way that he would come to the Lord Jesus Christ, but I will try to put the brush very plainly and simply—and then I will close my discourse. My Hearer, whatever you may have been up to, to this moment—if you have been a despiser of God, an infidel, a blasphemer—if you have added sin to sin, if you have made yourself black as Hell with enormous transgressions—yet all this is no reason why God should not have chosen you and loved you! And all this is no reason why He should not now forgive you and accept you! No, He puts it thus in His Word—“Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Come then, you blackest of sinners—you who feel yourselves unfit to be found in a House of Prayer—you who, like the publican in the Temple, scarcely dare to lift up your eyes to Heaven—you condemned ones who fear that there is no hope for you—let me assure you that in you there is space for God’s mercy to be displayed! There is elbowroom for His Grace to work! Come to Jesus just as you are! Accept the Atonement made by His own blood and be saved here and now, for He waits to be gracious and He has said, “Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out.”

I recollect the time, many years ago, when I would have given both my eyes to hear such Truth as I have preached tonight! It would not have

mattered to me who had told it to me. If it had been a man of stammering tongue and faulty grammar, if he had but said to me, “Salvation is of God’s Grace, not of your merit. It is of God’s goodness, not of your holiness—you have nothing to do but to rest on what Christ has done, for God loves even you who are dead in sins”—if I had known that, I think I would have found peace with God long before I did. Does anyone say, “But I need to *feel* and I need to *do*, and I need to find out this, and that, and the other?” You need nothing of the kind, Sinner! Christ has done it all! To take any merit of your own to Christ would be worse than carrying coals to Newcastle! Come just as you are—an empty-handed sinner, a bankrupt sinner, a starving sinner, you who are at the very gates of Hell, for—

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

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
PSALM 30.**

May the Holy Spirit who inspired the writer of this Psalm now lead us into its inner meaning! It is entitled, “A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house of David.” Or, rather, “A Psalm; a song of dedication for the House. By David.” It was a song of faith, since David did not live to witness the dedication of the Temple for which he had planned in his heart and for which he had laid by in store. Though he knew that he would not be permitted by God to build it, he took delight in writing a Psalm which might be sung at the opening of the Temple. Thus it begins—

Verse 1. *I will extol You, O LORD; for You have lifted me up, and have not made my foe to rejoice over me.* “I will exalt You, for You have exalted me! I will lift up Your praise because You have lifted up my spirits. I will bless You, for You have blessed me.” Our song of praise should be the echo of God’s voice of love. “You have not made my foes to rejoice over me.” You remember that this was one of the three things put to David as a chastisement for his great sin in numbering the people—“Will You flee three months before your enemies while they pursue you?” He here praises the Lord that such calamity as that did not come upon him. “You have not made my foes to rejoice over me.” Sorrows averted should be the occasion of grateful songs of thanksgiving!

2. *O LORD my God, I cried unto You, and You have healed me.* The king and the people had been sorely smitten with sickness on account of his sin, but the Lord, in mercy, bade the destroying angel sheathe his sword when he “was by the threshing-place of Araunah the Jebusite”—the very place which afterwards became the site on which the Temple was built! It was well, therefore, at its opening, to praise the God who heals His people. We ought to praise the Lord more than we do for our recovery from sickness. Employ the physician if you will, but, when healing comes

to you, magnify the Lord for it and ascribe the glory of it to His holy name!

3. *O LORD, You have brought up my soul from the grave: You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the Pit.* Here is a double mercy to sing of—not dead and not damned! Life spared is something for which to praise the Lord, but to have the soul saved from going down to the Pit is a cause of still greater thanksgiving! Oh praise the name of the Lord, you who love Him and trust in Him, for He has delivered you from going down into the Pit!

4. *Sing unto the LORD, O you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.* David seems to say to the saints, “Do not let me sing alone, but all of you join in the chorus.” He does not invite reprobates to praise the Lord, but He says, “Sing unto Jehovah. O you saints of His.” I think it is very wrong to have the praises of God sung in public by ungodly men and women, as they sometimes are. The singing should not be left to a godless choir. Oh, no—“sing unto the Lord, all you saints of His,” for you, only, can sing sincerely unto Him.

“Give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness”—at the very memory of Him—at the remembrance of the whole of Him, for that is His holiness, His wholeness, the entire, perfect Character of God. O saints below, sing as they do in Heaven, for their song is “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.”

5. *For His anger endures but a moment.* Notice that the words, “endures but,” are inserted by the translators and very properly so. But see how the passages reads if you leave them out—“For His anger a moment.” That is long enough for Him to display it, for it is His strange work—and long enough for us to endure it—for it might crush us if it lasted longer!

5. *In His favor is life.* Life came to Jerusalem, in David’s day, as soon as God smiled upon it. And life comes to us as soon as we taste of His favor, even though we have been ready to die of despair.

5. *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.* As the dews are appropriate to the night, so is weeping seemly for us when Jesus hides His face from us. The children of the bride-chamber may well mourn when the heavenly Bridegroom is taken from them, but it is only for a night. Morning will end our mourning. Our night-sorrow is for the night, but our joys are for a day that will know no evening!

6. *And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.* It is a pity to say too much. Very few people fall into the opposite fault of saying too little. It is always a pity to be counting with certainty upon the future and presuming, because of the hopefulness of the present, that this state of things will last forever. David was not wise when he said, in his prosperity, “I shall never be moved.”

7. *LORD, by Your favor You have made my mountain to stand strong: You did hide Your face, and I was troubled.* When God is at cross purposes with His people, they are troubled at once. There is no need for blows, no need for angry words—“You did hide Your face, and I was

troubled.” That is enough for a child of God—let him but miss the light of God’s Countenance and it breaks him down at once.

8. *I cried to You, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication.* What should the child of God do when he is in trouble, but cry? And to whom should he cry but to his Father?

9. *What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the Pit? Shall the dust praise You? Shall it declare Your truth?* So his prayer was an argument—and that is the very bone and sinew of prayer—to reason and argue with God. He seems to put it thus—“Lord, if I lose my soul, You will be a loser, too, for You will lose a singer out of Your choir, one who would be glad enough to praise You and whose very life it is to magnify You. Oh, do not cut me down! When I am dead, when I am lost, there can be no praise to You from me, so spare me, my gracious God!”

10. *Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be You my helper.* What a handy prayer this is, a prayer to carry about with you wherever you go! “Lord, be You my Helper.” That is a minister’s prayer when he is going to preach. That is a Sunday school teacher’s prayer when going to the class. Is not that a prayer for the sufferer when the pain upon him is very severe? “Lord, be You my Helper.” Are you working for Him? Are you cast down in soul? This prayer will suit you—“Lord, be You my Helper.”

11. *You have turned for me my mourning into dancing: You have put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.* What a transformation scene in answer to prayer! Notice that David does not say, “I hope that you have,” but he puts it thus, “You have—You *have*.” He is quite sure about it and, being sure of this great mercy, he gives God all the glory of it. What a wonderful change it is! Not merely from mourning into peace, but into delight—delight expressed by dancing! Not merely from sackcloth into ordinary dress, but from the sackcloth of sorrow to the satin of gladness! God does nothing by halves. He not only chases away the night and gives us twilight, but He goes on to gladden us with the full glory of noontide—and all this He does with a definite end and purpose!

12. *To the end that my glory.* Or, “my tongue”—

12. *May sing praise to You, and not be silent.* God ought to have praise from us. It is the quit-rent which we pay as tenants to the great Lord of All—let us not rob Him of His revenue.

12. *O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto You forever.*

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—716, 711, 30.
AND FROM “SACRED SONGS AND SOLOS”—39.**

—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.**

RESURRECTION WITH CHRIST

NO. 805

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

*“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by Grace you are saved).”
Ephesians 2:4, 5.*

THERE have been conferences of late of all sorts of people upon all kinds of subjects, but what a remarkable thing a conference would be if it were possible for persons who have been raised from the dead! If you could somehow or other get together the daughter of the Shunammite, the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow at the gates of Nain, Lazarus, and Eutychus, what strange communing they might have one with another! What singular enquiries they might make, and what remarkable disclosures might they present to us! The thing is not possible, and yet a better and more remarkable assembly may be readily gathered on the same conditions, and more important information may be obtained from the confessions of its members.

This morning we have a conference of that very character gathered in this house, for many of us were dead in trespasses and sins, even as others—but we hope that through Divine energy we have been quickened from that spiritual death, and are now living to praise God! It will be well for us to talk together, to review the past, to rejoice in the present, to look forward to the future. “You has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” And as you sit together, an assembly of men and women possessed of resurrection life, you are a more notable conclave than if merely your bodies and not your spirits had been quickened!

The first part of this morning's discourse will be occupied with a solemnity in which we shall take you into the morgue. Secondly, we shall spend awhile in reviewing a miracle, and we shall observe dead men living. We shall then turn aside to observe a sympathy indicated in the text, and we shall close with a song, for the text reads somewhat like music—it is full of thankfulness, and thankfulness is the essence of true song. It is full of holy and adoring wonder! It is evermore true poetry even though expressed in prose.

I. Celebrate, first, a great SOLEMNITY and descend into the morgue of our poor humanity. According to the teaching of sacred Scripture, men are dead, *spiritually* dead. Certain vain men would make it out that men are only a *little* disordered and bruised by the Fall—wounded in a few delicate members but not mortally injured. However, the Word of God is

very explicit upon the matter and declares our race to be not wounded, not merely hurt, but *slain* outright and left as *dead* in trespasses and sin.

There are those who fancy that fallen human nature is only in a sort of swoon or fainting fit—and only needs a process of reviving to set it right. You have only, by education and by other manipulations, to set its life-floods in motion and to excite within it some degree of action—and then life will speedily be developed. There is much good in every man, they say, and you have only to bring it out by training and example. This fiction is exactly opposite to the teaching of sacred Scripture! Within these truthful pages we read of no fainting fit, no temporary paralysis—DEATH is the name for nature's condition—and *quickenings* is its great necessity.

Man is not partly dead, like the half-drowned mariner in whom some spark of life may yet remain if it be but fondly tendered, and wisely nurtured. There is not a spark of *spiritual life* left in man—manhood is to all spiritual things an absolute corpse. “In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die,” said God to our first parents, and die they did—a *spiritual* death—and all their children alike by nature lie in this spiritual death. It is not a sham death, or a metaphorical one, but a *real, absolute, spiritual* death. Yet it will be said, “Are they not alive?” Truly so, but not spiritually. There are grades of life. You come first upon the *vegetable* life—but the vegetable is a dead thing as to the vitality of the *animal*. Above the animal life rises the *mental* life, a vastly superior life. The creature, which is only an animal, is dead to either the joys or the sorrows of mental life.

Then, high above the mental, as much as the mental is above the animal, rises what Scripture calls the *spiritual* life—the life in Christ Jesus. All men have more or less of the mental life, and it is well that they should cultivate it—get as much as they can of it. It is well that they should put it to the best uses, and make it subserve the highest ends. Man, even looked upon as merely living mentally, is not to be despised or trifled with. But still, the mental life cannot of itself rise to the spiritual life—it cannot penetrate beyond that mystical wall which separates forever the mere life of mind from the life of that new principle, the Spirit, which is the offspring of God and is the living and incorruptible seed which He casts into the soul.

If you could conceive a man in all respects like yourselves with this one difference—that his soul had died out of him—that he only possessed his animal faculties and had no intellectual faculties, so that he could breathe and walk, sleep and eat, and drink, and make a noise, but all mental power was gone—you would then speak of him as being entirely dead to mental pursuits. He might be a most vigorous and well-developed animal, but his *manhood* would be dead. It would be of no use explaining a proposition to him, or working out a problem on the black board for his instruction, or offering him even the simplest school book—for if he had no mind to receive, how could you impart? Now, spiritually, this is the condition of every unregenerate man. It is of no use whatever, apart from the Spirit of God, to hope to make the man understand *spiritual* things for they are spiritually discerned, says the Apostle.

The carnal mind cannot understand the things which are of God—when best trained it has no glimmering of the inward sense of spiritual things. It stumbles over the letter and loses the real meaning, not from lack of *mental* capacity, but from the absence of *spiritual* life. O sons of men, if you would know God, “You must be born again.” “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” He cannot *understand* it, he cannot *know* it. The carnal man cannot understand the things which are of God, which are eternal and invisible, any more than an ox can understand astronomy, or a fish can admire the classics. Not in a moral sense, nor a mental sense, but in a *spiritual* sense, poor humanity is dead, and so the Word of God again and again most positively describes it.

Step with me, then, into the sepulcher, and what do you observe of yonder bodies which are slumbering there? They are quite unconscious. Whatever goes on around them, neither occasions them joy nor causes them grief. The dead in their graves may be marched over by triumphant armies, but they shout not with them that triumph. Or, friends they have left behind may sit there and water the grass upon the green mound with their tears, but no responsive sigh comes from the gloomy cavern of the tomb.

It is thus with men spiritually dead—they are unaffected by spiritual things. A dying Savior, whose groans might move the very stones and make the rocks dissolve—the spiritually dead can hear all—and be unmoved. Even the all-present Spirit is undiscerned by them, and His power unrecognized. Angels, holy men, godly exercises, devout aspirations—all these are beyond and above their world. The pangs of Hell do not alarm them and the joys of Heaven do not entice them. They hear, after a sort, mentally, but the spirit-ear is fast shut up and they do not hear. They are unconscious of all things which are of a spiritual character—they have eyes but they see not, and ears, but they hear not.

You can interest them in the facts of geology, or the discoveries of art, but you cannot win their hearts to spiritual emotions and pursuits because they are as unaware of their meaning as an oyster or snail is unacquainted with the dis-establishment of the Irish Church. Carnal men blunder over the first words of spiritual knowledge as Nicodemus did who, when he was told that he must be born again, began to enquire, “How can a man be born again when he is old?” or, like the woman of Samaria, who, when she was told of living water, could not understand the spiritual Truth, and exclaimed in wonder, “You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep—from where, then, have You that living water?” Men are spiritually unconscious of spiritual Truth, and so far dead to it.

Observe that corpse—you may strike it, you may bruise it, but it will not cry out. You may pile burdens upon it, but it is not weary. You may shut it up in darkness, but it feels not the gloom. So the unconverted man is laden with the load of his sin but he is not weary of it. He is shut up in the prison of God’s justice, but he pants not for liberty. He is under the curse of God, as it is written, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them,” but that

curse causes no commotion in his spirit because he is dead! Well may some of you be peaceful, because you are not aware of the terrors which surround you.

A man totally deaf is not startled by thunder! If totally blind, he is not alarmed by the flashes of lightning! He fears not the tempest which he does not discern! Even thus is it with you who are at ease in your sins—you cannot discern the danger of your sin, you do not perceive the terror that rises out of it—else let me tell you there would be no sleep to those wanton eyes, no rest to those giddy spirits! You would cry out in grief the very moment you received life, nor would you rest till delivered from those evils which NOW ensure for you a sure damnation. Oh, were you but alive, you would never be quiet till you were saved from the wrath to come! Man remains unconscious of spiritual things and unmoved by them because, in a spiritual sense, he is dead.

Invite yonder corpse to assist you in the most necessary works of philanthropy. The pestilence is abroad—ask the buried one to kneel with you and invoke the power of Heaven to recall the direful messenger. Or, if he prefers it, ask him to assist you in purifying the air and attending to sanitary arrangements. You ask in vain, however necessary or simple the act, he cannot help you in it. And in *spiritual* things, it is even so with the graceless. The carnal man can put himself into the posture of prayer, but he cannot pray. He can open his mouth and make sweet sounds in earth-born music, but to true praise he is an utter stranger. Even repentance, that soft and gentle Grace which ought to be natural to the sinful is quite beyond his reach. How shall he repent of a sin, the weight of which he cannot feel? How shall he pray for a blessing, the value of which he has no power to perceive? How shall he praise a God in whom he feels no interest, and in whose existence he takes no delight?

I say that to all spiritual things the man is quite as unable as the dead are unable to the natural works and services of daily life. “And yet,” says one, “we heard you last Lord’s Day tell these dead people to repent and be converted.” I know you did and you shall hear me yet again do the like. But why do I speak to the dead thus, and tell them to perform actions which they cannot do? *Because my Master bids me*, and as I obey my Master’s errand, a power goes forth with the Word spoken and the dead awake in their sleep! They wake through the quickening power of the Holy Spirit—and they who *naturally* cannot repent and believe—*do* repent and believe in Jesus and escape from their former sins and live!

But, believe me, it is no power of *theirs* which makes them thus awake from their death-sleep, and no power of *mine* which arrests the guilty, slumbering conscience—it is a *Divine* power which God has yoked with the Word which He has given forth when it is fully and faithfully preached. Therefore have we exercised ourselves in our daily calling of bidding dead men live—because life comes at the Divine bidding. But dead they are, most thoroughly so, and the longer we live the more we feel it to be so! And the more closely we review our own condition before conversion, and the more studiously we look into our own condition even *now*, the more

fully do we know that man is dead in sin, and life is a *gift*, a gift from Heaven—a gift of undeserved love and Sovereign Grace—so that the living must every one of them praise God and not themselves.

One of the saddest reflections about poor dead human nature is what it will be. Death in itself, though a solemn matter, is not so dreadful as that which comes of it. Many a time when that dear corpse has first been forsaken of the soul, those who have lost a dear one have been glad to imprint that cold brow with kisses. The countenance has looked even more lovely than in life! And when friends have taken the last glimpse, there has been nothing revolting, but much that was attractive. Our dead ones have smiled like sleeping angels, even when we were about to commit them to the grave. Ah, but we cannot shake from us a wretched sense of what is sure to be revealed before long.

It is only a matter of time before corruption must set in, and it must bring with it its daughter putridity, and by-and-by, the whole must be so noxious that if you had kept it above ground so long, you would vehemently cry with Abraham, “Bury my dead out of my sight!” for the natural and inevitable result of death is *corruption*. So it is with us all. Some are manifestly corrupt—ah, how soon! While yet they are youths we see them plunging into infamous vice. They are corrupt in the tongue with lying words and lascivious speaking. They are corrupt in the eyes with wanton glances—corrupt, certainly at heart, and then corrupt thoroughly in life.

There are many about us in the streets every day, the stink of whose corruption compels us to put them out of society, for we are very decent. Even those who are dead, themselves, are very scrupulous not to associate with those who are too far gone in corruption. The dead bury their dead and roll the stone and put away the debauched and dissolute. We do not ask the rotten sinners into our households because they might corrupt us too fast. And we flatter ourselves that we are so much superior, whereas they are only a stage or two ahead in a race which all unregenerate men are running.

This corruption, though not developed in all to the same extent *visibly*, will be plain enough at the last in another world. When God finds us dead, He will cast us out where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched. What will be the development of an unregenerate character in Hell, I cannot tell, but I am certain it will be something which my imagination dares not now attempt to depict, for all the restraints of this life which have kept men decent and moral will be gone when they come into the next world of sin!

And as Heaven is to be the perfection of the saint’s holiness, so Hell will be the perfection of the sinner’s loathsomeness—and there will he discover, and others will discover—what sin is when it comes to its worst. “When lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.” And this, dear Hearer, do we solemnly remind you will be *your* portion forever and ever, unless God is pleased to quicken you. Unless you are made to live together with Christ, you will be in this world dead, perhaps in this world corrupt, but certainly so in the next world

where all the dreadful influences of sin will be developed and discovered to the very fullest—and you shall be cast away from the Presence of God and the glory of His power.

There can be no death in Heaven, neither can corruption inherit incorruption. And if you have not been renewed in the spirit of your mind—within those pearly gates you can never have your portion. And where the light of Heaven shines in perpetual noonday your lot can never be cast. Weigh these thoughts, I pray you. If they are not according to this Book, reject them! But as they most certainly are, refuse them at your own peril. But rather, let them take possession of your careful spirit and lead you to seek and find eternal life in Christ Jesus the Lord.

II. We now change the subject for something more pleasant, and observe A MIRACLE, or dead men made alive! The great object of the Gospel of Christ is to create men anew in Christ Jesus. It aims at resurrection and accomplishes it. The Gospel did not come into this world merely to restrain the passions or educate the principles of men, but to infuse into them a *new life* which, as fallen men, they did not possess. I saw yesterday what seemed to me a picture of those preachers whose sole end and aim is the *moralizing* of their hearers, but who have not learned the need of *supernatural* life.

Not very far from the shore were a dozen or more boats at sea dragging for two dead bodies. They were using their lines and grappling irons, and what with hard rowing and industrious sailing, were doing their best most commendably to fish up the lost ones from the pitiless sea. I do not know if they were successful, but if so, what further could they do with them but decently to commit them to their mother earth? The process of education and everything else, apart from the Holy Spirit, is a dragging for dead men—to lay them out decently, side by side, in the order and decency of death—but nothing more can man do for man.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has a far other and higher task. It does not deny the value of the moralist's efforts, or decry the results of education, but it asks what *more* can you do—and the response is, "Nothing." There it bids the bearers of the bier stand away and make room for Jesus, at whose voice the dead arise. The preacher of the Gospel cannot be satisfied with what is done in drawing men out of the sea of outward sin—he longs to see the lost life restored—he desires to have breathed into them a new and superior life to what they have possessed before. Go your way, Education, do your best, you are useful in your sphere! Go your way, teacher of morality, do your best, you, too, are useful in your own manner. But if it comes to what man *really* needs for eternity, you, all put together, are of little worth—the Gospel, and the Gospel alone, answers men's requirements—man must be *regenerated, quickened, made anew*—have fresh breath from Heaven breathed into him or the work of saving him is not begun.

The text tells us that God has done this for His people, for those who trust in Him. Let us observe the dry bones as they stir and stand before the Lord. And observing, let us praise the Lord that according to His great

love with which He loved us, He has quickened us together with Christ. In this idea of *quickening*, there is a mystery. What is that invisible something which quickens a man? Who can unveil the secret? Who can track life to its hidden fountain? Brother, you are a living child of God—what made you live? You know that it was by the power of the *Holy Spirit*.

In the language of the text, you trace it to God. You believe your new life to be of Divine implantation. You are a believer in the supernatural. You believe that God has visited you as He has not visited other men, and has breathed into you life. You believe rightly, but you cannot *explain* it. We know not of the wind, from where it comes or where it goes. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit. He that should sit down deliberately and attempt to explain regeneration, and the source of it, might sit there till he grew into a marble statue before he would accomplish the task. The Holy Spirit enters into us, and we who were dead before to *spiritual* things, begin to live by His power and indwelling.

He is the great Worker, but *how* the Holy Spirit works is a secret that must be reserved for God Himself. We need not wish to understand the mode—it is enough for us if we partake of the result. It is a great mystery, then, but while it is a mystery it is a great *reality*. We know and do testify, and we have a right to be believed, for we trust we have not forfeited our characters. We know and testify that we are now possessors of a life which we knew nothing of some years ago—that we have come to exist in a new world—and that the appearance of all things outside of us is totally changed from what it used to be. “Old things have passed away, behold all things are become new.”

I bear witness that I am this day the subject of sorrows which were no sorrows to me before I knew the Lord, and that I am uplifted with joys which I should have laughed at the very thought of if anyone had whispered the name of them in my ears before the Divine life had quickened me. This is the witness of hundreds of us, and although others disbelieve us, they have no right to deny our consciousness because they have not partaken of the same. If they have never tried it, what should they know about it? If there should be an assembly of blind men, and one of them should have his eyes opened and begin to talk of what he saw, I can imagine the blind ones all saying, “What a fool that man is! There are no such things.”

“Here I have lived in this world 70 years,” says one, “and I never saw that thing which he calls a color, and I do not believe in his absurd nonsense about scarlet and violet, and black and white! It is all foolery.” Another wiseacre declares, “I have been up and down the world, and all over it for 40 years, and I declare I never had the remotest conception of blue or green, nor had my father before me. He was a right good soul and always stood up for the grand old darkness. Give me,” says he, “a good stick and a sensible dog, and all your nonsensical notions about stars, and suns, and moons, I leave to fools who like them.” The *blind* man has not come into the world of light and color, and the *unregenerate* man has not

come into that world of spirit, and hence neither of them is capable of judging correctly.

I sat one day, at a public dinner, opposite a gentleman of the gourmand species who seemed a man of vast erudition as to wines, spirits and all the viands of the table. He judged and criticized at such a rate that I thought he ought to have been employed by our provision merchants as Taster in General! He had finely developed lips and he smacked them frequently. His palate was in a flue-critical condition. He was also as proficient in the quantity as in the quality, and disposed of meats and drinks in a most wholesale manner. His retreating forehead, empurpled nose and protruding lips made him, while eating at least, more like an animal than a man.

At last, hearing a little conversation around him upon religious matters, he opened his small eyes and his great mouth, and delivered himself of this sage utterance, "I have lived 60 years in this world and I never felt or believed in anything spiritual in all my life." The speech was a needless diversion of his energies from the roast duck. We did not want him to tell us that. I, for one, was quite clear about it before he spoke. If the cat under the table had suddenly jumped on a chair and said the same thing, I should have attached as much importance to the utterance of the one as to the declaration of the other. And so, by one sin in one man and another in another man, they betray their spiritual death.

Until a man has received the Divine life, his remarks thereon, even if he is an archbishop, go for nothing. He knows nothing about it according to his own testimony—then why should he go on to try to beat down with sneers and sarcasms those who solemnly avow that they have such a life, and that this life has become real to them—so real that the mental life is made to sink into a subordinate condition compared with the *spiritual* life which reigns within the soul? This life brings with it the exercise of renewed faculties. The man who begins to live unto God has powers now which he never had before—the power to really *pray*, the power to heartily *praise*, the power to actually *commune* with God, the power to *see* God, to *talk* with God—the power to receive tidings from the invisible world and the power to send messages up through the veil which hides the unseen up to the very Throne of God!

Now the man, instead of asking, "Is there a God?" feels that there is not a place where God is not! He sees God in everything! He hears Him in the wind, discerns Him in every creature that surrounds him. Now the man, instead of dreading God and betaking himself to some outward form, ceremony, or other outward way of pushing God further off, puts away his ceremonies, casts away the beggarly elements which once might have pleased him and draws near to his God in *spirit*, and speaks with him. "Father," he says, and God owns the kindred. I wish we all possessed this life, and I pray if we have it not that God may send it to us. If we have it not, the testimony of the Word of God is that we are dead when most we seem to be alive.

I shall not, however, keep you longer upon this quickening except to say that you may easily image to yourself the inward experience of a man who receives new life from the dead. You may conceive it by the following picture. Suppose a man to have been dead and to have been buried like others in some great necropolis, some city of the dead, in the catacombs. An angel visits him and by mercy's touch he lives! Now, can you conceive that man's first emotion when he begins to breathe? There he is in the coffin—he feels stifled, pent up. He had been there 20 years, but he never felt inconvenienced until now. He was easy enough, in his narrow cell, if ease can be where life is not. The moment he lives he feels a horrible sense of suffocation—life will not endure to be so hideously compressed—and he begins to struggle for release.

He lifts with all his might that dreadful coffin lid! What a relief when the decaying plank yields to his pressure! So the ungodly man is content enough in his sin—his Sabbath-breaking, his covetousness, his worldliness—but the moment God quickens him his sin is as a sepulcher to the living! He feels unutterably wretched. He is not in a congenial position and he struggles to escape. Often at the first effort the great black lid of blasphemy flies off, never to be replaced. Satan thought it was screwed down fast enough, and so it was for a *dead man*, but *life* makes short work of it and many other iniquities follow.

But to return to our resurrection in the vault—the man gasps a minute and feels refreshed with such air as the catacomb affords him. But soon he has a sense of clammy damp about him and feels faint and ready to expire. So the renewed man at first feels little but his inability and groans after power. He cries, "I want to repent. I want to believe in Jesus. I want to be saved." Poor wretch! He never felt that before—of course he did not—he was dead! Now he is alive and therefore he longs for the tokens, signs, fruits, and refreshments of *life*. Do you not see our poor friend who has newly risen? He has slipped down from that niche in the wall where they laid him, and finding himself in a dark vault, he rubs his eyes to know whether he really is alive, or whether it is all a dream!

It is such a new thing, and as by the little glimmering of light that comes in he detects hundreds of others lying in the last sleep, and he says to himself, "Great God! What a horrible place for a living man to be in! Can I be alive?" He begins to wander about, searching for a door by which he may escape. He loathes those winding-sheets in which they wrapped him. He begins stripping them off. They are damp and mildewed—they do not suit a living man. Soon he cries out for help—perhaps there is some passerby who may hear him and he may be delivered from his confinement. So a man, who has been renewed by Divine Grace, when he partly discovers where he is, cries out, "This is no place for me!"

That giddy ballroom—why, it was well enough for one who knew no better. That ale-bench was suitable for an unregenerate soul—but what can an heir of Heaven do in such places? Lord, deliver me! Give me light and liberty! Bring my soul out of prison that I may live and praise Your name. The man pines for liberty, and if, at last he stumbles to the door of the

vault and reaches the open air, I think he drinks deep draughts of the blessed oxygen! How glad he is to look upon the green fields and the fresh flowers! You do not imagine that he will wish to return to the vaults again, do you? He will utterly forsake those gloomy abodes! He shudders at the remembrance of the past and would not, for all the world, undergo again what he has once passed through.

He is tenderly affected at every remembrance of the past and is especially fearful lest there should be others like himself, newly quickened, who may need a Brother's hand to set them at liberty. He loathes the place where once he slept so quietly. So the converted man dreads the thought of going back to the joys which once so thoroughly fascinated him. "No," he says, "they are no joys to me. They were joys well enough for my old state of existence, but now, having entered into a new life, a new world, they are more joys to me than the spade and shroud are joys to a living man, and I can only think of them with grief, and of my deliverance with gratitude.

III. I must pass on very briefly to the third point. The text indicates a SYMPATHY—"He has quickened us together with Christ." What does that mean? It means that the life which lives in a saved man is the same life which dwells in Christ! To put it simply—when Elisha had been buried for some years, we read that they threw a dead man into the tomb where the bones of Elisha were, and no sooner did the corpse touch the Prophet's bones than it lived at once!

Yonder is the Cross of Christ, and no sooner does the soul touch the crucified Savior than it lives at once, for the Father has given to Him to have life in Himself, and life to communicate to others. Whoever trusts Christ has touched Him, and by touching Him he has received the virtue of eternal life! To trust in the Savior of the world is to be quickened through Him. We are quickened together with Christ in three senses—first, *representatively*. Christ represents us before the Eternal Throne. He is the second Adam to His people. So long as the first Adam lived the race lived, and so long as the second Adam lives, the race represented by Him lives before God. Christ is accepted, Believers are accepted. Christ is justified, the saints are justified. Christ lives, and the saints enjoy a life which is hid with Christ in God.

Next we live by union with Christ. So long as the head is alive the members have life. Unless a member can be severed from the head and the body maimed, it must live so long as there is life in the head. So long as Jesus lives, every soul that is vitally united to Him, and is a member of His body, lives according to our Lord's own word, "Because I live you shall live also." Poor Martha was much surprised that Christ should raise her brother from the dead, but He said, as if to surprise her still more, "Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" This is one of the things we are to believe—that when we have received the spiritual life it is in union with the life of Christ—and consequently can never die! Because Christ lives, our life must abide in us forever.

Then we also live together with Christ as to *likeness*. We are quickened together with Christ, that is, in the same *manner*. Now Christ's quickening was in this wise—He was dead through the Law, but the Law has no more dominion over Him now that He lives again. So you, Christian, you are cursed by the old Law of Sinai, but it has no power to curse you *now*, for you are risen in Christ. You are not under the Law—its terrors and threats have nothing to do with you. Of our Lord it is written, "In that He lives," it is said, "He lives unto God." Christ's life is a life unto God! Such is yours. You are not, therefore, to live unto the flesh or to mind the things of it—but God, who gave you life, is to be the great Object of your life. *In Him* you live, and *for Him* you live.

Moreover, it is said, "Christ, being raised from the dead dies no more. Death has no more dominion over Him." In that same way the Christian lives. He shall never go back to his spiritual death—having once received Divine life, he shall never lose it. God plays not fast and loose with His chosen. He does not save today, and damn tomorrow. He does not quicken us with the inward life and then leave us to perish. Divine Grace is a living, incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever. "The water that I shall give him," says Jesus, "shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." Glory be to God, then, you who live by faith in Christ live an immortal life, a life dedicated to God, a life of deliverance from the bondage of the Law! Rejoice in it, and give your God all the praise!

IV. And this brings us to the last word, which was A SONG. We have not time to sing it—we will just write the score before your eyes and ask you to sing it at your leisure—your hearts making melody to God. Brothers and Sisters, if you have, indeed, been thus made alive as others are not, you have first of all, in the language of the text, to praise the great love of God, great beyond all precedent! It was *love* which made Him breathe into Adam the breath of life and make poor clay to walk and speak.

But it is far greater love which makes Him now, after the Fall has defiled us, renew us with a second and yet higher life. He might have made new creatures by millions out of nothing. He had but to speak and angels would have thronged the air, or, beings like ourselves, only pure and un-fallen, would have been multiplied by myriads upon the greensward. If He had left us to sink to Hell as fallen angels had done before us, who could have impugned His justice? But His great love would not let Him leave His elect to perish. He loved His people and therefore He would cause them to be born again. His great love with which He loved us defied death, and Hell, and sin!

Dwell on the theme, you who have partaken of this love! He loved *us*—the most unworthy—who had no right to such love! There was nothing in us to love and yet He loved us—loved us when we were dead! Here His great love seems to swell and rise to mountainous dimensions—love to miserable sinners, love to loathsome sinners—love to the dead and to the corrupt! Oh, heights and depths of Sovereign Grace! Where are the notes

which can sufficiently sound forth your praise? Sing, O you redeemed, of His great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in sins! And cease not to praise God as you think of the riches of His mercy, for we are told that He is rich in mercy, rich in His Nature as to mercy, rich in His Covenant as to treasured mercy, rich in the Person of His dear Son as to purchased mercy, rich in Providential mercy—but richest of all in the mercy which saves the soul.

Friends, explore the mines of Jehovah's wealth if you can. Take the key and open the granaries of your God and see the stores of love which He has laid up for you. Strike your sweetest notes to the praise of God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He has loved us! And let the last note and the highest and the loudest of your song be that with which the text concludes, "By Grace are you saved."

O never stammer there! Brothers and Sisters, whatever you do—hold or do not hold—never be slow to say this, "If saved at all, I am saved by Grace—Grace in contradistinction to human merit, for I have no merit. Grace in contradistinction to my own free will, for my own free will would have led me further and further from God. Preventing Grace brought me near to Him." Do bless and magnify the Grace of God, and as you owe all to it, cry, "Perish each thought of pride!" Consecrate yourself entirely to the God to whom you owe everything! Desire to help to spread the savor of that Divine Grace which has brought such good things to you. Vow, in the name of the quickening Spirit, that He who has made you live by faith shall, from this day till you enter into Heaven, have the best of your thoughts, and your words, and your actions—for you are not your own—you have been quickened from the dead and you must live in newness of life.

The Lord bless you, dear Friends. If you have never spiritually lived, may He give you Grace to believe in Jesus this morning, and then you are alive from the dead. And if you are alive already, may He quicken you yet more and more by His eternal Spirit till He brings you to the land of the living on the other side of the Jordan. Amen.

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SALVATION BY GRACE

NO. 2741

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, AUGUST 25, 1901.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK,
ON A THURSDAY EVENING, IN THE SUMMER OF 1859.

“By Grace you are saved.”
Ephesians 2:5.

THE cardinal error against which the Gospel of Christ has to contend is the effect of the tendency of the human heart to rely upon salvation by works. The great antagonist to the Truth of God, as it is in Jesus, is that pride of man which leads him to believe that he can be, at least in part, his own savior. This error is the prolific mother of multitudes of heresies! It is through this falsehood that the pure stream of the Truth of God has been tainted so that, instead of flowing on in one clear pure river, it has been sadly polluted. There have been many who have sought to hinder the flowing of the Water of Life, or to divert the stream from its proper current. Many have tried to mingle the fancies and fallacies of men with the Truth as it is in Jesus, in order, thereby, to make it more palatable to poor, fallen, human nature.

It is my belief that all great reforms in the Church of Christ must have for their basis the declaration of the Doctrine revealed in my text—“By Grace you are saved.” The tendency of the Church, like that of the world, is to fly away from this Truth which is really the sum and substance of the Gospel. A departure from this Doctrine is, in my opinion, the essence of those many errors which, springing up from time to time, have troubled and divided the Church and marred the beauty of the spouse of Christ.

In all times, whenever this Doctrine has been obscured, the Church has become either heretical or Laodicean. She has either held some dangerous and damnable heresy, or she has held only a portion of the Truth and held it with so feeble a grasp that it has lost its ancient power in her hands—so that her enemies have prevailed against her. The mightiest men in all ages of the Church's history—those who have been the means of bringing the greatest good into her midst, and the most usefulness into the world—have been those who, rising up like Samson when called to do valiant deeds on behalf of Israel, have made this the distinguishing characteristic of their ministry—the Doctrine of Salvation by Grace in contradistinction of salvation by works.

In Augustine's day, there had been a grievous falling away from the simplicity of the Gospel. And when he arose and preached to the world this glorious Truth of God, there was an influence for good which, I be-

lieve, staved off the great Romish heresy, at least for a time. Had the Church and the world but listened to his voice and accepted his teaching, Popery would have been an impossibility! Then later, when Romanism had waxed exceedingly strong, the Lord raised up Martin Luther who taught this as the great central Truth of Christianity, that sinners are justified by faith—not by works. After Luther came another distinguished teacher of the Doctrine of Grace—John Calvin, a man far better instructed in the Truth of the Gospel than even Martin Luther was—and he pushed this grand Doctrine to its legitimate consequences. Luther had, as it were, undammed the stream of Truth by breaking down the barrier which had kept back the living waters in the great reservoir—but the stream was turbid and carried down with it much that ought to have been left behind. Then Calvin came and cast salt into the waters and purified them, so that they flowed on in a clear, sweet, pure stream to gladden and refresh the Church of God and to quench the thirst of poor parched sinners.

Calvin preached, as his great staple Doctrine, the great Truth in my text, “By Grace you are saved.” It is common, in these days, to call those ministers who dwell mainly upon this Doctrine, “Calvinists.” But we do not accept that title without qualification. We are not ashamed of it and we would rather be called “Calvinists” than have any other name except that which is our true one. We hold and assert again and again, that the Truth of God which Calvin preached, the Truth of God which Augustine thundered out with all his might—was the very Truth of God which the Apostle Paul had long before written in his Inspired Epistles and which is most clearly revealed in the discourses of our blessed Lord Himself! We desire to preach the Truth of God, the whole Truth of God and nothing but the Truth of God! We are not the followers of any mere man—we do not derive our Inspiration from Calvin’s Institutes and Commentaries, but from the Word of God itself! Yet we hold the Doctrines commonly called, “Calvinism,” to be none other than the essential basement Doctrines of our holy faith. These were the truths that Whitefield preached and that produced the great revival in his days! And these must be the Doctrines to which the Church of God must again return, if the Church of Rome is to be razed to its deep foundations, or souls to be converted in great multitudes, or the Kingdom of Christ to come!

My text relates to the Doctrine of Salvation by Grace and, coming to it, I ask you to notice, first, that the Apostle *addresses certain people who were saved*. Next, I want you to notice the *meanings of the term, “Grace,” as applied in the Scriptures*. And I shall finish with *some consolatory and practical inferences*.

I. In the first place, THE APOSTLE ADDRESSES CERTAIN PEOPLE, TO WHOM HE SAYS, “YOU ARE SAVED.” He does not say, “You shall be saved,” or, “You hope to be saved.” He speaks to them as persons already “saved.” Now, there are no people on the face of the earth who can be correctly described as “saved” unless it can also be said of them that they are saved by Grace!

I see two things in this part of my text and, *first, the Apostle mentions a present salvation*. He speaks not to people who were to be saved when

they died, or who hoped to be saved in some future state, but he addresses those who actually were saved—who had salvation, not in prospect, but in present enjoyment—who had passed out of a state of condemnation into that of salvation and who looked upon their salvation as being as sure, as certain, as really theirs as their houses, their lands, or their lives!

A present salvation cannot consistently be preached by any beside those who hold the Doctrine that salvation is by Grace. Is there a Roman Catholic, in the whole world, who, in harmony with his own creed, can say that he is saved? No, there is not one! In fact, lying as that creed does, it does not profess to put *anyone* into a position in which he can say, “I am saved.” No, the Romish Church not only postpones salvation to the day of death, but positively beyond it! There was Daniel O’Connell, of whom the Pope said that he was his greatest subject in Europe—yet it is not many years ago that we were informed that he was in “purgatory.” It was a hard thing that such a faithful disciple of the Pope should be sent there, yet he was no worse off than the bishops, archbishops and cardinals, for, according to the Romish teaching, they *all* go to “purgatory!” Of course, the Pope lets them out after a certain time, but that is all he professes to offer—salvation after a future indefinite period—he never pretends to say to anyone, “You are saved now.” That would be a lie too gross even for the Pope and priests of Rome to utter! There is no such thing as a present salvation in the whole of the Romish Church.

Nor is this possible under any system except that of salvation by Grace. Bring up the good Dissenters, and the good Churchmen, the men and women who are regular in their attendance on outward ordinances. Whatever the ceremonies of their church may be, they observe them with the most indefatigable industry. They have been “baptized” and confirmed. They have “taken the sacrament,” or sat at the communion table—according to the phraseology of their different churches—and they believe that, by their constant attention to the outward observances of worship, they will assuredly be saved! But speak to any one of these people, and ask if he can say, “I know that my sins are forgiven”—he will be astonished at your enquiry, and will reply, “I would not have the presumption to say such a thing!”

Appeal to the very best of them, the most devoted, the most earnest, the most indefatigable of those who are seeking salvation by their own works, and ask if they have obtained eternal life. You cannot find one who has done so—they are all hoping that, through the mercy of God, they may somehow and sometime be saved—but none of them will declare that they are now saved. From those who join us in church fellowship, I frequently hear such remarks as this, “I attended my church every day in the week. I repeated the prayers regularly, but I never found any rest to my soul until I trusted wholly in Christ.” From others who attended certain Dissenting places of worship, I have had such expressions as this, “I went up to the House of God and I heard my minister exhort me to be patient in sickness, to love my God and my neighbor, and I tried to do my best to obey his exhortations, but I never could say that I was a saved man, or use the confident language of the spouse, ‘My Beloved is

mine, and I am His,' until I learned that salvation is all of Grace and, by His Grace, trusted in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ."

No, my dear Friends, under the theory of salvation by works, whatever form it may take—whether it appears in the garb of Popery, or hides itself under the veil of Protestantism—it is always substantially the same—a man's own works cannot pretend to offer to him the blessing of a present salvation! Take the Arminian theory, which is the least objectionable of all forms of salvation by works—cut it asunder—and you will find that there is a strong taint of Popery even there.

"But," asks someone, "do not Arminians rejoice to say that they are already saved?" Yes, but their assertion is contradicted by the assurance which they will give you directly afterwards, that they may finally perish. Although they are now saved, their safety is something like that of a wrecked mariner who, after being tossed to and fro in a stormy sea, is washed up on a rock, from which he may presently be hurled back into the raging billows! Their safety is not like that of the man who has been carried into the lighthouse, or brought to land in the lifeboat, for they believe that, after all they have experienced, they may be lost. It is not salvation that the Arminian possesses—he is only in a *salvable state*. His condition is that of a man who, if he continues to repent and believe, shall be saved, but he is not truly saved now—he has not been built upon that sure, certain, solid foundation upon which the true Believer is resting. He cannot sing, with Toplady—

***"The terrors of Law, and of God
With me can have nothing to do!
My Savior's obedience and blood
Hide all my transgressions from view!
My name from the palms of His hands
Eternity will not erase—
Impressed on His heart it remains
In marks of indelible Grace.
Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given—
More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in Heaven!"***

Such a salvation as that—a present one, enjoyed now in all its fullness, in all its riches, in all its boundless lengths, and breadths, and depths and heights—is not possible under any other system but that of salvation by Grace, and by Grace alone! We, of all men living, who preach the Doctrine of Salvation by Grace, can proclaim a present salvation in all its fullness.

In our text we also see that *the Apostle speaks of a perfect salvation*. We teach that the moment a man believes in Christ, he is not merely put into a *salvable state*, not half saved—he is not placed in a position where, if he remains, he will be saved, but concerning which there is a fear that he may fall from it—but that he is already completely saved! I verily believe that the saints in Heaven, albeit they have received the crown of salvation, are not, as to its essential reality, more truly saved than the meanest and weakest Believer in Christ who is struggling through floods of temptation here upon earth.

For what is it to be saved? It is to have sin forgiven and to be “accepted in the Beloved.” The moment a sinner believes in Jesus, his sins are as much pardoned as they ever will be! They are as fully and as finally blotted out of God’s Book of Remembrance as they would be if he should live a thousand years of piety. He is as completely clear, as far as the forgiveness of his sins is concerned, as he will be when he stands at the right hand of the Judge at the Last Great Day.

To be saved, however, includes more than forgiveness of sins—it includes the imputation of the righteousness of Christ and, in this sense, also, the meanest Believer in Him is as much saved as the celestial spirits in the Paradise above. Is the robe of Christ’s righteousness spread over the Apostles? So is it, at this hour, around the poorest person on earth who is trusting in Jesus! Are those who sing God’s praises before His Throne in Glory clothed in the fair white linen which is the righteousness of the saints? Even so are all Believers here below! Each saint is, as John Kent says—

***“With his spotless vesture on,
Holy as the Holy One.”***

Covered with Christ’s righteousness, God sees no spot in His people!

“But,” asks someone, “are not the saints in Heaven more secure than Believers on earth?” Believers on earth are not secure from temptation, but they are secure from destruction—not from tribulation, but from condemnation! They are not exempt from care, woe and suffering, but they are forever delivered from the wrath of God and the damnation of Hell. Not an angel in Heaven is more certain of the eternal love of God than is the feeblest Believer upon earth! If your soul is committed to the hands of Christ, you can never perish! I speak no more strongly than His own utterances warrant, for Jesus has said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.” To the woman at the well of Sychar, our Savior said, “Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” We are complete in Him—perfected in all the essentials of salvation!

Now, mark, under no system of Doctrine whatever is perfect salvation in this world contemplated except under that scheme which teaches that we are saved by Grace. Under the plan of salvation proposed by the work-mongers, there is no completeness in any of its aspects. Under the old Mosaic dispensation in which God most clearly revealed Himself as the Judge of His people, all “those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually” could not “make the comers thereunto perfect.” There was, “in those sacrifices, a remembrance again made of sins every year.” However attentive they might be to all the observances of the Ceremonial Law, their salvation was not perfect. But Christ, “by one offering has perfected forever them that are sanctified” and, therefore, He has “sat down at the right hand of God.”

Now if under that noblest form of the Covenant of Works, complete salvation was not to be secured, how is it likely to be attained in any of those corrupt systems in which, while men profess to set aside the old

Covenant of Works, they yet expect to find salvation? No man but he who believes the Doctrines of Grace talks about being completely saved. Ask the Arminian—the fairest and best specimen, sometimes the best of men, though miserably mistaken as to his beliefs—what can he say? He tells you that if he perseveres in well-doing, in faith and in repentance, he will be saved. Ask him whether he is completely saved, or whether there is something more yet to be done and he will tell you that there is many a step yet to be taken before he will reach full salvation. He may talk about a finished righteousness, but he does not know how it is attained!

We hold that Believers are complete in Christ even now and that, die whenever they may, they will enter into His Presence as being already perfect in Him. Oh, how sweet it is to enjoy a present salvation, which is, at the same time, a perfect salvation! How grateful should we be that it is presented to us in the Covenant of Grace and that it is revealed to us in those blessed portions of Holy Scripture which tell us of the wonderful Grace of God which He has manifested towards His people! “You are saved.” Oh, how sweet are these words! Pause, Beloved, a moment or two, and rejoice over them. “You are saved”—saved now, at this present instant—if you are Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ!

II. Now we are to notice THE MEANINGS OF THE TERM, “GRACE,” AS EMPLOYED IN THE SCRIPTURES—“By Grace you are saved.”

First, it means that if we are saved, it *must be a matter of free favor*. There is nothing in us that could ever merit God’s esteem, or give Him such delight as to lead Him to bestow upon us the blessings of eternal salvation. If we ask why any individuals are rescued from the ruins of the Fall and enabled to believe in Jesus, the only answer is, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.” Certainly, we were not saved because of our talents, for the most talented often remain unconverted. We were not saved because of our wealth, for most of us have none. We were not saved because of the excellence of our disposition, or the holiness of our character, for, even since our conversion, we cannot think of our best services without shame and confusion of face. If I look upon the people of God, either in the mass or as individuals, instead of imagining that there was anything in them to cause God to love them, I am compelled to say that there seems to have been far more to move Him to destroy them than to save them! Will not all Believers here confess that they are saved not because of anything good in them, but because of Grace most full, and free, and unconstrained?

Further, we are saved by Grace *as a matter of Divine operation*. From the first holy desire in the soul, to the last shout of victory in the dying hour, salvation is by the operation of the Almighty. Whatever is not worked in you, by God’s Grace, will be an injury, not a blessing, to you. If any of you have a faith, or a repentance, or any condition of heart or life which is of your own making, get rid of it, for there is nothing good in it! That so-called faith which is not the gift of God is really presumption—and that repentance which is not godly sorrow worked by God in the soul, needs to be repented of! I am sure that all there is of good in any saint must have been put there by the Holy Spirit, for it would not have sprung up of itself. Human hearts will naturally grow weeds, but not

those rare exotics, those flowers of Heaven, the Christian Graces! These must be Divinely implanted and nurtured, and grow up entirely by the exercise of that same Omnipotence which raised Christ from the dead!

I will go even further and say that if Divine Grace should carry us every inch of the road to Heaven but one, we would be lost because of that last inch! If, in the edifice of our soul's salvation, there is even one stone left for us to put in its place, unassisted by God's Grace, that building will never be completed! From first to last, all must be of Grace. I agree with the highest doctrinalist upon this point, that there is not, and there cannot be a good thing in the heart of any man if it was not worked there by the Sovereign Grace of God.

"Well, but," says one, "is it not the duty of men to repent and to believe?" Certainly it is, but I am not speaking of their *duty*. Their lack of power does not excuse them from obedience to God's command. If a man owed another a thousand pounds, it would be his duty to pay his debt, whether he had the ability or not. And, inasmuch as it is man's duty to repent and to believe, herein is the Glory of God's Grace made manifest, in that He accomplishes, by his Grace, what man could never have done! I can truly say that as far as I have gone in the Divine life, there has been nothing good in me but that which has come from God. Let others give their own testimony—if they have any good thing which they have produced, let them glory in it! But I have nothing whereof to glory and must say to the Lord, "You have worked all my works in me as far as they have been any good, but, as for myself, I would cover my face and cry, 'Unclean, unclean, unclean.' Lord, have mercy upon Your servant!"

III. Now, to close, I want to draw some CONSOLATORY AND PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

First, *how humble that man ought to be who is saved by Grace!* The Arminian says that he can stand or fall according to his own will. Ought he not to be proud? What a fine fellow he is! Sing a Psalm in your own honor, Sir, and when you get to Heaven, take all the glory to yourself! You say that you have done part yourself—you admit that the Lord did a great deal for you, but that your own free will settled the matter. Very well, then, give the glory to yourself—sing your own praises forever and ever! But the true Believer says, "I was as clay in the hands of the potter when the Lord began with me. I was senseless, dead, corrupt, till the Lord took me in hand and quickened and changed me, and made me what I am—and I would go back to what I was before if He did not keep me by His Grace. But I know that what His Grace has commenced, He will certainly complete, and to Him be all the Glory!"

Next, if we are saved by *Grace, we, of all people, should have compassion on those who are out of the way.* If we are on the road to Heaven, we were brought onto it by Grace and, therefore, we ought to be very considerate of those who are not on it. That good man, John Newton, used to say, "A Calvinist who gets angry with the ungodly" is inconsistent with his profession. He knows that no man can receive this Doctrine except by the Grace of God—so, if God has not given to these men the Grace to receive this Doctrine, rather pray for them than get angry with them—and ask that they may receive the Truth in which your soul delights."

Then, once again, here is *a word of comfort*. If we are saved—are saved, mark you—what shall make us sad and unhappy at heart? “Oh!” says one, “I am so poor.” Yes, but you are saved! You are a Believer in Christ, so you are saved. “But,” says another, “I am so afflicted.” Yes, but you are saved. “But,” says another, “I am often so neglected and despised.” Yes, but you are saved. Oh, what joy would that thought have caused, a little while ago, when the burden of all your sins was upon you! You used to say, “Oh, if I could but be sure that I was saved, I would not mind if I had nothing but a crust of bread and a cup of water! If I could but know that my sins were forgiven, I would not mind being shut up anywhere in the world! If I might know that I was Christ’s, the world might say what it liked about me.”

Now you do know it, for you are on the Rock and you are saved—so why are you sad? You may now be despised, but, remember, the time is coming when you shall be glorified with Christ! You may be now forgotten by your friends, but your Savior’s eyes are on you and your name is on His heart! You are sad, yes, but you are secure! If you believe in Jesus, you may be cast down but you cannot be destroyed! You may be forsaken for a while, but you can never be cast away! Come then—

***“Children of the heavenly King,
As you journey, sweetly sing—
Sing your Savior’s worthy praise,
Glorious in His works and ways.”***

Lastly, one *word to those who cannot say that they are saved*. My dear Friends, there is very much in this text that should cheer and comfort you. The men who are saved are saved by Grace—by God’s free favor. There was nothing in them to recommend them to God. You have been confessing, “O Lord, I do not feel as I ought to feel” He does not want your feelings as a recommendation. If saved, you are to be saved as a matter of free favor and not as a matter of merit in any sense whatever. “But,” says one, “I cannot repent, I cannot believe.” My dear Friend, you are not going to be saved by anything that *you* can do in your own strength. You need repentance. Do not try to work it for yourself—the Lord will work repentance in you. You need faith. Do not go about to seek faith in yourself—you will never find it there—seek it from Christ. He is the Author as well as the Finisher of faith!

“By Grace you are saved.” Go and carry this text into every den and sty of pollution in London! Tell it to the murderer, the thief, the blasphemer, the harlot! Tell it to the man who cannot repent, and cannot pray, and cannot believe! Tell him that salvation is by Grace, and is worked in us by God the Holy Spirit and, as the hymn says—

***“Heaven with the echo shall resound,
And all the earth shall hear.”***

Go, then, my Brothers and Sisters, and spread the Doctrine of Salvation by Grace, for this old watchword of the Church is the source of her victory! And when once this shall be her battle-cry, her triumph is sure! The headstone of God’s spiritual temple shall be brought forth with shouts, crying, “Grace, Grace unto it.”

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

1 CORINTHIANS 12; 13:1-3.

1 Corinthians 12:1, 2. *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. You know that you were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as you were led.* Although the members of the church at Corinth were highly favored with spiritual gifts, they do not seem to have known how to use them. Paul points out to them, in this chapter, how ignorant they were concerning the very gifts which they possessed. They did not know how to put them to proper use in the service of God. The Apostle, therefore, reminds these gift-exalted Corinthians that, only a little while before, they were heathens, carried away by lies and superstition, and worshipping dumb idols. They had nothing, therefore, to boast of and it is probable that if *we* look back to the hole of the pit from where we were dug, we shall find no more occasion for boasting than they had.

3. *Therefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed.* I suppose that in their assemblies, where everybody talked who liked, there were some people who even spoke blasphemy. They professed to be under the guidance of the Spirit of God and yet they stood up and called Jesus accursed. Where there is no rule nor order, there is pretty sure to be something very mischievous before long. Paul gives them to understand that this kind of talk could not go unrebuked.

3. *And that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.* If a man really knows Jesus as his Lord, and he declares that Truth of God, then you may fully accept it as being in harmony with the teaching of the Spirit of God.

4-7. *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit all.* It is given in order that he may, himself, profit, and also that he may be the means of profiting those who hear him.

8. *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom.* He is prudent—an experienced man—fit to lead the young, the feeble and those who are less instructed than he is himself.

8. *To another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit.* He has a wide range of practical acquaintance with God's Word and though he may not be so judicious as the Brother who was just mentioned, yet he is a man of knowledge.

9. *To another faith by the same Spirit.* Paul probably means here some special kind of faith. Perhaps the faith that enabled its possessor to work miracles.

9, 10. *To another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits.* So that he is able to detect the impostors who come even into the nominal Church of Christ. They did come then, and they will continue to come even to the end.

10, 11. *To another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongue: but all these works that one and the same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.* Whatever our gifts as a church, or as individuals, may be, they all come from the same Spirit. This should tend to promote unity among us. Let us all trace whatever gift we have to the hand that gave it, and to the Spirit that worked it. Let us feel that we are so many pipes connected with one fountain and, therefore, as all the good that we convey comes from the one Source, let us give all the honor and glory of it to the Spirit of God from whom it comes.

12. *For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.* That, is to say, Christ visible—the Church of Christ. We are members of His mystical body. He is the Head, but all who are quickened by the Spirit of God are one with Him.

13, 14. *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, whether we are bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.* By the way in which some people act, you might almost imagine that the body was one member and that the one member was a tongue—but it is not so. God never intended that in the assembly, all should speak. Let those speak to whom He has given the power to speak. He does not lay all burdens upon one back—let each man bear the personal burden which God has placed upon his back.

15. *If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?* Where are you, dear child of God, who are in the position of the foot? Have you been comparing yourself with some eminent Christian who did much in his Master's service? And have you sorrowfully asked, "Why cannot I do what he did? I am only a poor foot, always touching the ground, often limping and frequently needing to be washed." Well, suppose you could be made into a hand, it might be a gain to you in some respects, but it might be a loss to the rest of the body. It would certainly be a loss to any of you if your feet were to be turned into hands, for you have need of feet! And the Church, which is here called by the name of Christ, needs its feet as much as it needs its hands. The mercy is that even if you have, in your anxiety—perhaps I ought to say in your *unbelief*—been saying, "Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body," it does not matter what you have said, for that does not alter the fact! "Is it therefore not of the body?" Of course, it is still of the body, whatever it may say!

16. *And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?* Oh, by no means! The ear has its proper purpose to fulfill. It is designed for a special service in the body which no other member can render. We must never compare ourselves among ourselves and wish to be somebody else. You are bad enough as you are, dear Friend, but you would probably be much worse if you were somebody else. You may think that you are a very poor ear, but you would decidedly make a much worse eye. Even if your ear is dull of hearing, it can, at any rate, hear better than it can see! It can do its own work

better than it could do the work of any other member of the body—and so can you as a member of Christ's mystical body.

17, 18. *If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now has God set the members, everyone of them in the body as it has pleased Him.* That is the best rule for each part of our body—"as it has pleased Him." Could any of you suggest a better place for your eyes than where they are? We have read the old heathen fable of a giant who had one eye in the middle of his forehead—and whenever I have seen his portrait sketched by fancy, I have felt, at once, that it was no improvement upon the human face! No, the eyes are best where they are—and so the ears—and so is the mouth. They are all best just where they are. So are you, my Brother or my Sister, best where you are, if you are in the place where God evidently meant you to be.

19. *And if they were all one member, where were the body? There would be no body at all!*

20, 21. *But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of you.* You know how very quick the hand always is to go up to the eye when it is in danger. You do not have to wait to tell it what to do, but in an instant, the hand is up, for there is a feeling between the members of the same body. "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of you." And the hand never feels that it may leave the eye to take care of itself—it is ready to protect it at once.

21-23. *Nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. No, much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary: and those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.* They are covered and concealed and so we take more trouble with them than we do with other parts of our body.

24. *For our comely parts have no need: but God has tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked.* Here is a lesson for us with regard to church fellowship—always to take most notice of those who are the least noticeable, and to be most gentle with those who require the most tenderness. You know that there are some of our fellow members who are not all we should like them to be. We believe that they are children of God, but they are, somehow or other, "cut on the cross." They are crotchety and weak in many ways. Now, we should try, as far as we can, to adapt ourselves to them. If you have ever had the gout very badly, you know that if a person walks across the room too heavily, you feel it. Do you, therefore, say to your father, when he is thus laid aside, "You cannot expect me to take notice of such a thing as that? Nor would you be so cruel as to say to anybody else, "If he has a gouty foot, I cannot help it and I shall tread on it every now and then." No, you are not so brutal as that! So, if there is a member of the body that is more tender than the rest, and especially if that tenderness is the result of disease, let us try to minister to it as far as we possibly can. Let us give "more abundant honor to that part which lacks."

25. *That there should be no schism in the body.* That is, no division, no tear in the body.

25, 26. *But that the members should have the same care, one for another. And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.* I am afraid that this second half of the verse refers to a duty which is more neglected than is the other. It is an easier thing to suffer with those that suffer than it is to rejoice with those that rejoice. And I will tell you why it is so—because, in giving compassion to those that suffer, you have some sense of dignity. Condescension is often a sort of pride, but when a Brother is better off than you are—when he has more talent than you have—when he is more successful than you are—for you to go and rejoice with him and be as glad as if it were all your own gladness—yes, to enter into his joy, and say, “God be thanked, my Brother, for your prosperity! I would increase it if I could, for I feel that I am a partner with you!”—ah, this needs great Grace. So, may God continually give us more Grace and deliver us from everything like envy, which is of Satan, and yet is all too common even among professing Christians!

27-31. *Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God has set some in the church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all Apostles? Are all Prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.*

1 Corinthians 13:1-3. *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing. God grant us Grace, then, that we may abound in this most excellent Grace of a true Christian life which is infinitely more essential than the highest gifts or the most remarkable talents that God Himself can bestow upon us!*

—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 EXCEEDING RICHES OF GRACE

NO. 1665

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 18, 1882,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches
of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”
Ephesians 2:7.***

FROM this verse it is clear that Paul fully expected the Gospel of the Grace of God to be preached in the ages to come. He had no notion of a temporary Gospel to develop into a better, but he was assured that the same Gospel would be preached to the end of the dispensation. Nor this alone, for as I take it, he looked to the *perpetuity* of the Gospel, not only through the ages which have already elapsed since the first Advent of our blessed Lord, but throughout the ages after He shall have come a second time. Eternity, itself will not improve upon the Gospel. When all the saints shall be gathered Home they shall still talk and speak of the wonders of Jehovah's love in Christ Jesus! And in the golden streets they shall stand up and tell what the Lord has done for them to listening crowds of angels, principalities and powers.

Paul did not believe in the quenching of the light of the testimony of Grace, but expected that throughout the ages to come it would burn on with the same brilliance. This I infer from the fact that he looked upon the believing Ephesians and himself as having been converted in the dawn of Christianity, on purpose, that to later ages they might serve as specimens of what the Gospel can do. He looked upon these Ephesians, newly drawn out from the cesspool of idolatry, in the same light as he looked upon himself when he said that the Lord had shown towards him all long-suffering for a pattern to them that should hereafter believe on His name. Paul and these Ephesians—and all those early Christians—were types to us of what God can do by the Gospel and of what He will continue to do until the present dispensation shall close.

From this statement we may gather with most sure logic that the Gospel is altogether unalterable, for if its results 1,800 years ago are to serve us as proofs of its power, then it must be the same Gospel. It is clear that the converts of the first century would not be, to us, any kind of testimony to the power of the Gospel as it now exists among us if, meanwhile, there had been a change in the Gospel, itself! At best, such facts could only show what the old-fashioned Gospel did in its day, but we could not infer from them what a new-fangled Gospel will now accomplish. Paul did not at all anticipate any removal of the old landmarks. He held it forth that the same results would follow in all ages from the preaching of the same Gospel with the same power from Heaven and, therefore, he regarded the first converts as pledges and proofs to all succeeding ages of what the Gospel could achieve.

Hold, my Brothers and Sisters, to that Gospel which has been delivered unto you, which we have received by the Spirit of God through the teaching of Christ and of His Apostles, and you shall yet see repeated in your midst the same things which were worked in those early days! Those who will, may drink the new wine of the modern vintage—my conviction is that the old is better! Learn, also, from this language of Paul, that every age is a gainer by those which preceded it. I have smiled, often, in this place, at the conceit of this 19th Century which holds up its head among the ages as far excelling them all, though if it knew itself, it would sing to a more modest tune. But now I will moderate my tone, and admit that this century *is* superior to all the ages that have been before it—superior in this *one* respect—that it has received by the lapse of time the fullest and most repeated evidence of the Gospel's power!

Whereas in the Second Century men could only refer to the experience of the saints during 100 years, we have, at this hour, the accumulated evidence of almost 1,900 years—and all this is put in evidence as proof of what Divine Grace can do. Whereas in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries men had the accumulated personal testimonies of those who had, till then, believed in Christ and had been saved thereby, we, upon whom the ends of the earth have come, have now far larger evidence, because the time has supplied us with a greater cloud of witnesses! For nearly 2,000 years, this Gospel has been preached among men! And every year has brought fresh trophies to its power—every *day*, I might say, is now producing evidence of its Divine power!

We have not, today, dear Friends, to begin to test the Gospel. The ice is broken for us—experiments have been made so frequently that we have now entered upon another stage. It is not ours to analyze the bread, but to feed upon it! We have not, today, to enquire, “Can we ford the stream?” Lo, these 19 centuries the hosts of God have gone through the flood in safety and we have but to join their ranks and follow where they lead the way! Surrounded by evidence that is altogether overwhelming, we behold the Gospel of Jesus going forth, conquering and to conquer! We hear from ten thousand times ten thousand voices the cry, “Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.” We cannot cease to proclaim the mercy of God as displayed in the atoning Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus, for infallible assurances strengthen our confidence and set our hearts on fire!

The multitudes of converts in past time make known to us in these ages that there is salvation—no, more—that this salvation is to be had, for they obtained it! No, further—that it is to be had upon the terms that God has laid down of simply believing in Jesus Christ—for they obtained it in that way and in none other! Doubt ought now to be out of the question! Every needy, trembling sinner should hasten away to the refuge supplied by Jesus. Because so many have been to Him with success. Because He has never rejected any. Because He has saved to the uttermost all those that have come to Him, therefore sinful men ought eagerly and unquestioningly to come at once and put their confidence in the Lamb of God! Then will God's purpose, as described in the text, be accomplished, that to the ages to come should be made known by all who have tasted of His

kindness the exceeding riches of His Grace toward men in Christ Jesus the Savior!

This morning I have a text before me which is a great deal too full for me—I can never draw out all its supplies. I have gone round the walls of this city text; I have counted its towers and marked well its bulwarks, but I am utterly unable to express myself by reason of joyous astonishment! I feel as if I must sit down and lose myself in adoration. I am a poor dumb dog over such a theme! I believe that if I were shut up to preach for 12 months from this text, I should not be straitened for matter, but rather, when I had finished the 52 Sabbaths, I should be eager to enter upon another year's consideration of the same topic! Here is a vast and fruitful country—a land of hills and valleys, a land of fountains and brooks of water—who shall spy it out and set the bounds thereof?

I shall try to exhibit a cluster from Eshcol, but the whole land I cannot show you—it behoves you to journey there for yourselves. It is a right royal subject—“The exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Whitefield and Wesley might preach the Gospel better than I do, but they could not preach a better Gospel! I shall preach with the longing desire that others may be enticed to come and taste of the dainties of Christ's marriage-feast. To this end I shall rehearse the loving kindnesses of the Lord. Oh that the Holy Spirit may help me—and draw you!

We begin with—**I. THE KINDNESS OF THE LORD TOWARD US IN CHRIST JESUS.** What kindness He displayed in choosing such sinners as we were! These Ephesians had been most superstitious idolaters. You know how loudly they shouted, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians.” There was no preparedness in them to cast away their idols and to worship the great Invisible God. There was nothing in them to draw them towards the light that shines in the Christ of God. They were far off, as Paul says, having no hope and really and truly without God in the world—and yet these were the very men whom the exceeding riches of God's Grace brought out of darkness into the marvelous Light of God!

They were “dead in trespasses and sins.” They walked according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air. They fulfilled the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were sunk in all manner of loathsome lusts and vices. And yet the Grace of God came to men of Ephesus and called out a Church to show forth the praises of God! Now, what were we, my Brothers and Sisters? We were not idolaters, nor sunk in all the degradation of Ephesus, but we were all sinners in some fashion or other. All the sheep went astray—though each one followed a different way, all took the downward road—and we among them. We, to the utmost of our power, fulfilled the lusts of the flesh and of the mind—we did evil even as we could.

If it had not been for the restraints of education and the checks of our surroundings, I know not into what crimes we would not have plunged. It is a happy circumstance, for some of us, that God met with us very early, or else we would have been swept away by the torrents of our youthful passions into the worst possible vices. We always had a strong will, a firm purpose and courage equal to any daring—these qualities under the

devil's influence would soon have forced a passage to Hell for us! If we had been left to sow our wild oats, what a crop we would have had long before this. Thanks be to God for His preventing love! Alas, some, left to wander far, were allowed to prove, in their lives, the sin which dwelt in them—and what a wonder of Grace, what a miracle of love that God should have selected them, after all, and brought them near to Himself!

Dear Brothers and Sisters, I will not enlarge upon this, for this is a point for your private meditations. Shut yourselves up in your closets and think of what you were and what you would have been if it had not been for the kindness of God toward you in Christ Jesus. Forget not that the Lord has shown this kindness toward us in order that others like we are may be induced to believe in the same kindness. Are any here the children of pious parents who have done violence to your consciences? After the same fashion did many of us terribly rebel—and yet the Lord has had mercy upon us! Have some of you fallen into the lusts of the flesh and followed after the pleasures of sin and thus defiled yourselves greatly? Do not despair of pardon, for there are some here who tearfully remember how the God of pardons forgave *them* after they had fallen into the same sins. Whatever form your transgression may take, God has saved others who fell into similar sins in order that in *them* He might make known to *you* His willingness to clasp you to His bosom and to cast your sins behind His back!

No doctrine, however clearly stated, will ever have such influence over men as living examples. When we can say of this one and of the other, "These were great offenders. These were open sinners. These were grievous transgressors, but they obtained mercy," we do, in effect, say to all of the same character, "Come, and you shall not be refused! Leave your sin as they have done—loathe it as they do! Trust in Jesus as they have been taught to do and you shall find equal mercy with them and shall rejoice in the common salvation." The kindness of God toward us—how I delight to dwell on the word, "us," and then to take it up and acknowledge my own personal share in it—the kindness of God toward *me*! Do this, my Brethren, and then go and display to others the kindness of the Lord toward your own souls.

But our attention is called not only to the persons whom God chose, but to His kindness displayed in the gracious acts which He has done towards them. Mark the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us. What has He done for us? He chose us before He lit the stars, those torches of the sky! He wrote our names upon the heart and hands of Christ before He laid the foundations of the hills! In the fullness of time He gave Christ for us, even that blessed Christ of whom we say, "Who loved me and gave Himself for me." He made with us in Christ Jesus a Covenant ordered in all things and sure which shall stand fast when all created things dissolve.

Having done this, He watched over us when we were bond-slaves to the tyrant Satan. Graciously He guarded us from going still further into transgression and committing the sin which is unto death. Then He called us—and when we would not come He drew us yet more forcibly by His effectual Grace till, at last, we yielded. Oh, I cannot tell all that He did for us

when we at last came to Jesus, but this I know, He washed us and we were whiter than snow! He brought forth the best robe and put it on us and made us comely in His sight. He gave us the kiss of sweet acceptance and He put us among the children. And since then He has given us the children's portion and has dealt with us as He used to deal with those that love His name. We have been adopted into the family and we have lived on the children's bread—we have been guided, led, instructed, upheld and sanctified! And the almighty Savior is still performing miracles of mercy for us!

The old tale of the giants piling mountain upon mountain, Pelion upon Ossa, is outdone by our God! He has not only heaped up one hill of mercy, but He has laid mountain upon mountain—He has piled up Alps upon Alps to make a pathway for us, that we may ascend to the right hand of God, even the Father, and sit in the heavenly places with Christ! What has He done? I answer, what has He *not* done? What more could He do? Can you suggest a mercy? He has already given it! Can you desire a favor? It is yours, already, and was yours from before the foundation of the world! Oh, the goodness, the manifold goodness, the overflowing, surpassing, inconceivable goodness of God in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus!

I am bound to dwell a moment on that last word—His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. That is the channel through which all blessing has come to us! God gives common mercies to men as His creatures, but these riches of His Grace, these Covenant blessings, all come to us as His chosen, through the Mediator! You can see the mark of the Cross on every spiritual favor which the Father has bestowed—some drops of bloody sweat have fallen upon every treasured gem of the Covenant treasure box. And does not this endear the mercy of God to you—that it comes through Jesus Christ? It seems to me to enhance its value and to make every Covenant blessing more and more dear because it is brought to us by the hand of the Well-Beloved! By His Atonement it is procured to us and by His matchless intercession it is actually bestowed!

Said I not right well that I have a theme which is too deep and high for me? I might detain you many a day upon this one word, “through Christ Jesus,” through the Incarnate God, through His life and death and Resurrection, and His intercession at the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty on high! All things come to us through Christ Jesus! He is the golden pipe of the conduit of eternal love, the window through which Grace shines, the door by which it enters! Get these two or three words and sit down and turn them over and over and over in your souls—and see if there is not the very music of Heaven sleeping within them—which your faith may call forth and coin into hallelujahs! “The exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus”—this is an anthem worthy of the celestial choirs! Sing it, O you chosen of the Lord, while you are waiting to ascend His holy hill!

II. But now I take a step further and get into the soul of the text. Let us consider—“THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS GRACE.” Here, our English is a poor language as compared with the Greek, and I believe that Paul groaned, even when he was writing the matchless Greek of the text, be-

cause he could not make it express all his meaning. Even the Hebrew, which seems to be the most expressive of all human tongues and might well have been spoken in Paradise, cannot contain or set forth the fullness of God's great thoughts—but here the Greek is wonderful! What if I read the words, “the hyperbolic wealth of Grace, or the super-abounding, excessive, overflowing riches of the Grace of God”?

If I were to heap up epithets, I could not give you all that Paul means. Only notice, first, that the riches of the Grace of God are above all limit. A man is not rich when he can count his money, or miss this and that when he has spent it. We used to read in our first Latin books, “It is the mark of a poor man to number his flocks”—the rich man has so many sheep that he cannot count them. When a person becomes immensely wealthy, he is richer than he needs to be and has not only, enough, but much to spare! So is it with the Grace of God—He has as much Grace as you need—and He has a great deal more than that! The Lord has as much Grace as a whole *universe* will require, but He has vastly more. He overflows!

All the demands that can ever be made on the Grace of God will never impoverish Him, or even diminish His store of mercy! There will remain an incalculably precious mine of mercy as full as when He first began to bless the sons of men! In a country village, if a man has a few hundred pounds, he is thought to be quite rich. You get into a large town—there a man must have several thousands! But when you come to London and frequent the Stock Exchange, you enquire of so-and-so, “Is he a rich man?” and someone will, perhaps, reply, “Yes, yes. He is worth a hundred thousand pounds.” Put that same question to a Rothschild with his millions and he answers, “No, he is a little man. He is not rich. He only owns a hundred thousand pounds.” These great bankers count their money by millions!

Well, but what are these great Rothschilds with all their millions when they are reckoned up according to the wealth of Heaven? They are nowhere at all! Only the Lord is rich. “If I were hungry,” He says, “I would not tell you, for the world is Mine and the fullness thereof.” He says, “The silver and the gold are Mine and the cattle on a thousand hills.” God is so rich in mercy that you cannot tell how rich He is! His is overflowing riches, marvelous riches, exceeding riches! God is excessive in nothing that I know of except in His mercy. He has boundless in all His attributes, but emphatically so in His love—for God *is* Love! His Grace is above all observation. The little Grace which you have seen—you stop me and exclaim, “Sir, I have seen great Grace.” So you have, for you! But the little Grace you have seen, I say, bears no proportion to the glorious whole!

You have not seen as much of God's Grace as a man might see of the sea if he stood upon the beach at Brighton or at Hastings. “Why,” you reply in surprise, “I can see as much of the ocean, there, as any mortal man can see.” That may be, but men's eyes have but a narrow range! I tell you, you have never beheld the sea, but only a trifling portion of it. If a man crosses from America, he has gazed upon a narrow furrow along which his vessel has plowed its way, but no one has ever beheld to the full, the vast, majestic ocean in all its length, breadth and depth! Nobody can see it in all its far-resounding shores and hollow caves! Such is the “exceeding

riches” of God’s Grace unsearchable, passing knowledge! Oh my poor tongue and my dull language! I must leave my subject, for it overflows my soul and drowns my speech. You must think it out for yourselves. The Grace of God surpasses all you know, all you see and all you think.

So I remark, next, that this Grace is above all expression, yes, even Inspired expression. Paul, though full of the Holy Spirit, could not speak out all the love of God in Christ Jesus, for His love is unspeakable! “Thanks be to God for His unspeakable Grace.” If we had all the tongues of men and of angels, we could not declare all the riches of the Grace of God! No, if all the orators that ever lived made this their one and only theme and if all of these were under the influence of the Divine Spirit, yet human language could not compass this Divine thing—

**“Words are but air, and tongues but clay,
And this compassion is Divine.”**

If we knew the language of angels we could *not*, then, declare the Grace of God! The most experienced saints bewail the weakness of every form of speech to describe the exceeding riches of the Grace of God.

We are compelled to add that it is above all our ways of action. The Gospel has taught us to forgive, but we do not take to it naturally. If anyone treats us very ill it is with some difficulty that we forgive. And there are certain base, cruel and ungrateful treatments which it becomes almost impossible to overlook and, if we forgive, yet we do not always forget. But such is the greatness of God’s mercy that we who have wearied ourselves with iniquity and wearied Him with our sins, yet have not outworn His compassion. It is hard for us to pardon, but it is spontaneous with God. He delights in it—“He delights in mercy.” Twenty-six times in one Psalm the sweet singer proclaims that, “His mercy endures forever.” How he rings that bell again, and again, and again—“For His mercy endures forever!”

Your mercy is very short and your temper is quick so that you speak unadvisedly and angrily very soon—but it is not so with God. So wondrous are His ways of Grace that they are past finding out! We cannot follow them and can scarcely believe them because they are so unlike ours! His ways are above our ways and His thoughts above our thoughts as much as the heavens are above the earth! The gentlest, meekest and most loving minds are left far behind in this race of love. Man is miserly in forgiveness, but the Lord is rich in mercy. Our little stream of goodness runs after much pumping and pressure, but the river of Divine Love flows freely on.

Yes, and the ways of Grace are above our understanding! Some famous minds have been born into the world, every now and then, men who have explored the sun, threaded the stars, and pried into the heart of the earth and told us of its ancient history. God raises up, every now and then, master minds to perceive and reveal His wisdom in Nature. But there never was and never shall be a human understanding that can fully grasp the incomprehensible riches of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus! Sit down and think it over and look intently into this mystery—and you will find it far beyond you. “It is high, I cannot attain unto it.”

I have set myself, this day, to study this matter, but I have barely touched it as with a swallow’s wing! I have not dived into the fathomless

depths, nor can I! Jehovah is such a marvelously forgiving God, so rich in His mercy, that our understanding cannot count the mighty sum. Yes, and if our thoughts were raised to the utmost—if we were sanctified to the highest degree, if we were so pure in heart as to see God—not even, then, should we be able to know all the exceeding riches of His Grace to us who believe! The loftiest thought of the most saintly mind never rose to the height of this great argument! The most masterly poetic conception faints, its wing droops and it falls to earth in the presence of this mercy which is higher than the heavens and far above the clouds! I wish I could say something that would make men know how vast is the mercy of God. Oh that these lips had language! Perhaps my failure may be better than fluency. If so, I would gladly be dumb to let Mercy, itself, speak.

Furthermore, dear Friends, the exceeding riches of God's Grace may be guessed at by the fact that Divine Mercy is above all our sins. You cannot sin so much as God can forgive! If it comes to a pitched battle between sin and Grace, you shall not be so bad as God shall be good. I will prove it to you. You can only sin as a man, but God can forgive as a God! You sin as a finite creature, but the Lord forgives as the infinite Creator. When I received that thought fairly into my soul last night, I felt like Abraham when he laughed for joy—I sin like a man, but He forgives like a God! We will never sin that Grace may abound—that were infamous and detestable!

But what a blessed text is that—"Where sin abounded Grace did much more abound." Your sin is like a mountain, but if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed you shall say to this mountain, "Be you removed, therefore, and cast into the midst of the sea of God's infinite mercy," and it shall be done unto you! The atoning blood will wash out all transgression and not a trace of it shall remain. Does not this fact magnify the mercy of God? Gross and intolerable as your sin may be, yet it is but as a drop in a bucket compared with the immense ocean of forgiving love! Try again. God's mercy is greater than His promises. "Oh, no," you say, "that will not do! We have read of 'exceeding great and precious promises.'" I tell you His mercy has a Glory beyond His promises, for His mercy is the father of His promises!

The Lord had mercy and Grace before He had spoken a single promise and it was because His heart was flaming with love that He made a Covenant of Grace and wrote, therein, the words of peace. His promises are precious streams that come leaping up in the deserts of our lost and ruined state. But the depth that lies under, which Scripture calls, "the depth that couches beneath," is richer than the fountain which comes out of it! The mercy of God is the source and the wellhead is greater than the promises which flow from it—ininitely greater than our straitened interpretations of the promises—which fall far short of their real meaning! And even that meaning, did we know it, cannot set forth all "the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

Let us try again. God's mercy is greater than all that all His children have ever received as yet. His redeemed are a multitude that no man can number and each one draws heavily upon the Divine Bank, but, notwithstanding all the Grace He has ever given to them, (and He has given to each of them a measureless portion), yet there is more Grace in God than

He has given forth as yet. "Oh," you say, "how can that be?" It is so because His mercy is not all given out in this life—much of it is laid up for enjoyment in the world to come. The Grace which we have not yet tasted is the very crown of the feast! The Lord has prepared, for them that love Him, an inconceivable bliss!

There is Heaven, there is Glory, there is all the bliss of the endless ages yet laid up in store. Oh the wealth of these heavenly reserves! I am sure I stated the Truth of God when I said that what the Lord has given does not comprehend all the exceeding riches of His Grace—He has infinitely more to give. You have seen the river Thames go rolling along, the abounding and rejoicing river—and you see the cattle come, on a hot day, and stand knee deep in the stream, and drink, drink, drink. There is more water in the Thames than all the bullocks in all earth's pastures ever drank, or will drink. They may be driven from every prairie under Heaven and stand on the river's brink and drink as though they would suck up Jordan at a draught, but they will never diminish the wealth of Father Thames!

But even if they could, you and I would be still as far off from all possibility of draining the wondrous flood of mercy which comes flowing forth from beneath the Throne of God! The rain of Grace has filled the pools, but it will rain, again, none the less plentifully. God's ability to give is greater than our capacity to receive. The fact is that this Grace is above all measure. Yet we have four measures for it—height, depth, breadth, length—and this mercy of God is so exceedingly great that in each of these measures it baffles description! It is higher than our sin, though that is exceedingly heinous and proudly threatens the gates of Heaven! It is higher than our thoughts, though our imagination, sometimes, takes a condor's flight. Oh, the height of Divine Mercy! It rises to the Throne of the Eternal!

As for the depths of Grace—the sea has immense depths, but the mercy of God is altogether unfathomable! Great sins sink into it and are lost, but Grace is just as deep, after it has swallowed up a world's sin, as it was before. There are inconceivably deep places in God's mercy where the blackest sins are lost. Out of these come the choicest pearls of Grace. Oh the depths! As for the breadth of mercy, David says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." What greater breadth can be conceived? As for the length of it, it is from everlasting to everlasting! Can anybody tell me the length of that? My sins began less than 50 years ago, but the Lord's mercy began—oh, when did it begin?

It was always with Him and His plans of mercy are from everlasting! There is a beginning to man's sin, but there is no beginning to pardoning Love. I shall cease to sin, I hope, long before another 50 years are over, and I shall be beyond fear of further fault. But the mercy of the Lord will never end, world without end! Who, then, can compass a matter which, in any one of its measurements, far surpasses all human computation? Grace is above all calculation! Hasten here, you great sinners! You are not great as compared with the Lord's great mercy in Christ Jesus! We cannot allow you to apply the word, "great," to your sin—we need to reserve it for the mercy of God! We must monopolize the word, for all greatness dwells

in the love and mercy of our God. However much you may have wandered, however black you may be, however defiled, God delights in mercy—it is the joy of His heart to pass by transgression and sin through the precious blood of Christ!

Do not do my Lord so great a dishonor as to measure your sin and affirm that it outstrips His mercy! It cannot be! You know nothing about the glorious Nature of my Lord. A child may fill its little cup out of the great sea, but the sea never misses it. Your sin is like that cup and you may fill it to the brim with mercy, but the ocean of love will never miss all that you can take from it! Come, take all that you can take, and none shall question you! Wash out your crimson stains in this pure flood and it shall remain as pure as at the first! I would not speak lightly of your sin—it is an exceedingly great and grievous thing—but still, I do say over, again, that as compared with the infinite mercy of God it is but as a shadow to the sun, or a grain of sand to the full ocean at its flood!

III. These riches of Grace deserve TO BE STILL FURTHER ILLUSTRATED and I shall illustrate them only by hints. What exceeding riches of Grace it was on God's part that when we resisted Him in the days of our sin He resolved to overcome our folly. If you offer a man a great kindness and he will not have it, you say, "Well, then, he must do without it. I am not going down on my knees to him to ask him to receive a favor from me." Yet the Lord pleads with sinners to accept His Grace. "Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord." He begs and beseeches men that they will be saved! He entreats them! He pleads with them! He argues with them that they would turn to Jesus and live! Oh, the exceeding riches of His Grace!

My Master, the Lord Jesus, came along to me and said, "Soul, will you have pardon and forgiveness?" And fool that I was, I answered, "No." Then He came, again, and said, "Will you have Me and My salvation? I will take you to Heaven with Me." And I answered, "No." Ah, but He would not take, "No," for an answer! He had a sweet way of getting at my understanding and my will and He drew me till, at last, I cried after Him! How I ate my black and rebellious words! "O Lord," I said, "take no notice of what Your poor, poor child has said! Throw my obstinate refusals behind Your back and let me come to You." But, oh, the exceeding riches of His Grace that He should stand waiting, waiting long, and knocking at our door though we would not let Him in!

The exceeding riches of His Grace were seen in making no conditions with us. When the Lord Jesus Christ met with us, He did not stand out for terms. I heard one say the other day, "I do not feel enough brokenness of heart nor enough humiliation of spirit." Who said that Christ demanded so much brokenness of heart and so much humbling of spirit before He would give His mercy? He who dared to say it knows not the freeness of the Gospel, for the Gospel comes to *bring* you the broken heart and the humbled spirit! And Christ comes to you just as you are, in all your alienation and your enmity, and brings everything in His hands that you can need. This is what we call Free Grace! A sharp critic said the other day, "Do not say 'Free Grace,' it is a tautology—Grace *must* be free."

Ah, my dear Sir, but we shall say, "Free Grace," so that there shall be no mistake about it, for some, I dare say, will not know where we are unless we are redundant in our expressions upon this point! There was nothing in us to draw Christ to us. We had nothing good, but everything evil. When He came, He did not say, "Bankrupt sinner, you must pay two pence on the pound, and I will pay the other nineteen and ten pence." He paid *all* our debts, asking not a farthing from us! He saw us lying by the roadside, bruised and broken, and He did *not* say, "Come here, poor man; rise up, and I will bind your wounds." No, but He came where we were lying, unable to stir, and poured in the wine and the oil—and did it all without our help. This is the "exceeding riches of His Grace"—in not standing stipulating and huckstering with us, but freely giving to us all we need—only asking that we would receive it; that we would be empty and that He might fill us with His love.

Beloved, I think I never knew "the exceeding riches of His Grace" better than when I was thinking, the other day, of how His Grace works. Why, He does all this with a word! He speaks a black sinner white! He speaks a dead sinner into life by a word. "Live," He says, and he that was dead lives! He that had been accounted unrighteous is, by God's will, reckoned righteous and he *is* righteous, for him whom God reckons to be righteous, by the imputation of Christ's righteousness is righteous, indeed! Yes, and he shall be rewarded for that righteousness which God, with a word, gives to him!

If you need another proof of "the exceeding riches of His Grace" think of the power of the blood. Once washed in the crimson fountain, your every sin is gone, every spot is washed out! Yes, and gone never to return, for he that is once washed in the atoning blood will never be black, again! The cleansing is perfected forever. The glorious High Priest made one offering for sin, only one—He did it once and by that He annihilated all the sins of all His people at a single stroke—once and for all! Oh, "the exceeding riches of His Grace." His word, His blood have worked such wondrous mysteries of Grace. And since then, dear Friends, have not "the exceeding riches of God's Grace" been marvelous to you? To think that He should accept us as Believers though we had not more than half a grain of faith! He has even treated us as Believers when sometimes we have been more doubters than trusters.

As for our repentance, it seemed such a poor shallow regret, yet He has reckoned it repentance and accepted it as such. Our love to Him! Oh, our poor love to Him has been like a spark hiding away in the ashes, yet He has called it love! He has known us better than we know ourselves and He has known we loved Him notwithstanding the feebleness of our affection! These poor, frail Graces of ours that we have been ashamed of, He has, nevertheless, rejoiced in them and had a joy in them as being the gift of His Spirit, of "the exceeding riches of His Grace." Ever since our conversion, the Lord has held on to us and helped us to hold on to Him. We have sorely tried Him time out of mind.

Sometimes we talk about our trials. There is another side to that. Think of *Christ's* trials—how we have grieved Him! We must have provoked His spirit 10,000 times, yet He loves us infinitely and does not give us up! He

has espoused us to Himself and He will never divorce us. He never sued out a divorce against a soul that was married to Him, nor ever will! He has not grown cold in His love—notwithstanding our chilliness—He loves us, now, with all His great and infinite heart! And, by-and-by, He will open the golden gates and He will say, “Come up here”—

***“Then, Lord, shall I fully know, but
Not till then, how much I owe.”***

But if, when I get to Heaven, I shall know what I owed Him *here*, I shall be in a greater difficulty than ever, for I shall not know what I then owe Him in His Glory!

It is an enormous debt we owe Him for the blessings of time and, perhaps, in eternity we shall begin to calculate their value. But then we shall be sweetly oppressed with a new burden, in a sense, of the amazing mercy which He will then be giving us at His right hand. We may give up the endless task! We cannot possibly calculate the sum! Brothers and Sisters, we are all in an equal difficulty and shall be so forever, for the Lord will go on to deluge us with mercy, Grace and favor forever and forever! And we shall say to one another, when millions of years have gone, “Brother, is it not still astonishing? Do you seem to know much more of it than you did in the Tabernacle that morning when you heard the poor preacher try to do his best with his subject and he was utterly lost in it?” And you will say, “I know far more, but I am as far off as ever from knowing all, for now I know more of my ignorance. I know more of the extent of what I do not know.”

Brothers and Sisters, if what we do know and what we do not know are added together to make up the total sum of the Lord’s Grace, what must it be?—

***“God only knows the love of God:
Oh that it now were shed abroad
In these poor stony hearts.”***

God grant it, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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SALVATION ALL OF GRACE

NO. 1064

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 4, 1872,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“By Grace are you saved.”
Ephesians 2:8.

OTHER Divine attributes are manifest in salvation. The Wisdom of God devised the plan. The Omnipotence of God executes in us the work of salvation. The Immutability of God preserves and carries it on—in fact, all the attributes of God are magnified in the salvation of a sinner—but at the same time the text is most accurate since Grace is the fountainhead of salvation and is most conspicuous throughout. Grace is to be seen in our election, for, “there is a remnant according to the election of Grace, and if by Grace then it is no more of works.”

Grace is manifestly revealed in our redemption, for you know therein the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it is utterly inconceivable that any soul could have *deserved* to be redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. The mere thought is abhorrent to every holy mind. Our calling is also of Grace, for, “He has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

By Grace also are we justified, for over and over again the Apostle insists upon this grand and fundamental Truth of God. We are not justified before God by works in any measure or in any degree, but by faith alone, and the Apostle tells us, “it is of faith, that it might be by Grace.” We see a golden thread of Grace running through the whole of the Christian’s history—from his election before all worlds even to his admission to the Heaven of rest. Grace, all along, “reigns through righteousness unto eternal life,” and, “where sin abounds, Grace does much more abound.” There is no point in the history of a saved soul upon which you can put your finger and say, “In this instance he is saved by his own merit.” Every single blessing which we receive from God comes to us by the channel of free favor, revealed to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Boasting is excluded because merits are excluded. Merit is an unknown word in the Christian Church—it is banished once and for all—and our only shouts over foundation or top stone are, “Grace, Grace unto it!”

Perhaps the Apostle is the more earnest in insisting upon this Truth of God here, and in many other places, because this is a point against which the human heart raises the greatest objection. Every man, by nature, fights against salvation by Grace. Though we have nothing good in ourselves, we all think we have! Though we have all broken the Law and have lost all claim upon Divine regard, yet we are all proud enough to fancy that we are not quite so bad as others—that there are some mitigating cir-

cumstances in *our* offenses and that we can, in some measure, appeal to the justice as well as to the compassion of God.

Hence the Apostle puts it so strongly, “By Grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.” The statement of the text means just this—that we all need saving—saving from our sins and saving from the consequences of them. And that if we *are* saved it is not because of any works which we have already performed. Who among us, upon looking back at his past life, would dare to say that he *deserves* salvation?

Neither are we saved on account of any works foreseen which are yet to be performed by us. We have made no bargain with God that we will give Him so much service for so much mercy—neither has He made any Covenant with us of this character. He has freely saved us and if we serve Him in the future, as we trust we shall, with all our heart and soul and strength—even *then* we shall have no room for glorying because our works are worked in us of the Lord! What have we, then, which we have not received? We are saved not because of any mitigating circumstances with regard to our transgressions, nor because we were excusable on account of our youth, or of our ignorance, or any other cause! We are not saved because there were some good points in our character which ought not to be overlooked, or some hopeful indications of better things in the future!

Ah, no—“By Grace are you saved.” That clear and unqualified statement sweeps away all supposition of any deserving on our part, or any *thought* of deserving! It is not a case of a prisoner at the bar who pleads, “not guilty,” and who escapes because he is innocent. Far from it, for we are guilty beyond all question! It is not even a case of a prisoner who pleads, “guilty,” but at the same time mentions certain circumstances which render his offense less heinous. Far from it, for our offense is heinous to the last degree and our sin deserves the utmost wrath of God! Ours is the case of a criminal *confessing* his guilt and owning that he deserves the punishment, offering no extenuation and making no apology, but casting himself upon the absolute mercy of the judge, desiring him, for pity’s sake, to look upon his misery and spare him in compassion.

As condemned criminals we stand before God when we come to Him for mercy. We are not in a state of probation, as some say—our probation is over—we are already lost! “Condemned already,” and our only course is to cast ourselves upon the sovereign mercy of God in Christ Jesus, not uttering a syllable of claim, but simply saying, “Mercy, Lord, I crave undeserved mercy according to Your loving kindness and Your Grace in Christ Jesus.” “By Grace are you saved.” This is true of every saint on earth and every saint in Heaven—altogether true without a single sentence of qualification! No man is saved except as the result of the free favor and unbought mercy of God, not of merit, not of debt, but entirely and altogether because the Lord, “will have mercy on whom He will have mercy,” and He wills to bestow His favor on the unworthy sons of men.

I. This simple Truth of God we do not mean to work out this morning, doctrinally or controversially, but to use it for practical purposes and the first is this—THIS GREAT DOCTRINE SHOULD INSPIRE EVERY SINNER WITH HOPE. If salvation is altogether of the free favor and Grace of God,

then who among us dares to despair? Who in this place shall be so wicked as to sit down in sullenness and say, "It is impossible for me to be saved"? For first, my Brothers and Sisters, if salvation is of mercy only, it is clear that our sin is by no means an impediment to our salvation!

If it were of *justice*, our transgression of the Law would render our salvation utterly impossible. But if the Lord deals with us upon quite another footing, and says, "I will forgive them freely," that very promise presupposes sin! If the Lord speaks of mercy, that very word takes it for granted that we are guilty, or else there would be no room for mercy at all! The very statement that we are saved by Grace implies that we are fit objects for Grace—and who are fit objects for Grace but the *guilty*, the *wretched*, the *condemned*?!

O Souls of men, the Law stops your mouths and makes you silently admit that you are guilty before God! But the Gospel opens the mouth of the dumb by declaring, "Christ died for the ungodly," and, "He came into the world to save sinners." If mercy comes into the field, sin is swallowed up in forgiveness, and unworthiness ceases to be a barrier for love! Is not this both clear and comforting?

Now observe that this prevents the despair which might arise in any heart on account of some one special sin. I meet with many whose terror of conscience arises from *one* particular crime. Had they not committed that crimson sin they consider that they might have been pardoned, but now they are in an evil case. "Surely," they say, "that sin, like an iron bolt, has fast closed the gates of Heaven against me." And yet it cannot be so if salvation is of Grace! Whatever the sin may be, its greatness will only serve to illustrate the great Grace of God. Undeserved mercy can pardon one sin as well as another if the soul confesses it. If God acted on the rule of merit with us, then *no* sin would be pardonable under any circumstances! But when He deals with us in a way of Grace He can pass by any offense for which we seek forgiveness.

The great sinner is so much the fitter object for great mercy. He who has but little sin, can, as it were, but draw forth little mercy from God to blot it out. But he who is guilty of some great, crowning, damning sin—he it is to whom the heights and depths of Divine mercy may be displayed! And if I speak to such an one this morning I would look upon him with joyful eyes. Sorrowful as he is, I am thankful to have found out such an one. You are a rare platform on which my Lord's love may display itself because you know yourself to be so utterly a lost sinner! You are but a black foil to set forth the brilliant diamond of my Master's Grace! Your foulness shall but illustrate the virtue of His precious blood and your crimson sin, by yielding in a moment to the precious blood, shall only show how great is His power to save!

It is clear, too, that if the sinner's despair should arise from the long continuance, multitude and great aggravation of his sins, there is no ground for it. For if salvation is of pure mercy only, why should not God forgive 10,000 sins as well as one? "Oh," you say, "I see why He should not." Then you see more than is true, for once come to Grace you have done with bounds and limits!

Know, moreover, that, "His thoughts are not your thoughts. And as the heavens are higher than the earth so are His thoughts higher than your thoughts and His ways than your ways." To blot out 10,000 sins is, with Him, no effort of Grace, for, "He is plenteous in mercy." He has been forgiving the sons of men ever since the first sinner crossed the threshold of Paradise and He delights to do it! So that, guilty Ones, I see in the multitude of your sins only so much the more room for the Lord to exercise His own delightful attribute of mercy! If He delights to blot out one sin, then He delights 10,000 times more to blot out 10,000 sins! If you will look at it in that light, though your transgressions may be as many as the hairs on your head or as the sands on the sea shore, you need not for a moment think you are cast away from hope!

The Lord's mercy is a sea which cannot be filled though mountains of sin are cast into its midst! It is like Noah's flood which covers all and drowns even the mountaintops of Heaven-defying sins! I wish to speak right home to the hearts of those who are in trouble and seeking mercy, and to them I say—do you not see that if salvation is of Grace alone, then the depravity of your nature does not shut you up in despair? What? Though your Nature is inclined to sin, and especially inclined to some sins—what if you are naturally angry and passionate? What if you are proud and covetous? What if you are in your natural disposition skeptical or lustful? Yet from the Grace of God hope flows even for you!

If the Lord were to deal with you according to your constitution and Nature, then, indeed, it were a hopeless case with you. But if He blesses you, not because you are good but because you need to be blessed. If He looks upon you in mercy, not because you are beautiful but because you are sick unto death and defiled, and need to be healed and cleansed. If it is your *misery* and not your merit which He considers, then you are yet in the land of hope! However fallen you may be, you may yet be raised up!

Why should not the Lord take the most depraved and abandoned, and obstinate among us, and renew his Nature and make of him a miracle of Grace? Would it not magnify His mercy if He should make of such an one the opposite of what he now is? What if He should make him tender in heart, holy in spirit, devout in character, ardent in love and fervent in prayer? He can do it! Glory be to His name, He can do it! And now that He deals with us in Grace let us hope He will do it in the case of many here today.

Remember, too, that any spiritual unfitness which may exist in a man should not shut him out from a hope since God deals with us in mercy. I hear you say, "I believe God can save me, but I am so impenitent." Yes, and I say it again, if you were to stand on terms of *debt* with God, your hard heart would shut you out of hope. How could He bless such a wretch as you are, whose heart is a heart of stone? But if He deals with you entirely upon another ground, namely, His mercy, why I think I hear Him say, "Poor hard-hearted Sinner, I will pity you and take away your heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh."

Do you say, "I cannot repent"? I know the criminality of that sad fact. It is a great sin not to be able to repent, but then the Lord will not look upon you from the point of what you *ought* to be, but He will consider what He

can make you, and He will *give* you repentance! Has not His Son gone up to Heaven, “exalted on high, to give repentance and remission of sins?” Do I hear you confess that you cannot believe? Now, the absence of faith from you is a great evil, yes, a horrible evil. But then the Lord is dealing with you on terms of Grace and does not say, “I will not strike you because you do not believe,” but He says, “I will *give* you faith,” for faith is “not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” He works our faith in us and has pity upon us, and takes away the unbelieving heart and gives the tender heart, the believing heart, in the presence of the Cross of Christ!

Oh, though I were black as the devil with past sin and vile as the devil with innate depravity, yet, if the Lord’s mercy looked upon me, could He not forgive the past and chance my Nature, and make me as bright a seraph as Gabriel before His Throne? “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” O Sinner, what a door of hope there ought to be open to you in this Truth of God—that salvation is altogether of Grace! And now, to sum up all in a word, there is no supposable circumstance or incident, or anything connected with any man that can shut him out of hope if he seeks forgiveness through the Savior’s blood! Whoever you may be and whatever you may have done, Grace can come and save you! I say again, if your character is the question at issue, you are a lost man! If your power to amend your character is the hinge of the business, you are a lost man!

But if the Grace that pardons and the power that amends *both come from God*, why should you be a lost man? Why should the harlot perish? Why should the thief perish? Why should the adulterer perish? Why should the murderer perish? “Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God for He will abundantly pardon.” You have heaped up your sins but God will heap up His mercies! You have highly aggravated your transgressions—you have sinned against light and knowledge—you have done evil with both hands greedily! But, thus says the Lord, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed you.” “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Thus much upon the first statement, that this doctrine ought to give hope to the sinner.

II. Secondly, THIS DOCTRINE AFFORDS DIRECTION TO THE SINNER as to how to act before his God in seeking mercy. Clearly, O Soul, if salvation is of Grace alone, it would be a very wrong course of action to plead that you are not guilty, or to extenuate your faults before God—that were to go upon the wrong tack altogether. If salvation is by your merit, or by an absence of demerit, then you would be right enough to set up a good character as a plea, though I believe that in the trial you would break down mightily, for you are as full of sin as an egg is of meat and your sin is as damnable as Hell itself!

And therefore it were vain for you to plead innocence—but if you *could* plead it, it is the wrong plea. If salvation is of Grace, then go to the Lord and confess your sin and transgression, and ask for Grace. Do not, for a

moment, attempt to show that you have no need of Grace, for that were folly, indeed! What more foolish than for a beggar to plead that he is not in need? Do not shut the door of Grace in your own face! To say, "I am not guilty," is to say "I do not need mercy." To say, "I have not transgressed," is to say, "I do not need to be forgiven," and how better could you commit spiritual suicide than by such pleading?

Neither, O Sinner, hope to propitiate the Lord with gifts and sacrifices. If salvation is of Grace, how dare you think to buy it? If He says He gives it *freely*, bring not with you any bribe, for in so doing you will insult and anger Him. Indeed, what could you bring to Him when Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof for a burnt sacrifice? If you could give Him rivers of oil that should deluge a continent, or seas of sacrificial blood broad as the Pacific, yet could you not for a moment render yourself acceptable with Him! Therefore do not try it! Venture on no ceremonies. Rest not in rituals. If salvation is of Grace, accept it as a free gift and bless the Giver. Do not think to dress yourself in garments of outward religiousness, or to borrow virtue from a fellow man who claims to be a priest! But since salvation is of free mercy, go and cast yourself on that free mercy!

That is to act according to the dictates of prudence. Your true course is this—since God is willing to show His mercy—go and confess that you need that mercy. Aggravate your sin in the confession if you can. Instead of trying to make it appear white, try to see its unutterable blackness. Say that you are without excuse, justly condemned for your transgressions. I assure you you shall never go beyond the truth in stating your sin, for that were quite impossible. A man lying wounded on the field of battle—when the surgeon comes round, or the soldiers with the ambulance—does not say, "Oh, mine is a little wound," for he knows that then they would let him lie. But he cries out, "I have been bleeding here for hours, and am nearly dead with a terrible wound," for he thinks that then he will gain speedier relief. And when he gets into the hospital he does not say to the nurse, "Mine is a small affair. I shall soon get over it." But he tells the truth to the surgeon in the hope that he may set the bone at once and that double care may be taken.

Ah, Sinner, you must do the same with God! The right way to plead is to plead your misery, your impotence, your danger, your *sin*. Lay bare your wounds before the Lord and as Hezekiah spread Sennacherib's letter before the Lord, spread your sins before Him with many a tear and many a cry, and say, "Lord, save me from all these! Save me from these black and foul things for Your infinite mercy's sake." Confess your sin! Wisdom dictates that you should do so, since salvation is of Grace.

And then yield yourself up to God. Capitulate at discretion. Make no terms with Him, but say, "Here I stand before You, O my Maker. I have offended You. I yield to You because You have said You will deal with me on terms of Grace. Behold, I cast myself at Your feet. The weapons of my rebellion I cast from my hands forever. I desire that You would take me and make me what You would have me to be. And seeing You are a God of Grace, I beseech You to have pity upon me. You have appointed a way of salvation by Jesus Christ. Oh, save me in that way, I entreat You."

Now, mark, I need to dwell upon this next point—because salvation is of Grace it directs the guilty as to how to plead before God. When we are praying and pleading we sometimes feel we need a help to guide us in the pleading. Let this guide you. Take care that all your pleas with God are consistent with the fact that He saves by His Grace. Never bring a legal plea, or a plea that is based upon *self*, for it will be an offense to God. Whereas, if your argument is based on Grace, it will have a sweet savor to Him.

Let me teach you, seeking Sinner, for a moment how to pray. Let it be in this way. Plead with God your miserable and undone condition. Tell Him you are utterly lost if He does not save you. Tell Him you are already lost, so that you can not help yourself hand or foot in this matter if He does not come to your rescue with the fullness of His power and love. Tell him that you are afraid to die and to come before His righteous bar, for unless He saves you Hell will be your portion. Plead with Him and ask Him whether it will delight Him that you should make your bed in Hell. Say to Him, “Shall the dead praise You? Shall the condemned set forth the praise?” Show Him the imminence of your danger. He knows it, but let Him see that *you* know it, and this will be good pleading with His mercy. “Save me, O Lord, for if ever a soul needed saving, if ever a soul were in the jaws of destruction, I am that soul! Therefore have pity upon me.” Thus pour out your heart before Him.

Then humbly urge the suitableness of His mercy to you. “Lord, You are merciful. Your mercy will find ample scope in me. Does your Grace seek out sin to purge it away? It is here, Lord—I teem with it—my heart swarms with evils! If You are pitiful, here is a heart which bleeds and is ready to perish. Oh, if You are, indeed, a physician, here is a sick soul that needs you! If You are ready to forgive, here are sins that need forgiving. Come to me, Lord, for Your mercy will find a grievousness of misery in me! Besides, is not Your mercy free? It is true I do not deserve it, but You do not give it to men because of their merit, else were it not Grace and mercy at all. Let Your free mercy light on me! Why should You pass me by? If I am the vilest of the sons of men You will be the more gracious if You look upon me. What? Though I have forgotten You these many years and have even despised Your love, will it not be the greater mercy on Your part to turn and give Your free Grace to me, even to *me*?”

Then argue with Him the plenteousness of His Grace. Say to Him, “Lord, Your mercy is very great, I know it is. ‘According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.’ If You were a little God and You had but little mercy, I should have but little hope in You, but oh, You are so great and glorious! You can cast my transgressions behind Your back! By the greatness of Your compassion, then, look on me.” It is well, also, to return to the first plea and repeat it, saying, “Lord, because You have this great mercy and I need it, look on my impotence this day. I am so weak I cannot come to You unless You come to me. You bid me repent, but see how hard my heart is! You command me to believe in Jesus, but my unbelief is very strong! You tell me to look to Your dear Son upon the Cross, but I cannot see Him for my tears which blind these weary eyes.

“Master, come to the rescue! Come and help Your servant for You are strong, though I am weak. You can break my heart though I cannot break it and You can open my poor bleared eyes, though I cannot as yet see as I would see the Savior Jesus Christ. Oh, by Your power and mercy save a weak, dead sinner.” And then, if you feel as if you wanted some other plea, begin to plead His promises. Say—

***“You have promised to forgive
All who on Your Son believe.
Lord, I know You cannot lie!
Give me Christ or else I die.*”**

“You have said that if the wicked forsake his way and turn unto You he shall live. Lord, I turn to You. Receive me. You have said that all manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. You have declared that the blood of Jesus Christ Your Son cleanses from all sin. Go not back from Your word, O God! Since You are dealing with men on terms of Grace, keep Your promise and let Your rich, free mercy come to me.”

I know what all this means by experience. I have gone over all these pleas by the week together and pleaded with God that He would have mercy upon me. “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and delivered him from all his fears.” Therefore, I bear testimony unto you, O seeking Souls, that this is the way to move His heart. Go upon the plan of Grace and plead His love. Not your merits, but your *demerits!* Not your profession of what you hope to do, but your acknowledgment of your misery will have power with Him. I have found it sweet work, sometimes, to plead with God His mercy in the gifts of Christ.

Let me help you, Sinner, to do it and may the Spirit help you. Say you unto God thus, “Lord, You have given Your only begotten Son to die. Surely He need not have died for the righteous. He died for the guilty—I am such an one—Lord, will You give Your Son for sinners and then cast sinners away? Did You nail Him to the Cross only for a mockery, that we might come to that Cross and not find pity? O God of Mercy, in the gift of Your Son You have done so much that You cannot draw back! You must save sinners now that You have given Jesus to die for them.”

Then plead with Jesus the compassion of His heart. Tell Him that He said He would not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. Pluck Him by the sleeve, and say, “You have said, ‘Him that comes unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.’” Tell Him that it was written of Him, “This Man receives sinners and eats with them.” Tell Him that you have heard, “this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and say to Him, “Have You lost your compassion, Savior? Will You not dart a glance of love on me, even me? You did heal lepers—heal my leprosy! You did permit the woman, whom You did call a dog, to come and receive blessings at Your hands, and although I AM a dog, yet give the crumbs of Your mercy to me, even me.”

This is the style of plea that will win the day. And then I would advise you, if you still fail in prayer, to go to God and say to Him, “Lord, You have sworn with an oath—‘As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather that he would turn to Me and live.’ I know that you mean this, my God. Will You take pleasure, then, in my death and spurn me now that I turn to You?” Tell Him that He has

saved other sinners like yourself. Remind Him of your wife, or child, or friend. Tell Him of Saul of Tarsus. Tell Him of the woman that was a sinner. Tell Him of Rahab, and say unto Him, "Lord, do You not delight to save great, big, evil sinners? I am just such an one! You have not changed. By all that You have done for others, I pray You do the same for me."

And then say to Him again, "I thank You, O God, that You have permitted even *me* to pray to You. I bless Your Grace that You have moved me to come to You. And as You have given me Grace to feel my sin in a measure, will You leave me to perish after all? Oh, by the Grace I have received in being spared so long in being permitted to hear Your Gospel, I beseech You to give me more Grace."

Then throw yourself down before Him and if you perish, perish there. Go to the Cross with such pleas as these and resolve that if it can be that a sinner may die at the foot of the Cross, you will die there, but nowhere else. As the Lord my God lives, before whom I stand, there shall *never* a soul perish that can cast itself upon the sovereign Grace of God through Jesus Christ His Son!

III. Now, to turn away from that to a third point. A FULL CONVICTION OF THIS TRUTH WILL RECONCILE OUR HEARTS TO ALL DIVINE ORDINANCES WITH REGARD TO SALVATION. I feel in my own heart, and I think every Believer here does, that if salvation is of Grace, God must do as He wills with His own. None of us can say to Him, "What are You doing?" If there were anything of debt, or justice, or obligation in the matter, then we might begin to question God—but as there is none and the thing is quite out of court as to law and far away from rights and claims—as it is all God's free favor, we will, therefore, stop our mouths and never question Him.

As to the persons whom He chooses to save, let Him save whom He wills. His name shall be had in honor forever, let His choice be what it may. As to the instrument by whom He saves, let Him save by the coarsest speaker, or by the most eloquent—let Him do what seems good to Him. If He will save by the Bible, without ministers, we will be glad to hold our tongues. And if He will save souls by one of our Brothers and not by us, we will grieve to think that we are so little fitted for His service, but still, if after doing all we can, He uses another more than us, we will say, "Blessed be His name." We will not envy our Brothers. The Lord shall distribute His Grace by what hands He pleases. Send, Lord, by whomever You will send.

And here I come to the *sinner* again—with the two great Gospel commands we will raise no dispute. Has He said, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved"? We will never raise a question against either the believing or the Baptism. If the Lord chooses to say, "I will save those who trust in Christ," it is both so natural a thing that He should claim our faith and so gracious a thing that He should *give* us the faith He claims of us that we cannot question it! And even if it were not so, He has a right to make what rules He pleases. If God permits entrance only by one door, let us enter by it and raise no contention. The Lord bids you trust in Jesus—say not in your heart, "I would rather *do* or *feel* some wonderful matter."

If He had bid you do some great thing would you not have done it? How much rather, now, that He says to you, simply trust in Jesus and be saved? I know if I were authorized to preach this morning that every man who would sail round the world should be saved, you would begin saving your money to make the great excursion! But when the Gospel comes to you there in those very pews and aisles and bids you *now* turn your eyes to the crucified Savior and only look to Him, I know if you have not learned the Truth of God, that salvation is of Grace, you will kick at that Divine command! But if you know it is of Grace, and only Grace, you will say, "Sweet is the command of God! Lord, enable me, now, to trust myself with Your dear Son."

And then you will not quarrel with the ordinance of Baptism, either. I know it is very natural that you should say, "What is there in it?" I also would say, what is there in it? What can there be in a mere washing in water? If you thought there were any salvation by it meritoriously, you would have missed the track altogether. But the Lord has put it, that "he that believes and is baptized, shall be saved," and therefore you *must* obey! I do not attempt to justify my Lord for so commanding, for *He* needs no defense from *me*. But if He so chooses to put it, the true heart will yield a prompt obedience to His will. If it were of merit, I could see no merit in Baptism *or* in the believing, for surely it cannot be meritorious to believe what is true, or to have one's body washed with pure water. But salvation is of Grace—and if the Lord chooses to put it so, let Him put it as He wills.

I am such a sinner, I will take His mercy, let Him present it in what way He pleases. As to the manner in which the Lord may be pleased to reveal Himself to any one of us, I am sure that if we know that salvation is of Grace, we shall never quarrel about that any more. To some of us, the Lord revealed Himself on a sudden. We know when we were converted to the day. I know the place to a yard. But many others do not. The day breaks on them gradually—first twilight, then a brighter light—and afterwards comes the noon. Do not let us quarrel about that. So long as I get a Savior, I do not mind how I get Him! So long as He blots out my sins I will not quibble about the way in which He manifests His love to me. If it is of Grace, that silences everything—Jew and Gentile shut their mouths without a murmuring word—and all together sit down at the foot of the Cross, no more to question, but reverently to adore.

IV. I pass over this point rapidly, for time flies. I gladly would clip his wings. But I must introduce to you the next fact—that the doctrine that salvation is of Grace furnishes to those who receive it A MOST POWERFUL MOTIVE FOR FUTURE HOLINESS. A man who feels that he is saved by Grace says, "Did God of His free favor blot out my sins? Then, oh, how I love Him! Was it nothing but His love that saved an undeserving wretch? Then my soul is knit to Him forever."

Great sin becomes in such a case no barrier to great holiness, but rather a motive for it, for he who has had much forgiven loves much, and loving much he begins at once to be in earnest in the service of Him whom he loves. I put it to you, Sinner, if the Lord this morning were to appear to you and say, "All your sins have been blotted out," would you not love Him? Yes, I think a dog would love such a Master as that! Would you not

love Him? Yes, I know you would! I know you proud, self-righteous people would not—but you *real* sinners, if pardon were to come to you—would you not love God with all your hearts? Assuredly you would, and then your soul would begin to burn with a desire to honor Him!

You would need to tell the next person you met—“The Lord has had mercy upon me! Wonder of wonders, He has had mercy upon *me!*” And then you would desire to put away everything that would displease Him. Away, you Sins! Away, you Sins—how can I defile myself with you again? And then you would desire to practice all His will, and say, “For the love I bear His name no duty shall be too difficult, no command too severe.” There are none that love God like those who are saved by Grace!

The man who thinks to save himself by works does not love God at all—he loves *himself*—he is a servant working for wages and that is the kind of servant who would turn to another master tomorrow if he could get better paid. And if the wages do not suit him he will strike. The old-fashioned servants were the best servants in the world, for they loved their masters and if paid no wages at all would have stuck to the family for love’s sake. Such are the servants of God who are saved by His Grace. “Why,” they say, “He has already pardoned me and saved me, and therefore my ear is bored and fastened to the door of His house to be His servant forever. And my glory is, I am Your servant, I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid, You have loosed my bonds.”

Such a man feels that he must perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. He will not stop short with a measure of Grace—he wants immeasurable Grace! He will not say, “There are some sins in me which I cannot overcome,” but by God’s Grace he will seek to drive out all the Amalekites. He will not say, “Up to this point I am commanded to go, but beyond that I have a license to say, ‘That is my besetting sin—I cannot get rid of it.’” No, but loving God with all his heart he will hate sin with all his heart and war with sin with all his might, and will never put sword in scabbard till he is perfected in the image of Christ.

The Lord fires us with such ardent love as this and I know no way by which to get it except by coming to Him on terms of Grace, confessing sin, receiving mercy, feeling love kindled in the heart in consequence, and thus the whole soul becomes consecrated to the Lord.

V. Lastly, I wish I could handle my text as I desire and as it handles me, but the truth of my text will be A TEST FOR THIS CONGREGATION. The way you treat this text shall well reveal what you are. It will be either a stone of stumbling to you this morning, or else a foundation stone on which you build. Is it a stone of stumbling? Did I hear you murmur, “Why, the man does not hold up morality and good works! He preaches salvation for the guilty and the vile! I do not need such a religion”?

Alas, you have stumbled at this stumbling stone and shall be broken upon it. You shall perish, for you do insult your God by thinking yourself wiser than His Word and by fancying that your righteousness is purer than the righteousness of Christ! You do imagine you can force your way to Heaven by a road that is most effectually blocked up! You despise the path which the Lord has opened! Beware of self-righteousness! The black

devil of licentiousness destroys his hundreds, but the white devil of self-righteousness destroys his thousands!

But do you accept this text as a foundation stone? Do you say, "I need Grace, indeed, for I am guilty"? Then come and take all the blessings of the Covenant, for they are yours! "He has put down the mighty from their seat and He has exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich He has sent away empty." Are you guilty? Come and trust your Savior! Are you empty? Come and be filled out of the fullness which is treasured up in Christ Jesus! Believe in Jesus now, for one act of faith sets you free from all sin! Do not tarry for a moment, nor raise questions with your God. Believe Him capable of infinite mercy and through Jesus Christ rest in Him.

If you are the worst soul in the world in your own apprehension, and the one odd man that would be left out of every catalogue of Grace, now write not such things against yourself—or even if you do, come and cast yourself upon your God! He cannot reject you or if He should, you would be the first that ever trusted in Him and was refused! Come and try! Oh, that His Spirit may bring you to Jesus at this very moment and that in Heaven there may be joy in the presence of the angels of God because a soul has confided in the Grace of God and found immediate pardon and instantaneous salvation through the precious blood of Christ!

The Lord bless every one of you. Oh, how I would like that every soul here should be washed in the blood of Christ this morning! Would God that every one of you were robed in the righteousness of Christ this day and prepared to enter into His rest! Pray for it, Christian Brothers and Sisters! Why should we not have it? Why, this congregation, great as it may seem, comparatively, is very little to God! Why should there be one left out? Let your prayers encircle the whole house and bear the entire audience up to God! Lay it before Him and say, "By Your mercy and by Your loving kindness save *all* this gathered company, for Christ's sake." Amen.

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FAITH—WHAT IS IT? HOW CAN IT BE OBTAINED? NO. 1609

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 17, 1881,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“By Grace are you saved through faith.”
Ephesians 2:8.*

I MEAN to dwell mainly upon that expression, “Through faith.” I call attention, however, first of all, to the fountainhead of our salvation, which is the Grace of God. “By Grace are you saved.” Because God is gracious, therefore sinful men are forgiven, converted, purified and saved. It is not because of anything *in* them, or that ever can *be* in them, that they are saved, but because of the boundless love, goodness, pity, compassion, mercy and Grace of God. Tarry a moment, then, at the wellhead. Behold the pure river of Water of Life as it proceeds out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb. What an abyss is the Grace of God! Who can fathom it? Like all the rest of the Divine attributes, it is infinite! God is full of love, for “God is love.” God is full of goodness—the very name, “God,” is but short for, “good.”

Unbounded goodness and love enter into the very essence of the Godhead. It is because, “His mercy endures forever,” that men are not destroyed. It is because, “His compassions fail not,” that sinners are brought to Himself and forgiven. Right well remember this, for otherwise you may fall into error by fixing your minds so much upon the faith which is the *channel* of salvation as to forget the Grace which is the fountain and source of faith itself! Faith is the work of God’s Grace in us. No man can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Spirit. “No man comes unto Me,” says Christ, “except the Father which has sent Me draw him.” So that faith, which is coming to Christ, is the result of Divine drawing!

Grace is the first and last moving cause of salvation and faith, important as it is, is only an important part of the machinery which Grace employs. We are saved “*through* faith,” but it is “*by* Grace.” Sound forth those words as with the archangel’s trumpet—“By Grace are you saved!” Faith occupies the position of a channel or conduit. Grace is the fountain and the stream—faith is the aqueduct along which the flood of mercy flows down to refresh the thirsty sons of men. It is a great pity when the aqueduct is broken. It is a sad sight to see, around Rome, the many noble aqueducts which no longer convey water into the city because the arches are broken and the marvelous structures are in ruins.

The aqueduct must be kept in tact to convey the current and, even so, faith must be true and sound, leading right up to God and coming right down to ourselves, that it may become a serviceable channel of mercy to our souls. Still, I again remind you that faith is the channel or aqueduct and *not* the fountainhead. We must not look so much to faith as to exalt it

above the Divine source of all blessings which lie in the Grace of God. Never make a Christ out of your *faith*, nor think of it as if it were the independent source of your salvation. Our life is found in “looking unto *Jesus*,” not in looking to our own faith. By faith all things become possible to us, yet the *power* is not in the faith, but in the *God* upon whom faith relies.

Grace is the locomotive and faith is the chain by which the carriage of the soul is attached to the great motive power. The righteousness of faith is not the moral excellence of faith, but the righteousness of *Jesus Christ* which faith grasps and appropriates. The peace within the soul is not derived from the contemplation of our own faith—it comes to us from Him who is our peace, the hem of whose garment faith touches—and virtue comes out of Him into the soul. However, it is a very important thing that we look well to the channel and, therefore, at this time we will consider it, as God, the Holy Spirit, shall enable us. Faith. What is it? Faith. Why is it selected as the channel of blessing? Faith. How can it be obtained and increased?

I. FAITH, WHAT IS IT? What is this faith concerning which it is said, “By Grace are you saved through faith”? There are many descriptions of faith, but almost all the definitions I have met with have made me understand it less than I did before I saw them! The Negro said, when he read the chapter, that he would confound it, and it is very likely that he did so, though he meant to *expound* it. So, Brethren, we may explain faith till nobody understands it. I hope I shall not be guilty of that fault. Faith is the simplest of all things and, perhaps, because of its simplicity it is the more difficult to explain.

What is faith? It is made up of three things—knowledge, belief and trust. Knowledge comes first. Romanist divines hold that a man can believe what he does not know. Perhaps a Romanist can, but I cannot. “How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?” I need to be *informed* of a fact before I can possibly believe it. I believe this, I believe that—but I cannot say that I believe a great many things of which I have never *heard*. “Faith comes by hearing.” We must first *hear* in order that we may know what is to be believed. “They that know Your name will put their trust in You” (Psa. 9:10). A measure of knowledge is essential to faith and, therefore, the importance of getting knowledge. “Incline your ear, and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live”—such was the word of the ancient Prophet, and it is still the Word of the Gospel!

Search the Scriptures and learn what the Holy Spirit teaches concerning Christ and His salvation. Seek to know God—“that God is and is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” May He give you “the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.” Know the Gospel! Know what the Good News is, how it talks of free forgiveness, of change of heart, of adoption into the family of God and of countless other blessings. Know God, know His Gospel and know, especially, Christ Jesus the Son of God, the Savior of men, united to us by His human Nature and united to God, seeing He is Divine and thus able to act as Mediator between God and man, able to lay His hands upon both and to be the connecting link between the sinner and the Judge of all the earth!

Endeavor to know more and more of Christ. After Paul had been converted more than 20 years, he tells the Philippians that he desired to know Christ and, depend upon it, the more we know of Jesus, the more we shall wish to know of Him, so that our faith in Him may increase. Endeavor, especially, to know the doctrine of the Sacrifice of Christ, for that is the center of the target at which faith aims! That is the point upon which saving faith mainly fixes itself, that, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Know that He was made a curse for us, as it is written, “Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” Drink deep into the doctrine of the substitutionary work of Christ, for therein lies the sweetest possible comfort to the guilty sons of men since the Lord, “made Him to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Faith begins with knowledge, therefore the value of being taught in Divine Truth, for to know Christ is eternal life.

Then the mind goes on to believe that these things are true. The soul believes that God is and that He hears the cries of sincere hearts; that the Gospel is from God; that justification by faith is the grand Truth that God has revealed in these last days by His Spirit more clearly than before. Then the heart believes that Jesus is, verily and in truth, our God and Savior, the Redeemer of men, the Prophet, Priest and King unto His people. Dear Hearers, I pray that you may at once come to the understanding of this. Get firmly to believe that “the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, cleans us from all sin,” that His Sacrifice is complete and fully accepted of God on man’s behalf so that He that believes on Jesus is not condemned.

So far you have made an advance towards faith and one more ingredient is needed to complete it, which is trust. Commit yourself to the merciful God; rest your hope on the gracious Gospel; trust your soul on the dying and living Savior; wash away your sins in the atoning blood; accept His perfect righteousness and all is well! *Trust* is the lifeblood of faith—there is no saving faith without it! The Puritans were accustomed to explain faith by the word, “recumbency.” You know what it means. You see me leaning upon this rail, leaning with all my weight upon it—even thus, lean upon Christ! It would be a better illustration, still, if I were to stretch myself at full length and rest my whole person upon a rock, lying flat upon it. Fall flat upon Christ! Cast yourself upon Him, rest in Him, commit yourself to Him! That done, you have exercised saving faith.

Faith is not a blind thing, for faith begins with knowledge. It is not a speculative thing, for faith believes facts of which it is sure. It is not an unpractical, dreamy thing, for faith trusts and stakes its destiny upon the truth of Revelation. Faith ventures its all upon the Truth of God. It is not a pleasant word to use, but the poet employed it, and it suggests my meaning—

**“Venture on Him, venture wholly.
Let no other trust intrude.”**

That is one way of describing what faith is—I wonder whether I have “confounded” it already. Let me try again. Faith is believing that Christ is what He is said to be, that He will do what He has promised to do and expecting this of Him. The Scriptures speak of Jesus Christ as being God, God in

human flesh—as being perfect in His Character; as being made a Sin Offering on our behalf—as bearing sin in His own body on the tree. The Scripture speaks of Him as having finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness.

The Scriptures further tell us that He “rose again,” that He “ever lives to make intercession for us,” that He has gone up into Glory and has taken possession of Heaven on the behalf of His people and that He will shortly come again “to judge the world in righteousness and His people with equity.” We are most firmly to believe that it is even so, for this is the testimony of God the Father when He said, “This is My beloved Son; hear Him.” This also is testified by God the Holy Spirit, for the Spirit has borne witness to Christ, both by the Word and many miracles and by His working in the hearts of men. We are to believe this testimony to be true. Faith also believes that Christ will do what He has promised—that if He has promised to cast out none that come to Him, it is certain that He will not cast us out if we come to Him.

Faith believes that if Jesus said, “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life,” it must be true, and if we get this Living Water from Christ, it will abide in us and will well up within us in streams of holy life. Whatever Christ has promised to do, He will do, and we must believe this so as to look for pardon, justification, preservation and eternal glory from His hands according as He has promised.

Then comes the next necessary step. Jesus is what He is said to be. Jesus will do what He says He will do. Therefore we must, each one, trust Him, saying, “He will be to me what He says He is and He will do to me what He has promised to do. I leave myself in the hands of Him who is appointed to save, that He may save me. I rest upon His promise that He will do even as He has said.” This is a *saving* faith and he that has it, has everlasting life! Whatever his dangers and difficulties; whatever his darkness and depression; whatever his infirmities and sins, he that believes thus on Christ Jesus is not condemned and shall never come into condemnation. May that explanation be of some service. I trust it may be used by the Spirit of God.

But now I think, as it is a very hot and heavy morning, that I had better give you a number of illustrations, lest anybody should be inclined to go to sleep. If anybody should be drowsy, will his neighbor just nudge him a little, for it may be well, while we are here, to be awake—especially with such a subject on hand as this! The illustrations will be such as have been commonly used and perhaps I may be able to give one or two of my own. Faith exists in various degrees, according to the amount of knowledge, or other cause. Sometimes faith is little more than a simple clinging to Christ—a sense of dependence and a willingness to depend.

When you are down at the seaside, as we might, all of us, wish to be, you will see the limpet sticking to the rocks. You walk with a soft tread up to the rock with your walking stick and strike the limpet with a rapid blow and off he comes! Try the next limpet in that way. You have given him warning—he heard the blow with which you struck his neighbor and he clings with all his might. You will never get him off, not you! Strike and

strike again, but you may as soon break the rock. Our little friend, the limpet, does not know much, but he clings. He cannot tell us much about what he is clinging to—he is not acquainted with the geological formation of the rock—but he clings! He has found something to cling to—that is his little bit of knowledge—and he uses it by clinging to the rock of his salvation! It is the limpet's life to cling!

Thousands of God's people have no more faith than this. They know enough to cling to Jesus with all their heart and soul—and this suffices. Jesus Christ is, to them, a Savior strong and mighty and like a rock, immovable and immutable! They cleave to Him for dear life and this clinging *saves* them! God gives to His people the propensity to cling. Look at the sweet pea which grows in your garden. Perhaps it has fallen down upon the gravel walk. Lift it up against the laurel or the trellis, or put a stick near it and it catches hold directly, because there are little hooks ready prepared with which it grasps anything which comes in its way—it was meant to grow upwards—and so it is provided with tendrils. Every child of God has his tendrils about him—thoughts, desires and hopes with which he hooks on to Christ and the promise.

Though this is a very simple sort of faith, it is a very complete and effectual form of it and, in fact, it is the heart of all faith and that to which we are often driven when we are in deep trouble, or when our mind is somewhat befuddled by our being sickly or depressed in spirit. We can *cling* when we can do nothing else and that is the very soul of faith! O poor Heart, if you do not yet know as much about the Gospel as we wish you to know, cling to what you do know! If as yet you are only like a lamb that wades a little into the River of Life, and not like leviathan who stirs the mighty deep to the bottom, yet drink, for it is drinking—not diving—that will save you! Cling, then! Cling to Jesus, for that is faith.

Another form of faith is when a man depends upon another from a knowledge of the superiority of that other and follows him. I do not think the limpet knows much about the rock, but in this next phase of faith there is more knowledge. A blind man trusts himself with his guide because he knows that his friend can see and, trusting him, he walks where his guide conducts him. If the poor man is born blind, he does not know what sight is, but he knows that there is such a thing as sight and that it is possessed by his friend and, therefore, he freely puts his hand into the hand of the seeing one and follows his leadership. This is as good an image of faith as we can have—we know that Jesus has about Him merit, power and blessing which we do not possess and, therefore, we gladly trust ourselves to Him and He never betrays our confidence.

Every boy that goes to school has to exert faith while learning. His schoolmaster teaches him geography and instructs him as to the form of the earth and the existence of certain great cities and empires. The boy does not, himself, know that these things are true except that he believes his teacher and the books put into his hands. That is what you will have to do with Christ if you are to be saved—you must know just because He tells you and believe because He assures you it is so—and trust yourself with Him because He promises you that salvation will be the result. Almost all that you and I know has come to us by faith. A scientific discov-

ery has been made and we are sure of it. On what ground do we believe it? On the authority of certain well-known men of learning whose reputations are established! We have never made or seen their experiments, but we believe their witness.

Just so you are to do with regard to Christ. Because He teaches you certain Truths of God you are to be His disciple, believe His Words and trust yourself with Him. He is infinitely superior to you and presents Himself to your confidence as your Master and Lord. If you will receive Him and His Words, you shall be saved. Another and a higher form of faith is that faith which grows out of love. Why does a boy trust his father? You and I know a little more about his father than he does and we do not rely upon him quite so implicitly. But the reason why the child trusts his father is because he *loves* him. Blessed and happy are they who have a sweet faith in Jesus intertwined with deep affection for Him! They are charmed with His Character and delighted with His mission. They are carried away by the loving kindness that He has manifested and now they cannot help trusting Him because they so much admire, revere and love Him.

It is hard to make you doubt a person whom you love. If you are, at last, driven to it, then comes the awful passion of jealousy which is strong as death and cruel as the grave—but till such a crushing of the heart shall come, love is all trust and confidence. The way of loving trust in the Savior may thus be illustrated. A lady is the wife of the most eminent physician of the day. She is seized with a dangerous illness and is struck down by its power. Yet she is wonderfully calm and quiet, for her husband has made this disease his special study and has healed thousands similarly afflicted. She is not in the least troubled, for she feels perfectly safe in the hands of one so dear to her, in whom skill and love are blended in their highest forms. Her faith is reasonable and natural—her husband from every point of view deserves it of her.

This is the kind of faith which the happiest of Believers exercise towards Christ! There is no physician like He! None can save as He can! We love Him and He loves us and, therefore, we put ourselves into His hands, accept whatever He prescribes and do whatever He bids. We feel that nothing can be wrongly ordered while He is the director of our affairs, for He loves us too much to let us perish, or suffer a single needless pang! Faith also realizes the Presence of the living God and Savior and thus it breeds in the soul a beautiful calm and quiet like that which was seen in a little child in the time of tempest. Her mother was alarmed, but the sweet girl was pleased. She clapped her hands with delight. Standing at the window when the flashes came most vividly, she cried in childish accents, “Look, mamma! How beautiful! How beautiful!”

Her mother said, “My dear, come away, the lightning is terrible!” But she begged to be allowed to look out and see the lovely light which God was making all over the sky, for she was sure God would not do His little child any harm. “But listen to the terrible thunder,” said her mother. “Did you not say, Mamma, that God was speaking in the thunder?” “Yes,” said her trembling parent. “O,” said the darling, “how nice it is to hear Him! He talks very loud, but I think it is because He wants the deaf people to hear

Him. Is it not so, Mamma?” Thus she went talking on, as merry as a bird, was she, for God was *real* to her and she trusted Him! To her, the lightning was God’s beautiful light and the thunder was God’s wonderful voice, and she was happy. I dare say her mother knew a good deal about the laws of Nature and the energy of electricity—and little was the comfort which *her* knowledge brought her!

The child’s knowledge was less showy, but it was far more certain and precious. We are so conceited, nowadays, that we are too proud to be comforted by self-evident Truths of God and prefer to make ourselves wretched with questionable theories. Hood sang a deep spiritual truth when he merrily said—

***“I remember, I remember,
The fir trees dark and high.
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky.
It was a childish ignorance,
But now ‘tis little joy
To know I’m further off from Heaven
Than when I was a boy.”***

For my own part I would rather be a child, again, than grow perversely wise. Faith is to be a child towards Christ—believing in Him as a real and present Person—at this very moment near us and ready to bless us. This may seem to be a childish fancy, but it is such childishness we must all come to if we would be happy in the Lord. “Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” Faith takes Christ at His word, as a child believes his father, and trusts Him in all simplicity with past, present and future. God give us such faith!

A firm form of faith arises out of assured knowledge. This comes of growth in Grace and is the faith which believes Christ because it knows Him. It trusts Him because it has proven Him to be Infallibly faithful. This faith asks not for signs and tokens, but bravely believes! Look at the faith of the master mariner—I have often been amazed at it! He looses his cable; he steams away from the shore. For days, weeks, or even months he never sees sail or shore, yet on he goes, day and night, without fear, till one morning he finds himself just opposite the desired haven towards which he has been steering! How has he found his way over the trackless deep? He has trusted in his *compass*, his nautical *almanac*, his *glass* and the heavenly bodies! And obeying their guidance, without sighting shore, he has steered so accurately that he has not to change a point to get into port. It is a wonderful thing, that sailing without sight!

Spiritually it is a blessed thing to leave the shores of sight and say, “Good-bye to inward feelings, cheering providences, signs, tokens and so forth! I believe in God and I steer for Heaven straight away.” “Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed”—to them shall be administered an abundant entrance, at the last, and a safe voyage on the way. This is the faith which makes it easy to commit our soul and all its eternal interests into the Savior’s keeping. One man goes to the bank and puts his money into it with a measure of confidence, but another has looked into the bank’s accounts and has been behind the scenes and made sure of its having a large reserve of well-invested capital—he puts in his money

with the utmost assurance! He knows and is established in his faith and so he cheerfully commits his all to the bank.

Even so, we who know Christ are glad to place our whole being in His hands, knowing that He is able to keep us even unto the end. God give us more and more an assured confidence in Jesus until it comes to be an unwavering faith, so that we never doubt, but unquestioningly believe! Look at the farmer—he labors with his plow in the wintry months, when there is not a leaf on the tree nor a bird that sings to cheer him and after he has plowed, he takes the precious corn from the granary, of which, perhaps, he has very little, and he buries it in the furrows, assured that it will come up again! Because he has seen a harvest 50 times, already, he looks for another and in faith he scatters the precious grain. To all appearances, the most absurd thing that ever was done by mortal man is to throw away good corn, burying it in the ground!

If you had never seen or heard of its results, it would seem the way of waste and not the work of farming, yet the farmer has no doubts—he longs to be allowed to cast away his seed—in faith he even covets fair weather that he may bury his corn! And if you tell him that he is doing an absurd thing, he smiles at your ignorance and tells you that thus harvests come. This is a fair picture of the faith which grows of *experience*—it helps us to act in a manner contrary to appearances—it leads us to commit our all to the keeping of Christ, burying our hopes and our very lives with Him in joyful confidence that if we are dead with Him, we shall also live with Him. Jesus Christ who rose from the dead will raise us up through His death unto newness of life and give us a harvest of joy and peace!

Give up everything into the hands of Christ and you shall have it back with an abundant increase. May we get so strong a faith that, as we have no doubt of the rising and setting of the sun, we may never doubt the Savior's working for us in every hour of need! We have already trusted in our Lord and have never been confounded, therefore let us go on to rely upon Him more and more implicitly—for never shall our faith in Him surpass the bounds of His deserving. Have faith in God and then hear Jesus say, "You believe in God, believe also in Me."

II. Thus far I have done my best to answer what faith is. We shall now enquire WHY FAITH IS SELECTED AS THE CHANNEL OF SALVATION "By Grace are you saved through faith." It becomes us to be modest in answering such a question, for God's ways are not always to be understood. But, as far as we can tell, faith has been selected as the channel of Grace because there is a natural adaptation in faith to be used as the receiver. Suppose that I am about to give a poor man an alms. I put it into his hand—why? Well, it would hardly be fitting to put it into his ear, or to lay it upon his foot, the hand seems made on purpose to *receive*.

So faith in the *mental* body is created on purpose to be a *receiver*—it is the hand of the man and there is a fitness in bestowing Grace by its means. Let me put this very plainly. Faith which receives Christ is as simple an act as when your child receives an apple from you because you hold it out and promise to give it the apple if it comes for it. The belief and the receiving relate only to an *apple*, but they make up precisely the same act as the faith which deals with eternal salvation! What the child's *hand*

is to the apple, that is your *faith* to the perfect salvation of Christ. The child's hand does not *make* the apple, nor *alter* the apple—it only *receives* it. And faith is chosen, by God, to be the receiver of salvation because it does not pretend to make salvation, nor to help in it, but it *receives* it.

Faith, again, is no doubt selected because it gives all the credit to God. It is of faith that it might be by Grace and it is of Grace that there may be no boasting, for God cannot endure pride. Paul says, "Not of works, lest any man should boast." The hand which receives charity does not say, "I am to be thanked for accepting the gift"—that would be absurd! When the hand conveys bread to the mouth, it does not say to the body, "Thank me, for I fed you." It is a very simple thing that the hand does, though a very necessary thing—but it never arrogates glory to itself for what it does. So God has selected faith to receive the unspeakable gift of His Grace because it cannot take to itself any credit, but must adore the gracious God who is the Giver of all good.

Next, God selects faith as the channel of salvation because it is a sure method, linking man with God. When man confides in God, there is a point of union between them and that union guarantees blessing. Faith saves us because it makes us cling to God and so brings us into union with Him. I have used the following illustration before, but I must repeat it because I cannot think of a better. I am told that years ago, above the Falls of Niagara, a boat was upset and two men were being carried down the current. Persons on the shore managed to float a rope out to them, which rope was seized by them both. One of them held fast to it and was safely drawn to the bank, but the other, seeing a great log come floating by, unwisely let go of the rope and clung to the log, for it was the bigger thing of the two and apparently better to cling to.

Alas, the log, with the man on it, went right over the vast abyss because there was no union between the log and the shore. The size of the log was no benefit to him who grasped it—it needed a *connection* with the shore to produce safety. So when a man trusts to his works, or to sacraments, or to anything of that sort, he will not be saved because there is no connection between him and Christ. But faith, though it may seem to be like a slender cord, is in the hands of the great God on the shore! Infinite power pulls in the connecting line and thus draws the man from destruction. Oh, the blessedness of faith because it unites us to God! Faith is chosen, again, because it touches the springs of *action*. I wonder whether I shall be wrong if I say that we never do anything except through faith of some sort? If I walk across this platform it is because I believe my legs will carry me.

A man eats because he believes in the necessity of food. Columbus discovered America because he believed that there was another continent beyond the ocean—many another grand deed has also been born of faith, for faith works wonders. Common things are done on the same principle—faith in its natural form is an all-prevailing force. God gives salvation to our faith because He has thus touched the secret spring of all our emotions and actions. He has, so to speak, taken possession of the battery and now He can send the sacred current to every part of our nature. When we believe in Christ—and the *heart* has come into the possession of

God—then are we saved from sin and are moved towards repentance, holiness, zeal, prayer, consecration and every other gracious thing!

Faith, again, has the power of working by *love*. It touches the secret spring of the affections and draws the heart towards God. Faith is an act of the understanding, but it also proceeds from the heart. With the heart, man believes unto righteousness and, therefore, God gives salvation to faith because it resides next door to the affections and is near akin to love. And love, you know, is that which purifies the soul. Love to God is obedience! Love is holiness! To love God and to love man is to be conformed to the image of Christ—and this is salvation!

Moreover, faith creates peace and joy. He that has it rests, is tranquil, is glad and joyous—and this is a preparation for Heaven. God gives all the heavenly gifts to faith because faith works in us the very life and spirit which are to be eternally manifested in the upper and better world. I have hastened over these points that I might not weary you on a day when, however willing the spirit may be, the flesh is weak.

III. We close with the third point—HOW CAN WE OBTAIN AND INCREASE OUR FAITH? This is a very earnest question to many. They say they want to believe but cannot. A great deal of nonsense is talked upon this subject. Let us be practical in our dealing with it. “What am I to do in order to believe?” The shortest way is to believe and if the Holy Spirit has made you honest and candid, you will believe as soon as the Truth of God is set before you. Anyway, the Gospel command is clear—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” But still, if you have a difficulty, take it before God in prayer. Tell the great Father exactly what it is that puzzles you and beg Him, by His Holy Spirit, to solve the question. If I cannot believe a statement in a book, I am glad to enquire of the author what he meant, and if he is an honest man, his explanation will satisfy me. Much more will the Divine explanation satisfy the heart of the true seeker! The Lord is willing to make Himself known! Go to Him and see if it is not so!

Furthermore, if faith seems difficult, it is possible that God the Holy Spirit will enable you to believe if you hear very frequently and earnestly that which you are commanded to believe. We believe many things because we have heard them so often. Do you not find it so in common life, that if you hear a thing 50 times a day, at last you come to believe it? Some men have come to believe that which is *false* by this process, but I should not wonder but what God often blesses this method in working faith concerning that which is *true*, for it is written, “Faith comes by hearing.” If I earnestly and attentively *hear* the Gospel, it may be that one of these days I shall find myself believing that which I hear, through the blessed operation of the Spirit upon my mind.

If that, however, should seem poor advice, I would add, next, consider the testimony of others. The Samaritans believed because of what the woman told them concerning Jesus. Many of our beliefs arise out of the testimony of others. I believe that there is such a country as Japan—I never saw it and yet I believe that there is such a place because others have been there. I believe I shall die—I have never died, but a great many have done so whom I once knew—and I have a conviction that I shall also

die. The testimony of many convinces me of this fact. Listen, then, to those who tell you how they were saved, how they were pardoned, how they have been changed in character—if you will but listen you will find that somebody *just like yourself* has been saved.

If you have been a thief, you will find that a thief rejoiced to wash away his sins in the fountain of Christ's blood! You that have been unchaste in life, you will find that men who have fallen that way have been cleansed and changed! If you are in despair, you have only to get among God's people and inquire a little, and some who have been equally in despair with yourself will tell you how He saved them! As you listen to one after another of those who have tried the Word of God and proved it, the Divine Spirit will lead you to believe. Have you not heard of the African who was told by the missionary that water sometimes became so hard that a man could walk on it? He declared that he believed a great many things the missionary had told him but he would never believe *that*.

When the African came to England it came to pass that one frosty day he saw the river frozen, but he would not venture on it. He knew that it was a river and he was certain that he would be drowned if he ventured upon it. He could not be induced to walk the ice till his friend went upon it. Then he was persuaded and trusted himself where others had ventured. So, perhaps, while you see others believe and notice their joy and peace, you will, yourself, be gently led to believe. It is one of God's ways of helping us to faith. A still better plan is this—note the Authority upon which you are commanded to believe and this will greatly help you. The authority is not mine, or you might well reject it. It is not even the pope's, or you might even reject that. But you are commanded to believe upon the authority of God Himself! He bids you believe in Jesus Christ and you must not refuse to obey your Maker!

The foreman of a certain works in the north had often heard the Gospel, but he was troubled with the fear that he might not come to Christ. His good employer, one day, sent a card round to the works—"Come to my house immediately after work." The foreman appeared at his employer's door and the man came out and said somewhat roughly, "What do you want, John, troubling me at this hour? Work is done, what right have you here?" "Sir," he said, "I had a card from you saying that I was to come after work." "Do you mean to say that merely because you had a card from me you are to come up to my house and call me out after business hours?" "Well, Sir," replied the foreman, "I do not understand you, but it seems to me that since you sent for me, I had a right to come."

"Come in, John," said his employer, "I have another message that I want to read to you." And he sat down and read these words—"Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Do you think after such a message from Christ that you can be wrong in going to Him?" The poor man saw it all at once and believed because he saw that he had good warrant and authority for believing! So have you, poor Soul! You have good authority for coming to Christ, for the Lord, Himself, bids you trust Him! If that does not settle you, think over what it is that you have to believe—that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered in the place of men and is able to save all who trust Him. Why, this is the most blessed

fact that ever men were told to believe! It is the most suitable, the most comforting, the most Divine Truth of God that was ever set before men!

I advise you to think much upon it and search out the Grace and love which it contains. Study the four Evangelists. Study Paul's Epistles and then see if the message is not such a credible one that you are forced to believe it! If that does not do, then think upon the Person of Jesus Christ—think of who He is and what He did—and *where* He is now and *what* He is now. Think often and deeply. When He, even such an one as He, bids you trust Him, surely your heart will be persuaded! How can you doubt Him? If none of these things avail, then there is something altogether wrong about you, and my last word is, submit yourself to God! May the Spirit of God take away your enmity and make you yield! You are a rebel, a proud rebel, and that is why you do not believe your God. Give up your rebellion! Throw down your weapons! Yield at discretion and surrender to your King!

I believe that never did a soul throw up its hands in self-despair and cry, "Lord, I yield," but what faith became easy to it before long. It is because you still have a quarrel with God and intend to have your own will and your own way that you cannot believe. "How can you believe," said Christ, "that have honor one of another?" Proud self creates unbelief. Submit, O man! Yield to your God and then shall you sweetly believe in your Savior. God bless you, for Christ's sake, and bring you, at this very moment, to believe in the Lord Jesus. Amen.

[NOTE—{Year 1881} While revising this sermon I felt moved to ask my readers to circulate it. I tried to be very simple and I think I succeeded. If you, dear Reader, think the sermon likely to show the way of salvation to those around you, will you not get extra copies and give them away? The preacher of the sermon and the giver of it will rejoice together if, by their united effort, men are led to faith in Jesus.]

[NOTE—{YEAR 2004} I pray you are aware you can download and print this sermon (and pass it on) if you are reading it online. If not, you can go to <http://www.spurgeongems.org> and read/download it. Volume 27, Sermon No. 1609—and if neither of these options apply to you, write me at, P.O. Box 702, Fulshear, TX, 77441-0702, and Lord willing, I will send you a copy in booklet form anywhere in the USA—**EOD**]

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ALL OF GRACE

NO. 3479

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1915.

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

*“For by Grace are you saved through faith; and that
not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”
Ephesians 2:8.*

OF the things which I have spoken unto you these many years, this is the sum. Within the circle of these words my theology is contained, so far as it refers to the salvation of men. I also rejoice to remember that these of my family who were ministers of Christ before me preached this Doctrine and none other. My father, who is still able to bear his personal testimony for his Lord, knows no other Doctrine, neither did his father before him.

I am led to remember this by the fact that a somewhat singular circumstance, recorded in my memory, connects this text with myself and my grandfather. It is now many years ago. I was announced to preach in a certain country town in the Eastern Counties. It does not often happen to me to be behind time, for I feel that punctuality is one of those little virtues which may prevent great sins. But we have no control over railway delays and breakdowns—and so it happened that I reached the appointed place considerably behind time. Like sensible people, they had begun their worship and had proceeded as far as the sermon. As I neared the chapel, I perceived that someone was in the pulpit preaching—and who should the preacher be but my dear and venerable grandfather! He saw me as I came in at the front door and made my way up the aisle. And he at once said, “Here comes my grandson! He may preach the Gospel better than I can, but he cannot preach a better Gospel, can you, Charles?” As I made my way through the throng, I answered, “You can preach better than I can. Pray go on.” But he would not agree to *that*. I must take the sermon, and so I did, going on with the subject then and there, just where he left off. “There,” he said, “I was preaching on ‘For by Grace are you saved.’ I have been setting forth the source and fountain-head of salvation. And I am now showing them the channel of it, through faith. Now you take it up, and go on.”

I am so much at home with these glorious Truths of God that I could not feel any difficulty in taking from my grandfather the thread of his discourse and joining my thread to it, so as to continue without a break. Our agreement in the things of God made it easy for us to be joint-preachers of the same discourse! I went on with, “through faith,” and then I proceeded to the next point, “and that not of yourselves.” Upon this I was explaining the weakness and inability of human nature and the certainty that salvation could not be of ourselves, when I had my coattail pulled, and my well-beloved grandfather took his turn again. “When I spoke of our depraved human nature,” the good old man said, “I know most about that, dear Friends.” And so he took up the parable, and for the next five minutes set forth a solemn and humbling description of our lost estate, the depravity of our nature and the spiritual death under which we were found. When he had said his say in a very gracious manner, his grandson was allowed to go on again, to the dear old man’s great delight, for now and then he would say, in a gentle tone, “Good! Good!” Once he said, “Tell them that again, Charles.” And, of course, I did tell them that again! It was a happy exercise for me to take my share in bearing witness to Truths of God of such vital importance, which are so deeply impressed upon my heart. While announcing this text I seem to hear that dear voice, which has been so long lost to earth, saying to me, “TELL THEM THAT AGAIN.”

I am not contradicting the testimony of forefathers who are now with God. If my grandfather could return to earth, he would find me where he left me—steadfast in the faith and true to that form of Doctrine which was once delivered to the saints. I shall handle the text briefly, by way of making a few statements. The first statement is clearly contained in the text—

I. THERE IS PRESENT SALVATION.

The Apostle says, “*You are saved.*” Not, “you shall be,” or, “you may be,” but, “you are saved.” He says not, “You are partly saved,” nor, “on the way to being saved,” nor, “hopeful of salvation,” but, “by Grace are you saved.” Let us be as clear on this point as he was and let us never rest till we know that we are saved! At this moment we are either saved or unsaved. That is clear. To which class do we belong? I hope that, by the witness of the Holy Spirit, we may be so assured of our safety as to sing, “The Lord is my strength and my song; He also has become my salvation.” Upon this I will not linger, but pass on to note the next point.

II. A PRESENT SALVATION MUST BE THROUGH GRACE.

If we can say of any man, or of any set of people, “You are saved,” we shall have to preface it with the words, “by Grace.” There is no other

present salvation except that which begins and ends with Grace. As far as I know, I do not think that anyone in the whole world pretends to preach or to possess a present salvation, except those who believe salvation to be all of Grace. No one in the Church of Rome claims to be now saved—completely and eternally saved. Such a profession would be heretical! Some few Catholics may hope to enter Heaven when they die, but the most of them have the miserable prospect of “purgatory” before their eyes. We see constant requests for prayers for departed souls and this would not be if those souls were saved and glorified with their Savior! “Masses” for the repose of the soul indicate the incompleteness of the salvation which Rome has to offer. Well may it be so, since Papal salvation is by works—and even if salvation by good works were possible, no man can ever be sure that he has performed enough of them to secure his salvation!

Among those who dwell around us, we find many who are altogether strangers to the Doctrine of Grace—and they never dream of present salvation. Possibly they trust that they may be saved when they die. They half hope that after years of watchful holiness they may, perhaps, be saved at last, but to be saved now, and to know that they are saved is quite beyond them—and they think it presumption!

There can be no present salvation unless it is upon this footing—“By Grace are you saved.” It is a very singular thing that no one has risen up to preach a present salvation by works. I suppose it would be too absurd. The works being unfinished, the salvation would be incomplete or, the salvation being complete, the main motive of the legalist would be gone!

Salvation must be by Grace. If man is lost by sin, how can he be saved except through the Grace of God!? If he has sinned, he is condemned—how can he, of himself, reverse that condemnation? Suppose that he should keep the Law of God all the rest of his life? He will then only have done what he was always bound to have done—he will still be an unprofitable servant. What is to become of the past? How can old sins be blotted out? How can the old ruin be retrieved? According to Scripture and according to commonsense, salvation can only be through the free favor of God!

Salvation in the present tense must be by the free favor of God. Persons may contend for salvation by works, but you will not hear anyone support his own argument by saying, “I am, myself, saved by what I have done.” That would be a superfluity of naughtiness to which few men would go! Pride could hardly compass itself about with such extravagant boasting. No, if we are saved, it must be by the free favor of God. No one professes to be an example of the opposite view.

Salvation to be complete must be by free favor. The saints, when they come to die, never conclude their lives by hoping in their good works. Those who have lived the most holy and useful lives invariably look to free Grace in their final moments. I never stood by the bedside of a godly man who reposed any confidence whatever in his own prayers, or repentance, or religiousness. I have heard eminently holy men quoting in death the words, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” In fact, the nearer men come to Heaven and the more prepared they are for it, the more simple is their trust in the merit of the Lord Jesus—and the more intensely do they abhor all trust in themselves! If this is the case in our last moments, when the conflict is almost over, much more ought we to feel it to be so while we are in the thick of the fight! If a man is completely saved in this present time of warfare, how can it be except by Grace? While he has to mourn over sin that dwells in him, while he has to confess innumerable shortcomings and transgressions, while sin is mixed with all he does, how can he believe that he is completely saved except it be by the free favor of God?

Paul speaks of this salvation as belonging to the Ephesians, “By Grace are you saved.” The Ephesians had been given to curious arts and works of divination. They had thus made a covenant with the powers of darkness. Now if such as these were saved, it must be by Grace alone! So is it with us, also—our original condition and character render it certain that if saved at all, we must owe it to the free favor of God! I know it is so in my own case and I believe the same rule holds good in the rest of Believers. This is clear enough and so I advance to the next observation—

III. PRESENT SALVATION BY GRACE MUST BE THROUGH FAITH.

A present salvation must be through Grace and salvation by Grace must be through faith. You cannot get a hold of salvation by Grace by any other means than by faith. This live coal from off the altar needs the golden tongs of faith with which to carry it. I suppose that it might have been possible, if God had so willed it, that salvation might have been through works and yet by Grace, for if Adam had perfectly obeyed the Law of God, he still would only have done what he was bound to do—and so if God should have rewarded him, the reward, itself, must have been according to Grace—since the Creator owes nothing to the creature! This would have been a very difficult system to work, while the object of it was perfect, but in our case it would not work at all. Salvation in our case means deliverance from guilt and ruin. And this could not have been laid hold of by any measure of good works since we are not in a condition to perform any. Suppose I had to preach that you, as sinners, must do certain works and then you would be saved? And suppose that you could

perform them? Such a salvation would not, then, have been seen to be altogether of Grace—it would have soon appeared to be of *debt*. Apprehended in such a fashion, it would have come to you in some measure as the reward of work done and its whole aspect would have been changed. Salvation by Grace can only be gripped by the hands of faith! The attempt to lay hold upon it by the doing of certain acts of Law would cause the Grace to evaporate! “Therefore, it is of faith that it might be by Grace.” “If by Grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it is of works, then is it no more Grace: otherwise work is no more work.”

Some try to lay hold upon salvation by Grace through the use of ceremonies—it will not do. You are christened, confirmed and caused to receive “the holy sacrament” from priestly hands. Or you are baptized, join the church, sit at the Lord’s Table. Does this bring you salvation? I ask you, “Have you salvation?” You dare not say, “yes”! If you did claim salvation of a sort, yet I am sure it would not be in your minds, salvation by Grace.

Again, you cannot lay hold upon salvation by Grace through your feelings. The hand of faith is constructed for the grasping of a present salvation by Grace, but *feeling* is not adapted for that end. If you go about to say, “I must feel that I am saved. I must feel so much sorrow and so much joy, or else I will not admit that I am saved,” you will find that this method will not answer. As well might you hope to see with your ears, or taste with your eyes, or hear with your nose as to believe by feeling—it is the wrong organ! After you have believed, you can enjoy salvation by feeling its heavenly influences! But to dream of getting a grasp of it by your own feelings is as foolish as to attempt to bear away the sunlight in the palm of your hand, or the breath of Heaven between the lashes of your eyes! There is an essential absurdity in the whole affair.

Moreover, the evidence yielded by feeling is singularly fickle. When your feelings are peaceful and delightful, they are soon broken in upon and become restless and melancholy. The most fickle of elements, the most feeble of creatures, the most contemptible of circumstances may sink or raise our spirits! Experienced men come to think less and less of their present emotions as they reflect upon the little reliance which can be safely placed upon them. Faith receives the statement of God concerning His way of gracious pardon and thus it brings salvation to the man believing! But feeling, warming under passionate appeals, yielding itself deliriously to a hope which it dares not examine, whirling round and round in a sort of frenzied dance of excitement which has become necessary for its own sustaining, is all on a stir, like the troubled sea which

cannot rest. From its toiling and raging, feeling is apt to drop to lukewarmness, despondency, despair and all the kindred evils! Feelings are a set of cloudy, windy phenomena which cannot be trusted in reference to the eternal Truths of God. We now go a step further—

IV. SALVATION BY GRACE, THROUGH FAITH, IS NOT OF OURSELVES.

The salvation, the faith and the whole gracious work together are not of ourselves!

First, they are *not of our former merits*—they are not the reward of former good endeavors. No unregenerate person has lived so well that God is bound to give him further Divine Grace and to bestow on him eternal life! Otherwise it were no longer of Grace, but of debt. Salvation is *given to us, not earned by us*. Our first life is always a wandering away from God and our new life of return to God is always a work of undeserved mercy, worked upon those who greatly need, but never deserve it!

It is not of ourselves! In the further sense, it is *not out of our original excellence*. Salvation comes from above. It is never evolved from within. Can eternal life be evolved from the bare ribs of death? Some dare to tell us that faith in Christ and the new birth are only the development of good things that lay hidden in us by nature. But in this, like their father, they speak of their own. Sirs, if an heir of wrath is left to be developed, he will become more and more fit for the place prepared for the devil and his angels! You may take the unregenerate man and educate him to the highest degree, but he remains and must forever remain dead in sin unless a higher power shall come in to save him from himself! Grace brings into the heart an entirely foreign element. It does not improve and perpetuate—it kills and makes alive! There is no continuity between the state of nature and the state of Grace. The one is darkness and the other is light—the one is death and the other is life. Grace, when it comes unto us, is like a firebrand dropped into the sea where it would certainly be quenched were it not of such a miraculous quality that it baffles the water and sets up its reign of fire and light even in the depths!

Salvation by Grace, through faith, is not of ourselves in *the sense of being the result of our own power*. We are bound to view salvation as being as surely a Divine act as Creation, or Providence, or Resurrection. At every point of the process of salvation, this word is appropriate—“*not of yourselves*.” From the first desire after it, to the full reception of it by faith, it is always of the Lord, alone, and not of ourselves. The man believes, but that belief is only one result among many of the *implantation of Divine Life* within the man’s soul by God, Himself!

Even the very will to be saved by Grace is not of ourselves, but is the gift of God! There lies the stress of the question. A man ought to believe in Jesus—it is his duty to receive Him whom God has set forth to be a Propitiation for sins. But man will not believe in Jesus—he prefers anything rather than faith in his Redeemer! Unless the Spirit of God convinces the judgment and constrains the will, man has no heart to believe in Jesus unto eternal life! I ask any saved man to look back upon his own conversion and explain how it came about. You turned to Christ and believed on His name—these were your own acts and deeds. But what caused you to turn? What sacred force was that which turned you from sin to righteousness? Do you attribute this singular renewal to the existence of a something better in you than has been yet discovered in your unconverted neighbor? No, you confess that you might have been what he now is if it had not been that there was a potent *something* which touched the spring of your will, enlightened your understanding and guided you to the foot of the Cross! Gratefully we confess the fact! It must be so. Salvation by Grace, through faith, is not of ourselves, and none of us will dream of taking any honor to ourselves from our conversion, or from any gracious effort which has flowed from the first Divine Cause. Last of all—

V. “BY GRACE ARE YOU SAVED THROUGH FAITH AND THAT NOT OF OURSELVES—IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD.”

Salvation may be called *Theodora*, or God’s gift. And each saved soul may be surnamed, *Dorothea*, which is another form of the same expression. Multiply your phrases and expand your expositions, but salvation truly traced to its well-head is all contained in the unspeakable gift—the free, unmeasured benison of love!

Salvation is *the gift of God*, in opposition to a wage. When a man pays another his wage, he does what is right and no one dreams of condemning him for it. But we praise God for salvation because it is not the payment of debt but the *gift* of Grace. No man enters eternal life on earth, or in Heaven, as his due—it is the gift of God. We say, “Nothing is freer than a gift.” Salvation is so purely, so absolutely a gift of God that nothing can be more free! God gives it because He chooses to give it according to that grand text which has made many a man bite his lip in wrath—“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” You are all guilty and condemned, but the Great King pardons whom He wills from among you! This is His royal prerogative! He saves in Infinite Sovereignty of Grace.

Salvation is the gift of God—that is to say completely so—in opposition to the notion of growth. Salvation is not a natural production from within.

It is brought from a foreign zone and planted within the heart by heavenly hands! Salvation is in its entirety a gift from God. If you will have it, there it is, complete! Will you have it as a perfect gift, “No. I will produce it in my own workshop.” You cannot forge a work so rare and costly upon which even Jesus spent His life’s blood! Here is a garment without seam, woven from the top throughout. It will cover you and make you glorious! Will you have it? “No. I will sit at the loom and I will weave a raiment of my own!” Proud fool that you are! You spin cobwebs! You weave a dream! Oh, that you would freely take what Christ upon the Cross declared to be finished!

It is the gift of God. That is, *it is eternally secure in opposition to the gifts of men, which soon pass away.* “Not as the world gives, give I unto you,” says our Lord Jesus. If my Lord Jesus gives you salvation at this moment, you have it and you have it forever! He will never take it back—and if He does not take it from you, who can? If He saves you, now, through faith, you are saved—so saved that you shall never perish, neither shall any pluck you out of His hand. May it be so with all of us! 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.**

NOT BOASTING, BUT TRUSTING

NO. 3408

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 28, 1914.

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

“Not of works lest any man should boast.”
Ephesians 2:9.

THIS is very plain. There is no mistaking the sense. We are saved by Grace and not by our own doings. A reason is assigned. If we were saved by our own doings, it would be natural and certain that we would boast. It is well that the Apostle is so very explicit here and elsewhere upon this Doctrine, for men will fall against and blunt the edge of his statement. Self-righteousness is the natural religion of every degraded heart. Only the Spirit of God can make a man really receive and acknowledge the Truth of God. The Apostle seems determined that if any reject it, it shall not be for lack of clearness in his statement as a teacher. He does not beat about the bush, or go round about, or mince matters—he comes at once to the point, “By Grace are you saved”—and then he gives the negative, the backstroke of the sword, “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” This is the old controversy of Christianity from the very beginning. The first heavy fire of the Gospel ordinance was directed against the Judaizers. They said salvation was by ceremonies and the works of the Law of God. In all sorts of shapes and ways, sometimes straightforwardly and sometimes cunningly, they tried to get into the Christian Church the idea that the works of men could have some merit in them and contribute in some degree to their salvation! The Apostle was a very sturdy opponent of this subtle innovation. His Epistle to the Romans, his Epistle to the Galatians, his Epistle to the Ephesians and, indeed, all his writings seem like so many cannons dragged to the front and discharging red-hot shot against the very idea of salvation by the works of the Law. “By the works of the Law there shall no flesh living be justified,” he says, “for by the Law is the knowledge of sin.”

Further down in the history of the Christian Church this old conflict was renewed very vehemently by Martin Luther and his brother Reformers against the Church of Rome. You must not think that the great point of difference between the Protestants and Romanists is whether we shall obey that respectable old gentleman at Rome or not! Or whether we shall have our ministers dressed in blue and scarlet and fine linen—or in common broadcloth, like ourselves. Those trifles may become important as ostensible signs of profession, but they are not the main point at is-

sue. They are merely the husk of the controversy! The real battle between the Papists and the Protestants turns on this—are men saved by works, or are they saved by Grace? All the Reformers that ever tried to reform the Church of Rome by interfering with her mummeries and her monasteries, her priests and their vestments, her holy days and celebrations, and I do not know what besides, were all just fiddling away with a wasted force at some of the external branches of that horrible old upas tree! But when Luther came fresh from the cell with that Light of God still beaming from his eyes, “We are justified by faith,” then it was that the axe was laid at the root of this tree! There is nothing needed to bring down popery but the constant promulgation of this one Truth of God—“It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy,” for salvation is not of man, neither by man—it is of the Lord and it is given to as many as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all their hearts! In fact, this is the standing controversy, today, before which all other controversies dwindle into insignificance. The outside world still has it that they will be saved by their own doings. The host of God’s elect, stripped of their own righteousness and made to put on the righteousness of Christ, stand, each man, with his sword upon his side and his shield in his hand, defensive for this one Truth of God, this vital Truth of God, the all-important Truth of the Gospel!

For this, Brothers and Sisters, we ought, every one of us, to be prepared to shed our blood! To obliterate or to disguise this Truth were to put out the lamp that illuminates this dark world! Take away the only ointment that can heal earth’s wounds! To destroy the only medicine that will ever cure the diseases of humanity—“Justified by faith, saved by Grace, not of works, lest any man should boast.”

At this time, let us briefly consider *a great negative*—“not of works.” *A great reason*—“lest any man should boast.” And then throw in, one after the other, with very little order, *a few thoughts about this great matter*.

I. A GREAT NEGATIVE—“Not of works.” Now, Brothers and Sisters, it must not be of works because that way has been tried and has proved *a complete failure*. Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden under circumstances peculiarly conducive to his happiness. The Law of God which was to test him was remarkably simple. It contained but one command, “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.” Adam was not, as we are, corrupt—his constitution had no tendency to sin. He was pure and perfect with well balanced judgment and without bias one way or the other. He had never sinned—he need not ever to have sinned! It seems to me, he had nothing to gain by sin. His paradise was as perfect as it could be! God had been pleased to give him everything necessary to make him abundantly happy. But under these circumstances—the most favorable in which humanity was ever placed—the way of acceptance before God by works broke lamentably down!

Whether after a short or long term of probation, we will not say—it is folly to speak where Scripture is silent—it is certain that when tempted,

he lapsed, for the woman took the fruit and the man also partook of it. Then acceptance by works became like a potter's vessel smashed with a rod of iron! Man had tried the way of merit and bitter, indeed was the award. Despair, you sons of Adam—where your father failed, though up to then untainted—you, with perverted will, with imagination apt to picture pleasantries in sin, with judgment warped and strained by innate depravity, by the infection of example and by the force of surrounding circumstances—think not that you can stand upright where perfect Adam fell! Hope not to find a way back through the gates of Paradise, for there still stands the cherub with his flaming sword—and no flesh living shall henceforth be saved by his works! The way of salvation by works is utterly unsuitable for us! It is not only fruitless, proved to be so, but it is inconsistent. Anything which involves an impossibility is vain to propose. Propose to a man without feet that he should walk, or to a man without eyes that he should distinguish colors—you see the folly—but is it not equally absurd to recommend a convict to seek a peerage? It is impossible for any one of us to obtain merits before God!

We have all confessedly sinned already. Our present status debars us from entering the list for future honors. By what means are we to put away this old sin? There it stands. Suppose we obey God from this time forth till we die without a single fault—we shall then only have done what it was our duty to perform and God had a right to expect of us! There will be no balance left, nothing to put *per contra* against our sins, nothing to our credit as a reduction of our liabilities—we would only have paid the current account, supposing that to be possible. The debt will still remain! The old score—who is to pay that? “Oh,” says one, “we apply to Christ for that.” No, no, Sir! If it is to be by works, you must keep to works, for the Apostle lays it down in the 11th of Romans that, “if it is of Grace, it is not of works, and if it is of works it is not of Grace.” Two principles, these, which will not mingle—have which you like. They are like oil and water, or, rather, like fire and water—they are opposed to each other! If Christ is to save you, He must do it altogether. He will never be a make-weight for you, depend upon it! He did not come into this world to make up a few deficiencies—not at all so! He will not have you boasting! He will not have you sharing the honor of your salvation with Him!

God demands of every man a perfect life—having all sinned, we cannot bring Him a perfect life. You have cracked that vase. And, if you do not break it again, it is already cracked. “Oh,” but you tell me, “it is only in a little place.” Yes, but if there is only one link in the chain broken which drags up the miner from the deeps of the earth, it is quite enough for his destruction that one link is broken! There is no need to have a dozen links fretted through with rust, the one flaw is sufficient. If you will be saved by works, you must be absolutely perfect, for it is inconsistent with the Justice of God that He should accept any but perfect obedience from the creatures that come under His sway. Can you render this?

If you know yourselves, you will say, “we cannot.” You will look on the flames that Moses saw when Sinai was on a blaze—you will tremble and despair of ever saving yourselves!

But, again, while the way has been proven to be fruitless and is certainly unsuitable, it is a way which, with all his talking, *no man ever does fairly try*. I have often noticed that those who prate loudest of good works are those that have the fewest good deeds to make mention of. Like little traders in the streets with their little stock of commodities, they had need cry and advertise their wares because they have so little to sell! Whereas a diamond merchant or dealer in bullion sits still and never makes a noise at all because he has precious treasure by him. Your hard talkers about good works generally come from some disreputable haunt. They will even boast that their sentiments are better than their habits. Well, they need be! I have seen them put their black and smutty fingers upon the bright Gospel of Christ and say, “This leads to licentiousness.” Pity, then, Sir, you should ever approach it, since you can find licentiousness fast enough without it! Pure minds see God in the Gospel. They veil their faces and bow before its majesty. Ah, well might I preach up morality, but not as the way of salvation, or what would be the result of it? What said Chalmers during the early part of his life? He said, “I preached up sobriety till nearly all my followers became great drinkers. I preached up honesty till I manufactured thieves. The more I preached of the right which man ought to do, the more I found men doing wrong.” These are not his words, but they are the sense of his own solemn confession when he came to read the pure Gospel and began to preach it with all his heart!

So is it with every man and I suppose it always will be. Dry essays about duty run off and slide like oil down a slab of marble—while the proclamation of the Gospel of the Grace of God in pardoning the chief of sinners attracts men to Jesus, breaks their hearts, causes them to hate sin, sets them upon reformation, makes them holy and helps them to persevere even to the end! “Not of works,” says the text—and we come back to it. If salvation were by works and could be so worked out—listen—then Calvary would be a superfluity! The Cross of Christ, with all its wonders, would be a work of supererogation on God’s part! The work of Redemption would be a subject of derision for us! Is there no salvation, or is there salvation somehow else? Must God come down and take the form of man and in that form must the Christ of God suffer even unto death—and all for nothing—for it comes to that! If man can save himself, what is there need of you angels? Hush your Christmas carols! What need for those gazing eyes and that absorbing wonder as you watch the manifestation of the Lord of Glory, Incarnate among men? What needs it that the Prophets talk of the Lamb of God and point us to the Infinite Sacrifice? What need is there that Jesus wears the crown of thorns and bows His head to die for us? There are men who say we can work our own passage to the stars and by our merits enshrine ourselves among

the blessed. Sirs, which shall I believe—that God has worked a work that need not have been, or that you are under the spell of a fatal delusion? “Let God be true and every man a liar.” You can find no way to Heaven but by the Cross!—

***“Could your zeal no respite know,
Could your tears forever flow—
All for sin could not atone—
Christ must save, and Christ alone!”***

Those persons who prate most of salvation by works, whether they acknowledge it or not, do really *lower the standard of holiness* and abate the dignity of the Law of God. You come to probe them and the old story which Whitefield and John Vaudois fought against so valiantly of Saxon obedience is the petition of the self-righteous man’s creed. “Well,” he says, “I can’t keep all the Law of God—I admit that. As to thoughts, deeds and words, I can’t be quite clean, but I will do my best.” Now, what is this but to altogether lower the Law of God because you cannot come up to God’s Law? Is the Almighty God to come down to your terms? Do you think to barter with Him? Can your miserable three farthings in the pound satisfy a Divine Law? This will never be! “Heaven and earth shall pass away,” says Christ, “but not one jot or one tittle of the Law shall fail.” This is the Word of God spoken from Sinai, “Cursed is every man that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.”

God will not take part payment! Holiness, let me tell you, Sirs, is a very different thing from that morality which some men boast of! Why, I almost hold my breath when I encounter some men’s morality that they talk so much of! Those loose tongues that chatter so glibly against the Gospel as fomenting licentiousness—if they did but once cry, “God be merciful to us sinners,” would come much nearer to playing their right part. Men that are sinning daily in open violation of common virtue will talk as though they were pure in all their tastes, holy in all their thoughts and above suspicion in all their lives? Oh, no! God’s holiness is something more grand, more sublime than you and I have guessed at! And we shall not reach to that by our works, at any rate, for they are blotted, blurred, marred and spoiled upon the wheel like the figures of an ill-taught potter—and we cannot presume to exhibit them before the living God.

II. A GREAT REASON IS GIVEN—a few words on it—“Not of works lest any man should boast.” If any man could get to Heaven by his own works, what a boaster he would naturally be! I am sure he would be so on earth. This is the part he would play. He would hear that God, in His mercy, had been forgiving some great sinner and that there was joy in Heaven over him. And he would say, “I cannot take my share in such pleasures as that. I have never transgressed His Commandments. I find myself very tightly bound and I do not get much joy out of it. Here is that renegade who has been given to sin and he is to be saved! I do not like

it.” You know where to read the story in Luke’s Gospel, “He was angry and would not go in, therefore his father came and entreated him. And he answering, said to his father, Lo, these many years have I served you, neither transgressed I at any time your commandments and yet you never gave me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this, your son was come, which has devoured your living with harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf.” Pretty specimen of a son, but the picture of what any man would be who felt, “I owe God nothing. I am all right—I am saved by my own works.”

What a churl he would be in the Church! I am sure I would be very sorry to admit such a man to our assemblies. I would feel that he was quite out of place with poor sinners saved by Grace like ourselves, who have nothing to boast of. It would make the whole Church wretched to have such people in Church fellowship! Why, if we did not idolize them, we would hate them! I do not know which of the two it would be—certainly they would be much out of place in our assemblies with their boasting. And what would they do in Heaven? Why, the very reverse of what all the spirits are doing who are there—these all sing, “We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”—they would have to say, “We kept our raiment white ourselves.” When the ransomed spirits cast their crowns at His feet, the self-righteous souls would hold high their crests and wear their tiaras, saying, “We have won them ourselves and we have a right to them!” It would spoil Heaven! Heaven would not be the perfection of harmony. Such beings would occasion discord in the Glory Land—a greater discord than seen in the universe since the Fall! No, no! It is “Not of works, lest any man should boast”!

Do I hear somebody say, “We do not maintain that men are to be saved by works altogether, but partly by God’s Grace and partly by their own works.” Well, I will suppose for a moment that this strange monster can be manufactured—a saint compounded part of Grace and part of works! Well now, in what proportion are these two opposite qualities to be brought together? How much Grace and how much works? Half works? Yes. Then how about those poor fellows who come very near half? Well, one quarter works? Yes. And then three-quarters Grace? Well, perhaps some more, and some less. Some three-quarters works, some half works and some only one-eighth works and so on. You will have to arrange them very orderly, you know—and depend upon it that as soon as they find out the proportion of their salvation that was by works—in that proportion they will begin to boast! I would and I do not think I would be to blame if I did. I would say, “Now, here I am, saved half by my works. Here is a lot of these poor believers in Christ who were saved altogether by Grace, but I have contributed of my own means a full half to my salvation. I do not mind just lifting my crown a little—just admit I had help in getting it on my head, but I am not going to cast it down at His feet—every man has a right to what is his due!”

I thought Napoleon did a good thing when, on the day of his coronation, he took his crown and put it on his own head. Why should he not take the symbol that was his due? And if you get to Heaven one half by Grace and one half by works, you will say, "Atonement profited me a little, but integrity profited me much more!" Do I seem to you to talk sarcastically? Be it admitted I do! Were it possible for me to kick this idea of human merit like a football round the world, Sirs—were it possible to set it in the pillory of scorn and pelt it with I know not what of filth, I would feel that I had the Apostle Paul standing by my side and saying, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." And I would hear him say of his own righteousness, "I count it as dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him." He could not have taken a coarser figure, nor one which expressed more thoroughly his hearty contempt of everything like self-righteousness—"I count it as dung that I may win Christ, and be found in Him." "Lest any man should boast"—this is a good and sufficient reason why salvation should not be of works! Now—

III. A FEW THOUGHTS WITHOUT ORDER, but I hope they may catch your attention and stick in your memory. Some say—I know it is a common observation—this talking about sinners coming to Christ just as they are and trusting in Him alone for their salvation is very dangerous. Respectable persons and people who think themselves qualified to be critics, generally make some such observation as this—"it is very dangerous." Now my dear Friends, if you will condescend to listen for a minute, I would remind you that *neither you nor I have anything to do with making the Gospel*. We may think the Gospel ought to be such-and-such, but that does not make it so. And if I should choose to think, or if you should, that such-and-such a Doctrine is very dangerous, that neither makes it true nor makes it false, for, after all, the great solemn appeal about all matters of religion is not to you, nor yet to me! We stand on an equal footing there—you may think one thing and I may think another. But the Judge—the Judge that ends the strife where wit and reason fail, must decide. The great question is, "What say the Scriptures? What does the Old Book say?" If it does not teach that the salvation of a sinner is altogether by Grace and not of works, it does not teach anything at all—and there are no words in any language that mean anything! I must be made to believe that black is white and that God has purposely and willfully written a Book to deceive us, before I can believe salvation to be by works! For the expressions about this matter are not a few. They are not casual—they are not dark and mysterious, they are not metaphorical—they are plain, simple and obvious. I challenge any man—I will not say any *theologian*—but any man of common-sense that can read the Bible—whether he uses our version, or prefers the original—if he will but read it honestly, he can come to no other conclusion in reading the Epistles of

Paul than this—that salvation is by Grace through faith in the merits of Christ—and not at all by the works of the Law.

Now, that is a thing that ought to decide and end the matter. I ask you not to heed anything I say—do not take my word for it—my *ipse dixit* is nothing! It is in God's Book and on your heads it must be if you deny it! "Oh," said one to another, "I didn't like your preaching the other night." "What didn't you like in it?" "I didn't like your preaching up salvation to sinners." "Oh, that is nothing to me, the quarrel is not between you and me, but between you and my Master. You must settle that with Him. I have nothing to do with manufacturing Doctrines—my business is to preach them as I find them in the Scripture. If you do not like them, you must leave them, but it is at your own peril." Let me say to all of you, I beseech you cast not away your own soul!

Everyone of us ought to remember that a *great deal of that commodity in this world known by the name of good works is not good works at all*. What is a good work? I would venture to say that anything that has in it the element of selfishness is *not* good. You may question that, but I think it is the highest virtue to be unselfish. If a man is found to be virtuous, as we say, with the design of benefiting *himself*, has he not spoiled his virtue? The very design of seeking merit by what he does, spoils the possibility of merit! A man is not a servant of God while he is only serving himself. It is only when he gets rid of self that he becomes truly good. To pray may be good or not, according to whether it is real prayer. To attend the House of God, or give alms to the poor may be good or not good, according to the heart. But external duties are not good works! No, though a man should be faultless in his external life, yet if the motive were sinister and the desires unclean, his works would all taste of the fountain from where they came and not be good in the sight of God. Did it ever strike you that in our works the heart must always be the great matter?

Cowper, in his *Task*, has very wonderfully worked out this subject in the best blank verse. He pictures two footmen employed by you—one of them is a very polite, quick, nimble, handy fellow—but, as he says, he serves you for your house, your housemaid, and your pay. Let either of these be gone and he is gone, too. But the true servant is Charles, that stands behind the chair, that is troubled if your appetite seems to fail, that has been with you from a boy, that if you were poor and hadn't any pay to give him, would cling to the posts of your doors—that would live for you and die for you—that is the man whom you love as a servant! So it is with virtue. The best and highest of good works are those that spring from love, real love to God! Now, where do you find this? In the man who rejects Christ? No—his works are those of a slavish fear! He does not serve God out of love, but because he trembles at the thought of Hell. But when a soul is brought to trust in Jesus, then the heart loves God, the service of God becomes a great delight and the man who says, "I am not saved by works," works ten times harder than he ever would have done if he had hoped to be saved by his own doings! And his works are

better works because he has devoted love which infuses into them a sacred excellency which otherwise had not been there.

Be it forever known and understood that when we preach salvation by Grace, *we do not undervalue morality*. No, Brothers and Sisters, we exalt it! I will give you proof. There is a hospital. It is free to all the sick, but there is a notion about town that nobody may enter there except those who do something to heal themselves. Now, I will suppose that I am sent as a missionary to go among the sick and tell them that their own health is not worth a farthing, that they are to come to the hospital gates just as they are, that at the hospital they look at disease as a qualification and not at health. Somebody might say, "Here is this man undervaluing health." My dear Brother, I am doing no such thing! Do you think I would be trying to get these sick people into the hospital if I undervalued health? It is not health I undervalue—it is the quackery that mimics health! It is this empiricism which films over men's diseases, which had need be dealt with otherwise. Why, if thousands in London were dying because they had the notion that they could not be received at the hospital unless they healed themselves, surely it were the kindest and best work a man could do—and the quickest means to promote the popular health—to go and dissuade men of this absurd notion! If, my Brothers and Sisters, when we bade you come to Christ, we told you that after coming to Him, you might live in sin as you did before, we would be worthy to be hanged! But when we tell you that Christ is a Physician and His Church a hospital—and that He can heal you if living in sin, we do not by any means decry your morality, but only tell you that it is but a piece of quackery until you come to Christ!—

***"Speak they of morals, oh, You bleeding Lamb!
The best morality is love to You!"***

The best holiness is to love Christ and to serve Him actuated by the motive of gratitude! And if you try merit before you come to Him, it will only plunge you into deeper sin! You cannot blot out your iniquities. Still I know the scandal will be repeated, but if any choose to repeat it, the lives of those who have preached up salvation by Grace furnish the best answer. In the days of Charles the First and Charles the Second, you would have found the party headed by Laud in the Church of England crying up ritual, crying up good works. You would have found on the other hand, the Puritan party rigidly preaching up Justification by Faith and Salvation by Grace. Now, Sirs, where did you find the country parson that preached in the morning upon good works, in the afternoon? Why, with a girl on either side dancing round the Maypole, according to the Book of Sports! And if you needed him a little later in the evening, you would have to send some trusty parish beadle to bring him in from the village alehouse!

But where is the man who preached salvation by Grace while at the conventicle? "Oh" says one, "he is at home singing Psalms with his family." Doesn't he go round the Maypole? "No, the old bigot, he never breaks

the Sabbath. He says it is against the Law of God.” Well, but isn’t he in the alehouse? “No, I dare say the old superstitious creature is on his knees somewhere, praying.” Everybody knows this was the fact! The Puritan theology bred Puritan living—the Doctrine of Justification by Faith made men holy! But the other party that preached this wonderful doctrine of salvation by works went pretty far to prove, at any rate, that *they* could not be saved by their works! The long-haired cavaliers, with their scented locks and their abominations not fit to be uttered by pure tongue, or heard by the ear of decency—these were your work mongers, your upholders of salvation by your own doings! But the man that ordered his household well in the fear of God, the man that could bend to God but not to a tyrant, the man that loved his country and would sooner die on Edge Hill or Naseby than he would lay down the faith he held dear to him—that is the man who preached that we are justified by faith and not at all by the works of the Law! You shall find holiness grows out of the one Doctrine which is despised—and wickedness springs from the other which is advertised as a panacea for all ills!

If there are any here that think they can be saved by their own works, I have no Gospel to preach to them whatever. I will not interfere with them. My Master has said that there is no need of a physician to them that are not sick. Good people, virtuous people, excellent people—you that are going to Heaven all on your own account—don’t quarrel with us poor sinners because we choose to have what you despise! If you do not want the medicine, let us drink it and be not bitter against us if we choose another way than yours. If your road is broad enough and there are enough companions in it, let us alone if we choose the narrow path!

But yet I cannot coolly dismiss you so. If you are naked, poor and miserable—I will not insult you. I counsel you by my Master—get gold tried in the fire that you may be rich and white raiment that you may be clothed—and if you know not how you can buy it, I will tell you. It is without money and without price! It is freely given and shall be given to you if you will take it. Shake your hand of that venomous serpent of your own self-confidence! Shake it into the fire, I pray you—it is the best place for it! You may come with empty hands to Christ and He will give you all your soul can want. When you come to die, you will find that good-works theory unable to bear you up. The best of men have looked upon their lives from that closing scene in another manner than they ever did before. One said he was gathering up all his works—his good works and his bad works, too—and flinging them all overboard that he might just simply trust in a Crucified Savior. At any rate, Friend, if you are prepared to risk your soul on your works, I am not prepared to risk mine on anything that I have done! No, I am not afraid to meet the trial hour. I am not afraid to look you in the face to-night and say, “I will meet you on that tremendous day and we will see whose confidence is the better. You shall take your works if you will, and I will take my Lord! And you shall rest in what you do, but I will not rest in anything I do.” Oh, rest well upon Him

and I will tell you what will happen when the whirlpools of Almighty Wrath shall be round about you! Your good works shall go like those deceitful life-buoys we heard of the other day—and you shall sink! But never did a soul sink that could cling to Christ! It is an unheard of thing that Christ has ever let a sinner perish, for He has said, “Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out.”

Now, whether you have been righteous or wicked, whether you can cry yourselves up, or whether you bewail yourselves that you are deep in the mire of sin—go, stretch out your hand and take Christ! Turn your eyes to Jesus, dying upon Calvary’s Cross and look to Him—

“There is life in a look of the Crucified One!”

There is life at this moment for you! I wish that everyone in this dense mass would look to my Master. There is Grace enough in Christ for everyone of you! No sinner was ever lost because there was any stint in Christ! No, but because they would not come and thought themselves too good for Him. Come as you are—just as you are and trust Christ. And then mark you, you will be saved! You will be saved from the love of sin! You will be saved from the power of it! You will begin a new and holy life. You will henceforth be full of good works which shall abound to the Glory of God—and with these good works upon you, you shall be like a tree that is covered with rich fruit, acceptable to God! Still your root shall not be your fruit, but your root shall be a simple faith in a precious Christ whom this night I have declared unto you. So God bless you. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ROMANS 5:1-9.**

Verse 1. *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* We have it to-night. We enjoy it. We delight in it, “through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

2. *By whom also we have access by faith into this Grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* Not only have we peace, but we get into the favor of God and we stand in it! This is the Grace or favor which comes of being justified. We now feel a freedom to come into our Father’s Presence because He has forgiven us for Christ’s sake. We now feel at home with Him though once we were prodigal sons and had wandered far away. And we rejoice in hope of the Glory of God. We have something yet in reserve—present peace, but future perfection! We have present rest, but there still remains a rest for the people of God. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God!

3-5. *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations, also, knowing that tribulation works patience. And patience, experience, and experience, hope. And hope makes us not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.* So that even what might seem to be the disadvantages of this present life are

made to work into advantages! And what at one time might threaten our prosperity, really conduces to it. Patience, which we never could have if we never had a trouble, is given to us. And experience, which we never could have if we did not patiently endure the trouble we obtain! We get pearls out of these deep seas. We get treasures out of these blazing furnaces which seem to smelt our blessings, that they may come to us rich and pure. And, above all, there rises a glorious hope, never to be drowned—never to be made ashamed—because we feel the love of God shed abroad in our hearts like a sweet perfume making every part of our nature fragrant because the Holy Spirit is there!

6. *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.* That was our character. There was no good point about us. We were ungodly and we had no strength to mend ourselves or to be other than ungodly. The strength for reformation had all gone. The strength for regeneration we never had. We were without strength and then Christ died for us—died for the ungodly!

7. *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet perhaps for a good man.* A benevolent, loving-spirited man.

7, 8. *Some would even dare to die. But God commends His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* And that is the glory of His Love! While we were rebels against His government, He redeemed us. While we were far off from Him by wicked works, He sent His Son to die and bring us near. Free Grace, indeed, was this—not caused by anything in us but springing freely from the great heart of God!

9. *Much more, then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.* You see the force of the argument? If He loved us when we were still dead in sin, much more will He keep us and preserve us now that He has justified us! Were His enemies redeemed? Shall not His friends be kept? Did He love those who were still far off? Will He not love those who are brought near—and love us even to the end?

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

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

THE AGREEMENT OF SALVATION BY GRACE WITH WALKING IN GOOD WORKS NO. 2210

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JUNE 28, 1891,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship,
created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before
ordained that we should walk in them”
Ephesians 2:9, 10.*

I shall call your attention to the near neighborhood of these two phrases, “Not of works” and, “Created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” The text reads with a singular sound, for it seems strange to the ear that good works should be given such a negative description as to the cause of salvation and then should be spoken of as the great end of it! You may put it down among what the Puritans called, “Orthodox Paradoxes,” if you please, though it is hardly so difficult a matter as to deserve the name.

Not long ago, I tried to handle the point of difference supposed to exist between the doctrine of faith—“Believe, and you shall be saved,” and the doctrine of the new birth and its necessity—“You must be born again.” My method was on this wise—I did not explain the difficulties which appear to the logician and the doctor of metaphysics, but I tried to show that, practically, there were none. If we deal only with difficulties which block up the way to salvation, there are none. As for those matters which involve no real hindrance, I leave them where they are. A rock which is in nobody’s way may stand where it is. He that believes in Jesus *is* born again. These two things are equally true—there must be a work of the Spirit within, yet he that believes in the Lord Jesus *has* everlasting life.

Now, there is a contention always going on about the doctrine of good works, but instead of taking one side or the other, we shall try to see whether there is really anything to quarrel over if we keep to the Scriptures. We insist upon it, with all our might, that salvation is “not of works, lest any man should boast.” But, on the other hand, we freely admit and earnestly teach that, “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” Where there are no good works, there is no indwelling of the Spirit of God! The faith which does not *produce* good works is *not saving faith*—it is not the faith of God’s elect—it is not faith at all in the Scriptural sense. I have just taken these two points to bring them forward for the help and comfort of beginners. I seek not to instruct you who are already well taught, but my

aim at this time is to instruct beginners on this important subject. Salvation is not of works, but, at the same time, we, who are the subjects of Divine Grace, are “created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” This is plain to the enlightened Believer, but babes in Grace have weak eyes and cannot at once perceive it.

Before, in the gracious Providence of God, Luther was raised up to preach the doctrine of Justification by Faith, the common notion among religious persons was that men must be saved by works—and the result was that, knowing nothing of the root from which virtue springs, very few persons had any good works at all! Religion so declined that it became a mere matter of empty ceremony, or of useless seclusion and, in addition, superstition overlaid the original Truth of the Gospel, so that one could hardly find it out at all. The reign of self-justification and priestcraft led to no good result upon the masses of religious people. Indulgences and forgiveness of sins were hawked through the streets and publicly sold. So much was charged for the pardon of one sin and so much for another, and the treasury of “his holiness” at Rome—who might better have been called, “his unholiness”—was filled by payments for abating penalties in a “purgatory” of Rome’s inventing!

Luther learned from the sacred Volume, by the Spirit of the Lord, that we are saved by Grace, alone, through faith—and, having found it out, he was so possessed by that one Truth of God that he preached it with a voice of thunder! His witness on that one point was so concentrated that it would be too much to expect equal clearness upon all other Truths of God. I sometimes compare him to a bull who shuts his eyes and goes straight on at the one objective which he means to overthrow. With a mighty crash, he broke down the gates of Papal superstition! He saw nothing—he did not need to see anything—except this—“By Grace are you saved through faith.” He made very clear and good work upon that point, faulty as he was upon certain others. The echoes of his manly voice rang down the centuries. I note that nearly all the sermons of Protestant divines, long after Luther, were upon Justification by Faith and, whatever the text might be, they somehow or other brought in that article of a standing or falling Church. They seldom finished a sermon without declaring that salvation is not by works, but that it is by faith in Jesus Christ.

I do not censure them for a moment! Far rather do I *commend* them—better too much than too little upon the central doctrine of the Gospel. The times needed that point to be made clear to all comers and the Reforming preachers made it clear. Justification by Faith was the nail that had to be driven home and clinched—and all their hammers went at that nail. They were not nearly so clear and specific upon many other doctrines as they were upon this, but then it was a foundation stone and they were occupied in laying it—and they did lay it and laid it thoroughly—and laid it forever. Still, they would have more fully completed the circle of revealed Truth if Sanctification had been as fully apprehended and as clearly explained as Justification. It had been well if the legs of the Gospel of the

Reformation had been equal, for one was a little longer and a little stronger than the other and, therefore, there was a limp—a halting like that of victorious Israel, as he came from Jabbok—but still a limp which it would be well to cure.

We have passed beyond the stage of dwelling too much on that cardinal doctrine and I greatly fear that in these times we do not have enough preaching of Justification by Faith. I could wish the Lutheran times back, again, and that the old thunders of Wittenberg could be heard once more. And yet I shall be glad if everything that is practical in the Gospel shall also have its full sphere allotted to it. The duties—let me rather say, the high and holy *privileges*—which come to us as children and servants of God—these should be maintained and fully preached, side by side with the blessed Truth of God embodied in those lines—

**“There is life in a look at the Crucified One!
There is life at this moment for you.”**

I shall dwell, first of all, upon the first point of the text, which is this, “Not of works,” or, *the way of salvation*. “Not of works” is a negative description, but within the negative there lies very clearly the positive. The way of salvation is by something *other* than our own works. Secondly, I shall speak about *the walk of salvation*. We who are saved, walk in holiness, for we are, “created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.” It is a decree of the Sovereign Lord that His chosen should be led to walk in holiness!

I. First, then, THE WAY OF SALVATION is negatively described as, “Not of works.” To this many take exception, but that we cannot help—the Scripture is plain enough. We are told that we ought not, on any occasion, allow persons to sing—

**“Sinner, nothing do,
Either great or small,
Jesus did it, did it all,
Long, long ago.”**

Great exception has been taken to that expression, but I believe that if the same Truth of God had been expressed in any other words, the same objection would have been raised, for it is the *Truth* that is objected to, rather than the words in which it is set forth! My text itself would be, to such persons, very objectionable—“Not of works.” They are ready to rail at Paul for speaking thus evangelically. They hate the doctrine of salvation all of gift and not in the least of merit—a doctrine which we love! We preach salvation, “not of works.” We repeat the teaching again and again, and mean to repeat it continually till we die! Salvation is of the Lord’s mercy and *not* by works of the Law.

If we were to preach that salvation is of works, we should please many fine folk; but as we do not know that it would be at all to their benefit that they should be pleased, we shall not brush one hair of our head in a different way from that in which it grows, to please them—much less shall we keep back, or explain away, the fundamental Truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—and that for several reasons.

If we were to preach to sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, that salvation would be by their own works, *we should be setting aside the way of salvation by Grace*. There cannot be two ways of salvation for the same people! If we take to the one, we practically deny the other. It cannot be questioned that a guilty man, if saved at all, must be saved through the mercy of God. It cannot be denied, also, that our Savior and His Apostles taught that we are saved by faith. A man must shut his eyes if he does not see this to be their teaching. If, then, I teach men that they can be saved by works, I have practically told them that salvation by Grace is a myth, a mistake, a mischievous error! I have set it aside, for, as I have said before, there cannot be two ways to Heaven—there cannot be more than one. If I set up the way of *works*, I shut up the way of *Grace*. If salvation is of merit, it is not of mercy! And if there is no salvation of men by the pure mercy of God, what an unhappy case are we in! To deny Grace is really to deny hope. Where, then, would there be any Gospel, or glad tidings, or good news?

The way of salvation by *works* is not “news.” It is the old way of man’s devising which is the general and well-known error of all the ages. Moreover, it is not, “good news,” or glad news, for there is nothing good or glad in it. That we shall be rewarded for our works is nothing more than the heathens taught! Justification by religious performances and meritorious deeds is nothing better than the old Phariseeism with a Christian name stuck upon it! It is not worth revealing by the Spirit of God, for it is to be seen by the light of man’s own candle. That doctrine makes the Lord Jesus Christ to be practically a nobody, for if salvation is of works, then the way of salvation through faith in our Savior is superfluous and even mischievous.

Next, to preach *the way of salvation by works is to propose to men a way in which they have already failed*. If you are to be saved by works, you must begin very early—you must begin *before* you sin—since *one* sin decides the matter. But already you have commenced to break the Law of God. I am not addressing persons who have yet to start upon the way, for they have started already. You are a good way on the road, one way or other, and since you began in the way of works, what a failure you have already made of it! Is there anyone here who can claim that he is already saved by works, as far as he has gone? Has anyone among you been without sin? Look at your lives! Examine your consciences! Observe your words, your thoughts, your imaginations, your motives—for all these come into the account!

Is there a man or woman here that does good and sins not? Scripture declares that “there is none that does good, no, not one.” “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way.” The way of salvation cannot, therefore, be by following a road from which we have already so sinfully and steadily departed. If you were perfect as Adam was before he sinned, you might follow the way of works and be safe—but you are not in that condition. If I could be sent to an Adam and an Eve altogether unfallen, I might propose to them the way of salvation

by obedience to the Law—but *you* have fallen and your nature is inclined to forsake the right way. The very garments that you wear show that you have discovered your shame. The daily labors which weary you prove that you are not in Paradise. The very preaching of the Gospel implies that you are in a sinful world! You are not possessed of an unbiased will, or inclined to that which is good—you have chosen the evil and still continue to choose it—therefore I should only be proposing to you a road in which you have already stumbled. And I should be setting you a task in which you have already broken down.

And, next, I think it will be admitted by all, that *the way of salvation by good works would be self-evidently unsuitable to a considerable number*. I will take a case. I am sent for, in an emergency, and it is the dead of night. A man is dying, smitten suddenly by the death-blast. I go to his bedside, as requested. Consciousness remains, but he is evidently in mortal agony. He has lived an ungodly life—and he is about to die. I am asked by his wife and friends to speak to him a word that may bless him. Shall I tell him that he can only be saved by good works? Where is the time for works? Where is the possibility of them? While I am speaking, his life is struggling to escape! He looks at me in the agony of his soul and he stammers out, “What must I do to be saved?” Shall I read to him the Moral Law? Shall I expound to him the Ten Commandments and tell him that he must keep all these? He would shake his head and say, “I have broken them all; I am condemned by them all!” If salvation is of works, what more have I to say? I am of no use here. What can I say? The man is utterly lost! There is no remedy for him. How can I tell him the cruel dogma of “modern thought” that his own personal character is everything? How can I tell him that there is no value in belief, no help for the soul in looking to Another—even to Jesus, the Substitute? There is no whisper of hope for a dying man in the hard and stony doctrine of salvation by works!

If salvation had been by works, our Lord could not have said to the thief, dying at His side, “Today shall you be with Me in Paradise.” That man could do no works! His hands and feet were fastened to the cross and he was in the agonies of death. No, it must be of Grace, all-conquering Grace—and the *modus operandi* must be by faith, or else for dying men the Gospel is a mockery! The man must look and live! The expiring sinner must trust the expiring Savior. As life ebbs out, the penitent must find life in Jesus’ death. Is it not clear that the Gospel of works is unsuitable in such a case as this? Now, a Gospel which is unsuitable to *anybody* is not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, I put it plainly. A Gospel that does not suit *everybody* does not suit *anybody*—and if it suits *any* class and condition really and truly, it must suit *all* classes! I think I have told you that, on one occasion, I had a letter which was intended to be very irritating to me, from some rather eminent, aristocratic gentleman who said that he had read some of my sermons when he was out on the coast of Africa and he found that certain black fellows out there—certain,

“niggers”—delighted in them very much. He wrote to inform me that I was a very competent preacher for “niggers.”

I accepted the assurance at once as a very high compliment! I felt that, if I could preach to “niggers,” I could preach to anybody and that, if the Gospel that I preached was suitable to the natives on the coast of Africa, it would certainly suit the people in London! If those who are afar off could understand it, you, who are near, could also understand it! The Gospel was not sent into the world to be a patent medicine that could only be purchased by the wealthy, or a spell that could only be uttered by Latin scholars. It is a Gospel for all ranks and conditions of men—and if I prove that what you call the Gospel is unsuitable for the dying, or is unsuitable for the ignorant—it is NOT the Gospel of Jesus Christ! The Gospel of salvation by Grace, through *faith*, is suitable for every class of persons that we have to deal with! Sinful habit has bound in iron fetters many of our fellow citizens and the Gospel can free them! Be the habit drunkenness, or profanity, or what it may, the habit holds them fast—and the Prophet says, concerning habit, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may you also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.”

To what purpose, then, do I cry to the leopard, “Change your spots,” or to the Ethiopian, “Change your skin”? I must bring a *superior force* to bear upon the leopard or the Ethiopian before this can be accomplished! And there is no force in mere exhortation. You may exhort a blind man to see as long as you like, but he will not see. You may exhort a dead man to live as long as you like, but he will not live through your exhortation! Something more is needed! The forces of natural depravity and the acquired habits of sin in many cases—I think you will admit it—put the doctrine of salvation by works out of court! And if out of court as to *one*, it is gone as to *all*, for there can be but one Gospel. Go through your convict settlements. Go through your jails and just see what you can do with a doctrine of salvation by good works! You will come home disappointed, however earnest may be your address. But go there and tell of Free Grace and dying love—and pardon bought with blood—and eyes that stream with tears, confessions of sin and cries for pardon will tell you that you have not spoken in vain!

Further, dear Friends, if we go and preach salvation by works to men, we are preaching to them *a way of salvation impossible to all because of the perfection of the Law*. What are the good works that can merit Heaven? What are the good works that can ensure eternal life? These are not the easy things which some seem to imagine. They must be perfectly pure, continuous and unspotted. “The Law of the Lord is perfect.” It condemns a *thought* and even the *glance* of an eye, as an act of criminality. “Whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.” The Law of God in 10 commands means much more than the bare words would imply—it deals with the whole range of moral condition, motive and thought. Dream not that its sweep includes only *external* acts—indeed, it *does* include externals, but, in very deed, the Ten

Commandments are *spiritual*! They go right through the heart and search the inward parts of the spirit. The more a man understands the Law of God, the more he feels condemned by it—and the less does he indulge the dream that he, as he is, shall ever be able to keep it intact. With such foul hands as ours, how can we do clean work? With hearts so polluted, how can we be “undefiled in the way”? Nature rises no higher than its source and that which comes out of the heart will be no better than the heart—and that is, “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”

The Law of God is one and if you break it in any one point, you break it altogether. If, in a chain of 100 links, 99 should be perfect, yet if a *single* link anywhere in the chain should be too weak for the weight placed upon it, the load will fall to the ground quite as surely as if 20 links were snapped! One breakage of the perfect Law of God involves transgression against the whole of it! In order to be saved by works, there must be absolutely perfect, continuously perfect obedience to it in thought, word and deed. And that obedience must be rendered cheerfully and from the heart—for this is the heart of the first table—“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” Can you keep that? Vain-glorious man, have you measured your moral strength against requirements so great and yet so just? Have you proved yourself equal to the task?

Here is the heart of the second table—“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Have you ever tried to do that—to love your neighbor *as yourself*? You have been a little kind and sometimes generous, but the standard of loving your neighbor *as yourself*—have you ever reached to that? Has your charity been equal to your self-love? I do not believe that it has ever gone even *half* the way. Now, “What things soever the Law says, it says to them who are under the Law,” and if it says all this to you and you cannot answer to its demands, how can you hope that you shall live by it? When a man fails to keep the Law of God, it condemns him! And its penalty—in other words, its *curse*—falls on him as justly his due. He that is under the Law is under the *curse*. All that the Law has to say to you is—“You have broken me and you must die for it.” Read the curses written in the Book of Deuteronomy and remember that all these are pronounced over your head—

**“Look to the flames that Moses saw,
And shrink, and tremble, and despair.”**

And again, dear Friends, *if we preach salvation by works, we shall take the minds of men away from a sense of their great need*. Here is a person who has a terrible disease. He can be cured. The knife must be used, but if, instead thereof, I lay down for him rules of cleanliness and of general hygiene, I may do him some sort of good, but meanwhile he will neglect the chief evil, his disease will spread and will become fatal. What am I to do, if I am a surgeon? Must I not impress him, first, with the conviction that a serious operation is required, and that it must be submitted to? All the rest will be proper enough and even *necessary*, in due time, but I

must do *nothing* to take his mind away from the great master evil that is destroying his life!

The *sinner* must be told that he must be born again, that his nature is corrupt, that this corrupt nature must be destroyed, that a new nature must be created in him—to all this his mind *must* be turned! He must be made “a new creature” in Christ Jesus. And if I stir him up to *eternal action*, with a view to his salvation by it, I shall be taking his thoughts away from the inward evil of sin which is the very essence of the matter! O Sirs, if you had committed an offense against the government of your country and were found guilty and condemned to die, my first business with you would be to entreat you to ask pardon of your queen! I might come into your cell and say that I would have you dressed more respectably; would have you read such a book, or learn such a science—and this might be all very well—but the *first* thing you need is to have the sentence of death repealed! I will exhort you, my dear Hearers, to do everything that is honest, right and good, but there is something needed even more than this! You need to be *cleansed from sin by the precious blood of Christ*. You need to be *renewed in heart by the Holy Spirit* and you must turn your thoughts to these things! You first and most of all need the Lord Jesus! Look to him, I pray you! I dare not exhort you to do this work, or to do that, lest I distract your mind from Christ.

The preaching of legal justification has no power over men. Congregations thus instructed are usually careless, worldly and devoted to carnal amusements. Those who *hear* about works feel as if they had now done enough and do not need to practice them. There is nothing in such doctrine to awaken anxiety, or move desire, or stir the depths of the soul. It has nothing Divine about it, nothing supernatural, nothing which can really raise the fallen, cheer the faint, or inspire the gracious. Without unction, life, or fire, a legal ministry is mere fiddling a tune to lame men, or setting forth a course of living action for a vault full of corpses. This point we know to be fact and, therefore, we shall not repeat the experiment.

I am afraid that *if we began to preach salvation by works, we would encourage pride in some and create despair in others.* Many would think that they had done pretty well, as compared with other people—they would, therefore, right speedily wrap themselves up in a false hope. But others, knowing that they had *not* done well, as compared with other people, would think that there was no hope for them and so would sit down in despair. What practical purpose could this serve—to be making some more proud and others more wicked through the influence of despair upon them?

But the very worst matter is that *it would be taking them away from Jesus.* Our business, my Brethren, is to hold up Jesus Christ! To what end did He die if men could be saved by their own works? It was a superfluity that He should hang upon the Cross if our own merits can open a way of salvation. How could the great God permit and even ordain such a death if we could be saved by our own merits? Why that bloody sweat? Why that

nailing of the hands and feet? Why that, “Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani?” if, of yourselves, you can be saved? But it is not so! You cannot save yourselves by efforts of your own and, therefore, we have to come to you, shutting you up to only this one thing—that you must be saved by faith in Him whom God has set forth to be a Propitiation for sin! You need the love of God! You need the power of the Holy Spirit! You need to be quickened into newness of life! You need to be helped to run in the ways of righteousness! In a word, you need *everything* until you come to Christ and everything that you need you will find in Him, and in Him, alone.

Within yourselves there is nothing that you need. You may search, look and turn the dunghill of your nature over and over again, but you will never find the jewel of salvation there! That pearl of great price is in the Lord who assumed human nature, lived, loved, died and rose again—that He might redeem men from the Fall and all the sin consequent thereof. Oh, that you would look away from self once and for all! God forbid that the preacher should ever hold up anything else before you except the Crucified Savior, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, bidding men look and live!

To talk to unbelieving men about the possibility of salvation by their own works *would keep them from eternal life*. All that the life of nature can do will never suffice to produce a higher nature. Let the natural exert itself as it may, it will never rise to the spiritual! The best working horse does not, thereby, become a man—the best unregenerate man cannot, thereby become regenerate! There must be a new birth—and that comes by *faith*—not by works. To believe in Jesus is the entrance gate of the new life and there is no other door! If we, in any way, set you hunting about for another way, we shall cause you to miss the only one entrance and that will be to your soul’s eternal loss! As we dread this, we more and more resolve to hold up the Cross and the Cross alone, and again and again we cry, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” God forbid that by our essays upon virtue, or, “the enthusiasm of humanity,” we should distract you from hastening to the Lord Jesus, that He may give you rest, life and holiness! We want you to let your thoughts run, *all of them*, to Calvary and to that wondrous Person whose wounds upon the tree bleed healing for the wounds of sin—and whose death is, for Believers—the death of the great evil power which once held them in bondage!

Thus much upon a topic which we shall never wear threadbare and which we shall always continue to insist upon while life or breath remains, because it will always be needed while sinners remain on earth needing salvation.

II. But now we come to this second most important part of the subject, namely, THE WALK OF SALVATION. Those who have believed in Christ and have been the subjects of the Spirit’s work, are now, “created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained *that they should walk in them*.” God desires that His people should abound in good works. It is His great objective to produce a people fit to commune with Himself—a holy people with whom He can have fellowship in time and in

eternity! He wishes us not only to produce good works, but to *abound* in them—and to abound in the highest order of them. He would have us become imitators of Himself as dear children, possessing the same moral attributes as the Father in Heaven possesses! Is it not written, “Be you perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect”? Oh, that we came within measurable distance of this blissful consummation!

Note in the text, first, that *there is a new creation*. One of the poets said of old that, “an honest man is the noblest work of God.” That is not true unless we add to the word, “honest,” an emphatic *spiritual* sense. A Christian man, however, *is* the noblest work of God. He is the product of the second creation. At first, man fell and marred his Creator’s work, but, in the *new* creation, He that makes all things makes us new! Now, the objective of the new creation of our race is holiness unto the glory of God. You are not new-made in the image of the fallen Adam, but in the likeness of the second Adam! You are not new-created to sin—this cannot be imagined! The new creature sins not, for it is born of God. The new life is a living and incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever.

The *old nature* sins and always will sin, but the *new* life is of God and it strives daily against the sin of the old nature and perseveres, and pushes forward towards everything that is holy, upright and perfect. Its instincts all run towards perfect holiness. The old nature does not care to pray, but the new nature prays as readily as we breathe. The old nature murmurs, but the new nature sings and praises God from an impulse within. The old nature goes after the flesh, for it is fleshly, but the new nature seeks the things of the Spirit, for it is spiritual! If you have been born again at all, you have been born unto holiness! If you have been new-created, you have been created unto good works! If this is not so with us, our religion is a mere pretence.

This new creation is in connection with Christ, for we read in the text, “Created *in Christ Jesus*.” We are the branches; He is the Vine out of which we grow! Your life and all your fruit-producing power lie in your union to Christ. You are not merely new-created, but you are created in Christ Jesus! It is not merely a change from a lower nature to a higher, but from separation from Christ to union with Him! What a wonderful thing that is—that you and I should not only be creatures in the world, but new creatures in Christ Jesus! Creatures we were in the first Adam, but our new creatureship is in the second Adam. Beloved, if you are what you profess to be, you are one with Jesus by that vital union which cannot be dissolved—and good works follow upon that union! Joined to Jesus by faith in Him, love to Him and imitation of Him, you walk in good works! Your creation to holiness is your creation in Christ Jesus. As you become one with the anointed Savior, His anointing ordains you to service and His salvation leads you into obedience. There cannot but be fruit on that branch which is vitally joined to that fruitful Stem, Christ Jesus, who did always those things which pleased the Father!

Our good works must flow from our union with Christ by virtue of our faith in Him. We depend upon Him to *make* us holy. We depend upon Him

to *keep* us holy. We overcome sin by the blood of the Lamb. We reach after holiness by the constraining love of Jesus. Love to Christ is the impelling cause of putting away first, one evil, and then another—and the energy enabling us to follow after one virtue and then another. Love to Christ burns like a fire in the breast that has conceived it and, as it burns, it makes the heart to glow and to become transformed to its own nature. You have seen a piece of iron put into the fire, all black or rusty, and in the fire it has gradually become red with heat and, as it has reddened, it has thrown off the scales of rust until, at last, it has looked to be, itself, a mass of fire. The effect of the love of God, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, is to burn off the rust and scales of sin and depravity—and we become pure love to God through the force of the love of God which takes possession of our being!

Moreover, that love moves us to patient imitation of Christ. Do you know what that means? “The Imitation of Christ” is a wonderful book upon the subject which every Christian should read. It has its faults, but its excellences are many. May we not only *read* the book, but write it out anew in our own life and character by seeking in everything to be like Jesus! It is a good thing to put up in your house the question, “What would Jesus do?” It answers nine out of 10 of the difficulties of moral casuistry. When you do not know what to do and the Law does not seem very explicit upon it, put it so—“What would Jesus do?” Here, then, stands the case—by your creation in Christ you come to exhibit faith *in* Him, love *to* Him and imitation *of* Him—and all these are the means by which *good works* are produced in you! You are “created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”

Notice that *creation unto these good works is the subject of a Divine decree*—“Which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.” This is God’s decree! Am I ordained to eternal life? Answer the other question—“Am I ordained to walk in good works?” If I am ordained to good works, then I *do* walk in them and the decree of God is manifestly carried out in me! But if I make a profession of being a Christian, attend a place of worship and compliment myself upon my safety—while I am living in sin—then evidently there is no decree that I shall walk in good works, for I am living otherwise than that decree would have caused me to live. O Beloved, it is the eternal purpose of God to make His people holy! Agree with that purpose, with the freedom of your renewed will and with the delight of your regenerated heart! Concur in the will of God. Yes, vehemently desire, heartily pant after perfect holiness in the fear of God! Then may you, in the midst of severe struggles against temptation from outside and from within, fall back upon the decree of Predestination. Since it is God’s decree that, as being new-created in Christ, I should be full of good works, I shall be so despite my old nature and despite my spiritual weakness! The decree in the new creature of God will be carried out despite my surroundings, despite the temptations of my circumstances, despite the opposition of the devil. God has before ordained that we should walk in good works—and we *shall* walk in them, sustained by His holy Spirit!

So, then, dear Friends, these good works must be *in the Christian*. They are not the root, but the *fruit* of his salvation. They are not the way of the Believer's salvation—they are his *walk in the way of salvation*. Where there is healthy life in a tree, the tree will bear fruit according to its kind. So, if God has made our nature good, the fruit will be good. But if the fruit is evil, it is because the tree is what it always was—an evil tree. The desire of men created anew in Christ is to be rid of every sin. We do sin, but we do not *love* sin. Sin gets power over us, sometimes, to our sorrow, but it is a kind of death to us to feel that we have gone into sin. Yet it shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under the Law, but under Grace and, therefore, we shall conquer it and get the victory!

The outcome of our union with Christ must be holiness. “What concord has Christ with Belial?” What union can He have with men that love sin? How can they that are of the world, who love the world, be said to be members of the Head who is in Heaven, in the perfection of His Glory? Brothers and Sisters, we must, in the power of the text, and especially in the power of our union to Christ, seek to make daily advances in good works which God has before ordained that we should walk in them, for walking means not only *persevering* but *advancing*. We should go from strength to strength in holiness—we should do more and do better. What are you doing for Jesus? Do twice as much! If you are spreading abroad the knowledge of His name, work with both hands! If you are living uprightly, seek to put away any relics of sin that abide in your character that you may glorify the name of God to the utmost.

And, lastly, *this should be our daily exercise*—“That we should walk in them.” Good works are not to be an amusement, but a vocation. We are not to indulge in them occasionally—they are to be the tenor and bent of our lives. “Oh,” says one, “that is a hard saying!” Do you think so? Well, then, this displays and sets in clear light the first part of my subject. You see how impossible it is that you should be saved by these good works, do you not? But if you *are* saved—if you have *obtained* a present salvation, if you are *now* a child of God, if you are now assured of your safety, I charge you, by the love you bear to God, by the gratitude you have to His Christ—give yourself wholly to everything that is right, good, pure and just! Help everything that has to do with temperance, righteousness, truth and godliness! And “let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.”

May the Spirit of God seal this sermon upon the hearts of His people, for Christ's sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Ephesians 2.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN-BOOK”—238, 554, 537.**

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THE SINGULAR ORIGIN OF A CHRISTIAN NO. 1829

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MARCH 22, 1885,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON FEBRUARY 7, 1884.

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,
which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.”
Ephesians 2:10.*

THIS text is written by the Apostle as a reason why salvation cannot be a thing of human merit—“not of works, lest any man should boast, for we are His workmanship.” The *for* indicates an argument. It is a conclusive reason why salvation *cannot* be by our good works, because even when we have an abundance of the best of works, they are far more due to God than to ourselves! We, ourselves, in our saved condition, are the workmanship of God, and with each of us the argument holds good—“Not of works, for we are His workmanship.”

We are so completely the Lord's workmanship that we are also styled a creation! We are “created in Christ Jesus,” and a creation cannot possibly be the creature's own work—such a supposition would be absurd upon the face of it! It would be a misuse of language to speak of anything as creating itself. Whatever, therefore, we are in Christ Jesus is the result of God's work upon us and *cannot* be the cause of that work.

Moreover, our good works, be they what they may, are the subjects of an ordinance of God—“which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.” Truly they are purposed by ourselves and our will and heart determine them, but far at the back of all this lies the Divine Purpose by which they were settled from of old. If good works are ordained, as well as the salvation of which they are the evidence, then the whole matter is of Divine ordaining and there is no space left to impute salvation to human works! The tree is not created by its fruit, for the fruit is created with the tree, and is one purpose for which the tree was created. Good works are not the cause of salvation, for they are the result of it and were contemplated as a result by God when He saved us. The argument deserves to be worked out at greater length, but we have not space for it now.

I want, at this time, to call your attention to four things in the text. And if you can carry in your mind's eye the first creation, the making of Adam and what he was made for—and where he was put when he was made—it will serve as a background to the picture of the second creation which I shall attempt to paint. I would dwell upon man as God's workmanship in a still higher sense than by his first making. I would set him forth as created anew “unto good works, which God has before *prepared*”—for that is

the word properly used in the new translation—"which God has before prepared that we should walk in them."

I. To begin, then, notice first, THE SINGULAR ORIGIN OF A Christian. Of all Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles—of all Christians, even if they are the highest Apostles, like Paul, or the least of all the family of love, such as we may be—as many as are truly saved and brought into union with Christ, they are the *workmanship of God!*

No Christian in the world is a chance production of Nature, or the outcome of evolution, or the result of special circumstances. "By the Grace of God I am what I am," may be said by every man who is saved. To nothing can we ascribe the fact that we are in Christ except this—that we are *God's workmanship*. Of regeneration, we must say, once and for all, "This is the finger of God."

The spiritual life cannot come to us by development from our old nature. I have heard a great deal about evolution and development, but I am afraid that if any one of us were to be developed to our utmost, apart from the Grace of God, we should come out worse than before the development began! Our flesh would be apt to produce, by evolution, something exceedingly brutish and devilish. Mr. Whitefield once raised a great outcry against himself by saying that man by nature was half beast, half devil—I have never seen any reason why the description should be altered, but I have sometimes wondered which was the worse of the two—the devil in the man, or the beast in him!

As to spiritual life coming out of our unrenewed nature, it is impossible! "Out of nothing comes nothing." There is no spiritual life in men dead in trespasses and sins—how, then, can *life* come out of them? Out of death, truly, there comes a something congruous thereto—horrible are the forms of corruption that arise from the body in which death holds sway! But this is dissolution and destruction—not *life*. What the corruption of a human soul may be, I cannot attempt to say. Terrible as Hell must be, there is nothing in the Pit more awful than those who are in it. The lost, themselves, are more unutterably dreadful than any punishment that justice may have imposed upon them. Developed manhood, developed without any restraining influences, if it is shut up in vast numbers, must be a fermenting mass of hate, envy, malice, lust, cruelty and pride. Speak of evolution—here it is—"When lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death." Darkness never begets light, filth never creates purity, Hell never yields Heaven and depravity never produces Grace.

But the point is that we are God's workmanship. *We are His workmanship from the very first*. The first stroke that helps to fashion us into Christians comes from the Lord's own hands. He marks the stone while yet in the quarry, cuts it from its natural bed and performs the first hewing and squaring, even as it is He who afterwards exercises the sculptor's skill upon it. It was the Lord who first taught us our need of a Savior and gave us our sense of sin—and our early trembling and our new desires. The faintest breath of spiritual life that was ever breathed by any one of us came from God Himself! We might almost use the same words concerning our new nature as the Psalmist used when he spoke of his body—

“Your eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Your book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”

We shall remain the Lord's workmanship to the very last. The picture must be finished by that same Master hand which first sketched it. If any other hand should lay so much as a tint or color on it, it would certainly mar it all. God has commenced the character of His people after so marvelous a sort that no human mind, as yet, fully comprehends the full design of infinite love, for none know perfectly the matchless Character of Jesus, our Lord. “It does not yet appear what we shall be.” Since, then, we do not even know what we are to be, we cannot intrude into the work and take the pencil from the hand of the great Artist, and complete His design—the Author must be the Finisher of what He has begun.

This is very beautiful to remember and it should *stir up all that is within us to magnify the Lord.* If it is so, that from the first the Lord has worked all our works in us, what an amount of patience, what an amount of power, what an amount of skill, what an amount of love, what an amount of Grace has God spent upon us! I was surprised when I was told, the other day, by a friend, who was a maker of steel-plate engravings, how much labor had to be put into a finely-executed engraving. Think of the power that has cut lines of beauty in such steel as we are! Think of the patience that lent its arms, its eyes and its heart—and its infinite mind—to the carrying on of the supreme work of producing the image of Christ in those who were born in sin! Think of the skill which makes heirs of God out of heirs of wrath! It seemed impossible, when one said that, “God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham,” but it is more than fulfilled in us!

Miracles of Grace have been worked upon us as many as the sands on the seashore. How graciously has the Lord endured our opposition to His gracious operations, never violating the freedom of our will, but making us willing in the day of His power! This is one of the greatest of the marvels. See how He has continued to work upon us, year after year, with final perseverance of undiminished love! How much more of power will still be needed and how much more of long-suffering—and how much more of careful wisdom—before we shall be perfect and complete? According to His riches in Grace will He deal with us and if that should not suffice, He will take a higher standard and treat us according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus. This we know, that we shall certainly receive all that is needed for completion, for He that has begun a good work in us will perform it unto the day of Christ. Happy is it for us that “we are His workmanship”!

Now, ought we not, dear Friends, as far as the Lord has gone with us already, to bless and praise His holy name? Do you not think that it is becoming in all of us who know that God has been at work with us, to adore Him continually for what He has done? I know you sigh because a part of the picture still looks rough and incomplete. Consider that the Artist has not ended His labor upon that portion of us. Sanctification, in its practical issues, is not yet ended. But do not sigh so much over the incomplete part as to fail in rejoicing over that which is accomplished! Rejoice that a hand

has been laid upon the canvas which is matchless even in its outlines and foundation colors! A hand, moreover, which was never yet known to throw away a canvas upon which it had once commenced a masterpiece! Remember to magnify His work. "He who has worked us for the same thing is God, who also has given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."

One thing I would say to you who are God's people—if we are His workmanship, never let us be ashamed to let men see God's workmanship in us. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." Let us be very much ashamed to let them see the remains of the *devil's* workmanship in us—hide it behind a veil of repentant grief! Christ has come to destroy it—let it be destroyed! Yet let your simple faith be known and spoken of, even though it is ridiculed by the wise men of the age who, by wisdom, know not God. Do not be ashamed of your confidence in your God at any time, even though men burst into a fit of laughter over it as if you must be raving mad—for this, also, is God's workmanship. Nothing that God has worked is unfit to be seen. Search from the summit of the highest Alp to the bottom of the deepest cavern and there is neither plant, nor beast, nor insect, nor even grain of dust which is not beautiful in its season.

I have heard foolish people half scream at the sight of some poor little insect, or frog, or lizard—but this is from lack of knowing more of the beauty of the creature which our great Father has formed. If these are quietly looked at, especially if they are examined under the microscope, they amaze us with the marvelous art displayed in them. Nothing that God has made should be despised. Assuredly this is most true in the *spiritual* kingdom where the lowest form of Grace is lovely as an angel's countenance! All the new creatures of God are surpassingly beautiful and as far as you, my Brothers and Sisters, are God's workmanship, so far are you comely with the comeliness which He has put upon you! Look how the Bridegroom in Solomon's Song extols His bride, fair metaphor of the manner in which the Lord Jesus praises His Church! He is an impartial Judge of all that is excellent, but when He views His people as God's work, He is full of admiration!

That which is your *own* work, you may well blush to acknowledge. That which is the devil's work, you are bound to detest! But that which is the work of the Holy Spirit in you will bear inspection and no guilty fear should cause you to conceal it. Let your meekness, your kindness, your uprightness, your integrity, your purity appear unto all men. Never let it be a question whether you are a Christian. Do not tremble at the persecution which the enmity of the ungodly may inflict upon you because you belong to Christ, but rather accept it as an *honor*, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt!

As to any of you who hear me at this time and feel forced to say, "Ah, me! I do not see how I am to be a Christian"—let me speak with you. I am thinking of the matter very differently. I see very plainly how you *can* become Christians—for all of us who are Believers are God's workmanship and that God who has made *us* His workmanship can make *you* to be the same. "Oh, but I cannot do anything!" Who said you could? Who asked you to do any part of God's work? We are *God's* workmanship! There is, in

your fallen nature, no power or will towards good and if the question were about *your* workmanship, the answer would be full of despair! But while God works, there is hope.

“Oh, but I have a withered hand!” When Jesus bids you stretch it out, do not enquire about your own power, but look to His power who gives the command! Do you say, “I cannot save myself. I cannot make myself holy”? Look, then, to Him who is a Savior, able to save to the uttermost, who was born for this end that He might save His people from their sins. “We are *His* workmanship,” cry all the saints! Do you want to be your own workmanship? He that can work upon one can work upon another. Oh, that you would lie at His feet! Oh, that you would put off all idea of what you can do for yourself and draw comfort from these few words of my text—“We are His workmanship”! What is there that God cannot do for you? Rough material as you are, He can make you what you should be! He can make you what it will delight you to be! God grant that we may learn to look to the Strong for strength and no longer waste our time in enquiring for it where there is nothing but perfect weakness!

Here, then, is the origin of a Christian—he comes out of the workshop of God.

II. Secondly, here in the text we see THE PECULIAR MANNER OF THIS ORIGIN. “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.” “*Created* in Christ Jesus.” Catch that thought. Our new life is a *creation*. This goes further than the former expression, for workmanship is less than creation. A man may produce a picture and say, “This is my workmanship”—a piece of mosaic, or a vessel fresh from the wheel may be a man’s workmanship—but it is not his *creation*. The artist must procure his canvas and his colors. The maker of a mosaic must find his marbles or his wood. The potter must dig his clay, for without these materials he can do nothing, for he is not the Creator. To One only does that august name strictly belong! None other could create a gnat, or the beam of light in which it dances, or the eyes with which it is seen.

In this world of Grace, wherever we live, we are a creation. Our new life is as truly *created out of nothing* as were the first heavens and the first earth. This ought to be particularly noticed, for there are some who think that the Grace of God *improves* the old nature into the new. It does nothing of the sort! That which we possess since the Fall is corrupt and dead and to be buried—of which our Baptism is the type and the testimony. That which is of God within us is a new birth, a Divine principle, a living seed, a quickening Spirit! In fact, it is a creation—we are *new creatures* in Christ Jesus. What a sweeping statement! This goes back to the very beginning of Grace within us. As we read, “In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth,” so may we say of every man that is born again unto God, that he had no true beginning till God created him and made him to be *spiritually*. Creation is the calling of something out of nothing, of light out of darkness, of life out of death. Is not this a fair description of the new birth? Has not this happened to us? When we were nothing, God, in the greatness of His Grace, created us in Christ Jesus!

Creation was *effected by a word*. “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.” “He spoke, and it was done! He commanded, and it stood

fast.” “God said, Let there be light: and there was light.” Is not that, again, an accurate description of our entrance into spiritual light and life? Do we not confess, “Your Word has quickened me”? “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever.” “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” The Lord breathed upon us by His Spirit and we lived—He spoke, and we were created in Christ Jesus.

In creation *the Lord was alone and unaided*. The Prophet asks, “Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counselor has taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and showed to Him the way of understanding?” After all was done, the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy—but they did not—*could* not aid in the work! Creation is the prerogative of Jehovah and none can share it with Him. So it is in the regeneration of a soul—instrumentality appears, but the real work is immediately of the Spirit of God.

See, then, poor Sinners who may hear these words, that they have a relation to you! You are saying, “How can we become Christians?” Why, you can become Christians by being *created*—and there is no other way! “But we cannot create ourselves,” says one. It is even so! Stand back and quit all pretence of being creators—and the further you retreat from self-conceit the better—for it is God who must create you! How I wish that you felt this! “It would drive us to despair,” you say. It might drive you to such despair as would be the means of your flying to Christ—and that is precisely what I desire! It would be greatly to your gain if you never again indulged a shred of hope in your own works and were forced to accept the Grace of God! I seek not to excite in you a proud activity, but a humble reliance on the mercy of God and a submissive acceptance of His plan of salvation by Free Grace. Oh, that this might be done!

The Gospel does not call upon you to save yourselves, but its voice is the echo of that of the Lord in Isaiah 45:22, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” The Lord does not even *ask* for your help in your own salvation. When He has worked in you, you may work it out, but that is all. Be ready to be as clay in the hands of the Potter, plastic to the touch of the All-Creating God, and you shall find that He is the God of salvation and to Him belong the issues from death! Out of black sinners He can make bright saints! Hearts of stone He can take away and give hearts of flesh. He can take the infidel and create in him a mighty faith; the harlot and make her a pattern of purity; the lowest of the low and the vilest of the vile—and put them among the princes—even the princes of His people! Granted that a Christian is the result of a creation, then nothing is needed to begin with and no help is required in the process—the Lord can work and none can hinder Him. This Truth of God lifts the whole matter out of the region of the creature’s merit, worth, or ability—and puts it on another footing, full of hope to man and of glory to God! I would be glad and rejoice forever in that which God creates—it fills me with comfort for my fellow men and with reverence for my God.

But the text speaks of this creation as, “in Christ Jesus.” This is a deeply instructive subject which, at this present time, cannot fully be discussed, partly from lack of time and partly from lack of ability, on my part, to fully open it up. It would require a series of discourses, such as Dr. John Owen, or Stephen Charnock might have been able to deliver. The theologians of today, if there are any, cannot come near it. Herein is a great deep—“created in Christ Jesus.” This much, however, I may note, for it rises to the surface. In the *first* creation you and I were created in Adam. We wear the image of the earthly Adam by our natural descent and, as such, we are the creatures of God. It is of our natural birth that the Psalmist said, “Your hands have made me and fashioned me.” Thus we received our being and that is a blessing. But the blessing would have soured into a curse had not Jesus come to work our well-being! Creation in the first Adam has brought us into a world of misery—and to reach a better world, we require to be created in some such fashion that we come into union, connection and relationship with the *second* Adam—the Lord from Heaven.

This is what the Lord does when He new-creates each Believer—He creates him in Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus is his federal Head and his Representative—his hope is hidden in Him. We are thus put under a new economy and are dealt with under a new system and order of things. I could tell you something more that I believe, namely, that when the glorious Jehovah created the Christ, as the Man, Christ Jesus—and when the Godhead came into union with this human Nature of our blessed Lord, all of us were viewed as in Him. What says the Lord? “In Your book all My members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” That God saw you and me and all the redeemed in Christ from all eternity is a matter of faith to me.

And we were in Christ when He died, in Him when He rose and we are in Him even now that He sits at the right hand of God, the Father. Who can separate the Head from the members, or the members from the Head? We are regarded as one in the thought and acts of Jehovah! Beloved, there is a mystic unity between Christ and the twice-born, into which I will not further go. I point to a case which, just now, I will not unlock. But to return to the text, here is the glory of it—first, we are God’s workmanship—and the peculiar manner in which we have been created is that we have been created “in Christ Jesus.”

III. We come, thirdly, to dwell upon THE SPECIAL OBJECTIVE OF THIS CREATION—“unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.”

When Adam was created, the Lord made him for His own Glory. This always was, and is, and must be the chief end of man. As soon as he was created, the Lord placed Adam in the garden. And what did He give him to do? “He had only to enjoy himself,” says one. I do not read such a statement in the Scriptures. “He put him there,” says another, “that he might eat of every fruit that grew in the garden.” Truly He did permit Adam, freely, to partake of all that Nature yielded, but God tells us, Himself, that He put Adam in the garden, “to dress it, and to keep it.” An occupation was found for Adam which would keep him always busy.

A gardener's business is healthful and interesting, but it offers no temptation to idleness, for every season has its demands—and if the work is not kept well under hand, it is hard to overtake it again. That noble man who was the founder of our race, trimmed the vine and trained the tree! He uprooted the weed and planted the herb. Paradise, itself, required, to make it perfect, that a man should have something to do! Slavish drudgery involved by unreasonable hours is not of God, but of the cruel greed of man. Ill-remunerated toil, by which the worker cannot earn his daily bread, is the result of human tyranny, not of Divine purpose! But a fair share of healthy, useful labor is necessary for us all and, if ever this world becomes a Paradise, again, we shall have, each one of us, to pay either the sweat of our brow or of our brain as the price of our bread.

When the Lord creates us the second time, in the second Adam, He does not make us that we may be merely comfortable and happy. We may enjoy all that God has given us, for of every tree of this garden you may freely eat, since in the Paradise into which Christ has introduced you, there is no forbidden fruit. You may eat and drink abundantly of heavenly food, but you are *not* created anew with so poor a purpose as only your pleasure! Around you is the garden of the Lord, and your call is that you may dress it and keep it. Cultivate it within; guard it from foes without. Holy labors await you! Good works are expected of you and you were created in Christ Jesus on purpose—that you might be zealous for them. To you the great Father says, "Son, go work today in My vineyard." He who died for you calls you to do works like His own. The Holy Spirit within you prompts you to consecration, urges you to diligence.

And what are good works? In that question lies another large subject. Tell me, you who talk so much of good works, what are they? I should say that they are works such as God commands—*works of obedience*. When we heartily keep the Divine precepts, we must be right, for it can never be evil for a man to do what God bids him.

Next, I should say that they are *works of love*—of love to God and love to man—works done out of a pure affection to the great Father and out of unselfish regard to men. That which we do to display our own liberality is done unto self, and so is spoiled. But where there is a single eye to God's Glory, the work is good. Works done out of love to Christ, love to saints, love to the poor and love to lost sinners are good works.

Furthermore, I should say that *works of faith* are good works—works done in confidence in God—undertaken in reliance upon His help and in the firm belief that He will accept them even though men might censure them. The proclamation of His Gospel with faith in its power, the pleading of the promise with expectation of its fulfillment, the sacrifice of personal gain for the service of the Truth of God—works such as these are good and pleasing to God—for without faith it is impossible to please Him.

I am bound to add that good works include the necessary *acts of common life* when they are rightly performed. We are to produce good works in our home, in our shop, in our workplace, in our travel abroad, or on our sickbed—everywhere we are to be filled with good works to God's Glory. All our works should be good works and we may make them so by sanctifying them with the Word of God and prayer, according to that precept,

“Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Observe that God has not created us that we may *talk* about our good works, but that we may *walk in them*. Practical doing is better than loud boasting! God has not created us that we may occasionally perform good works, but that we may *walk* in them—that they may be so habitual to us that the common course of our conversation may be full of them. God has not created us that we may execute good works as a grand performance, but that we may walk in them—not that we may jump up to them, or seem to be walking on stilts and making a great display every now and then—but that easily, naturally, out of a fully renewed heart, our new-created spirit may display itself in good works! May God grant that His holy objective may be carried out in us to such a degree that our path may be luminous with holiness, that we may leave behind a shining track like that of a vessel upon the sea! Oh, that our way may be strewn with gracious acts, as when a cloud shines over a thirsty land and blesses it with silver showers!

I have known in a certain village, a spot called, “The Poet’s Walk,” and another called, “The Lovers’ Walk.” Oh, that ours may be, “The Christian’s Walk”! May the good Lord perfect us in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight!

IV. And now I close with this last head. Fourthly, THE REMARKABLE PREPARATION MADE FOR THAT OBJECTIVE, for so the text may be rendered, “which God has prepared that we should walk in them.”

God has decreed the salvation of His people—but do not accept that statement as it is at times delivered—but clearly understand what it means. The Lord has decreed everything and He has as much *decreed the holy lives of His people* as He has decreed their ultimate glorification with Him in Heaven! Concerning good works, “He has before ordained that we should walk in them.” If God has really and of a truth met with you in a way of Grace and worked upon you by His Spirit, and new-created you, then take it for certain that you are ordained to be a prayerful, godly, upright, sanctified man. The purpose is one and indivisible—there is no ordination to salvation apart from sanctification!

The Lord has not ordained any man to eternal life with the proviso that he may continue in sin. No, but He has ordained him that he shall become a new creature in Christ Jesus and then shall forsake his evil ways and walk in good works until that walk shall end in perfection before the Eternal Throne of God! Understand, then, that the walk of a Christian man is predestinated of God as much as the safety of a Christian! And so we, whom He has predestinated, are as eager to fulfill our holy destiny here as to enjoy our heavenly destiny hereafter. Foreordination to holiness is indissolubly joined to foreordination to happiness. *Note that.* Thus, in the Eternal Purpose, due provision is made for the good works of Believers.

But, next, God has *personally prepared every Christian for good works*. “Oh,” some say, “I sometimes feel as if I am so unfit for God’s service.” You are not unfit, so far as you are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works! When God creates a bird to fly, it is the best flying-

machine that can be manufactured—indeed, none can equal it! If God creates worms to plow the soil and bring up the more useful ingredients to the surface, they are the best fertilizers under Heaven! God's purpose is subserved by that which He makes, else were He an unwise worker. We are, in a special degree, God's workmanship, created to this end, that we may produce good works—and we are fitted to that end as much as a bird is fitted to fly, or a worm is fitted for its purpose in the earth.

“Oh,” says one, “but I find it so difficult to walk in good works.” Then you are not your true and real self. Pray God to put the flesh back and to let that dead and carnal part of you be gone! And ask that the new life, which He has infused, may have good scope to carry out its own natural instincts, for it is a *holy* thing, created on purpose to walk in good works, and it will do so if it is not hindered. Give it liberty! Give it opportunity! Feed it! Bring it before God to strengthen it and it must, it *will*, as certainly produce good works as a good tree brings forth good fruit! Spontaneous holiness comes forth from sincere piety. A pure fountain yields clear streams, it cannot do otherwise. The new nature cannot sin because it is born of God. He that has a clean heart will necessarily have clean hands. An impure sea casts up mire and dirt, but the river of the Water of Life, when it overflows its banks, deposits no mud—it leaves sand of gold behind it!

Once more, observe with content that *everything around you is arranged for the production of good works in you*. “I do not see that,” says one. But listen. When God made Adam, when did He make him? He did not create him till He had made a place for him to live. The great Father's dear child could not be created until the garden had its roses blooming and its fruits ripening for him, that he might be delighted with them. When the Lord God created you in Christ Jesus, as you believe He did, He had prepared for you a position of service and usefulness exactly fitted for your capacity. That place, for the present, is the position which you now occupy.” No,” says one, “but I am in the place of poverty.” That is it—it is God's design that you may, in that place, produce the sweet fruits of contentment and patience!

“Alas!” cries another, “I dwell among the ungodly.” It is intended by your Lord that your light may shine among them and that you, having your Graces tried, may become all the stronger and the better Christian. “Oh,” says one, “I am a Christian, but I believe that I am in the worst place that ever was. I am alone, like a plant in the desert.” Is it not written, “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose”? Full often the most advantageous place for our manhood is that which is surrounded with splendid difficulties! A soldier is trained by battles and a mariner by storms. What can a man do when he has everything to his hand? Everything is possible to him, but so it is to every simpleton! He is truly a man who has nothing to assist him and yet is aided by the opposition which confronts him. To sail against wind and tide would be more notable than to drift with gale and current. Is not he a true man who can turn to account the worst possible circumstances so as to produce the best possible results? He has an opportunity for distinguishing himself who is placed amid temptations

and perils. In your life, good works are provided for—"God has before prepared that we should walk in them."

On the whole, you are placed in the best position for your producing good works to the Glory of God. "I do not think it," says one. Very well. Then you will worry to quit your position and attain another footing—mind that you do not plunge into a worse! The wise man says, "as a bird that wanders from her nest, so is a man that wanders from his place." It is not the box that makes the jewel, nor the place that makes the man. "Oh, but anywhere rather than this!" Yes, and when you get into the place you now covet, you will pine to be back again! A barren tree is none the better for being transplanted. A blind man may stand at many windows before he will improve his view. If it is difficult to produce good works where you are, you will find it still difficult where you wish to be! He who said that he leaped so many yards at Rhodes, was asked to do the same feat at home—surely the *place* could not take away his strength, nor give it to him!

Oh, Sirs, the real difficulty lies not without you, but within you! If you get more Grace and are more fully God's workmanship, you can glorify Him in Babylon as well as in Jerusalem! Were you placed within the outskirts of Perdition, you would glorify God if God has sanctified you. If you were called to walk through Pandemonium, you would startle it with a message from the Most High if the Spirit of God is truly within you. Your present possibilities are the best for this present—use them as they fly! At any rate, rest assured that Divine Wisdom has not only prepared you for the hour, but the hour for you. All things are, in a Divine sense, your friends, "For you shall be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you."

Moreover, *the Lord has prepared the whole system of His Grace to this end*—that you should abound in good works. Every part and portion of the economy of Grace tends toward this result, that you may be perfect, even as Your Father in Heaven is perfect. I long to be holy—the Holy Spirit is given to be my Sanctifier. I desire to live near to God—the Holy Spirit dwells in me and this is nearness of the highest order. Did I hear you sigh—"I pine to know more of God"? This precious Book is in your hands and its Author is among us, ready to expound it to you. "Oh, but I agonize to conquer sin!" This is not denied you, for it is written, "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith."

Another says, "I yearn to be more like Christ." You are taken into communion with Christ on purpose that this may be. Looking at Him, you are changed into His image, from glory unto glory! Everything necessary for your holiness is to your hand in the Covenant of Grace. All the helps that you need in your pilgrim way are already placed along the sacred road. The Lord, in the Scriptural sense of the word, "*prevents*" you with the blessings of His goodness. All events, whether terrible or joyous, shall be made to work together for this highest form of good, namely, your sanctification! January's snow, February's cold, April showers, March winds, and July suns, all co-operate to prepare the wheat for the garner—and all earthly changes are sent of God to ripen us for the eternal future.

Yes, I may even say that the glories of Heaven call us to a sublime life of holiness—and the thunders of Hell urge us to conquer the temptations which are in the world through lust. The crown which Christ holds over our heads inspires us with ardor in our race—while the Cross on which He died stirs us to a fervent enthusiasm for His praise. Nothing in Heaven, or on earth, or in Hell, rightly used, will excuse us in lukewarmness, but everything will impel us to intense zeal for holiness. Even the sin which so sadly abounds around us should make us the more watchful and careful in life. When dung is laid to the roots of the vine, it is not, thereby, defiled, but even out of the foul decay it finds nutriment with which to swell its delicious clusters! Thus, even the wickedness of man, by driving us nearer to our God, should prove a powerful motive for producing more exemplary lives in the midst of an untoward generation.

Oh, Sirs, if God calls you His workmanship, take care that none can justly find fault with the Worker! If you are, indeed, God's creation in Christ Jesus, take care that none despise the second birth, or the second Adam. And if it is so, that the Lord has before prepared all things that we may walk in good works, let us get into gear with Creation—let us be in harmony with Providence—let us keep step with the march of God's Purpose. What more shall I say? I will only breathe a wish. Oh, that you who have not yet believed in my Lord Jesus would do so now! For, "to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name"! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Ephesians 2.*
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—181, 287, 222.**

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:

DEAR FRIENDS—I shall be right glad when the weekly sermon will be that preached in my own pulpit on the previous Lord's Day—and I hope that such will be the case in two or three weeks! Still, I think the present sermon is somewhat better than those of an ordinary Sunday morning. I certainly enjoyed it much in preparing it for the press and I send it forth very hopefully, believing that God will feed His people with it. I cannot say that I am quite well, but I am progressing upon the whole and feel much rested and refreshed. Pray that I may soon get to work—and may do so under a double anointing of the Spirit of God! I heartily thank some few friends who have sent help to Evangelists and Colportage, and I would not forget those who mean to do so soon.

Yours ever heartily,

C. H. Spurgeon.

Mentone, March 14, 1885.

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

A SOLEMN DEPRIVAL

NO. 3472

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 1915.

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

“Without Christ.”
Ephesians 2:12.

WE shall have two things to consider this evening—the *misery of our past estate, and the great deliverance which God has worked for us.* As for—

I. THE MISERY OF OUR PAST ESTATE, be it known unto you that in common with the rest of mankind, Believers were once without Christ. No tongue can tell the depth of wretchedness that lies in those two words. There is no poverty like it, no need like it, and for those who die so, there is no ruin like that it will bring! Without Christ! If this is the description of some of you, we need not talk to you about the fires of Hell—let this be enough to startle you, that you are in such a desperate state as to be without Christ! Oh, what terrible evils lie clustering thick within these two words!

The man who is without Christ *is without any of those spiritual blessings which only Christ can bestow.* Christ is the life of the Believer, but the man who is without Christ is dead in trespasses and sins. There he lies—let us stand and weep over his corpse! It is decent and clean, and well laid out, but life is absent and, life being absent, there is no knowledge, no feeling, no power! What can we do? Shall we take the Word of God and preach to this dead sinner? We are bid to do so and, therefore, we will attempt it. But as long as he is without Christ, no result will follow, any more than when Elisha’s servant laid the staff upon the child—there was no noise, nor sound, nor hearing. As long as that sinner is without Christ, we may give him ordinances, if we dare. We may pray for him, we may keep him under the sound of the ministry, but everything will be in vain! Till You, O quickening Spirit, come to that sinner, he will still be dead in trespasses and sins. Till Jesus is revealed to him there can be no life!

So, too, Christ is the Light of the world. *Light* is the gift of Christ. “In Him was light, and the light was the life of men.” Men sit in darkness until Jesus appears. The gloom is thick and dense—not sun, nor moon, nor star appears, and there can be no light to illumine the understanding, the affections, the conscience. Man has no power to get light. He may strike the damp match of reason, but it will not yield him a clear flame. The candle of superstition, with its tiny glare, will but expose the darkness in which he is wrapped. Rise, Morning Star! Come, Jesus, come! You are the Sun of Righteousness, and healing is beneath Your wings.

Without Christ there is no light of true spiritual knowledge, no light of true spiritual enjoyment, no light in which the brightness of the Truth of God can be seen, or the warmth of fellowship proved. The soul, like the men of Naphtali, sits in darkness and sees no light.

Without Christ there *is no peace*. See that poor soul hunted by the dogs of Hell? It flies swift as the wind, but far faster do the hunters pursue. It seeks cover yonder in the pleasures of the world, but the baying of the Hellhounds frighten it in the festive haunts. It seeks to toil up the mountain of good works, but its legs are all too weak to bear it beyond the oppressor's rule. It doubles. It changes its tack. It goes from right to left but the Helldogs are too swift of foot, and too strong of wind to lose their prey! And till Jesus Christ shall open His bosom for that poor hunted thing to hide itself within, it shall have no peace!

Without Christ *there is no rest*. The wicked are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, and only Jesus can say to that sea, "Peace, be still."

Without Christ *there is no safety*. The vessel must fly before the gale, for it has no anchor on board! It may dash upon the rocks, for it has no chart and no pilot. Come what may, it is given up to the mercy of wind and waves. Safety it cannot know without Christ! But let Christ come on board that soul, and it may laugh at all the storms of earth, and even the whirlwinds which the Prince of the Power of the air may raise, need not confound it—but without Christ there is no safety for it.

Without Christ again, *there is no hope*. Sitting wrecked upon this desert rock, the lone soul looks far away, but marks nothing that can give it joy. If, perchance, it fancies that a sail is in the distance, it is soon deceived. The poor soul is thirsty and around it flows only a sea of brine, soon to change to an ocean of fire! It looks upward and there is an angry God—downward, and there are yawning gulfs—on the right hand, and there are accusing sounds—on the left hand, and there are tempting fiends. It is all lost! Lost! Lost! Without Christ, utterly lost, and until Christ comes, not a single beam of hope can make glad that anxious soul.

Without Christ, Beloved, remember that all the religious acts of men are vanity. What are they but mere airbags, having nothing in them whatever that God can accept? There is the semblance of worship—the altar, the victim, the wood laid in order, and the votaries bow the knee, or prostrate their bodies—but Christ alone can send the fire of Heaven's acceptance! Without Christ, the offering, like that of Cain's, shall lie upon the stones, but it shall never rise in fragrant smoke, accepted by the God of Heaven. Without Christ your church attendance is a form of slavery, your chapel meetings a bondage. Without Christ your prayers are but empty wind, your repentances are wasted tears, your almsgivings and your good deeds are but a coating of thin veneer to hide your base iniquities! Your professions are white-washed sepulchers, fair to look upon, but inwardly full of rottenness! Without Christ your religion is dead, corrupt, a stench, a nuisance before God—a thing of abhorrence—for where there is no Christ, there is no life in any devotion, nothing in it for God to see that can possibly please Him. And this, mark you, is a true description, not of some, but of all who are without Christ! You moral

people without Christ, you are lost as much as the immoral! You rich and respectable people, without Christ, you will be as surely damned as the prostitute that walks the streets at midnight. Without Christ, though you should heap up your charitable donations, endow your almshouses and hospitals, yes, though you should give your bodies to be burned, no merit would be imputed to you! All these things would profit you nothing! Without Christ, even if you might be raised on the wings of flaming zeal, or pursue your eager course with the enthusiasm of a martyr, you shall yet prove to be but the slave of your own passion and the victim of your own folly! Unsanctified and unblessed, you must, then, be shut out of Heaven and banished from the Presence of God! Without Christ, you are destitute of every benefit which He, and He alone, can bestow.

Without Christ, implies, of course, that you are without the benefit of *all those gracious offices of Christ which are so necessary to the sons of men*, you have no true *Prophet*. You may pin your faith to the sleeve of man and be deceived. You may be orthodox in your creed, but unless you have Christ in your heart, you have no hope of Heaven. Without Christ, the Truth of God, itself, will prove a terror to you! Like Balaam, your eyes may be open while your life is alienated. Without Christ that very *Cross* which saves some will become to you as a *gallows* upon which your soul shall die! Without Christ you have no *Priest* to atone or to intercede on your behalf. There is no Fountain in which you can wash away your guilt. No Passover blood which you can sprinkle on your lintel to turn aside the destroying angel. No smoking altar of incense for you. No smiling God sitting between the cherubim. Without Christ you are an alien from everything which the priesthood can procure for your welfare! Without Christ you have no shepherd to tend, no King to help you—you cannot call in the day of trouble upon One who is strong to deliver. The angels of God, who are the standing army of King Jesus, are your enemies and not your friends. Without Christ, Providence is working your ill—not your good. Without Christ you have no *Advocate* to plead your cause in Heaven. You have no Representative to stand up yonder and represent you, and prepare a place for you! Without Christ you are as sheep without a shepherd. Without Christ you are a body without a head. Without Christ you are miserable orphans without a father, and your widowed soul is without a husband. Without Christ you are without a *Savior*—what will you do? What will become of you when you find out the value of salvation at the last pinch, the dreary point of despair? To sum up all, you are without anything that can make life blessed, or death happy! Without Christ, though you are rich as Croesus, famous as Alexander and wise as Socrates, yet are you naked, and poor, and miserable—for you lack Him by whom are all things, and for whom are all things, and who is Himself All-in-All!

Surely this might be enough to awaken the conscience of the most heedless! But ah, without any of the blessings which Christ brings, and to miss all the good offices which Christ fills—this is only to linger on the side issues! The imminent peril is to be *without Christ, Himself*. Do you

see, there, the Savior in human form—God made flesh, dwelling among us? He loves His people and came to earth to wipe out an iniquity which had stained them most vilely, and to work out a righteousness which should cover them most gloriously—but without Christ that living Savior is nothing to you! Do you see Him led away as a sheep to the slaughter, fastened to the cruel wood—bleeding, dying? Without Christ you are without the virtue of that great Sacrifice! You are without the merit of that atoning blood! Do you see Him lying in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, asleep in death? That sleep is a burial of all the sins of His people, but without Christ your sins are not atoned for! Your transgressions are yet unburied—they walk the earth—they shall go before you to Judgment! They shall clamor for your condemnation. They shall drag you down without hope. Without Christ, remember, you have no share in His Resurrection. Bursting the bonds of death, you, too, shall rise, but not to newness of life, nor yet to glory, for shame and everlasting contempt shall be your portion if you are without Christ! See Him as He mounts on high! He rides in His triumphal car through the streets of Heaven! He scatters gifts for men, but without Christ there are none of those gifts for you! There are no blessings for those who are without Christ! He sits on that exalted Throne of God and pleads and reigns forever, but without Christ you have no part in His intercession and you shall have no share in His Glory! He is coming. Listen! The trumpet rings. My prophetic ear seems to catch the strain! He comes, surrounded by majestic pomp, and all His saints shall reign with Him! But without Christ you can have no part nor lot in all that splendor. He goes back to His Father and surrenders His Kingdom and His people are forever safe with Him. Without Christ there shall be none to wipe away the tears from your eyes. No one to lead you to the fountain of Living Waters. No hand to give you a palm branch. No smile to make your immortality blessed. Oh, my dear Hearers, I cannot tell you what unutterable abysses of wretchedness and misery are comprised here within the fullness of the meaning of these dreadful words—*without Christ*.

At this present hour, if you are without Christ, you lack the very essence of good, by reason of which your choicest privileges are an empty boast instead of a substantial gift. Without Christ *all the ordinances and means of Grace are worth nothing*. Even this precious Book, that might be weighed with diamonds, and he that was wise would choose the Book and leave the precious stones—even this sacred Volume is of no benefit to you! You may have Bibles in your houses, as I trust you all have, but what is the Bible but a dead letter without Christ? Ah, I would you could all say what a poor woman once said. “I have Christ here,” as she put her hand on the Bible, “and I have Christ here,” as she put her hand on her heart, “and I have Christ there,” as she raised up her eyes towards Heaven. But if you have not Christ in your heart, you will not find Christ in the Book, for He is discovered there in His sweetness, His blessedness and His excellence only by those who know Him and love Him in their hearts! Do not get the idea that a certain quantity of Bible reading, particular times spent in repeating prayers, regular attendance at a place of

worship and the systematic contribution of a guinea or so to the support of public worship and private charities will ensure the salvation of your souls! No, you must be born-again! And that you cannot be, for it is not possible that you could have been born-again if you are still living without Christ! To have Christ is the indispensable condition of entering Heaven. If you have Him, though compassed about with a thousand infirmities, you shall yet see the brightness of the eternal Glory! But if you have not Christ, alas, for all your toil and the wearisome slavery of your religion, you can but weave a righteousness of your own which shall disappoint your hope and incur the displeasure of God!

And without Christ, dear Friends, there comes the solemn reflection that *before long you shall perish*. Of that I do not like to talk, but I would like you to think of it. Without Christ you may live, young man—though, mark, you shall miss the richest joys of life. Without Christ you may live, hale, strong man, in middle age—though, mark, without Him you shall miss the greatest support amidst your troubles! Without Christ you may live, old man, and lean upon your staff, content with the earth into which you are so soon to drop, though, mark you, you shall lose the sweetest consolation which your weakness could have found! But remember, man, you are soon to die! It matters not how strong you are—Death is stronger than you and he will pull you down, even as the stag hound drags down his victim, and then “how will you do in the swellings of Jordan,” without Christ? How will you do when the eyes begin to close, without Christ? How will you do, Sinner, when the death rattle is in your throat, without Christ? When they prop you up with pillows, when they stand weeping round your expiring form, when the pulse grows faint and few, when you have to lift the veil and stand disembodied before the dreadful eyes of an angry God, how will you do without Christ? And when the Judgment trumpet shall wake you from your slumber in the tomb, and body and soul shall stand together at that last and dread assize—in the midst of that tremendous crowd, Sinner, how will you do without Christ? When the reapers come forth to gather in the Harvest of God, and the sickles are red with blood, and the vintage is cast into the winepress of His wrath, and it is trodden until the blood runs forth up to the horse’s bellies—how will you do, then, I ask you, without Christ? Oh, Sinner, I pray you let these words sound in your ears till they ring into your heart! I would like you to think of them tomorrow, and the next day, and the next. Without Christ! I would like to make you think of dying, of being judged, of being condemned without Christ! May God in His mercy enable you to see your state and fly to Him who is able to save, even unto the uttermost, all them that come unto God by Him! Christ is to be had for the asking! Christ is to be had for the receiving! Stretch out your withered hand and take Him! Trust Him and He will be yours forevermore! And you shall be with Him, where He is, in an eternity of joy! Having thus reviewed the misery of our past estate, let us endeavor, with the little time we have left, to—

II. EXCITE THE THANKFULNESS OF GOD'S PEOPLE FOR WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE FOR THEM.

We are not without Christ, now, but let me ask you, you who are Believers, where you would have been now without Christ? As for some of you, you might—indeed you *would* have been, tonight, in the alehouse or gin palace. You would have been with the boisterous crew that make merriment on the Lord's Day. You know you would, for "such were some of you." You might have been even worse—you might have been in the harlot's house. You might have been violating the laws of man as well as the laws of God, "for even such" were some of you, but you are washed, but you are sanctified. Where might you not have been without Christ? You might have been in Hell! You might have been shut out forever from all mercy—condemned to eternal banishment from the Presence of God!

I think the Indian's picture is a very fair one of where we would have been without Christ. When asked what Christ had done for him, he picked up a worm, put it on the ground, and made a ring of straw and wood round it, which he set alight. As the wood began to glow, the poor worm began to twist and wriggle in agony, whereupon the Indian stooped down, took it gently up with his finger, and said, "That is what Jesus did for me. I was surrounded, without power to help myself, by a ring of dreadful fire that would have been my ruin, but His pierced hand lifted me out of the burning." Think of that, Christians, and as your hearts melt, come to His table and praise Him that you are not now without Christ!

Then think what His blood has done for you. Take only one thing out of a thousand. It has put away your many, many sins. You were without Christ and your sins stood like yonder mountain, whose black and rugged cliffs threaten the very skies. There fell a drop of Jesus' blood upon it and it all vanished in a moment! The sins of all your days were gone in an instant by the application of the precious blood! Oh, bless Jehovah's name that you can now say—

***"Now freed from sin I walk at large,
My Savior's blood my full discharge!
Content at His dear feet I lay,
A sinner saved, and homage pay."***

Remember, too, now that you have Christ, *of the way in which He came and made you partaker of Himself*. Oh, how long He stood in the cold, knocking at the door of your heart! You would not have Him! You despised Him! You resisted Him! You kicked against Him—you did, as it were, spit in His face and put Him to open shame to be rid of Him! Yet He would have you, and so, overcoming all your objections, and overlooking all your unworthiness, at length He rescued you and acknowledged you to be His own!

Consider, Beloved, *what might have been your case had He left you to your own free agency*. You might have had His blood on your head in aggravation of your guilt! Instead of that, you have got His blood applied to your heart in token of your pardon! You know right well what a difference that makes. Oh, that was a dreadful cry in the streets of Jerusalem, "His blood be on us and our children!" And Jerusalem's streets flowing with

gore witnessed how terrible a thing it is to have Christ's blood visited on His enemies! But, Beloved, you have that precious blood for the cleansing of your conscience. It has sealed your acceptance and you can, therefore, rejoice in the ransom He has paid and the remission you have received with unspeakable joy and full of glory!

And I would not have you forget the vast *expense which it cost to procure this priceless gift*. Christ could not have been yours had He lived in Heaven. He must come down to earth—but even then He could not be fully yours till He had bled and died. Oh, the dreadful portals through which Christ had to pass before He could find His way to you! He finds you now right easily, but before He could come to you He must, Himself, pass through the grave! Think of that and be astonished!

And why *are you not left to be without Christ?* I suppose there are some persons whose minds naturally incline towards the doctrines of free will. I can only say that mine inclines as naturally towards the Doctrines of Sovereign Grace. I cannot understand the reason why I am saved, except upon the ground that God would have it so. I cannot, if I look ever so earnestly, discover any kind of reason in myself why I should be a partaker of Divine Grace. If I am not tonight without Christ, it is only because Jesus would have His will with me and that will was that I should be with Him where He is and should share His Glory. I can put the crown nowhere but upon the head of Him whose mighty Grace has saved me from going down into the Pit!

Beloved, let us mention one thing more out of the thousand things which we must leave unsaid. *Remember what you have tonight now that you have Christ*. No, no, no, do not be telling me what you have not got! You have not got a certain income, you say! You have not got a competence! You have not got wealth. You have not got friends. You have not got a comfortable house. No, but you have your Savior—you have Christ! And what does that mean? "He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him, also, freely give us all things?" The man who has Christ has everything! There are all things in one in Christ Jesus, and if you once get Him, you are rich to all the intents of bliss! What? Have Jesus Christ and be discontented? Have Christ and murmur? Beloved, let me chide you, gently, and pray you to lay aside that evil habit! If you have Christ, then you have God the Father to be your Protector, and God the Spirit to be your Comforter! You have present things working together for your good, and future things to unravel your happier portion! You have angels to be your servitors, both on earth and in Heaven! You have all the wheels of Providence revolving for your benefit! You have the stones of the field in league with you! You have your daily trials sanctified to your benefit! You have your earthly joys hinged from their doors and hallowed with a blessing! Your gains and your losses are alike profitable to you! Your additions and your reductions shall, alike, swell the tide of your soul's satisfaction! You have more than any other creatures can boast as their portion! You have more than all the world beside could yield to regale your pure taste, and ravish

your happy spirits! And now, will you not be glad? I would have you come to this feasting table this evening, saying within yourselves, "Since I am not without Christ, but Jesus Christ is mine, I do rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice!"

And oh, dear Christian Friends, if you have lost your evidences, go to Christ to find them! Do not go striking your matches to light your candles, but go direct to the Sun and get your light from His full orb. You who are doubting, desponding and cast down, do not get to foraging up the moldy bread of yesterday, but go and get the manna which falls fresh today at the foot of the Cross! Now you who have been wandering and backsliding, do not stay away from Jesus because of your unworthiness, but let your very sins compel you to come to your Savior's feet. Come, you sinners! Come, you saints! Come, you who dare not say that you are His people! Come, you whose faith is but as a grain of mustard seed! Come, you who have not any faith at all! Come now to Jesus, who says, "Whoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely."

May God grant that some who feel that they are without Christ because they have no enjoyment, nor any sense of communion with Him, may now take hold of His name, His Covenant, His promises, with a lively faith! No, more—may they find Him to the rapture of their souls and He shall have all the praise. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
PSALM 50:14-23; Ezekiel 36:21-38.**

PSALM 50:14-23.

In the first part of this Psalm, God has solemnly expostulated with His people as to the utter worthlessness of sacrifice and ceremony apart from living faith in Him, and holy life as its fruit. And He sums it all up in the searching question of the 13th verse, "Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Have you such a groveling opinion of Me, your God, as to conceive that I am satisfied with these things?" See what contempt the Lord pours upon sacrifices—even those that were of His own ordaining—when men rested in them and made them their confidence and their end!

Verse 14. *Offer unto God thanksgiving.* This is what He wants—heart-work.

14. *And pay your vows unto the Most High.* This is what He demands—obedience.

15. *And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.* Thus you see God has spoken to His professing people—to those who were moral, decent and observant of outward ritual. He now turns to some others—some others, perhaps, quite as outwardly religious, but their lives were immoral—their conduct was a breach of His Law. At first He speaks of their neglect of the First Table, which says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart," and shows that it is not bullocks and rams which can make amends for forgetfulness of God. Now He turns to the Second Table and shows that no amount of sa-

crifice can make up for breaches of the Law of God as it touches our fellow men.

16. *But unto the wicked, God says, What have you to do to declare My statutes, or that you should take My Covenant in your mouth?* Your unholiness, even though you were of the tribe of Levi, would disqualify you from declaring My statutes. Your mouth is full of slander, how could you dare to use it to speak of My Covenant with it?

17. *Seeing you hate instruction, and cast My Words behind you.* As if they were worthless things to be thrown away—as if they were obnoxious things to be thrown behind your back where you could not see them. “Do you talk about worshipping Me, while you are neglecting My Words?” Now it is a very solemn thing when a man boasts about the Covenant, or about the Doctrines of Grace, or about outward ceremonies, and yet there are parts of God’s Word that he neglects—there are portions of God’s will that he dares not look in the face. If ever I meet a text that I am afraid of, I begin to be afraid of myself! And if I feel any tendency to take away from a text any of its swooping charges or its strong demands, I feel that surely I must have quarreled with this text because it has quarreled with me. How can we think we are offering to God acceptable sacrifice when any of His Words are cast behind our backs?

18. *When you saw a thief, then you consented with him, and have been partaker with adulterers.* “When you saw a thief you consented with him,” and some professors do this. If they do not themselves, rob, there are some who will employ their clerks to tell lies in writing. They consent in the bad trade of others. They become accomplices, helping to make excuses for others. “And have been partaker with adulterers.” Can a man profess to be religious and yet do this? Well, I have known such, and such will still creep into the Church of God—unclean, unchaste men, who nevertheless will come and sit as God’s people sit, and sing as God’s people sing! And, indeed, anyone who listens to lascivious talk, or who smiles at an unchaste jest, is himself a partaker with adulterers more or less.

19. *You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit.* How many do this, and yet think they are the children of God? They ruin other characters most remorselessly—they will spread false reports, if not actually invent them—and yet think themselves the people of God!

20. *You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son.* When a tongue has once learned the habit of calumny, it will spare none. The nearest relative and the dearest will become victims to the habit—first of gossip and afterwards of actual detraction and lying! Oh, the misery, the pain that is caused in the world by this habit which is so rife! And can we imagine ourselves to be the people of God when we delight in repeating false stories about others? Have we forgotten the Truth of that word, “All liars shall have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone”? As surely as God is true and loves truth, if we love lies, where God is we can never come. It matters not how much

we may pretend to have reverence for God, and to have an experience of His Truth—we are not of the Truth of God, neither are we of God.

21. *These things have you done, and I kept silent.* God, in His long-suffering, bears with these sinners. “You thought that I was altogether such an one as yourself.” These men came at last to say, “Pooh! The Prophets make too much fuss about holiness! You can serve God, and yet, after all, live as we do. So long as we give God a tithe, it matters not how we get our property. If we offer Him the bulls, He will be quite content.” Ah, to what do men degrade their God! Some made Him of old to be like a bull that has horns and hoofs, but many men nowadays think God to be like themselves—and that is worse!

21. *You thought that I was altogether such an one as yourself: but I will reprove you, and set them in order before your eyes.* “I will lay your sins out before you—parcel them out, ‘Item this’—Item that.’ I will classify them: I will set them like a dreadful army in array before you. I will let you see that though I had patience with you, I was neither blind nor deaf, but heard and saw all that you have done and noted it all.” Oh, what a vista this opens up for unholy professors—for ungodly members of Christian churches!

22. *Now consider this, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.* What solemn words! What dreadful words! God never plays at threats and His ministers, when they speak of wrath to come, are not to speak with velvet mouths and soft words, for “Oh, the wrath to come,” as George Whitefield used to say with uplifted hands and streaming eyes, “The wrath to come! The wrath to come—how dreadful will it be!” God Himself proves it. “Beware, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.” And then the Psalm finishes up with this kind word of gracious address which drops like raindrops out of the bosom of the tempest that went before—

23. *Whoever offers praise glorifies Me.* More than he that offers bullocks.

23. *And to Him that orders his conversation aright*—The man that strives in the sight of God to walk a holy life—this is the man to whom—

23. *Will I show the salvation of God.* If he needs saving, let him order his conversation as he may, he will owe all to Sovereign Grace! He will have no merit of his own, “but where I by Grace,” says the Lord, “lead a man to order his conversation aright, there will I show more and more fully, and at last perfectly in him, the salvation of God.”

EZEKIEL 36:21-38.

The Prophet had been bringing many heavy charges against God’s people. He had been thundering out the most tremendous threats against them. God was angry with them on account of sin. The Chapter is full of dreadful utterances, enough to make one tremble as he reads them. But all of a sudden the note altogether changes and the Prophet of Thunder becomes the Prophet of Consolation! Free Grace follows like a clear shining after the rain.

Verses 21-28. *But I had pity for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, where they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus says the LORD GOD—I 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. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.* Here, indeed, is matchless Divine Grace, that these very people who for their sins were banished from their land, and who in their exile added to their sin by the way in which they blasphemed God—those very people are to be brought back and the mercy of God is so to be displayed in them that, in the very people who blasphemed God’s name, God shall be had in honor!

25, 26. *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.* Now notice that all this was spoken to persons who had no desire for these blessings! If they had had a desire for them, their hearts could not be considered to be stony, but they were set against God—they were His enemies—and yet He makes this solemn declaration in the Sovereignty of His Grace that He will give them a new heart and a right spirit! There may be some in this house, tonight, and I pray there may, who are strangers to the God of Israel, who, if they know anything concerning His Son, only know enough to oppose Him. May God’s eternal Omnipotence work in them mightily that a new heart and a right spirit may be given them tonight according to that ancient Word of God, “I am found of them that sought Me not.” He can come and make them a people that were not a people. Oh, that His Grace would do so now!

27. *And I will put My Spirit within you.* Not only a new spirit, but My Spirit. God Himself shall come and dwell in those hearts which once were a receptacle for the devil!

27, 28. *And cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments and do them. And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers: and you shall be My people, and I will be your God.* He who talks in this Sovereign way is God Himself! He first made the world as He pleased, and in the second New Creation, He does as He will, having power over us as the potter has over his clay. This is promised to the Jewish people, but it is also fulfilled in multitudes of others where God, in the same Sovereign way, works out the purposes of His love.

29. *I will also save you from all your uncleanness and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.* Temporal mercies shall follow where spiritual mercies are given.

30-36. *And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that you shall receive no more reproach of famine among the hea-*

then. Then shall you remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, says the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus says the Lord GOD, In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be built up and the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD built up the ruined places, and planted that which was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it. Prayer will always go with the Divine working. Where God means to save, He sets men praying. Those who are saved intercede for others, and others who as yet are unsaved feel the need of the blessing and begin to cry for it—and the blessing comes! As the black cloud forebodes the shower, so does the gathering spirit of prayer always foretoken the coming blessing! Heaven and earth may pass away, but the memorial of Jehovah always is “The God who hears prayer.” He is the God whose arm is always moved by the prayer of man. Did not Moses stand between them and vengeance, so that God said, “Let Me alone,” as if He had said, “I cannot destroy them while you pray”? Did not Elijah open and shut the windows of Heaven by his prayer? Nothing is impossible to those who know how believingly to enquire of God.

37. *Thus says the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them: I will increase them with men like a flock. Take up this promise, members of this Church, and urge it before God that He would give us not few additions, but many, very many! “I will increase them with men like a flock.”*

38. *As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts. When a great number of lambs would be brought up to Jerusalem for them to keep the Passover with, a great and countless company. Oh, that such additions may be given to the Church!*

38. *So shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men; and they shall know that I am the LORD.*

—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.**

OUR GLORIOUS TRANSFORMING NO. 3496

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 1916.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 3, 1871.

*“But now in Christ Jesus, you, who sometimes were far off,
are made near by the blood of Christ.”
Ephesians 2:13.*

I DO not want you to feel at this time as if you were listening to a sermon, or to any sort of set discourse, but rather I should like, if it were possible, that you should feel as if you were alone with the Savior and were engaged in calm and quiet meditation. I will try to be the prompter, standing at the elbow of your contemplation, suggesting one thought and then another, and I pray, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, as many of you as are truly in Him, that you may be able to meditate as to be profited and to say at the close, “My meditation on Him was sweet. I will be glad in His name.” There are three very simple things in the text. The first is *what we were*. Some time ago “we were far off.” But secondly, *what we are*—we are “made near.” And then there is the how, *the means of this great change*. It is “in Christ Jesus,” and it is added, “by the blood of Christ.” First, then, let us with humility consider, as Believers—

I. WHAT WE WERE.

There was a day when we passed from death unto life. All of us who are children of God have undergone a great and mysterious change—we have been new-created, we have been born-again. If any of you have not experienced this great change, I can only pray that you may. But you will not be likely to take much interest in the theme of our meditation this evening. As many of you as have experienced this great change are now asked to remember what you were. You were far off, first, in the respect that *you were aliens* from the commonwealth of Israel. The Jew was brought near. The Jewish people were favored of God with light, while the rest of the world remained in darkness. “To them He gave” the oracles. With them He made a Covenant. But as for the rest of the nations, they were left unclean and far off. They could not come near to God. This was our condition. We were Gentiles. We had no participation in the Covenant that God had made with Abraham. We had no share in the sacrifices of Aaron or his successors. We could not come in by the way of circumcision. We were not born after the flesh and we had no right to that fleshly Covenant, however great its privileges. We are brought near now. All that the Jew ever had we have. We have all his privileges and more!

He had but the shadow—we have the substance. He had but the type—we have the reality. But before our rebirth we had neither shadow nor substance—we were afar off and had no participation in them!

And, Beloved, when we think of our distance from God, there are three or four ways in which we may illustrate it. We were far off from God, *for a vast cloudland of ignorance hung between our souls and Him*. We were lost as in a tangled forest in which there was no pathway. We were like some bird drifted out to sea that would be bereft of the instinct which guides it on its course, driven to and fro by every wind, and tossed like a wave by every tempest! We knew not God, neither did we care to know. We were in the dark with regard to Him and His Character. And when we did make guesses concerning God, they were very wide of the truth and did not help to bring us at all near. He has taught us better now—He has taught us to call Him, Father, and to know that He is Love. Since we have known God, or, rather, have been known of God, we have come near, but once our ignorance kept us very far off. Worse than that, there was between us and God a *vast range of the mountains of sin*. We can measure the Alps, the Andes have been scaled, but the mountains of sin no man has ever measured! They are very high. They pierce the clouds. Can you think of the mountains of your sin, Beloved? Reckon them all up since your birth—sins of childhood, youth, manhood and riper years—your sins against the Gospel, and against the Law of God, sins with the body and sins with the mind. Sins of every shape and form—ah, what a mountain range they make! And you were on one side of that mountain and God was on the other. A holy God could not wink at sin, and you, an unholy being, could not have fellowship with the thrice Holy God! What a distance!—an impassable mountain separated you from your God. It has all gone now. The mountains have sunk into the sea, our transgressions have all gone, but oh, what hills they were, once, and what mountains they were but a little while ago! In addition to these mountains, there was, on the other side nearest to God, *a great gulf of Divine Wrath*. God was angry, justly angry, with us. He could not have been God if sin had not made Him angry. He that plays with sin is very far from knowing anything of the Character of the Most High. There was a deep gulf. Ah, even the lost in Hell know not how deep it is. They have been sinking—but this abyss has no bottom. God's love is Infinite. Who knows the power of Your anger, O Most High? It is all filled, now, as far as we are concerned. Christ has bridged the chasm. He has taken us to the other side of it—He who brought us near—but what a gulf it was! Look down and shudder. Have you ever stood on a glacier and looked down a crevasse, and taken a great stone and thrown it down, and waited till at last you heard the sound as it reached the bottom? Have not you shuddered at the thought of falling down that steep? But there you stood but a little while ago, an heir of wrath, even as others! So the Apostle puts it, “even as others.” Oh, how far off you were!

Nor was this all, for there was another division between you and God. When, dear Friends, we were brought to feel our state and to have some longings after the Most High, the mountains of sin had been moved and the chasm of wrath been filled, yet there remained another distance of our own making. There was a sea of fear rolling between us and God. We dared not come to Him! He told us He would forgive, but we could not think it true! He said that the blood would cleanse us—the precious blood of the Atoning Sacrifice—but we thought our stains too crimson to be removed! We dared not believe in the Infinite Compassion of our Father! We ran from Him—we would not trust Him. Do you not remember those times when to believe seemed an impossibility, and salvation by faith appeared to be as difficult a thing as salvation by the works of the Law? That sea has gone away now! We have been ferried over its streams. We have no fear of God, now, in the form of trembling, slavish fear—we are brought near and say, “Abba Father,” with an untrembling tongue! You see, then, something of the distance there was between us and God. But I will illustrate it in another way. Think of God a moment. Your thoughts cannot reach Him—He is infinitely pure—the heavens are not clean in His sight and He charges His angels with folly. That is one side of the picture. Now look at yourself, a worm that has rebelled against its Creator, loathsome with sin, through and through defiled! When I see a beggar and a prince stand together, I see a distance, but ah, it is but an inch, a span, compared with the infinite leagues of distance in character and nature between God and fallen man! Who but Christ could have lifted up from so low an estate to so high a condition—from fellowship with devils to communion with Jehovah, Himself? The distance was inconceivable! We were lost in wonder at the greatness of the love that made it all vanish. We were afar off.

Now I have stated that very simply. Think it over a minute. And what do you feel as the result of your thought? Why, humility rises! Suppose you are a very experienced Christian and a very intelligent reader of the Bible. Suppose that for many years you have been able to maintain a consistent character. Ah, my dear Brother, my dear Sister, you have nothing of which to glory when you recollect what you *were*, and what you *would have been* if it had not been for Sovereign Grace! You, perhaps, have forgotten a little that you were just what the Bible says. You have been so contemplating your present privileges that you have, for a while, failed to remember that it is only by the Grace of God that you are what you are! Let these considerations bring you back to your true condition. And now with lowly reverence at the foot of the Cross bow down your soul and say, “My Lord, between me and the greatest reprobate there is no difference but what Your Grace has made. Between me and lost souls in Hell there is no difference except what Your Infinite Compassion has deigned to make. I humbly bless You, and adore You, and love You because You have brought me near.”

Now we shall continue our contemplation, and take the second point. We have a bitter pill in this first one, but the next consideration kills it, takes the bitterness away and sweetens it! It is—

II. WHAT WE ARE—WHAT WE ARE.

“We are made near through the blood of Christ.” You will please observe that the Apostle does not say, “We hope we are.” He speaks positively, as every Believer should. Nor does he say, “We shall be.” There are privileges reserved for the future, but here he is speaking of a *present* blessing, which may be now the object of distinct, definite knowledge, which ought to be, indeed, a matter of present experimental enjoyment. We are brought near. What does he mean by this? Does not he mean, first, what I have already said, that as we were far off, being Gentiles, and not of the favored commonwealth of Israel, we are now brought near, that is to say, *we have all the privileges of the once favored race?* Are they the seed of Abraham? So, are we, for he was the father of the faithful and we, having believed, have become his spiritual children. Had they an altar? We have an Altar of which they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. Had they a high priest? We have a High Priest—we have One who has entered into Heaven! Had they a sacrifice and paschal supper? We have Christ Jesus, who, by His one offering, has forever put away our sin and who is today the spiritual meat on which we feed. All that they had, we have, only we have it in a fuller and clearer sense! “The Law of God was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ,” and they have come to us. But we are brought a great deal nearer than the Jew—than most of the Jews were—for you know, Brothers and Sisters, the most devout Jew could not offer sacrifices to God. I mean, as a rule. Prophets were exceptions. They could not offer sacrifices, themselves—they could bring the victim, but there were some special persons who must act as priests. The priest came near to God on the behalf of the people. Listen, O you children of God, who were once afar off! It is the song of Heaven! Let it be your song on earth—“You were slain and have redeemed us unto God by Your blood, and have made us priests and kings.” *We are all priests* if we love the Savior! Every Believer is a priest! It is for him to bring his sacrifice of prayer, and thanksgiving, and come in, even into the Holy Place in the Presence of the Most High! And I might say more, for no priest went into the Most Holy Place of all, save one, the high priest, and he, once a year, not without blood and not without smoke and incense, ventured into the Most Holy Place. But we, Brothers and Sisters, see the veil taken right away and we come up to the Mercy Seat without the trembling which the high priest felt of old, for we see the blood of Jesus on the Mercy Seat and the veil rent—and we come boldly to the Throne of Heavenly Grace to obtain Grace to help in time of need! Oh, how near we are—nearer than the ordinary Jew! Nearer than the priest—as near as the High Priest, Himself, for in the Person of Christ we are where He is, that is, at the Throne of God! Let me say, dear Brothers and Sisters, that we are near to God today, for *all that divides us from*

God is gone. The moment a sinner believes, all that mountain of sin ceases to be. Can you see those hills—those towering Andes? Who shall climb them? But lo, I see One come who has the scars of one who has died upon a cross! I see Him hold up His pierced hands and one drop of blood falls on the hills, and they smoke—they dissolve like the fat of rams! They burn to vapor, and they are gone! There is not so much as a vestige of them left. Oh, glory be to God, there is no sin in God's Book against the Believer! There is no record remaining—He has taken it away and nailed it to His Cross and triumphed in the deed. As the Egyptians were all drowned in the sea, and Israel said, "The depths have covered them; there was not one of them left," so may every Believer say, "All my sin is gone, and we are pure, accepted in the Beloved, justified through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ." Oh, how glorious this nearness is when all distance is gone!

And now, Brothers and Sisters, we are near to God, for *we are His friends*. He is our mighty Friend and we love Him in return. Better than that, *we are His children*. A friend might be forgotten, but a child—a father's heart yearns towards him. We are His children. He has chosen us that we may approach Him, that we may dwell in His courts and abide, and go no more out forever. "The servant abides not in the house forever, but the son abides always." And this is our privilege. And yet even more than that. Can anybody here imagine how near Jesus Christ is to God? So near are we, for that is the Truth of God which the little verse sings—

**"So near—so very near to God,
More near I cannot be!
For in the Person of His Son
I am as near as He!"**

If we are, indeed, in Christ, we are one with Him—we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones, and He has said, "Where I am, there shall also My servants be," and He has declared that we shall receive the Glory—the Glory which He had with the Father before the world was. What nearness is this!

Now I have stated that Truth of God, I want you now to feed on it for a minute and draw the natural conclusions, and feel the fit emotion. Beloved, if you are brought so near to God, what manner of lives ought you to lead? Common subjects ought never to speak traitorous words, but a member of the Privy Council, one who is admitted to the Court, should certainly be loyal through and through! Oh, how we ought to love God who has made us near!—a people near unto Him. How ought heavenly things and holy things to engross our attention! How joyously we ought to live, too, for with such high favors as these it would be ungrateful to be unhappy! We are near to God, Brothers and Sisters. Then God sees us in all things—our heavenly Father knows what we have need of—He is always watching over us for good. We are near to Him—let us pray as if we were near God. There are some prayers that are dreadful from the distance there is evidently in the mind of the offerer. Too generally liturgies

are addresses to a God too far off to be reached, but the humble familiarity which boldly comes trembling with fear, but rejoicing with faith, into the Presence of God—this becomes those who are made near! When a man is near a neighbor whom he trusts, he tells him his griefs, he asks his help. Deal thus with God! Live on Him, live for Him, live in Him! Be never distant from a God who has made you near unto Himself. Our life ought to be a heavenly one, seeing that we are brought near to God—the God of Heaven! Brothers and Sisters, how assured every one of us may be of our safety if we are, indeed, Believers in Christ, for if we are made near by love and friendship to our God, He cannot leave us! If, when we were enemies, He brought us near, will He not keep us, now He has made us friends? He loved us so as to bring us up from the depths of sin when we had no thoughts, nor desires towards good—and now He has taught us to love Him and to long for Him, will He forsake us? Impossible! What confidence this Doctrine gives!

And once more, dear Brothers and Sisters, if the Lord has brought us near, what hope we ought to have for those who are farthest off from God today! Never be you among that pharisaical crew who imagine that fallen women or degraded men cannot be uplifted again! You were sometimes far off, but He has made *you* near. The distance was so great in your case that surely, He who met *that* can also meet the distance in another case! Have hope for any who can be brought under the sound of the Gospel! And labor on until the more hopeless, the most hopeless are brought there! Oh, let us gird up our loins for Christian work, believing that if God has saved us, there remain no hurdles! The chief of sinners was saved years ago. Paul said so. He had no mock modesty. I believe he said the truth. The chief of sinners has gone through the gate into Heaven and there is room for the second worst to get through—there is room for you, Friend, as there is room for me. The God that brought me near has taught me to know that no man is beyond the reach of His Grace. But I must leave that with you, hoping that it will flavor all your thoughts tonight. Once more. The last thing we are to consider is—

III. HOW THE GREAT CHANGE WAS WORKED.

We were put into Christ and then through the blood we were made near. The Doctrine of the Atonement is no novelty in this house. We have preached it often—no, we preach it constantly—and let this mouth be dumb when it prefers any other theme to that old, old story of the Passion, the Substitution and consequent Redemption by blood! Beloved, it is the blood of Jesus that has done everything for us! Our debts Christ has paid, therefore, those debts have ceased to be. The punishment of our sin Christ has borne and, therefore, no punishment is due to us. Substitution has met a case that is never to be met by any other means. The Just has suffered for the unjust to bring us to God! We deserved the sword, but it has fallen upon Him who deserved it not, who voluntarily placed Himself in our place, that He might give compensation to Justice and full liberty to Mercy. It is by the blood that we are brought near,

then! Christ has suffered in our place and we are, therefore, forgiven. But think about that blood a minute. It means suffering—it means a life surrendered with agony! Suffering—we talk about it, ah, but when you feel it, then you think more of the Savior. When the bones ache, when the body is racked, when sleep goes from the eyelids, when the mind is depressed, when the head turns, ah, then we say, “My Savior, I see a little of the price that redeemed me from going down into the Pit.” The mental and physical suffering of Christ are both worthy of our consideration, but depend upon it, His soul’s sufferings were the soul of His sufferings! And when we are under deep depression, brought near even unto death with sorrow, then again we think of how the Savior bought us. The early Church was noted in its preaching for preaching facts. I am afraid now that we are too noted for forgetting facts and preaching Doctrine! Let us have Doctrine, by all means, but after all, the fact is the great thing. When Paul gave a summary of the Gospel which he tried to preach, he said, “This is the Gospel that I have preached—that Jesus Christ was crucified, died, was buried, rose again.” There in Gethsemane, where bloody sweat soaked the soil. There on the pavement, where the lash tore again and again into those blessed shoulders till the purple streams gushed down, and the plowers made their furrows, and the blood filled them. There when they hurled Him on His back to the ground and fasten His hands to the wood with rough nails—there when they lifted Him up and dislocated His bones when they fix the Cross into the earth. There where they sit and watch Him, insult His prayers and mock His thirst while He hangs naked to His shame in the midst of a ribald crew. There where God, Himself, forsakes Him, where Jehovah turns His face away from Him, where the Sufferer shrieks in agony, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”—there it is that we were brought near, even we that were far off. Adore your Savior, my Brothers and Sisters—bow before Him. He is not here, for He is risen, but your hearts can rise and you can bow at His feet. Oh, kiss those wounds of His! Ask that by faith you may put your finger into the print of His nails and your hand into His side! “Be not faithless, but believing,” and let all your sacred powers of mind assist your imagination and faith to realize, now, the price with which the Savior brought you from an intolerable bondage! God grant you Grace to feel something of this.

I have laid the Truth of God before you. Now sit down and quietly turn it over in your mind. And what will strike you? Why, surely first *the heinousness of sin*. Was there nothing that could wash out sin but blood? And was there no blood that could wash it out but the blood of the Son of God? O Sin! O Sin! What a black, what a damning thing you are! Only the blood of an Incarnate God can wash out the smallest stain of sin. My heart, I charge you to hate it! My eyes, look not on it. My ears, listen not to its siren charm! My feet, run not in its paths! My hands, refuse to handle it! My soul, loathe, loathe that which murdered Christ and thrust a spear through the most tender heart that ever beat!

Next to that, do you not feel emotions of *intense gratitude* that if such a price was needed, such a price was found? God had but one Son, dearer to Him than Isaac was to Abraham, and though there was none to command Him to do it, as there was in Abraham's case, yet voluntarily the gracious Father led His Son up to the Cross. And it pleased the Father to bruise Him. He put Him to grief. He gave Him up for us! Which shall I most admire—the love of the Father, or the love of the Son? Blessed be God, we are not asked to make distinctions, for they are One! “I and My Father are One,” and in that sacred act of the Sacrifice for the sins of men, the Father and the Son are both to be worshipped with equal love. You see, then, the heinousness of sin in some degree, for its needing for its pardon the love of Jesus, and the love of God that gave the Savior's blood.

But, dear Friends, before I sit down, let me remark that we learn from our text and from the whole contemplation what it is that would bring us experimentally nearer than we are tonight. How did I get near first? Through the blood! Do I need to get near to God tonight? Have I been wandering? Is my heart cold? Have I got into a backsliding state? Do I need to come close, now, to my blessed Father, and again to look up to Him and say, “Abba,” and rejoice in that filial spirit? There is no way for me to come nearer except the blood. Let me think of it, then, and let me see its Infinite value. It is sufficient, let me hear its everlasting, ever-prevalent plea, and oh, then I shall feel my soul drawn, for that which draws us nearer to God, and will draw us right up to Heaven, is none other than the crimson cord of the Savior's endless, boundless, dying, but ever-living love!

And this teaches me, and teaches you, too, and here I have done, *what it is we ought to preach and teach* if we would bring the far-off ones in—if we would bring near to God those that now wander from Him. Philosophy, bah! You will philosophize men into Hell, but never into Heaven! Ceremonies you can amuse children with and you can degrade men into idiots with them, but you can do nothing else! The Gospel and the essence of that Gospel, which is the blood of Jesus Christ—it is this which is an Omnipotent leverage to uplift the filth, debauchery and poverty of this city into life, into light, and into holiness! There is no battering ram that will ever shake the gates of Hell except that which every time it strikes sounds this word, “Jesus, Jesus, the Crucified.” “God forbid that we should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” If it will save us, it will save others—only let us spread the good news, let us tell of the good tidings. Every one of us ought to preach the Gospel somehow. You that speak in common conversation forget not to speak of Him. Scatter such tracts as are most full of Christ—they are the best—others will be of little use. Write letters concerning Him. Remember His name is like ointment, full of sweetness—but to get the perfume you must pour it forth. Oh, that we could make fragrant all this neighborhood with the savor of that dear name! Oh, that wherever we dwell, everyone of us might

so think of Christ in our hearts that we could not help speaking of Him with our lips! Living, may we rejoice in Him! Dying, may we triumph in Him. May our last whisper on earth be what our first song shall be in Heaven, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain and has redeemed us unto God by His blood.” Oh, I pray God to make this season of communion very sweet to you, and I think it will be if you have the key of our meditation tonight, and can unlock the door—if you know how far off you were and see how near you are by the precious blood!

Oh, there are some far-off ones here tonight, however, to whom I must say just this word. Far-off one, God can make you near! You can be made near tonight! Whoever you may be, He is still able to save, but the *blood* must make you near—the blood of Jesus! Trust Him. To believe is to live—and to believe means only and simply to trust, to depend upon. That is faith. Have confidence in Christ’s Sacrifice and you are saved! God grant you may be enabled to do it, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
1 CHRONICLES 22.**

May the Lord instruct us while we read. Perhaps we shall understand it better if we begin in the 21st Chapter at the 26th verse.

1 Chronicles 21:26, 27. *And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD; and He answered him from Heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering. And the LORD commanded the angel; and he returned his sword to its sheath.* “And David built there”—that is upon the threshing floor of Ornan. The place of sacrifice was the place of salvation! The angel was smiting Jerusalem, but as soon as ever the sacrifice was offered, the angel sheathed his sword.

28. *At that time when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there.* Then came a sacrifice of thanksgiving, as there always should be after prayer is answered. Remember how the Psalmist puts it, “Then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar”—after the sin is pardoned and the transgression is put away.

29, 30 and 1 Chronicles 22:1. *For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, were at that season in the high place at Gibeon. But David could not go before it to inquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD. Then David said, This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel.* The place where God had answered him—where the angel had appeared to him, where the fire had come down from Heaven—he felt to be holiest and that the Lord had directed him to it as the spot where His Temple was to be built. It is very significant that it should be upon a threshing floor, for surely the Church of God is God’s threshing floor, where He gathers His sheaves together and

separates between the wheat and the chaff. “I will winnow,” says He, “My threshing floor.” Oh, that we might always recognize that Christ is the Temple of God, and Christ is the Sacrifice! Christ is the appearance of God that is better to us than the appearance of angels, and Christ is God’s answer to us by fire—and where Christ is, there is the burnt offering.

2. *And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew worked stones to build the House of God.* It is very observable, *not the Israelites*, but the foreigners, the aliens, the strangers, the remaining Canaanites that were in the land were set to hew the stones for the House of the Lord. I have heard very good people, indeed, object to the ungodly giving any money whatever to God’s cause. This proves them wrong—here are the aliens employed to hew the stones for the House of God—and why should they not? It will do them good, at least, to do some good thing or other in their lives. Let them have an opportunity to do so. But I see here an indication of the *calling of the Gentiles*, for whenever the Jews said the Gentiles had nothing to do with God, why the very stones of their Temple spoke against them! Were not the timbers brought from Tyre by the Tyrians along in floats? Were not the stones quarried by aliens and foreigners? Oh, the Lord would have His people follow a large, and liberal, and prophetic policy in their dealing with mankind! God forbid that we should shut anybody out from anything that looks like good. Oh, let us not repel them—it may be that in repelling their offerings we may be hardening their hearts. David was a wiser man than that.

3, 4. *And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joints; and brass in abundance without weight. Also cedar trees in abundance: for the Zidonians and they of Tyre brought much cedar wood to David.* Here, again, was a kind of prophecy of what would happen in better days, when the poor Gentiles would be permitted to have a share in the building of the House of God. These Tyrians and Zidonians were among the worst of idolaters and yet they were used in their due place and subservience to hew the trees and float them to the Temple, as near as they could get by sea to Joppa.

5. *And David said, Solomon, my son, is young and tender, and the House that is to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it.* There is no way of helping young people to serve God like setting them a good example. Let the father feel, with regard to his son, that he is young and tender—he may not be able to begin, but if I begin, I shall get him in the mode of doing such things, and maybe he may carry out my design when I am sleeping in the grave. It was well, it was wise, it was splendid of David thus to make all preparations that Solomon might afterwards go on with the good work!

6. *So David prepared abundantly before his death.* If you cannot do everything yourself—and who can?—is it not well to prepare abundantly

before our death for somebody else to go on with the work? Thus shall we live after we are dead—live in our sons, if God is so good to us—live in our grandchildren! Who knows?—live in someone we were the means of bringing to the Savior’s feet by our ministry. Then he called to Solomon, his son. He had prepared everything, and now he speaks to him. And he charges him to build a House for Jehovah, the God of Israel.

7-8. *And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an House unto the name of the LORD my God: But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, You have shed blood abundantly, and have made great wars: you shall not build an House unto My name, because You have shed much blood upon the earth in My sight. It was not an allusion to Uriah’s blood, as some have thought, for God said this to David long before David’s great sin. The wars in which David was engaged were honest wars for the defense and deliverance of the country, in which God had helped him, and yet even the best war is bad in God’s esteem. When blood is shed, God delights not in it—and He sets His servant on one side without blaming him, and says, “No, a bloody hand is not fit for the building of My Temple. You have been called in the order of Providence to be a warrior and a conqueror. You must be content with that—you cannot build the Temple to the God of Peace.”*

9. *Behold a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest. That is a very sweet name for Solomon, “A man of rest.” I pray that many a Believer here may be a man of that kind. Some Believers have to be men of war. There they are, in a world of struggles, disputes, contentions of their own ambitions—but happy is that man who is of a gentle and a tender spirit, a spirit of holy wisdom and whom God gives the great privilege to be a man of peace!*

9, 10. *And I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build an House for My name and he shall be My son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever. What a sweet benediction from an aged man’s mouth.*

11-13. *Now, my son, the LORD be with you and prosper you, and build the house of the LORD your God, as He has said of you. Only the LORD give you wisdom and understanding, and give you charge concerning Israel, that you may keep the Law of the LORD your God. Then shall you prosper, if you take heed to fulfill the statutes and judgments which the LORD charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed. This was addressed to a tender young man by an old man who had displayed much courage. They who have been courageous can safely encourage others to be so. God make us all in every good cause to be free from fear. Like Bernard, the knight, may we be “without fear, and without reproach,” ever contending for God and His Truth.*

14. *Now behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the House of the LORD an hundred thousand talents of gold. Whatever sum that may have*

been, it could hardly have been a Babylonian talent, because that would have made him to have laid up one thousand millions sterling!

14. *And a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber, also, and stone have I prepared; and you may add thereto.* A capital text for a collection—whenever there has been a good sum given already, “You may add thereto.” Next Sunday week we collect for the hospitals. You may add to the gold if you can. You may add to the silver if you can. You may add to the copper if you cannot add to the silver or the gold.

15. *Moreover there are workmen with you in abundance.* David had foreseen all that was needed and had got a list of the men of skill and art throughout all his land.

15. *Hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work.* You remember that text, “The Lord showed me four carpenters,” and so when the Lord wants carpenters, there will be carpenters! Whatever kind of men He requires for His service, that kind of men shall be forthcoming in the day of need—“All manner of cunning men for every manner of work.”

16. *Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number. Arise, therefore and be doing, and the LORD be with you.* That is his word to Solomon.

17. *David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon, his son, saying—*What a grand thing it is when a man has true-hearted helpers—men who are ready to stint themselves, annihilate themselves, as it were—to help some other man to do the work of the Lord, quite satisfied to be themselves unknown, so long as the House of the Lord is built and God’s name is glorified!

18. *Is not the LORD, your God with you? And has He not given you rest on every side? For He has given the inhabitants of the land into my hand; and the land is subdued before the LORD, and before His people.* So then they had not to fight, but to work! If Jesus Christ has conquered all our foes, and routed all our sins—if sin, death and Hell lie prostrate at His feet—what can we do but devote our rest and peace to His service?

19. *Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God; arise therefore, and build you the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God, into the House that is to be built to the name of the LORD.*

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

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

NEARNESS TO GOD

NO. 851

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 17, 1869,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off are
made near by the blood of Christ.”
Ephesians 2:13.***

THE text is a gate of pearl leading up to the excellent Glory. Happy are the men to whom it is given to enter thereby. It turns upon hinges of diamond. Those two phrases, “in Christ Jesus,” “by the blood of Christ”—these are the two pivots of the precious doctrine of the text. “Made near,” this is our delightful privilege, but, “in Christ Jesus,” is one source of the blessing, “and by the blood of Christ” is the other. Before our rejoicing eyes rolls a sea of love, an ocean of boundless peace and bliss comparable to the sea of glass before the sapphire throne! In order to reach this great Pacific, you must sail through yon narrow strait which flows between the two headlands of union to Christ and cleansing by the atoning blood.

I. We commence, therefore, this morning, by endeavoring to EXPLAIN THE MEANING OF THE TWO KEY WORDS—“*In Christ Jesus,*” and “*by the blood of Christ.*” “We who once were far off are made near.” *First, because we are in Christ Jesus.* All the elect of God are in Christ Jesus by a federal union. He is their Head ordained of old to be so from before the foundation of the world. As Adam was the federal head of the race and as in him we fell, so Christ, the second Adam, stands as the Head of the chosen people and in Him they rise again and live.

This federal union leads in due time, by the Grace of God, to a *manifest* and vital union—a union *of* life and *for* life—even unto eternal life, of which the visible bond is *faith*. The soul comes to Jesus and lays hold on Him by an act of faith because Jesus has already laid hold upon that soul by the power of His Spirit, claiming it to be His heritage, seeing He has bought it with His blood and His Father has given it to Him as the reward of the travail of His soul. All who are in Christ Jesus in the eternal Covenant of Grace, shall, in due time, be in Him by the living union of which we now speak—mystical and mysterious—but still most real, most true and most efficient.

Now, Beloved, when a soul becomes really in Christ, as the branch is in the vine, and draws its nourishment from the stem, as the limb is in the body and derives all its vitality from the central heart—when a man thus becomes one with Christ, it is clear to the most common observer that he must be near to God—for Christ is ever near to God and those one with Him must be near, also. Jesus is Himself God—here is nearness outdone! As Man He is without spot or blemish and near to God in Character. As having finished the work which was given Him to do, He is near to God in *acceptance*. As having gone up to Heaven to take the promised crown, He is near to God in Person. And since we are one with Him, we must be from that very fact near to God, yes, as near to God as Christ Himself is!

Understand that if anything is one with a man, actually one with that man, it stands in the same place as that man does. So if we are one with Christ by a real and actual union—where Christ is, we are! Christ's standing is our standing! And as Christ is near unto God, even so He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places. We are—

**“So near, so very near to God,
We cannot nearer be,
For in the Person of His Son,
We are as near as He.”**

The other key word of the text is, “by the blood of Christ.” If it is asked what power lies in the blood to bring near, it must be answered, first, that the blood is the symbol of the Covenant. Ever in Scripture when covenants are made, victims are offered and the victim becomes the place and ground of approach between the two covenanting parties. The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is expressly called, “the blood of the Everlasting Covenant,” for God comes in Covenant near to us by the blood of His only-begotten Son. Every man whose faith rests upon the blood of Jesus slain from before the foundations of the world is in Covenant with God and that Covenant becomes to him most sure and certain because it has been ratified by the blood of Jesus Christ and therefore can never be changed or disannulled.

The blood brings us near in another sense because it is the taking away of the sin which separated us. When we read the word, “blood,” as in the text, it means mortal *suffering*—we are made near by the griefs and agonies of the Redeemer. The shedding of blood indicates pain, loss of energy, health, comfort, happiness. But it goes further still—the term, “blood,” signifies *death*. It is the *death* of Jesus in which we trust. We glory in His life. We triumph in His Resurrection. But the ground of our nearness to God lies in His death.

The term, “blood,” moreover, signifies not a mere expiring, but a painful and ignominious and penal death. A death not brought about by the decay of nature, or the arrows of disease, but caused by the sharp sword of Divine vengeance. The word, in fact, refers directly to the Crucifixion of our Lord. We are brought near to God especially and particularly by a crucified Savior pouring out His life's blood for us! Beloved, it is well to note this well-known doctrine, because there are some teachers—and I doubt not very excellent men, too—who seem not to be of Paul's mind when he said, “God forbid that I should glory, save in *the Cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and who resolved to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him *crucified*.

These Brethren are incessantly preaching concerning Christ *glorified*, a valuable Truth of God, I allow, but not the way of a sinner's access to God. Christ's Second Coming was never intended to take the place of Christ's Crucifixion and yet there have been some, I fear, who, in their zeal for the very great and important Truth of the coming Glory, have suffered the blazing light of the Second Advent to obscure the milder radiance and the more healing beams of the First Advent, with its bloody sweat, its scourges, its crown of thorns and ransom price for lost sinners.

Let it never be forgotten that while we bless Immanuel, God with us, for His Incarnation. And we joyfully perceive that even our Lord's *birth* in human flesh brought man near to God. While we thank and praise the Man of Sorrows for His Divine example and we see that this is a blessed

help to us practically to advance towards our heavenly Father. While we praise and magnify the Lord Jesus for His Resurrection and His Ascension and discern in each glorious step fresh rungs of the ladder which leads from earth to Heaven. Yet still, for all that, we are not made near to God by the Incarnation! We are not in very deed made near to God by the Resurrection, nor by the Second Advent, but we are made near by the *blood of Christ*.

The first, the grandest, the highest, the most essential Truth of God for us to lay hold of and to preach is the fact that Jesus Christ *died* for our sakes according to the Scriptures and that this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and for sinners gave Himself up to die, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. God is glorified because Christ was punished for the sin of His people. Love has its full, but Law has its due. On the Cross we see sin fully punished and yet fully pardoned. We see Justice with her gleaming sword triumphant and Mercy with her silver scepter reigning in sublime splendor!

Glory be to the wondrous wisdom which discovered the way of blending vengeance with love, making a tender heart to be the mirror of unflinching severity, causing the crystal vase of Jesus' loving Nature to be filled with the red wine of righteous wrath!—

***“O love of God, how strong and true!
Eternal and yet ever new,
Uncomprehended and unbought,
Beyond all knowledge and all thought.
We read You best in Him who came
To bear for us the Cross of shame—
Sent by the Father from on high,
Our life to live, our death to die.”***

Beloved, you thus see that we are made near because the blood of Christ has sealed a Covenant between us and God and has forever taken away the sin which separated us from God. Experimentally, we are brought near by the application of the blood to our conscience. We see that sin is pardoned and bless the God who has saved us in so admirable a manner, and then we who hated Him, before, come to love Him.

We who had no thought towards Him desire to be like He is. We are experimentally, and in our own souls, drawn and attracted to God by the blood of Jesus. The great attracting loadstone of the Gospel is the doctrine of the Cross. To preach the atoning sacrifice of Jesus is the shortest and surest way, under God's Holy Spirit, to draw those that are far off, mentally and spiritually, very near unto God! Thus have I dwelt upon those two key words upon which the text seems to me to hinge.

II. Let us pass on to ILLUSTRATE THE NEARNESS into which God has been pleased to bring us in Christ Jesus by virtue of His blood. I shall take three illustrations from the Word of God. The first illustration is from our first parent, *Adam*. Adam dwelt in the Garden, abiding with God in devout communion. The Lord God walked in the Garden in the cool of the day with Adam. As a favored creature, the first man was permitted to know much of his Creator and to be near to Him.

But, alas, Adam sinned and at once we see the first stage of our own distance from God as we perceive Adam in the Garden without his God. In the Garden, in the very midst of Paradise, flowers shedding their sweet perfume, fruits hanging ready to his hand on every side—and yet man is

wretched, miserable and cowardly! He hides among the trees of the Garden until the Lord God calls to him, "Adam, where are you?" Here is the first stage of distance and it is sad and terrible. But, ah, Brethren, you and I were further off than that—much further off than that when love made *us* near!

It would have been a great wonder of Divine Grace if, being in such a position, God had restored us again to His favor. If He had said to us after one transgression, "I have blotted out your sin like a cloud: I have passed by your offense, I restore you to happiness." But the Grace which God has shown to us is as much greater than this as the thorn-bearing soil is sterner than Eden's laughing flowers.

Adam was brought before his God, arraigned, upbraided and condemned to be expelled from Paradise. Justice drove out the man. With fiery sword the cherubim keep watch at Eden's gate. Adam banished into the cold, sin-blighted world, to till the ground from where he was taken, with the promise ringing in his ear, "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," is the second stage of distance from God. Now, it would have been great Grace for God to take Adam from outside the Garden, to forgive him, to bring him within the happy gate and restore him to his former place—but the mercy worked in us is greater still!

You and I were further gone than Adam outside of Eden, with a Gospel promise newly given him. We were not on the threshold of Paradise, but we were far off by wicked works. Our natural position as Gentile sinners was not with Adam outside the gate, but with the nations that knew not God! Our position was as when they had wandered farthest away from Paradise, had become most estranged from God and had set up many gods, and many lords, and had polluted and defiled themselves with all manner of uncleanness!

See now the steps which God has taken with us Gentile dogs, as the Jews once called us! He has taken us, who were of old an idolatrous people, practicing bloody rites—a nation without knowledge of the Divine oracles and He has illuminated us with the Gospel of His Grace, bringing the kingdom of God very near unto us and ourselves very near to it. The Lord has been pleased to separate many of us to Himself and bring us into His visible Church so that we dwell within that "garden walled around, chosen and made peculiar ground." This is no small deed of love! Aliens are made fellow *citizens* with the saints and of the household of God!

Yet, much more than this has been done for true Believers in the blood of Jesus. Not the name only, but the very *essence* and soul of true piety is ours, so that once again we walk with God! And in communion with the saints and with their Lord, we find a new garden of delight whose plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, camphor with spikenard. "Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphor, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters and streams from Lebanon." We might date our letters from Elysium, for, "we that have believed do enter into rest." Yes, we are restored by Divine Grace to the King's garden! We have found Glory begun below—

***"Celestial fruits on earthly ground,
From faith and hope do grow."***

Let me now give you a *second* illustration, which may place this wonder of love in a still clearer light. It shall be taken from the children of Israel traveling through the wilderness. If an angel had poised himself in mid air and watched awhile in the days of Moses, gazing down upon the people in the wilderness and all else that surrounded them, his eyes would have rested upon the central spot, the tabernacle, over which rested the pillar of cloud and fire by day and night, as the outward index of the Presence of God.

Now, observe yonder select persons clad in fair white linen, who come near, very near, to that great center—they are priests—men who are engaged from day to day sacrificing bullocks and lambs and serving God. They are near to the Lord and engaged in most hallowed work, but they are not the nearest of all. One man, alone, comes nearest. He is the high priest, who, once every year, enters into that which is within the veil. Ah, what condescension is that which gives *us* the same access to God! The priests are servants of God and very near to Him, but not nearest. And it would be great Grace if God permitted the priests to enter into the Most Holy Place.

But, Brothers and Sisters, we were not by nature comparable to the priests. We were not the Lord's servants. We were not devoted to His fear and the Grace that has brought us near through the precious blood was much greater than that which admits a priest within the veil. Every priest that went within the veil entered there by blood which he sprinkled on the Mercy Seat. If made near, even from the nearer stage, it must be by blood and in connection with the one only High Priest.

If the angel continued his gaze he would next see lying all round the tabernacle the twelve tribes in their tents. These were a people near unto God—for what nation has God so near unto them? Deuteronomy 4:7. But they are nothing like so near as the *priests*. They did not abide in the holy court, nor were they always occupied in worship. Israel may fitly represent the *outward* Church, the members of which have not yet received all the spiritual blessing they might have, yet are they blessed and made near. If ever an Israelite advanced into the court of the priests, it was with blood. He came with sacrifice. There was no access without it. It was great favor which permitted the Israelite to come into the court of the priests and partake in Divine worship. But, Brethren, you and I were farther off than Israel and it needed more Grace, by far, to bring *us* near. By blood alone are we made near, and by blood displayed in all the glory of its power!

Outside the camp of Israel altogether, you would have seen a company of miserable wretches who herded together as best they could—lepers—unclean, driven outside the camp. *This* is more like *our* position. If ever these lepers were brought near enough to come into communion with the camp of Israel, much more to come into communion with the *priests*, their access must be wholly and alone by blood. The turtle dove, or the young pigeon must be slain. The lamb must be killed, the scarlet wool and hysop must be used. There was no purging of the leper to bring him into communion with the tribes of Israel except by blood.

And oh, we—we in our filthiness so like the leper—we have to praise almighty Grace which looked upon us when our natural depravity stared us in the face—when it had become apparent by our continued disobedience to God! We have to praise the mercy which has brought us right

away from the leper's place to as near to God as the accepted high priest before the veil! Beloved, had the angel still continued his gaze, he would have observed that even these lepers were far more favored than the other inhabitants of the world, for the whole world was lying in darkness, without God, without a revelation of His Glory.

THIS is our position, this last one! We were the aliens, the strangers, the foreigners! A leper, though a leper, was still an Israelite, and if he could not go up into the sanctuary of the Lord, yet still there was the mark of the Covenant of his flesh and he was of the seed of Abraham and the wing of God in the cloudy pillar covered him! He ate the manna and drank of the rock. But as for the poor heathen—for them there was no appointed way of access—they were cast out and left to perish in their sins! The old Covenant did not, so far as its outward manifestation was concerned, have a word to say to US!

Far off, then, with the Gentiles is your place and my place. We are by nature out of covenant and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. There you are right away in the dark heathen world. And what did God's Grace do for you? Why, it brought you, first of all, into connection with God's people and under the sound of the Gospel's silver trumpet! You became like the poor leper, but still you were near to Israel, hearing the Gospel and learning the way of salvation. Thank God for bringing you so near as that, for there is no small privilege in hearing the Truth of God. But Divine Grace did not stop there. It purged and cleansed you, and you were admitted into fellowship with the Church.

You became numbered with the seed of Israel! You pitched your tent near the tabernacle and partook of its abundant blessings! But Grace did not stop there. It made you, next, a priest unto God, a consecrated servant of the Lord of Hosts and you have been kept by Grace in the place of holy service! You are *still* the Lord's anointed priest and your sacrifices are well-pleasing in His sight. But here is the wonder of wonders—when the eternal love of God had brought you so near, so gloriously near, it did not stop there! It did not content itself with making you a priest, but it said you shall stand “in Christ Jesus!” And, Beloved, you know that this means that we are made as near Christ Himself, who, as the great High Priest, with blood in His hand, goes right into the veil, right up to the Mercy Seat and talks with God!

A *third* illustration of our nearness to God will be found around the peaks of the mount of God, even Sinai, where the various degrees of access to God are set forth with singular beauty and preciseness of detail. The 19th chapter of the book of Exodus tells us that the Lord revealed Himself on the top of Sinai with flaming fire and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace. Jehovah drew near unto His people Israel, coming down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai, while the tribes stood at the foot of the mountain.

Now remember that our natural position was much more remote than Israel at the foot of the mountain, for we were a Gentile nation to whom God did not appear in His Glory and with whom He spoke not as with Israel. We were living in darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death—and Israel was privileged to come very near as compared with us. Therefore the Apostle, in the chapter from which the text is taken, speaks of the circumcised as *near*. I take Israel to be to us this morning the type of

those who live under Gospel privileges and are allowed to hear the joyful sound of salvation bought with blood.

There stand the tribes at the foot of the mountain. They can hear the sound of the trumpet waxing exceedingly loud and long and a distinct voice proclaiming the Law of God—they hear it and it affects their hearts and prostrates them with awe. Boundaries were set round about the mountain and an ordinance was given that if so much as a beast touched the mountain, it should be stoned or thrust through with a dart. Their distance was thus far more apparent than their comparative nearness. Do you see them standing there—the whole vast host—hearing, hearing distinctly and trembling as they hear—at last trembling so much that they say to Moses, “Speak you with us and we will hear. But let not God speak with us lest we die”?

Their fear made them remove further still—what they saw and heard of God begot in them no *love*—it did not draw them to Him, but the reverse! They promised fairly to Moses that they would keep all God’s Laws, that they would serve him with all their hearts. But alas, their goodness soon vanished! They had been outwardly purified and made ready, sanctified, as Moses says, to behold the Glory of the Lord. But alas, after a few short days they deliberately fell into idolatry, worshipping a golden calf—forgetting the solemnities of the Law and indifferent to the will of God who had displayed Himself to them. Very near they were, and yet far enough off to perish—for their carcasses fell in the wilderness and with many of them He was not well-pleased.

Ah, my dear Hearers, there is much Grace in the fact that you are brought near enough, all of you, to be able to hear the Gospel plainly and earnestly delivered. At the base of Mount Zion you have stood trembling while we have warned you of the judgment to come and told you of the indignation of God against sin. You have been like Israel, ready to sink into the earth with fear and you have promised, some of you very fairly, that before long you would repent and believe the Gospel. The Gospel command has come to your conscience with such power that you have been compelled to promise obedience to it! But alas, what has been the result of your fear and your vow? You have gone farther back from God and have plunged anew into the world’s idolatry—and are today worshipping *your-selves*, your *pleasures*, your *sins*, or your *righteousness*!

And when the Lord comes, the nearness of opportunity which you have enjoyed will prove to have been to you a most fearful responsibility and nothing more. You come to the mount of God and hear His voice, but like Israel you go your way to rebel yet more and more! Sometimes, under earnest sermons, or by solemn Providences, or by the suggestions of the Holy Spirit, you have been almost persuaded to be Christians! But yet you are, to this hour, without Christ and without hope! You came up to the turning point, but you stopped there. We all hoped well of you. We could almost have clapped our hands in the certainty of our hope that you would be saved and yet you remained like Israel—only near in the point of outward privilege—but not brought near by the *blood* so as to be saved.

Child of God, be thankful for that first stage of nearness this morning, for even this is given us by blood! If there had been no paschal lamb, Israel had never stood at Sinai. And if there had been no blood shedding you had never heard the Gospel. But bless the Lord that you have ad-

vanced far, far beyond this into a nearness infinitely preferable! Turning to the 24th chapter of Exodus, you will observe that the Lord said unto Moses, “Come up unto the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu and 70 of the elders of Israel; and worship afar off.”

The next stage of nearness to God is pictured by the chosen men selected from the people who were to climb halfway up the hill, nearer to the thick canopy of darkness which veiled the Presence of God. But still they are said to have worshipped *afar off*. Now, note that these 70 could not come nearer than the people except by blood—turn to the 5th verse, “And Moses sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the audience of the people and Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, Behold the blood of the Covenant which the Lord has made with you concerning all these words.”

The select band of representative men could not come into a degree of superior nearness without blood. It was a great honor to be called out from among the people to enjoy a nearer audience with the Almighty Lord. Surely those men, with their souls hushed under a deep sense of awe would, nevertheless, rejoice and say, “What are we and what is our father’s house, that we are called upon to climb so near to God?” Those 70 may be used to represent the *visible* Church of Jesus Christ. Church members are all, in a certain sense, made nearer to God than the mere common hearers of the Word and their position is one of eminent honor and privilege.

In the case of the 70, it is said, “they saw the God of Israel”—10th verse—that is to say, they had a remarkably vivid impression upon their minds of His august Presence—“and there was under His feet, as it were, a paved work of sapphire stone.” That is, they were permitted to see the justice, the holiness, the *purity* of God typified by a pavement of clear crystal. As the text continues—“as it were the body of Heaven in His clearness.” They were doubtless overwhelmed with a sense of the awful majesty, holiness and purity of God. But they were encouraged by Divine mercy to be of good cheer, so that they saw God, “*and did eat and drink.*”

They had manifest communion with the Most High and yet they did not die under the blaze of Glory. “Upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand.” See here a fair type of the Glory which God gives to His visible Church! We are selected and taken out from among men to be a people near unto Him. We are made, as Church members, to have a clearer view than others of the holiness and Glory of God. We are permitted to eat and drink in His Presence, to sit down at His table and yet to live. We are favored in the Church with many gracious displays of the Lord’s love and Grace such as the world sees not.

But I want you to notice a Truth of God which strikes me as so solemnly full of warning. Among those who thus were privileged to enter into this nearness, we have the names of Nadab and Abihu—and what became of them? They were destroyed before the Lord for offering strange fire upon the altar! So that it is clear that there is an official nearness of God which does *not* secure men from wrath. In the Christian Church, there may be, no, it seems as if there always *must* be some who shall, without

doubt, perish—and the fire of God shall devour them. I wish that those who join the Church without due consideration would solemnly recollect that it is not necessary for them to thrust themselves into such an awful position unless they *know* that they are the people of God. It were a pity for them to increase their own condemnation by such a willful act of presumption.

Note well that passage concerning the unfaithful servant who said in his heart, “My lord delays his coming,” and began to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink and to be drunken. For it is written, “The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looks not for him and at an hour when he is not aware and will cut him in sunder and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.” The sacrifices of the Covenant were cut in sunder and so the Covenant was ratified.

Now, the man who mocks the Covenant by intruding himself into the fellowship to which he belongs not shall receive upon himself the curse which for others our Great Sacrifice has borne. There will be singular judgments for ungodly Church members. It were good for such men that they had never been born! Judgment is to *begin* at the House of God. “His fan is in His hand.” And what will He do with it? “He will thoroughly purge *His floor*.” When He sits as a refiner, whom will He purify? Mark the words of Malachi—“He will purify the *sons of Levi*.” His fire, where is it? It is in Zion and His furnace in Jerusalem. There shall be no such condemnation as that which shall be measured out to those who, in official standing, possess peculiar nearness to God and yet, like Nadab and Abihu, have not the true spirit, are unfaithful in service, look not to the Savior in truth and so are cast away after all!

Most worthy of your notice is another fact connected with the 70 and that is when Moses went up into the higher Glory, he bade Aaron and the 70 stay where they were, but they failed to do it. He said unto the elders (in the 14th verse), “Tarry you here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man has any matters to do, let him come unto them.” Moses was then gone from them for 46 or 47 days at the least and their duty was to have remained where he had appointed their place. If the people needed Aaron, they were to send up to him—he need not cease to direct and judge the people, but they were to *come to him*—he was not to go down to them.

Now, what did Aaron do? Why, he went down to the camp and fell into the black sin of making a molten image! “And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.” Aaron would never have made that golden calf if he had stayed upon the mountain where he was told to remain.

What does this say to us? Is not the lesson plain? The visible Church is too prone to come down to the world and even those who are God’s servants, when they are lifted up into a state of nearness to God, seldom abide there. They conform to this evil world—they descend from their true eminence, they mix with the people—and they, who have seen God in His Glory like unto a sapphire stone, are found pandering to the corruption of the world! To what a state of degradation may any of us come unless the

Lord shall hold us up! We may go up very far and may see God and then come down and become the instruments of the sins of others, as Aaron did.

If you read on, in the 24th chapter, you will observe that the Lord called to Moses again and he went up the hill attended by one single person. "And Moses rose up and his minister, Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God." So these two men go alone and Joshua comes to what I may call the fringe of the black cloud of darkness which hung over the central peak of Sinai. There he stopped and there by God's Grace he was able, patiently, to remain the first six days with Moses and those other 40 days, while Moses was on the top alone. Joshua, by God's Grace, was enabled to maintain the true, real, abiding, faithful communion with God!

And he seems to me to represent those virgin souls among God's elect ones who follow the Lamb where ever He goes. Those men, greatly beloved, who are delivered by abundant Grace from much of the instability of the majority of professors, so that they walk in the light as He is in the light. They abide in their Lord and His Word abides in them. These come not down to the people as Aaron and the elders did, but their conversation is in Heaven and their walk is with God. Such men fall not into the people's sin, but tarry in solitary nonconformity to a degenerate Church. Even these do not realize the fullness of the nearness which belongs to them in the Mediator, but they come very, very near to God.

Now what are such men sure to be? What was Joshua? He was a warrior and of martial spirit. When Moses came down from the mount with Joshua, Joshua said to him, "There is a sound of war in the camp." As a warrior he would naturally be apprehensive of a foe. Moses descended alone till he met his servant, Joshua, waiting in his place. The two went down till they came to the place where the 70 ought to be, but they were all gone—all gone! And at the foot of the mountain, where they might have expected to find Israel on their knees in prayer, they saw a ribald crew indulging in vile orgies before a golden calf! Joshua's example seems to say to us, that if we are to keep up our fellowship with Christ, we must fight for it! If we would be men of God, we must be warriors for the Truth of God! What a blessing if we can get to such a point as this!

But there is something beyond it and I desire to bring you to it by bidding you observe that Moses is the type of the Mediator—he went right up to the greatest nearness of access and there he communed with God—he interceded with God and he received from God's hand the revelation of God's Law! Now hear and wonder, "We who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ," and brought to stand as near as Moses stood, for we are in Jesus as near to God as possible. It was something to come as near as Israel. It was *more* to advance as near as the elders. It was higher, still, to be called as near as Joshua.

But to be brought as near as *Moses*, through the precious blood, so that we dwell *in* God, rejoice in Him, intercede with Him, have power with Him and receive from Him the revelation of His Truth by the energy of His Holy Spirit—this is the crown of all! O that we may go down with a Glory upon our faces like that upon the face of Moses, to show the sons of men that we have been with Jesus in the Holy Place and are filled with all the fullness of God!

Looking at these stages of nearness, does it not seem a tremendous distance from our place in far-off Tarshish and the isles thereof, among the heathen, into the camp of Israel, up the sides of the mountain with the elders, higher still with Joshua and beyond Joshua into the secret place of the majesty of the Most High, where the Mediator of that Covenant stood alone and where our Mediator stands forever with all those who are in Him?!

III. Let US NOTE SOME OF THE DISPLAYS OF THE REALIZATIONS OF THIS NEARNESS TO GOD as granted to us by blood through our union with Christ. We perceive and see manifestly our nearness to God in the very first hour of our conversion. The father fell upon the prodigal's neck and kissed him—no greater nearness than that! The prodigal becomes an accepted child—is and must be very near his father's heart.

And we, who sometimes were far off, are as near to God as a child to his parents. We have a renewed sense of this nearness in times of restoration after backsliding, when, pleading the precious blood, we say, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." We come to God and feel that He is near unto them that are of a broken heart. We come near to God in prayer. Our nearness to God is peculiarly evinced at the Mercy Seat. The very term we use for prayer is, "Let us draw near unto God." But, Brothers and Sisters, we never get to God in prayer unless it is through pleading the precious blood!

We see our nearness to God in the act of praise. Oftentimes in praising Him, we have taken the wings of seraphs and passed up into the Glory and magnified the Lord, but it has always been through Him who by His precious blood makes our praises acceptable to the Most High. We who have believed come very near to God in the act of Baptism, for we are baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Wicked and base is he who has dared to touch that ordinance, unless he sincerely desired fellowship in the Lord's death. The nearness we get to God in Baptism by faith depends upon whether or not we see the blood there and behold Jesus as buried for us.

Then in the Lord's Supper—what nearness is there! But it, too, all lies in the blood. We get no nearness through the wine, no nearness through the bread—the elements are nothing of themselves—it is only when we get to feel that our Lord's flesh is meat, indeed, and His blood drink, indeed, that we draw near to Him. And, Beloved, when we have done with means of Grace, with communing here, and meditations and prayers and praises, we shall get nearer to our God up yonder—in the place where they see His face and bear His name upon their foreheads.

But why shall we then draw near to Him? It is written, "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: therefore are they before the Throne of God and serve Him day and night in His Temple."

IV. I have thus hinted at various times when this nearness to God develops itself and is most seen. Let us close with a BRIEF EXHORTATION. Let us live in the power of the nearness which union with Christ and the blood has given us. It is a well-known rule that our minds are sure to be occupied with those things which are most near to us. We may excuse ourselves for being so worldly because the things of this world are so near

us—but we must never venture to repeat that excuse again—since we now know that we are made near to God and heavenly things by the *blood*.

Let your conversation be in Heaven: “Where your treasure is, there let your heart be.” Beloved, if we are, indeed, so near to God through the blood and through union with Christ, let us enjoy those things which this nearness was intended to bring! Those who live under the equator never lack for light or heat. There vegetation is luxuriant and every form of life is well developed. They who dwell far away in the frigid zone, where the sun only casts his slanting rays, may well be meager and short of stature and feel the pinch of poverty.

We who dwell under the equator of the Lord’s love must bring forth much fruit! Let us rejoice with joy unspeakable! Let our souls be like those torrid zones where all the birds have plumage rich and rare, where brilliant flowers abound, where everything is full of vigor! If we are so near to God, it follows as a very natural exhortation that we should exercise much faith in Him. If I am, indeed, brought so near to God, why should I be afraid that He will leave me in poverty? If I were a stranger and He knew me not, He might cast me away. But if I am near to Him, as near as Christ is, He cannot be unkind, thoughtless, or ungenerous to me. Near to *Him*! Why, my name is on the palms of Jesus’ hands! I live in Jesus’ heart! And I live, if I am in Christ, under the very eyes of God! He will keep me as He keeps the apple of His eye.

One other word. Let us maintain a behavior suitable to the high position which Divine Grace has given us. If we are a people near to God, let us walk in all integrity, uprightness, chastity, honesty, soberness—in one word, in all holiness. “Be you perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.” If you have looked upon the pavement of sapphire, you must have seen your own sinfulness in contrast with its azure brightness. Pray the Lord to give you of His Spirit, that you may become like He who is thus so pure and glorious in all things!

Let not the sons of God demean themselves! Let not princes of the blood imperial be found among the common herd. As you are to be the compeers of angels, no, as you are *higher* far than they, and one with Christ—and as the precious blood has been your ransom price—walk as becomes saints! The Lord help you to do so, that His name may be glorified. Amen.

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CHRIST OUR PEACE

NO. 3386

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*“He is our peace.”
Ephesians 2:14.*

THE true minister of Christ is not satisfied to be long away from his main theme. There are many things which it is very proper for him to speak upon in your hearing. We dare not forget the Doctrines of the Word of God, or the precepts, or the experiences of God's people. But recognizing the claims of all these, God forbid that we should glorify save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! It is the preaching of Christ which is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Therefore, wherever we may wander around the circumference, we always feel a drawing in of our soul toward the center, which is “Christ in you, the hope of Glory.”

And if the preacher feels that he cannot go on long in the pulpit without preaching up his Lord and Master, I am quite sure that all the saints of God feel that they cannot be long content without this theme. They must constantly have Christ. As often as the table is spread in our homes, we need bread. We do not care to have the same meats and drinks in the morning, at mid-day and at the evening meal. We like to have a frequent change of food, but we always want the bread—and the table is badly furnished, let it have what it may upon it, if there is not there the bread which is the staff of life! So the Believer delights in the variety of God's Word and there is no Truth which is not precious to him. He counts the very shavings of truth to be like the dust of diamonds. Let every particle of it be gathered up and treasured, yes, so treasured that men may be ready to die for the slightest fragment of a Truth of God! But still, the purest diamond, the Koh-I-Noor of the whole, is the Doctrine of the Savior suffering for our sins—and if we do not hear much concerning the Lamb of God, if this is not the big bell that is rung most often, we feel that none of the others can make up for the lack! If this silver trumpet of Jubilee is not blown, the year is dull and dreary, and the service of God's sanctuary becomes an empty thing. Christ, Christ, Christ! Oh, that we may always make Him the sum and substance of our ministry and that you may always desire Christ as the Water of Life to your souls—your All-in-All, without whom you cannot be at rest! We come then, at this time, to our dear theme, praying God the Holy Spirit to take of the things

of Christ and show them to us. It is His office—may He tenderly consider us and fulfill that office in our souls—here and now!

There are only four words in the text and, therefore, four things may suffice us for tonight. The first great word, or, at any rate, the second greatest, is the word, “peace,” and we shall think for a little while upon that, considering—

I. IN WHAT SENSE WE ARE TO REGARD THE EXPRESSION, “HE IS OUR PEACE.”

The text compels us to begin with the thought, *the Lord Jesus Christ is peace between the Jew and the Gentile*. There was an old enmity between these two, an enmity on both sides. The Jew looked down upon the Gentile. He said, “I am of the seed of Abraham, the friend of God—ours are the oracles, ours the true God and the Covenant—as for you Gentiles, you are an idolatrous seed whom God has left, as He did your father, to carry out the devices of your own hearts and to perish in your uncircumcision.” The Jew called the Gentile a dog, thought him unclean, would have no friendly dealings with him, considered that uncircumcised men were little better than beasts and scarcely to be written down in the same list as the seed of Israel.

And the Gentiles, with equal earnestness and intensity, returned the enmity, for if the Jew taunted the Gentile with uncircumcision, much more did the Gentile ridicule the Jew because of his circumcision! The most severe edicts, especially under the Roman Empire, were passed against the Jews. Some of the Emperors expressed themselves as believing them to be the most detestable of all races! One of them said that he had seen the heathens of Sarmatia and had beheld the barbarous tribes of the North, but he had seen all vices and all wickedness outdone among the Jews! It was not true—it was a gross lie—but it shows what was the enmity of the Gentile mind generally against the Jew, for the fact was that in those days the Jew was looked upon as unsocial. He never mingled with other nations. He could by no possibility be absorbed into other tribes, but held firmly to his nationality and would not be reckoned among the people. Hence there was a perpetual conflict. But my Brothers and Sisters, no sooner did the Lord Jesus Christ display the fullness of the Gospel in the Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Spirit resting upon the Jew, than the Jew began to preach to the Gentile! There was a little tug in Peter’s heart at first. He hardly liked it, but still, God gave him a vision and immediately he went to preach the Gospel among those whom he had counted to be common and unclean! As for Paul, though a Pharisee of the Pharisees, though one of the strictest of Jews, yet he seems to have taken naturally to preaching among the Gentiles as soon as he was converted. He immediately went to these despised people and began to declare unto them the unsearchable riches of Christ! Now, in Christ Jesus, what fraternity there is, my Brothers and Sisters, between the seed of Israel and the Gentile stock! How we all feel that we are one! How many of the Jewish people has the Lord called! I hear it sometimes said

that He called a larger proportion of the Jews than He has of the Gentiles, for, remember, the seed of Israel is but small, while the Gentiles at the present time number, I suppose, a thousand millions at least, so that a small number of Christian Jews make a large proportion to the bulk! But wherever you meet with a converted Jew, a true Believer, there is no more hearty lover of the Gentiles, no one more desirous to see the Gentiles saved!

And when you meet with a genuine, converted, instructed Gentile, how his heart goes out toward the seed of Israel and how rejoiced he is when he hears that some of the Lord's Brothers and Sisters, according to the flesh, are converted to the faith in the crucified Jesus! Yes, there is now no longer enmity. It is all over. Nothing can be more un-Christian than for a Christian to despise a Jew! Nothing is more unlike the spirit of our Master than when you laugh at the Jew and speak of him with contempt. Remember that the King of kings was a Jew! The Lord Jesus Christ, Himself—whom we adore as true Deity—came in our humanity as of the stock of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Let there always be love and concord between us—and when the Lord shall be pleased to take the veil from Israel's eyes—then shall be our happy time as well as theirs. The Lord send it soon that He may be glorified.

Enough, however, upon that. The Lord Jesus Christ is our peace in a second sense, namely, *in making peace between nations*. That there are wars in the world at the present time is not the consequence of anything that Christ has said, but of the lusts of our flesh. As I understand the Word of God, I always rejoice to find a soldier a Christian, but I always mourn to find a Christian a soldier, for it seems to me that when I take up Christ Jesus, I hear one of His Laws, "I say unto you, resist not evil. Put up your sword into its sheath; he that takes the sword shall perish by the sword." The followers of Christ in these days seem to me to have forgotten a great part of Christianity. How many of you would go tomorrow into a court of law and, if you were called upon to do it, would take an oath, whereas if there is anything taught in Scripture, it is expressly taught that you are not to swear at all, neither by Heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath! If Christ ever delivered a plain precept, it is this—and yet all denominations of Christians seem to have cast it to the winds, with the exception of the Society of Friends. And so with regard to this matter of war. Our Apostle does not mince matters when he says, "Whence come wars? Whence come fights? Come they not from your own lusts?" That is the top and bottom of it, but, wherever true Christianity prevails, war becomes less frequent. It is owing to Christianity that war is far less common—though still too frequent—than it used to be. The length of human life has been much increased by the prevalence of peace—and wars, devastating wars, though, alas, they still break out—are not so constant as once they were and we are confidently looking

forward to the time when the Messiah shall wield His blessed scepter and wars shall cease to the ends of the earth! Then shall men—

***“Hang the useless helmet high,
And study war no more.”***

Then shall the shrill clarion of the battlefield yield to the pipe of shepherd’s plaintive melody. Then shall the weaned child play upon the hole of the asp and the lion shall eat straw like an ox. Oh, that the Prince of Peace would come and establish His empire upon a firm foundation! Then could we, indeed say, “He is our peace!”

But, Brothers and Sisters, there is another meaning in the text. *The Lord Jesus is the great cause of peace between man and man.* As soon as you become a Christian, you cannot hate anybody. To be angry without a cause is a sin to you as soon as you are a Believer in Christ! Unless you are a fearful hypocrite, you then forgive every man his offenses and you continue to forgive your brethren even unto 70 times seven, once you become the sincere disciple of Jesus. It is utterly inconsistent with Grace in the heart to harbor malice against your fellow man. Through our infirmity we may be, and sometimes are, quick of temper and sharp—and this we ought to regret and mourn over—but to carry in our soul any enmity against any man is contrary to the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ! Give me your hand, my Brother, my Sister, for the sake of Him who died for us! We cannot quarrel at the foot of the Cross! We cannot look up and see the streaming wounds and then break the King’s peace! I mean the peace that the bleeding, thorn-crowned King has made! Especially among Christians, there must not be anything like a shadow of division or discord. And I do pray you, as I have often done, if you would be followers of Christ, be you as little children and lay aside everything like enmity, hatred, variance, strife and jealousies! You will have to live in Heaven together, I hope. Oh, live like heavenly ones together here! You profess to have one Lord, one faith, one Baptism. You say that you are filled with the Holy Spirit—then let no root of bitterness springing up trouble you, lest thereby many are defiled! May that sweet and holy dove, the Spirit of Christ, rest upon all mankind, so that each man may see in his fellow man a Brother or a Sister. May divisions between sects and parties—and especially between nations and men of different colors—be laid aside and may we all rejoice in one universal confraternity. May the day soon break when there shall be true liberty the world over and fraternity established everywhere after Christ’s own model!

Still, Brothers and Sisters, these are only secondary applications of the text. *The great peace which Christ has made is between God and man.* There was war between man and his God. Man offended and loved to offend. God would have him return and be obedient, but man would not, for his heart was set on mischief. Man had so offended the Divine Law that punishment was inevitable! Jesus Christ came in and bore “the chastisement of our peace,” suffering an equivalent for what His redeemed would have suffered!

Now, God can with strictest justice pardon human transgressions. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other at the Cross of Christ. God was merciful and yet was just in our forgiveness—and now, between Him and those who are in Christ Jesus—there is no difference, no division, no strife, no war! Therefore, being reconciled by His blood, “we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” We are brought near by the blood of the Atonement. The chasm is bridged, the mountain is removed! Do you enjoy this peace, my dear Hearer? Can you look up to God, the great God, and feel that there is no alienation between you—that what He loves, you love? That the object of His heart is the supreme object of yours? That if there has been any idol set up, contrary to Him, in your heart, you desire to have it thrown out? Oh, if it is so, then bless God that He has given you Christ to be your peace!

And then, Brothers and Sisters, there follows from this peace between man and God *peace between man and himself*, for man is as much at war with himself as he is with God, and until Christ comes in, he enjoys no rest. “There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.” Some of you know experimentally what it is to have a strife and a warfare going on within—and you will never get a deep and settled calm until Christ comes into the vessel of your soul and says to the winds of your fear, and to the waves of your sins, “Peace, be still.”

He that has Christ has a peace that passes all understanding! He that has Christ has great peace and nothing shall offend him. But he that has no Christ has no solid peace. He may say, “Peace, peace,” where there is no peace, and daub his wall with untempered mortar, but the hail shall sweep away all his refuges of lies! And after his false peace there shall come a terrible alarm. Oh, my Hearer, have you had peace made between God and you by the precious blood? If so, then you are now at rest! But if you are tossed to and fro between one thought and another, you have nothing to rest upon! I pray you listen carefully to what I have to say concerning the Lord Jesus, and may the Holy Spirit bless it to you! Thus much upon that priceless gem, that blessed word, “peace.”

The next great word in the text worthy of our adoring thought is that little one of two letters only, the pronoun “*He*.” “He is our peace.”

II. WHO IS SAID TO BE “OUR PEACE”?

What are we to understand by the Lord Jesus Christ being our peace? I want you carefully to notice that it does not say that His work on our behalf is the *source* of our peace. That, of course, is true, but here it says, “He is our peace.” He, personally—HE—Christ Himself, is the peace of His people! It does not say that He *makes* our peace, or that He *brings* us peace. That is very true, most true, but it is a greater Truth that He, Himself, is our peace!

Now, I beseech you, Believer, to look at this Truth of God very carefully, and you, Unbeliever, too! The unbeliever thinks that in order to get peace, he must perform good works. But see, Man, your good works are

not your peace! If they had been, God would have said so plainly, “Your good works shall be your peace.” But not so, “He is our peace.” It is not that you are to be a peace unto yourself, nor does it say that your repentance, or tears, or prayers can give you peace. These are good and they are to be used, but the ground of your peace must never be, “I have prayed. I have repented”—but He—He is our peace! There are many things that you may do and that you *shall* do by the power of the Holy Spirit, but I tell you that none of these things are to be the basis of your comfort! Your soul’s fountain of crystal comfort is to be Christ and Christ alone! He, He, He—HE is our peace! Nothing in you, nothing you can do, nothing you can feel, but Christ, to whom you must look or perish. He must be your peace!

Now, Believer, look this in the face. Christ is to be your peace—not your communion with God, nor your high and holy experiences. All these are very precious and I wish we could always be on Tabor’s brow. It were well for us if, like, Enoch, we always walked with God, but still, our communion must never be looked upon as the ground of our peace with God. It is Christ and Christ, alone, that is our peace! Though you could mount as high as Gabriel and soar aloft through Heaven, as on a wing of fire—like the swift archangel, your rapid flight must not be your comfort, nor all the glorious service which you could render to your God, but Christ, Christ, Christ and Christ, alone, must be your peace. Beloved, it is all in vain for any of us to look back and try to find peace in what we have done!

It is a very great comfort to us, in some respects, to have been called by Grace in early youth—to have been enabled to preach the Gospel year after year with success—and I know what it is to think of all the souls who have been converted under my ministry. I know what it is to remember how many times I have addressed immense crowds of people. But I also know what it is to think, “Well, I may do all this and only be more condemned for it! I may do all this and yet be found out to be a miserable hypocrite, after all.” Therefore, there is no abiding comfort to be found in this. It is not our *doing* for Christ, but Christ, Himself, that is our peace! Now, some of you have been in the Sunday School, today, and you do not feel that you have got on well with the children. Well, I am glad if you have a passionate yearning for the salvation of the children’s souls, but do not begin to lose your hope and confidence in Christ because you do not succeed! If you had succeeded, you would have been very mistaken had you taken it as an evidence of your redemption! And if you fear you have not succeeded, have spoken in vain and spent your strength for nothing, do not be greatly cast down by it, for your peace does not lie either in your service, or in your success—it lies entirely in Christ!

I like the remark that was once made by a poor bricklayer who tumbled from the top of a house. A clergyman went to see him and, as he thought the man was dying, he said to him, “My dear Fellow, you must

try to make your peace with God.” “Ah, Sir,” said the man, “you do not understand it, I can see. Make my peace with God? Why that was made for me in the Eternal Covenant before the world began! That was made for me on Calvary’s tree of shame, when Christ laid down His life. If Christ had not made my peace with God, I know I could not make it!”

So put all the things you have done and can do, into the scale, Believer, and when they are all there—kick them all out again—for they are not worth a single ounce of weight in your soul’s salvation! Christ must be there! And Christ alone!

One of the occupations of the dying saint must be the tying up of his bad works and of his good works in one bundle—for they are wonderfully much alike—and throwing them all overboard, every one of them, and floating to Glory on the plank of Free Grace in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is our peace! HE is our peace! If Believers would always remember this, they would not be so often depressed and distressed. Ah, I have often heard this cry, as I told you this morning, “I do not grow in Grace as I could wish. I do not serve my Lord as I should. I live at a great distance from Him. I am afraid I dishonor His holy name.” I like to hear that! That is all good, *very good*, but then they go on with this—“I am afraid that I shall perish, after all”—and that is all wrong, very wrong, for if the question is put, “Do you trust in Christ?” and if the answer is that you do, well then, if God is true, you *cannot* perish! If all your help comes from Him who made Heaven and earth, and who died upon the bloody tree for your sins, then Heaven and earth may pass away and shall, but His promise cannot! He has given you two immutable things, wherein it is impossible for God to lie, that you may have strong consolation if you have fled for refuge to Christ Jesus! Do you believe in Jesus? Do you hang upon Christ wholly and entirely? Then are you saved and God’s Word is pledged to bring you safely home at the last! Sanctification must never be put in the place of justification—when we do so, we shall miss sanctification, as well as justification. When Believers say, “I cannot grow in Grace as I would, and therefore I doubt,” do you see what they do? It is as though they said, “Here is a plant that will not grow and therefore it shall not have any water.” It is impossible for any one of us—for you—to get sanctification through doubts! Your doubting takes away the water which alone can nourish the roots of your sanctity. If, in the teeth of all your sins, you still believe in Christ—believe over the head of all your shortcomings and your negligence—then your belief will breed love and admiration! And then your love of Christ and your admiration of Him will breed imitation—and so there will come holy living to the glory of God! Love is the forceful mainspring of a gracious life, but doubt makes it grow limp and feeble. Doubt snaps the string of your bow, takes off the edge of your sword, makes you languid and powerless and causes all your Divine Graces to flag. Therefore, keep to it, Christian, keep to it and let not the devil, himself, drag you from it!

“He is our peace”—my peace—not myself, nor anything that is in me, but Christ Jesus alone!

I have thus put the negative of it, but now let us take the positive. “He is our peace.” By this is meant, first, that *the Person of Christ* is our peace. He is God. I rest on Him. I *have perfect peace*, then, for He is Almighty, He cannot fail me. He is inimitable—He will not leave me. He is Truth itself—He will not belie His word.

Jesus Christ is also Man, and if Man, then He sympathizes with me, being touched with a fellow feeling for me in my infirmities. Then with such a heart of tenderness, He will not throw up the work of Grace, but He will bear with my ill manners and be my “Brother born for adversity,” even to the end. So, then, the complex Person of Christ, as God, as well as Man, is the peace of the Believer when he trusts Him.

In the next place, *the perfect righteousness of Christ* is another part of our peace. In a delightful little book upon the Person of Christ by good Mr. Bonar, he speaks about our sins as though they were so many mud creeks—our sins of unbelief, neglect, lack of love and so on. Well, but wherein we have failed, Christ has not failed—every duty in which we have come short, He has fulfilled! For every sin that we commit, you will always find an opposite virtue in Christ. Well says Mr. Bonar, “Then Christ is the flood tide which comes up and fills all these creeks and covers all the mire—and there is not a little creek nor a great bay but what this tide of Christ’s glorious merits fills all!” Perhaps this thought may give you the meaning of the text, “Your peace shall be like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea”—the many waves which come up and cover all the sands and the mire of our iniquities till God sees no sin in us, because He sees the righteousness of Christ standing for us—and looks upon us, not as we are separately, but as we stand in Him—and so He makes us to be “accepted in the Beloved.” Oh, Believer, if you can wrap the righteousness of Christ around you, you can feel, then, the sweetness of the truth of our text, “He is our peace.”

Yet once more. After His person and His righteousness, there *comes His precious blood*. Oh, Beloved, there is no balm for the soul like the Cross! Sometimes I like to sing to myself, when I get a little fluttered in my soul, that precious hymn—

**“Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the Cross I spend!
Life and health, and peace possessing,
From the sinner’s dying Friend!
Here it is I find my Heaven,
While upon the Cross I gaze.
Love I much? I’m more forgiven—
I’m a miracle of Grace.”**

I have sometimes used this simile and will use it again. If you ride through London, mile after mile, mile after mile, and see the great swarms of people, you say to yourself, “I cannot make out how all these people are fed. I cannot see how there is always a meal for these four mil-

lions and more.” But go off tomorrow morning and make a round of the great markets—the cattle market, the meat markets, the fruit markets and I know not what besides—and now you say, “I cannot make out where the people can be found to eat all this! How does such a tremendous mass of provisions of all kinds ever get consumed?”

You change your note directly. When you only looked at the people’s needs, you thought, “How can they all be supplied?” but when you look at the supply, you say, “How can there be needs great enough for all this?” So you look at your sins and you say, “How can there be merit enough to put all these sins away?” But if you will but look at the Son of God dying on the Cross for sinners, you will change your note and you will say, “Where could there be sinners great enough to demand such an immense Sacrifice as the giving up of the life of the Son of God to redeem men from their iniquities?” You must go to the Cross if you want to have peace concerning your sins, for “He is our peace.”

Further, Beloved, *the ever-living Christ is always our peace*. The thought that there beats a heart in Heaven that is always loving us, that there moves a tongue in Heaven that always pleads for us, that there is an arm in Heaven that always fights for us and that there is a foot in Heaven that will be swift to run for our defense—oh, this is a precious consolation! If faith can but perceive that Jesus Christ is within the veil at the Father’s Throne, with His heart full of love towards those who trust in Him, then will He be to us our peace!

I shall not, however, enlarge farther upon that point, though it is a very fruitful subject. But I must say that the *more you know of Christ’s Character and work, the deeper will be your peace*. Ignorant professors who do not know that Jesus Christ “is the same yesterday, today, and forever,” are sometimes afraid that the promises will not be fulfilled. But they must be fulfilled, for He is not only full of Grace, but of Truth! Know Christ and trust Him—and you need not be afraid. Poverty shall not make you poor, sickness shall not make you diseased, death shall not make you die! You shall triumph over all these in your inmost soul and come off more than conqueror through Him who has loved you and is your peace!

We have only as yet handled two words, but they are two big, colossal words. “*He is our peace.*”

But we must now speak briefly upon those two diamond rivets which fasten Christ and peace together. So we look now at—

III. WHOSE PEACE IS HE?

Notice that word, “our.” “He is *our* peace.” To whom, then, is this splendid peace given? Every man that has Christ as his Savior! I have half a mind to ask those who have trusted Christ to be their peace, to say aloud, here and now, “He is our peace.” There is a gray-headed man here, and if he were to rise and lean on his staff, he could say, “Yes, blessed be God, without doubt I can say that He is my peace.” There is a

valiant soldier of Christ yonder, and he would declare boldly, "He is my peace." But I daresay there is some timid Hannah here who would wipe the tears from her face and quietly say, "Yes, He is my peace." And there are some youngsters here, whom the Lord has but lately brought in, and they can say, tremblingly, but yet meaning it from their inmost souls, "He is my peace." It is all the same, whether we are old or young, whether we are advanced in the Divine Life, or are only just in the beginning of it—we have no other peace except the Lord Jesus Christ!

But who are these people who have Christ to be their peace? Well, they are *those who could not get peace anywhere else*, for we never come to Christ until we are driven to Him by stormy weather. He is such a blessed port that we might all wish to cast anchor in Him, but yet we are such fools that we keep out at sea as long as we can—and only when we feel our sins to be like hurricanes howling in our ears, do we fly to Christ! Well, if you have nowhere else to go and you come to Him with all your hunger and nakedness—and trust in Him—whether you sink or swim, then shall He be your peace!

I cannot delay upon that, however, for our time is gone and, therefore, I must take that other word—"is."

IV. WHEN IS HE OUR PEACE?

I know the world says, "I hope He will be my peace." Dear Hearer, do not be satisfied with that! Never be content with "may be," but seek after a present salvation! I was soundly enough asleep the other morning when, about half-past three my bell rang very sharply, and then rang again. And when I put my head out of the window to see who was there, I heard someone say, "Oh, if you please, Sir, there is a poor man dying, and he wants to see you badly! Do come." "Oh, yes, where does he live? I will be there as quickly as I can." And away I went.

The dying man said to me, "I beg your pardon, Sir, for sending for you at this time of night, but it is very hard for a man to go out of this world and not know where he is going. Do tell me the way I may be saved." I was glad enough to tell him about Him who is our peace, but how I wished and wished again that he had not needed to be told about it then! As I said to those who were round about him, "Now see, he has enough to think of with his dying pains, without having to think of finding a Savior now! Oh, the rest of you seek Him while you have health and strength!" And I now say that to you! You will find other work when you come to die without having to search for a Savior! Besides that, what a joy it is to get Christ now—to say, "He is my peace." Why, there are some of us who are as happy now in Christ as we could well wish to be! We find that our religion is no misery to us. It is not a chain, but like the wings of a bird and it helps us to mount! We feel at perfect peace with God right now, and if Death were to come tonight, or tomorrow, or while we are sitting here, I trust we should not think of him as an adversary, but our Father's servant, sent to take us into our Father's Presence! Oh, my dear Hearers, some of you, when you come to dying, will, perhaps,

have to think, "I used to attend a Sunday school. I used to go to a place of worship, but I gave it all up when I came to London. When I got into business and had a family, I thought I needed Sunday for recreation, and so I neglected my soul, and now where am I? Far off from God!" Oh, I hope I shall not have to come and tell you in your extremity about a Savior, but may you now receive Him! All that He asks of you is to trust Him—and that He gives you! My poor friend said the other night, "I cannot think, Sir. I cannot settle my thoughts." Yes, but you can think now and, therefore, now, before the evil days come and the dark night draws on, turn, turn! May God turn you! May effectual Grace lead you to see my bleeding Master with His five streaming wounds, with the crown of thorns about His brow, mocked and despised, and spit upon for us, that we might escape the thorn and not have to be wounded with the arrows of death, but might live through Him! May the Lord Jesus Christ be to everyone of you your peace tonight, that you may take the text and say, "He is now, even tonight, our peace."

God grant it for His name's sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
JOHN 11:27-46.**

Our Lord's greatest miracles were always the reward of faith.

Verse 27. *She said unto Him, Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, which should come unto the world.* By which she as good as said, "I believe that and I believe everything else. I have an implicit faith in You. Whatever You say, whatever You have said or shall say, I am prepared to believe it all, for I believe in You. I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

28. *And when she had so said, she went her way, and secretly called Mary, her sister.* Because she knew that the Jews hated the Savior. She could not tell what would come of it if they knew of His coming, so she whispers to her—

28-30. *Saying, The Master is come, and calls for you. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto Him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was at that place where Martha met Him.* Their cemeteries were outside the town and probably the Savior was near the very grave where Lazarus slept.

31-32. *The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goes unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying unto Him, Lord, if You had been here, my brother had not died.* Her thought was the same as the thought of Martha, but she did not say as much as Martha. She never did. Martha had a dialogue with the Savior, but Mary bowed at His feet.

33-37. *When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have you laid him? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how He loved him! And some of them said, Could not this Man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus, therefore, again groaning in Himself, came to the grave. Many have asked why Christ groaned. Why, Brothers and Sisters, it is the way in which He gives life—by His own death! We sometimes say of one who does a great action, “It took so much out of him.” So it did out of the Savior. He must groan that Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus may rejoice. It is not without the stirring of His very life that He gives life to the dead!*

38-39. *It was a cave and the stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take you away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, said unto Him, Lord, by this time he stinks: for he has been dead four days. “It were a pity to roll away the stone.”*

40-41. *Jesus said unto her, Said I not unto you, that if you would believe, you should see the Glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. That is grand praying, is it not? Sometimes we ought to say, “Just so.” “Father, I thank You that You have heard me.”*

42-44. *And I knew that You hear Me always, but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that You have sent Me. And when He had thus spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth! And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. He probably slipped himself off from the ledge in the tomb upon which he been laid and there he appeared before them bound so that he could not move farther.*

—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.**

END OF VOLUME 59

JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF

NO. 1388

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 9, 1877,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Jesus Christ Himself.”
Ephesians 2:20.***

“Jesus Christ Himself” is to occupy all our thoughts this morning. What an ocean opens up before me! Here is room in the sea for the largest ship! In which direction shall I turn your thoughts? I am embarrassed with riches. I know not where to begin—and when I once begin, where shall I end? Assuredly we need not go abroad for joys this morning, for we have a feast at home! The words are few, but the meaning vast—“Jesus Christ Himself.” Beloved, the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ contains in it nothing so wonderful as Himself. It is a mass of marvels, but He is THE miracle of it! The wonder of wonders is “The Wonderful” Himself!

If proof is asked of the Truths of God which He proclaimed, we point men to Jesus Christ Himself. His Character is unique. We defy unbelievers to imagine another like He. He is God and yet Man—and we challenge them to compose a narrative in which the two apparently incongruous characters shall be so harmoniously blended—in which the human and Divine shall be so marvelously apparent without the one overshadowing the other! They question the authenticity of the four Gospels—will they try and write a fifth? Will they even *attempt* to add a few incidents to the life which shall be worthy of the sacred biography and congruous with those facts which are already described?

If it is all a forgery, will they be so good as to show us how it is done? Will they find a novelist who will write another biography of a man of any century they choose, of any nationality, or of any degree of experience, or any rank or station and let us see if they can describe, in that imaginary life, a devotion, a self-sacrifice, a truthfulness, a completeness of character at all comparable to that of Jesus Christ Himself? Can they invent another perfect character even if the Divine element is left out? They must fail, for there is none like Jesus!

The Character of Jesus has commanded respect even from those who have abhorred His teaching. It has been a stumbling block to all objectors who have preserved a shade of candor. They could refute Jesus' doctrine, they say. They boast they could improve His precepts. They claim His system is narrow and outworn. But what can they do with *Him*? They must admire Him even if they will not adore Him—and having done so, they have admired a Person who must be Divine—or else He willfully left His disciples to believe a lie. How do they surmount this difficulty? They cannot do so by railing at Him, for they have no material for accusation. Jesus Christ Himself silences their criticism!

This is a file at which these asps bite, but break their teeth. Beyond all argument or miracle, Jesus Christ Himself is the proof of His own Gospel. And as He is the proof of it, so, Beloved, He is the marrow and essence of it. When the Apostle Paul meant that the Gospel was preached, He said, “*Christ is preached,*” for the Gospel is Christ Himself! If you want to know what Jesus taught, know Him! He is the incarnation of that Truth of God which by Him and in Him is revealed to the sons of men. Did He not, Himself say, “I am the way, the truth, and the life”?

You have not to take down innumerable books, nor to pore over mysterious sentences of double meaning in order to know what our great Teacher has revealed. You have but to turn and gaze upon His countenance, behold His actions and note His spirit and you know His teaching. He lived what He taught. If we wish to know Him, we may hear His gentle voice saying, “Come and see.” Study His wounds and you understand His innermost philosophy. “To know Him and the power of His Resurrection” is the highest degree of spiritual learning. He is the end of the Law and the soul of the Gospel—and when we have preached His Word to the fullest, we may close by saying, “Now, of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum—we have an High Priest who is set on the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the heavens.”

Nor is He, alone, the proof of His Gospel and the substance of it, but He is the power and force by which it spreads. When a heart is truly broken of sin, it is by Him that it is bound up. If a man is converted, it is by Christ, the power of God. If we enter into peace and salvation, it is by the gracious manifestation of Jesus Himself. If men have enthusiastically loved Christianity, it is because, first of all, they loved Christ! Apostles labored for Him and for Him confessors were brave. For Him saints have suffered the loss of all things and for Him martyrs have died. The power which creates heroic consecration is “Jesus Christ Himself.” The memories stirred by His name have more influence over men’s hearts than all things else in earth or Heaven. The enthusiasm which is the very life of our holy cause comes from Himself.

They who know not Jesus know not the life of truth, but those who dwell in Him are filled with power and overflow so that out of the midst of them streams forth living water! Nor is it only so, Beloved, for the power which propagates the Gospel is Jesus Himself. In Heaven He pleads and, therefore, does His Kingdom come. “The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.” It is from Heaven that He rules all things so as to promote the advance of the Truth of God. All power is given unto Him in Heaven and in earth and, therefore, are we to proclaim His life-giving Word with full assurance of success.

He causes the wheels of Providence to revolve in such a manner as to help His cause. He abridges the power of tyrants, overrules the scourges of war, establishes liberty in nations, opens the mysteries of continents long unknown, breaks down systems of error and guides the current of human thought. He works by a thousand means preparing the way of the Lord. It is from Heaven that He shall shortly come and when He comes, when Christ Himself shall put forth all His might, then shall the wilder-

nesses rejoice and the solitary places be glad! The reserve force of the Gospel is Christ Jesus Himself. The latent power which shall at last break every bond and win universal dominion is the energy, the life, the Omnipotence of Jesus Himself!

He sleeps in the vessel now, but when He arises and chides the storm there will be a deep calm. He now, for awhile, conceals Himself in the ivory palaces of Glory, but when He is manifested, in that day His chariot wheels shall bring victory to His Church militant. If these things are so, I have a theme before me which I cannot compass! I forbear the impossible task and I shall but briefly note some few apparent matters which lie upon the surface of the subject. Brethren, "Jesus Christ Himself" should always be the prominent thought of our minds as Christians! Our theology should be framed upon the fact that He is the Center and Head of all. We must remember that "in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Some of our Brothers are mainly taken up with the doctrines of the Gospel and are somewhat bitter in their narrow orthodoxy. We are to love every Word of our Lord Jesus and His Apostles and are to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints, but yet it is always well to hold the Truth of God in connection with Jesus and not as in itself, alone, the sum of all things. Truth isolated from the Person of Jesus grows hard and cold. We know some in whom the slightest variation from their system arouses their indignation even though they admit that the Brother is full of the Spirit of Christ. It is with them doctrine, doctrine, doctrine—whereas with us, I trust, it is Christ Himself! True doctrine is, to us priceless as a Throne for our living Lord. But our chief delight is not in the vacant Throne, but in the King's Presence!

Give me not His *garments*, though I prize every thread, but the blessed Wearer whose sacred energy made even the hem to heal with a touch! There are others of our Brothers who delight above measure in what they call *experimental preaching* which sets forth the inner life of the Believer—both the rage of depravity and the triumph of Grace. This is well in due proportion, according to the analogy of faith, but still, Jesus Himself should be more conspicuous than our experiences and feelings, doubts and fears, struggles and victories. We may get to study the action of our own hearts so much that we fall into despondency and despair. "Looking unto Jesus" is better than looking unto our own progress! Self-examination has its necessary uses, but to have done with self and live by faith in Jesus Christ Himself is the best course for a Christian.

Then, there are others who rightly admire the precepts of the Gospel and are never so happy as when they are hearing them enforced, as, indeed, they ought to be. But after all, the commands of our Lord are not our Lord Himself, and they derive their value to us and their power over our obedience from the fact that they are His Words and that He said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." We know the truth of His declaration, "If a man loves Me he will keep My sayings," but there must be the personal love to begin with! Brothers and Sisters, all the benefits of these three schools will be ours if we live upon Jesus Himself!

They each gather a flower, but our Divine “plant of renown” has all the beauty and all the fragrance of all that they can gather—and without the thorns which are so apt to grow on their peculiar roses. Jesus Christ Himself is to us precept, for He is the Way. He is to us doctrine, for He is the Truth. He is to us experience, for He is the Life. Let us make Him the pole star of our religious life in all things! Let Him be first, last and middle! Yes, let us say, “He is all my salvation and all my desire.” And yet do not, I beseech you, disdain the doctrine, lest marring the doctrine you should be guilty of insult to Jesus Himself. To trifle with the Truth of God is to despise Jesus as our Prophet.

Do not, for a moment, underrate experience, lest in neglecting the inner self, you also despise your Lord Himself as your cleansing Priest! And never for a moment forget His commandments, lest if you break them you transgress against Jesus Himself as your King. All things which touch upon His Kingdom are to be treated reverently by us for the sake of Himself. His Bible, His day, His Church, His ordinances must all be precious to us, because they have to do with Him. But in the forefront of all must always stand “Jesus Christ Himself,” the personal, living, loving Jesus! Christ *in* us the hope of Glory. Christ *for* us our full redemption. Christ *with* us our guide and our solace and Christ *above* us pleading and preparing our place in Heaven. Jesus Christ Himself is our Captain, our armor, our strength and our victory! We inscribe His name upon our banner, for it is Hell’s terror, Heaven’s delight and earth’s hope. We bear this upon our hearts in the heat of the conflict, for this is our breastplate and coat of mail.

I shall not endeavor to say anything this morning which will strike you as beautiful in language, for to endeavor to decorate the Altogether Lovely One would be blasphemy. To hang flowers upon the Cross is ridiculous and to endeavor to adorn Him whose head is as the finest gold and whose Person is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires would be profane. I shall but tell you simple things in simple language—yet are these the most precious and soul-satisfying of the Truths of Revelation.

I. With Jesus Christ Himself we begin by saying, first, that Jesus Himself is THE ESSENCE OF HIS OWN WORK and, therefore, how readily we ought to trust Him. Jesus Himself is the soul of His own salvation. How does the Apostle describe it? “He loved me, and gave *Himself* for me.” He gave His crown, His Throne and His joys in Heaven for us, but that was not all—He gave Himself. He gave His life on earth and renounced all the comforts of existence. He bore all its woes. He gave His body, He gave His agony, He gave His heart’s blood—but the summary of it is He gave Himself for me.

“Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it.” “Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” No proxy service here! No sacrifice which runs as far as His own Person and there stops! There was no limit to the grief of Jesus like that set upon the suffering of Job—“Only on himself lay not your hand,” or, “Only spare his life.” No, every reserve was taken down, for He gave *Himself*. “He saved others, Himself He could not save,” because He Himself was the very essence of His own sacrifice on

our behalf. It is because He is what He is that He was able to redeem us! The dignity of His Person imparted efficacy to His Atonement. He is Divine, God over all, blessed forever and, therefore, infinite virtue is found in Him.

He is Human and perfect in that humanity and, therefore, capable of obedience and suffering in man's place. He is able to save us because He is Immanuel—"God with us." If it were conceivable that an angel could have suffered the same agonies and have performed the same labors as our Lord, yet it is not conceivable that the same result would have followed. The pre-eminence of His Person imparted weight to His work. Always think, then, when you view the Atonement, that it is Jesus Himself who is the soul of it. Indeed the efficacy of His sacrifice lies there. Therefore the Apostle, in Hebrews, speaks of Him as having "by Himself purged our sins." This purging was worked by His Sacrifice, but the sacrifice was Himself!

Paul says, "He offered up Himself." He stood as a Priest at the altar offering a bloody Sacrifice, but the offering was neither bullock, nor ram, nor turtle dove—it was Himself. "Once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." The sole reason why we are well-pleasing with God is because of Him, for He is our sweet-smelling Offering. And the only cause for the putting away of our sin is found in Him because He is our Sin Offering. The cleansing by the blood and the washing by the water are the result, not of the blood and the water in and of themselves and separate from Him, but because they were the essentials of Himself. You see this, I am persuaded, without my enlarging upon it.

Now, because of this, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the Object of our faith. Is He not always so described in Scripture? "Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth"—not, "Look to My Cross," nor, "Look to My life," nor, "to My death," much less, "to My sacraments or to My servants," but, "Look to ME." From His own lips the words sound forth, "Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." In fact, it is the Christian's life motto, "Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith." May I not go farther and say how very simple and how very easy and natural ought faith to be from now on?

I might be puzzled with various theories of the Atonement, but I can believe in Jesus Himself! I might be staggered by the many different mysteries which concern theology and overpower even masterminds, but I can confide in Jesus Himself! He is one whom it is difficult to distrust—His goodness, gentleness and truth command our confidence. We can and do trust in Jesus Himself! If He is proposed to me as my Savior, and if faith in Him is that which saves me, then at His dear feet I cast myself unreservedly and feel myself secure while He looks down on me. He who bled that sinners might be saved cannot be doubted any more! "Lord, I believe; help You my unbelief."

Now you who have been looking to your *faith*, I want you to look to Jesus Himself rather than at your poor feeble faith. Now you who have been studying the results of faith in yourselves and are dissatisfied, I beseech

you turn your eyes away from yourselves and look to Jesus Himself. Now you who cannot understand this and cannot understand that, give up wanting to understand, for a while, and come and look at Jesus Christ Himself, “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.” The Lord grant us Grace to view Jesus Christ Himself in the matter of our salvation as All in All, so that we may have personal dealings with Him and no longer think of Him as a mere idea, or as an historical personage, but as a personal Savior standing in the midst of us and bidding us enter into peace through Him!

II. “Jesus Christ Himself” is, as we have said, THE SUBSTANCE OF THE GOSPEL and, therefore, how closely should we study Him. While He was here He taught His disciples, and the object of His teaching was that they might know Himself and through Him might know the Father. They did not learn very fast, but you see what He meant them to learn by the observation He made to Philip, “Have I been so long a time with you and yet have you not known Me, Philip?” He meant them to know Himself—and when He had risen from the dead the same objective was still before Him.

As He walked with the two disciples to Emmaus they had a wide choice of subjects for conversation, but He chose the old theme and, “beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” No topic was half as important or profitable! No mere *man* may come to teach himself, but this Divine One can have nothing better to reveal, for He Himself, the Incarnate God, is the chief of all the Truths of God! Therefore our Lord was concerned to be known to His people and, therefore, again and again we read that, “Jesus showed Himself unto His disciples.”

Whatever else they may be ignorant of, it is essential to disciples that they know their Lord, His Nature, His Character, His mind, His Spirit, His objective, His power—we must know in a word—we must know Jesus Himself. This also, Beloved, is the work of the Holy Spirit. “He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Me, and shall show it unto you.” The Holy Spirit reveals Christ to us and in us. Whatever things Christ has spoken while He was here, the Holy Spirit opens to the mind and to the understanding. Thus by speaking of Christ within us, He carries on the work which our Lord began when here below. The Comforter is the Instructor and Jesus is the Lesson. I dare say you long to know a thousand things, but the main point of knowledge to be desired is Jesus Himself.

This was His teaching and this is the Holy Spirit’s teaching—and this is the end and objective of the Bible. Moses, Isaiah and all the Prophets spoke of Him—and the things which are recorded in this Book were written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ and, that believing, you might have life through His name. Precious is this Book, but its main preciousness lies in its revealing Jesus Himself. It is the field which contains the pearl of great price, the case which encloses Heaven’s brightest jewel. We have missed our way in the Bible if its silken clue has not led us to the central chamber where we see Jesus Himself!

We have never been truly taught of the Holy Spirit and we have missed the teaching of the life of Christ unless we have come to abide in Jesus Himself. To know Him is our beginning of wisdom and our crown of wisdom. To know Him is our first lesson on repentance and our last attainment as we enter Heaven. Our ambition is that we may know the love of Christ by which passes knowledge. Here is our life study and we have good in it, for these things the angels desire to look into. May the Lord grant that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of His calling and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

Beloved, because Jesus is the sum of the Gospel, He must be our constant theme. "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." So spoke men of old and so say we. When we have done preaching Christ we had better have done preaching—when you have done teaching in your classes Jesus Christ Himself, give up Sunday school work, for nothing else is worthy of your pains. Put out the sun and light is gone, life is gone, all is gone. When Jesus is pushed into the background or left out of a minister's teaching, the darkness is darkness that might be felt and the people escape from it into Gospel light as soon as they can.

A sermon without Jesus in it is savorless and worthless to God's tried saints—they soon seek other food. The more of Christ in our testimony, the more of light and life and power to save. Some preachers are guilty of the most weary tautology, but this is not laid to their charge when their theme is Jesus! I have heard hearers declare that their minister appeared to have bought a barrel organ on which he could grind five or six tunes and no more—and these he ground out forever and ever, amen! They have been weary, very weary, of such vain repetitions. But to this day I never heard of anybody against whom the complaint was urged that he preached Christ too much, too often, too earnestly, or too joyfully!

I never recollect seeing a single Christian man coming out of a congregation with a sorrowful face saying, "He extolled the Redeemer too highly. He grossly exaggerated the praises of our Savior." I do not remember ever meeting with a case in which the sick upon the bed of languishing have complained that thoughts of Jesus were burdensome to them. I never recollect that a single book has been denounced by earnest Christian men because it spoke too highly of the Lord and made Him too prominent. No, my Brethren, He who is the study of the saints must be the daily theme of ministers if they would feed the flock of God! No theme so moves the heart, so awakens the conscience, so satisfies the desires and so calms the fears. God forbid we should ever fail to preach Jesus Himself! There is no fear of exhausting the subject, nor of our driving away our hearers, for His words are still true, "I, if I am lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

III. Jesus Christ Himself is THE OBJECT OF OUR LOVE and how dear He should be. We can, all of us who are really saved, declare that, "We love Him because He first loved us." We have an intense affection for His blessed Person as well as gratitude for His salvation. The personality of

Christ is a fact always to be kept prominently in our thoughts. The love of a truth is all very well, but the love of a person has far more power in it. We have heard of men dying for an idea, but it is infinitely more easy to awaken enthusiasm for a *person*.

When an idea becomes embodied in a man, it has a force which in its abstract form is never wielded. Jesus Christ is loved by us as the embodiment of everything that is lovely, true, pure and of good report. He Himself is incarnate perfection inspired by love. We love His offices, we love the types which describe Him, we love the ordinances by which He is set forth—but we love Himself best of all. He Himself is our Beloved—our heart rests only in Him. Because we love Him we love His people and through Him we enter into union with them. Our text is taken from a verse which says, “Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.” He is the binder at the corner, joining Jew and Gentile in one temple. In Jesus those ancient differences cease, for He “has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us; to make in Himself of two one new man, so making peace.”

We are at one with every man who is at one with Christ. Only let our Lord say, “I love that man,” and we love him at once. Let us only hope that our friend can say, “I love Jesus,” and we hasten to respond, “And I love you for Jesus’ sake.” So warm is the fire of our love to Jesus that all His friends may sit at it and welcome! Our circle of affection comprehends all who in any shape or form have truly to do with Jesus Himself. Because we love Him we delight to render service to Him. Whatever service we do for His Church and for His Truth, we do for His sake. Even if we can only render it to the least of His brethren, we do it unto Him. The woman with the alabaster box of precious ointment is a type which we greatly prize, for she would only break the precious box for *Him*—and every drop of its delicious contents must be poured only upon His head.

The bystanders complained of waste, but there can be no waste in anything that is done for Jesus. If the whole world, the heavens and the Heaven of heavens were all one great alabaster box, and if all the sweets which can be conceived were hidden within it, we would wish to see the whole broken, that every drop of the sweetness might be poured out for Jesus Christ Himself—

***“Jesus is worthy to receive
Honor and power Divine.
And blessings more than we can give
Be, Lord, forever Thine.”***

Oh our Beloved, if we can do anything for You, we are charmed at possessing such a privilege! If we are allowed to wash Your disciples’ feet, or to care for the poorest of Your poor, or the least lamb of Your flock, we accept the office as a high honor, for we love You with all our hearts!

Our love to Jesus should be as much a matter of fact as our affection for our husband, wife, or child—and it should be far more influential upon our lives. Love to our Lord is, I trust, moving all of you to personal service. You might have paid a subscription and allowed others to work, but you cannot do it when you see that Jesus gave Himself for you. Jesus Himself demands that I, myself, should be consecrated to His praise. Personal ser-

vice is due to a personal Christ who personally loved and personally died for us! When nothing moves us to zeal, the jaded spirit cannot follow up its industries unless Jesus Himself appears and straightway our passions are all on fire and the fiery spirit compels the flesh to warm to its work. We even glory in infirmity when Jesus is near! And we venture upon works which otherwise had seemed impossible! We can do anything and everything for “Jesus Christ Himself.”

IV. Fourthly, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is THE SOURCE OF ALL OUR JOY. We ought to rejoice when we have such a springing well of blessedness! In times of sorrow our solace is Jesus Himself. It is no small ground of comfort to a mourner that Jesus Himself is a Man. How cheering to read, “For as much as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He, also, took part of the same.” The humanity of Christ has a charm about it which only the quietly sorrowful discover. I have known what it is to gaze upon the Incarnation with calm repose of heart when my brain has seemed to be on fire with anguish.

If Jesus is, indeed, my Brother, there is hope at all times! This is better balm than that of Gilead, “He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.” “For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able, also, to succor them that are tempted.” Pain, hunger, thirst, desertion, scorn and agony Jesus Himself has borne! Tempted in all like as we are, though without sin, He has become the Comforter of the sorrowful. Many and many a sufferer in the lone watches of the night has thought of Him and felt his strength renewed. Our patience revives when we see the Man of Sorrows silent before His accusers. Who can refuse to drink of His cup and to be baptized with His baptism?—

***“His way was much rougher and darker than mine.
Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine?”***

The darkness of Gethsemane has been light to many an agonized soul and the passion, even unto death, has made the dying sing for joy of heart. Jesus Himself is the solace of our soul in sorrow—and when we emerge from the storm of distress into the deep calm of peace, as we often do—blessed be His name, He is our Peace! He left us peace by legacy and peace He creates in us. We never know deep peace of heart until we know the Lord Jesus Himself. Do you remember that sweet word when the disciples were met together, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews—“Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them and said, Peace be unto you”? Jesus Himself, you see, brought the message, for nothing but His Presence could make it effectual!

When we see Him our spirit smells a sweet savor of rest. Where can an aching head find such another pillow as His bosom? On high days and holidays our spirits soar beyond rest—we ascend into the Heaven of joy and exultation—but it is our Lord’s joy which is in us making our joy full. “Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord,” and then are we, also, glad. By faith we see Jesus Himself enthroned and this has filled us with delight, for His glorification is our satisfaction. “Him, also, has God highly exalted and given Him a name which is above every name.” I care not what becomes of me so long as He is glorified!

The soldier dies happy when the shout of victory salutes his ear and his failing sight beholds his prince triumphant. What a joy to think that Jesus is risen—risen to die no more! The joy of Resurrection is superlative! What bliss to know that He has ascended, leading captivity captive! That He sits, now, enthroned in a happy state, and that He will come in all the glory of the Father to break His enemies in pieces as with a rod of iron! Here lies the grandest joy of His expectant Church—she has in reserve a mighty thunder of hosannas for that auspicious day! If there is any joy to be had, O Christian, that is both safe and sweet, a joy of which none can know too much, it is to be found in Him whom as yet you see not, but in whom believing you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

We must tear ourselves away from that thought to turn to another, but assuredly it is rich in happy memories and in blessed expectations.

V. Fifthly, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF IS THE MODEL OF OUR LIFE and, therefore, how blessed it is to be like He. As to our *rule* for life, we are like the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration when Moses and Elijah had vanished, for we see “no man save Jesus only.” Every virtue found in other men we find in Him in greater perfection! We admire the Grace of God in them, but Jesus Himself is our pattern. It was once said of Henry VIII, by a severe critic, that if the characteristics of all the tyrants that had ever lived had been forgotten, they might all have been seen come to life in that one king. We may more truly say of Jesus, if all graces, virtues and sweetnesses which have ever been seen in good men could all be forgotten, you might find them all in Him—for in Him dwells all that is good and great.

We, therefore, desire to copy His Character and put our feet into His footprints. Be it ours to follow the Lamb wherever He goes! What says our Lord Himself? “Follow Me,” and again, “Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls.” Not Christ’s Apostle, but Christ Himself is our guide! We may not take a secondary model, but must imitate Jesus Himself. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and His gracious operations, we are developing into the image of Christ till Christ is formed in us. And we thus develop because the heavenly life in us is His own life. “I in them,” said He. And again, “I am the life.” For “we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God.” “He that has the Son has life, and he that has not the Son has not life.”

It is not passing through Baptism, nor bearing the name of Christ—it is having Jesus Himself in our hearts that makes us Christians—and in proportion as He is formed in us and the new life grows, we become more and more like He. And this is our prospect for eternity, that we are to be with Him and like He, for “when He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is.” Think of Him, you that mourn your imperfectness today—think of Jesus Christ Himself—and then be assured that you are to be like He is! What a picture! Come, artist, bring your best skill! What can you do? All pencils fail to depict Him. It needs a poet’s eye as well as an artist’s hand to picture the Lovely One.

But what can the poet do? Ah, you, also, fail. You cannot sing Him any more than your friend can paint Him. Fruitful conception and soaring imagination may come to your aid, but they cannot prevent your failure! He is too beautiful to be described—He must be *seen*. Yet here comes the marvel—“We shall be like He is”—like Jesus Christ Himself! O saint, when you are risen from the dead how lovely you will be! Will you know yourself? Today you are wrinkled with old age, scarred with the marks of disease and pain. Perhaps you are deformed by accident, or blanched with consumption—but none of these shall blemish you then! You will be without spot or wrinkle, faultless before the Throne—

***“O glorious hour!
O blessed abode!
I shall be near
And like my God!”***

And not only in bodily form shall we be like He is whose eyes are as the eyes of doves and whose cheeks are as beds of spices—but in spirit and in soul shall we be perfectly conformed to the Well-Beloved! We shall be holy, even as He is holy and happy as He is happy. We shall enter into the joy of our Lord—the joy of Jesus Himself! I don’t say that we can be Divine—that cannot be—but still, Brothers and Sisters, we shall be very near the Throne. O what rapture to know that my next of kin lives and when He shall stand, in the last day, upon the earth, I shall not only see God in this, my flesh, but I shall be like He is, for I shall see Him as He is! Christ Himself, then, becomes to us unspeakably precious, as the model of our present life and the image of the perfection towards which the Holy Spirit is working us.

VI. Lastly, HE IS THE LORD OF OUR SOUL. How sweet it will be to with Him. We find, today, that His beloved company makes us move pleasantly whether we run in the way of His commands or the valley of the shadow of death. Saints have lain in dungeons and yet they have walked at liberty when He has been there! They have been stretched on the rack and even called it a bed of roses when He has stood by. One lay on a gridiron, with the hot fires beneath him, but amidst the flames he challenged his tormentors to do their worst! He laughed them to scorn, for his Lord was there!

Martyrs have been seen to clap their hands when every finger burned like a lighted candle and they have been heard to cry, “Christ is All,” “Christ is All!” When the Fourth, like unto the Son of God, walks in the furnace, all the fire can do is but snap their bonds and set the sufferers free! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, I am sure your only happiness that has been worth having has been found in knowing that He loved you and was near you! If you have ever rejoiced in the abundance of your corn and wine and oil, it has been a sorry joy—it has soon palled upon your taste—it never touched the great deeps of your spirit and soon it has gone and left you sorely wearied in heart.

If you have rejoiced in your children, your kinsfolk and your bodily health, how readily has God sent a blight upon them all. But when you have rejoiced in Jesus, you have heard a voice bidding you proceed to further delights! That voice has cried, “Drink, O Friends, yes, drink abun-

dantly, O Beloved.” To be inebriated with such joy as this is to come to the best condition of mind and to fix the soul where it should be! We are never right till we come out of ourselves and into Jesus. But when the ecstatic state comes and we stand right out of self and stand in Him so that whether in the body or out of the body we can scarcely tell, God knows! Then are we getting back to where God meant man to have been when He walked with him in Eden—getting near to where God means we shall be when we shall see Him face to face!

Brethren, what must the unveiled vision be! If the sight of Him, here, is so sweet, what must it be to see Him hereafter! It may be we shall not live till He comes, for the Master may tarry. But if He does not come and we, therefore, are called to pass through the gate of Death, we need not fear! I should not wonder if when we pass under the veil and come out in the disembodied state, one of our astonishments will be to find Jesus Himself there waiting to receive us! The soul hoped that a convoy of ministering angels would be near the bed and would escort it across the stream and up the mountains to the Celestial City—but no, instead thereof—our spirit will be saluted by the Lord Himself!

Will it be amazed and cry, “It is He, even He, my best Beloved, Jesus Himself! He has come to meet me! Heaven might have been too great a surprise. Even my disembodied spirit might have swooned away, but it is He, the Man Christ Jesus whom I trusted down below and who was the dear companion of my dying hours! I have changed my place and state, but I have not changed my Friend nor changed my joy, for here He is.” What a glance of love will that be which He will give to us and which we shall return to Him! Shall we ever take our eyes away from Him? Shall we ever wish to do so? Will not the poet’s words be true—

***“Millions of years my wondering eyes,
Shall over Your beauties rove.
And endless ages I’ll adore
The glories of Your love.”***

Within a week it may be our meeting with Jesus Himself may take place! Perhaps within an hour! A poor girl lying in the hospital was told by the doctor or the nurse that she could only live another hour. She waited patiently and when there remained only one quarter of an hour more, she exclaimed, “One more quarter of an hour and then”—she could not say what! Neither can I—but Jesus Himself has said, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am that they may behold My Glory.” And as He has prayed, so shall it be and so let it be! Amen and Amen.

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THE TABERNACLE OF THE MOST HIGH

NO 267

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 14, 1859,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

*“In whom you also are built together for an
habitation of God through the Spirit.”
Ephesians 2:22.*

UNDER the old Mosaic dispensation God had a visible dwelling place among men. The bright Shekinah was seen between the wings of the cherubim which overshadowed the Mercy Seat. And in the tabernacle while Israel journeyed in the wilderness and in the temple afterwards, when they were established in their own land, there was a visible manifestation of the Presence of Jehovah in the place which was dedicated to His service. Now, everything under the Mosaic dispensation was but a type, a picture, a symbol, of something higher and nobler. That form of worship was, as it were, a series of shadow pictures, of which the Gospel is the substance. It is a sad fact, however, that there is so much Judaism in all our hearts, that we frequently go back to the old beggarly elements of the Law, instead of going forward and seeing in them a type of something spiritual and heavenly, to which we ought to aspire.

It is disgraceful to the present century to hear some men talk as they do. They had better at once espouse the Jewish creed. I mean it is disgraceful to hear some men speak as they do with regard to religious edifices. I remember to have heard a sermon once upon this text—“If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy.” And the first part of the sermon was occupied with a childish anathema against all who should dare to perform any unhallowed act in the Churchyard, or who should lean the pole of a tent during the fair of the coming week against any part of that edifice, which, it seemed to me, was the god of the man who occupied the pulpit.

Is there such a thing as a holy place anywhere? Is there any spot wherein God now particularly dwells? I know not. Listen to the words of Jesus, “Believe Me, the hour comes, when you shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour comes and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him.” Remember, again, the saying of the Apostle at Athens, “God that made the world and all things

therein, seeing that He is Lord of Heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands.”

When men talk of holy places they seem to be ignorant of the use of language. Can Holiness dwell in bricks and mortar? Can there be such a thing as a sanctified steeple? Can it possibly happen that there can be such a thing in the world as a moral window or a godly door post? I am lost in amazement, utterly lost, when I think how addled men’s brains must be when they impute moral virtues to bricks and mortar and stones and stained glass. Pray how deep does this consecration go and how high? Is every crow that flies over the edifice at that time in solemn air? Certainly it is as rational to believe that, as to conceive that every worm that is eating the body of an Episcopalian is a consecrated worm and therefore there must necessarily be a brick wall, or a wide gravel path to protect the bodies of the sanctified from any unhallowed worms that might creep across from the Dissenters’ side of the cemetery.

I say again, such child’s play, such Popery, such Judaism, is a disgrace to the century. And yet, notwithstanding, we all find ourselves at many times and seasons indulging in it. That at which you have just now smiled is but pushing the matter a little further, an error into which we may very readily descend. It is but an extravaganza of an error into which we all of us are likely to fall. We have a reverence for our plain Chapels. We feel a kind of comfort when we are sitting down in the place which somehow or other we have got to think must be holy.

Now let, us if we can, and perhaps it takes a great sturdiness and independence of mind to do it—let us drive away once and forever, all idea of holiness being connected with anything but with a conscious active agent. Let us get rid once and forever of all superstitions with regard to place. Depend upon it, one place is as much consecrated as another and wherever we meet with true hearts reverently to worship God, that place becomes for the time being God’s House. Though it is regarded with the most religious awe, that place which has no devout heart within it is no House of God. It may be a house of superstition, but a House of God it cannot be.

“But, still,” says one, “God has a habitation. Does not your text say so?” Yes and of that House of God I am about to speak this morning. There is such a thing as a House of God. But that is not an inanimate structure, but a living and a spiritual temple. “In whom,” that is Christ, “you also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” The House of God is built with the living stones of converted men and women and the Church of God, which Christ has purchased with His blood—this is the Divine edifice and the structure wherein God dwells even to this day. I would, however, make one remark with regard to places in which we wor-

ship. I do think, albeit that there can be no sanctity of superstition connected with them, there is at the same time, a kind of sacredness of association. In any place where God has blessed my soul, I feel that it is one other than the House of God and the very gate of Heaven.

It is not because the stones are hallowed, but because there I have met with God and the recollections that I have of the place consecrate it to me, That place where Jacob laid him down to sleep, what was it but his sleeping chamber for the time being, but his sleeping chamber was none other than the House of God? You have rooms in your houses, I hope, and closets there more sacred in truth than any gorgeous cathedral that ever lifted its spire to Heaven. Where we meet with God there is a sacredness, not in the place but in the associations connected with it. Where we hold fellowship with God and where God makes bare His arm, though it is in a barn or a hedgerow, or on a moor, or on a mountain side, there is God's House to us. And the place is consecrated at once, but yet not so consecrated as that we may regard it with superstitious awe, but only consecrated by our own recollections of blessed hours which we have spent there in hallowed fellowship with God.

Leaving that out of the question, I come to introduce you to the house which God has built for His habitation. We shall regard the Church this morning thus—first, as a building. Secondly, as a habitation. And thirdly, as what she is soon to become, namely—a glorious temple.

I. First, then, we shall regard the Church as A BUILDING. And here let us pause to ask the question first of all what is a Church—what is the Church of God?

One sect claims the title for itself of the Church, while other denominations hotly contend for it. It belongs to none of us. The Church of God consists not of any one particular denomination of men. The Church of God consists of those whose names are written in the book of God's eternal choice. The men who were purchased by Christ upon the tree, the men who are called of God by His Holy Spirit and who being quickened by that same Spirit partake of the life of Christ and become members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. These are to be found in every denomination all sorts of Christians. Some stray ones where we little dreamed of them—here and there a member of the Church of God hidden in the midst of the darkness of accursed Rome. Now and then, as if by chance, a member of the Church of Christ, connected with no sect whatever, far away from all connection with his Brethren, having scarcely heard of their existence yet still knowing Christ, because the life of Christ is in him.

Now this Church of Christ, the people of God, throughout the world, by whatever name they may be known, are in my text compared to a *building*

in which God dwells. I must now indulge in a little allegory with regard to this building. The Church is not a heap of stones shot together. She is a building. Of old her architect devised her. Methinks I see Him, as I look back into old eternity making the first outline of His Church. "Here" said He in His eternal wisdom, "shall be the Cornerstone and there shall be the pinnacle." I see Him ordaining her length and her breadth, appointing her gates and her doors with matchless skill, devising every part of her and leaving no single portion of the structure unmapped. I see Him, that mighty Architect, also choosing to Himself every stone of the building, ordaining its size and its shape—settling upon His mighty plan the position each stone shall occupy, whether it shall glitter in front, or be hidden in the back, or buried in the very center of the wall.

I see him marking not merely the bare outline, but all the structure itself. All being ordained, decreed and settled in the Everlasting Covenant, which was the Divine plan of the mighty Architect upon which the Church is to be built. Looking on, I see the Architect choosing a cornerstone. He looks to Heaven and there are the angels, those glittering stones. He looks at each one of them from Gabriel down—but, said He, "None of you will suffice. I must have a cornerstone that will support all the weight of the building, for on that stone every other one must lean. Gabriel, you will not suffice! Raphael you must lay by. I cannot build with you." Yet it was necessary that a stone should be found and one, too, that should be taken out of the same quarry as the rest. Where was he to be discovered? Was there a *man* who would suffice to be the cornerstone of this mighty building? Ah no! Neither Apostles, Prophets, nor teachers would. Put them altogether and they would be as a foundation of quicksand and the house would totter to its fall.

Mark how the Divine mind solved the difficulty—"God shall become Man, very man and so He shall be of the same substance as the other stones of the temple, yet shall He be God and therefore strong enough to bear all the weight of this mighty structure, the top whereof shall reach to Heaven." I see that Cornerstone laid. Is there singing at the laying of it? No. There is weeping there. The angels gathered round at the laying of this first stone. Sad, look you men, and wonder—the angels weep! The harps of Heaven are clothed in sackcloth and no song is heard. They sang together and shouted for joy when the world was made, why shout they not now?

Look here and see the reason. That stone is imbedded in blood, that Cornerstone must lie nowhere else but in His own gore. The vermilion cement drawn from His own sacred veins must imbed it. And there He lies, the first stone of the Divine edifice. Oh, begin your songs afresh, you angels, it is over now. The Cornerstone is laid. The terrible ceremony is com-

plete and now, from where shall we gather the stones to build this temple? The first is laid, where are the rest? Shall we go and dig into the sides of Lebanon? Shall we find these precious stones in the marble quarries of kings? No. Where are you flying, you laborers of God? Where are you going? Where are the quarries? And they reply—"We go to dig in the quarries of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the depths of sinful Jerusalem and in the midst of erring Samaria."

I see them clear away the rubbish. I mark them as they dig deep into the earth and at last they come to these stones. But how rough, how hard, how unhewn! Yes, but these are the stones ordained of old in the Decree and these must be the stones and none other. There must be a change effected. These must be brought in and shaped and cut and polished and put into their places. I see the workmen at their labor. The great saw of the Law cuts through the stone and then comes the polishing chisel of the Gospel. I see the stones lying in their places and the Church is rising. The ministers, like wise master-builders, are there running along the wall, putting each spiritual stone in its place. Each stone is leaning on that massive Cornerstone and every stone depending on the blood and finding its security and its strength in Jesus Christ, the Cornerstone, elect and precious.

Do you see the building rise as each one of God's chosen is brought in, called by grace and quickened? Do you mark the living stones as in sacred love and holy brotherhood they are knit together? Have you ever entered the building and noticed how these stones lean one upon another, bearing each others' burden and so fulfilling the law of Christ? Do you mark how the Church loves Christ and how the members love each other? How first the Church is joined to the Cornerstone and then each stone bound to the next and the next to the next, till the whole building becomes one? Lo, The structure rises and it is complete and at last it is built.

And now open wide your eyes and see what a glorious building this is—the Church of God. Men talk of the splendor of their architecture—this is architecture, indeed—neither after Grecian nor Gothic models—but after the model of the sanctuary which Moses saw in the holy mountain. Do you see it? Was there ever a structure so comely as this—*instinct* with life in every part? Upon one stone shall be seven eyes and each stone full of eyes and full of hearts. Was ever a thought so massive as this—a building built of *souls*—a structure made of *hearts*? There is no house like a heart for one to repose in. There a man may find peace in his fellow man. But here is the house where God delights to dwell—built of living hearts, all beating with holy love—built of redeemed souls, chosen of the Father, bought with the blood of Christ.

The top of it is in Heaven. Part of them are above the clouds. Many of the living stones are now in the pinnacle of Paradise. We are here below, the building rises, the sacred masonry is heaving and, as the Cornerstone rises, so all of us must rise until at last the entire structure from its foundation to its pinnacle shall be heaved up to Heaven and there shall it stand forever—the new Jerusalem—the temple of the majesty of God!

With regard to this building I have just a remark or two to make before I come to the next point. Whenever architects devise a building they make mistakes in forming the plan. The most careful will omit something. The most clever find in some things he has been mistaken. But mark the Church of God. It is built according to rule and compass and square and it shall be found at last that there has not been one mistake. You, perhaps, my dear Brother, are a little stone in the temple and you are apt to think you ought to have been a great one. There is no mistake about that. You have but one talent. That is enough for you. If you had two you would spoil the building. You are placed perhaps in a position of obscurity and you are saying, “Oh that I were prominent in the Church!” If you were prominent you might be in a wrong place. And but one stone out of its place in architecture so delicate as that of God, would mar the whole.

You are where you ought to be—stay there. Depend on it there is no mistake. When at last we shall go round about her, mark her walls and tell her bulwarks, we shall each of us be compelled to say, “How glorious is this Zion!” When our eyes shall have been enlightened and our hearts instructed, each part of the building will command our admiration. The topstone is not the foundation, nor does the foundation stand at the top. Every stone is of the right shape. The whole material is as it should be and the structure is adapted for the great end, the glory of God, the temple of the Most High. Infinite wisdom, then, may be remarked in this building of God.

Another thing may be noticed, namely, her impregnable strength. This habitation of God, this house which is not made with hands, but is of God’s building, has often been attacked, but it has never been taken. What multitudes of enemies have battered against her old ramparts! But they have battered in vain. “The kings of the earth stood up and the rulers took counsel together,” but what happened? They came against her, all of them with mighty men, each man with his sword drawn, but what became of them? The Almighty scattered kings in Hermon like snow in Salmon. As the snow is driven from the mountain side before the stormy blast, even so did You drive them away, O God and they melted before the breath of Your nostrils—

***“Then should our souls in Zion dwell,
Nor fear the rage of Rome or Hell.”***

The Church is not in danger and she never can be. Let her enemies come, she can resist. Her passive majesty, her silent rocky strength, bids them defiance now. Let them come on and break themselves in pieces, let them dash themselves against her and learn the ready road to their own destruction. She is safe and she must be safe even unto the end. Thus much, then, we can say of the structure. It is built by infinite wisdom and it is impregnably secure.

And we may add, it is glorious for beauty. There was never structure like this. One might feast his eyes upon it from dawn to eve and then begin again. Jesus Himself takes delight in it. So pleased is God in the architecture of His Church, that He has rejoiced with His Church as He never did with the world. When God made the world He heaved the mountains and dug the seas and covered its valleys with grass. He made all the fowls of the air and all the beasts of the field. Yes, and He made man in His own image and when the angels saw it, they sang together and they shouted for joy. God did not sing. There was no sufficient theme of song for Him that was "Holy, holy, holy." He might say it was very good. There was a goodness of fitness about it, but not moral goodness of holiness. But when God built His Church He did sing. And that is the most extraordinary passage, I sometimes think, in the whole Word of God, where He *is* represented as singing—"Your Redeemer in the midst of you is mighty, He will save, He will rest in His love, He will rejoice over you with singing" (Zeph. 3:17).

Think, my Brethren, of God Himself looking at His Church—and so fair and beautiful is the structure that He sings over His work and as each stone is put in its place, Divinity itself sings! Was ever song like that? Oh, come, let us sing, let us exalt the name of God together—praise Him who praises His Church—who has made her to be His peculiar dwelling place.

Thus, then, have we in the first place regarded the Church as a building.

II. But the true glory of the Church of God consists in the fact that she is not only a building, but that she is A HABITATION. There may be great beauty in an uninhabited structure, but there is always a melancholy thought connected with it. In riding through our country, we often come upon a dismantled tower, or castle. It is beautiful, but it is not a thing of joy. There is a sorrowful reflection connected with it. Who loves to see desolate palaces? Who desires that the land should cast out her sons and that her houses should fail of tenants?

But there is joy in a house lit up and furnished—where there is the sound of men. Beloved, the Church of God has this for her peculiar glory, that she is a tenanted house, that she is a habitation of God through the Spirit. How many Churches there are that are houses, yet not habitations!

I might picture to you a professed Church of God. It is built according to square and compass, but its model has been formed in some ancient creed and not in the Word of God. It is precise in its discipline according to its own standard and accurate in its observances according to its own model. You enter that Church, the ceremony is imposing. The whole service perhaps attracts you for a while. But you go out of that place conscious that you have not met with the life of God there—that it is a *house*, but a house without a Tenant. It may be professedly a Church, but it is not a Church possessing the indwelling of the Holy One.

It is an empty house that must soon be dilapidated and fall. I do fear that this is true of many of our Churches, Established and Dissenting, as well as Romanist. There are too many Churches that are nothing but a mass of dull, dead formality. There is no life of God there. You might go to worship with such a people, day after day and your heart would never beat more quickly, your blood would never leap in its veins, your soul would never be refreshed, for it is an empty house. Fair may be the architecture of the structure, but empty is its storehouse, there is no table spread, there is no rejoicing, no killing of the fatted calf, no dancing, no singing for joy.

Beloved, let us take heed, lest our Churches become the same, lest we be combinations of men without spiritual life and consequently houses uninhabited, because God is not there. But a true Church, that is visited by the Spirit of God, where conversion, instruction, devotion and the like, are carried on by the Spirit's own living influences—such a Church has God for its Inhabitant.

And now we will just turn over this sweet thought. A Church built of living souls is God's own house. What is meant by this? I reply, a house is a place where a man solaces and comforts himself. Abroad we do battle with the world—there we strain every nerve and sinew that we may stem a sea of troubles and may not be carried away by the stream. Abroad, among men, we meet those of strange language to us, who often cut us to the heart and wound us to the quick. We feel that there we must be upon our guard. We could often say, "My soul is among lions. I lie even among those that are set on fire of Hell." Going abroad in the world we find but little rest but the day's work done—we go home—and there we solace ourselves. Our weary bodies are refreshed.

We throw away the armor that we have been wearing and we fight no more. We see no longer the strange face, but loving eyes beam upon us. We hear no language now which is discordant in our ears. Love speaks and we reply. Our home is the place of our solace, our comfort and our rest. Now, God calls the Church His habitation—His home. See him abroad. He is hurling the thunderbolt and lifting up His voice upon the

waters. Harken to Him. His voice breaks the cedars of Lebanon and makes the hinds to calve. See Him when He makes war, riding the chariot of His might, He drives the rebellious angels over the battlements of Heaven down to the depth of Hell. Behold Him as he lifts Himself in the majesty of His strength!

Who is this that is glorious? It is God, most high and terrible. But look, He lays aside His glittering sword. His spear He bears no longer. He comes back to His home. His children are about Him. He takes His solace and His rest. Yes, think not I venture too far—He shall rest in His lover and He does do it. He rests in His Church. He is no longer a consuming fire, a terror and a flame. Now, is He love and kindness and sweetness, ready to hear the prattle of His children's prayer and the disjointed notes of His children's song. Oh how beautiful is the picture of the Church as God's House, the place in which He takes His solace! "For the Lord has chosen Zion. He has desired it for His habitation. This is My rest forever: here will I dwell. For I have desired it."

Furthermore, a man's home is the place where he shows his inner self. You meet a man at the market, he deals sharply with you. He knows with whom he has to deal and he acts with you as a man of the world. You see him again at home, talking with his children and you say, "What a different man! I could not have believed it was the same being." Mark, again, the professor in his chair. He is instructing students in science. Mark his sternness as he speaks upon recondite themes. Would you believe that that same man will in the evening have his little one upon his knee and will tell it childish tales and repeat the ballads of the nursery? And yet it is even so. See the king as he rides through the street in his pomp. Thousands gather round him—acclamation rends the sky. With what majestic port he bears himself! He is all king, every inch a monarch, as he towers in the midst of the multitude.

Have you seen the king at home? He is then just like other men. His little ones are about him. He is on the floor with them in their games. Is this the king? Yes, it is even he. But why did he not do this in his palace?—in the streets? Oh, no, that was not his *home*. It is in his *home* that a man unbends himself. Even so with regard to our glorious God—it is in His Church that He manifests Himself as He does not unto the world. The mere worldling turns his telescope to the sky and he sees the pomp of God in the stars and he says, "O God, how infinite are You." Devoutly he looks across the sea and beholds it lashed with tempest and he says, "Behold the might and majesty of the Deity!" The anatomist dissects an insect and discovers in every part of it Divine wisdom and he says, "How wise is God!" Yes. But it is only the *Believer* who, as he kneels in his chamber,

can say, "My Father made all these," and then can say, "Our Father which are in Heaven, hallowed be Your name."

There are sweet revelations which God makes in His Church, which He never makes anywhere else. It is there He takes the children to His bosom. It is there He opens His heart and lets His people know the fountains of His great soul and the might of His infinite affection. And is it not a sweet thing to think of God at home with His family, happy in the house of His Church?

But yet, furthermore, another thought strikes me now. A man's home is the center of all he does. Yonder is a large farm. Well, there are outhouses and hay racks and barns and the like. But just in the middle of these—there is the house—the center of all husbandry. No matter how much wheat there may be, it is to the house the produce goes. It is for the maintenance of the household that the husband carries on his husbandry. You may hear the cattle lowing yonder, you may mark the sheep upon the hills, but the fleece comes home and the full udders must yield the milk for the children of the house, for the house is the center of all. Every river of industry comes down towards the sweet soft inland lake of home.

Now God's Church is God's center! He is abroad in the world, He is busy here and there and everywhere—but to what does all His business tend? To His Church. Why does God clothe the hills with plenty? For the feeding of His people! Why is Providence revolving? Why those wars and tempests and then again this stillness and calm? It is for His Church. Not an angel divides the ether who has not a mission for the Church. It may be indirectly, but nevertheless truly so. There is not an archangel that fulfils the behests of the Most High but really carries the Church upon his broad wings and bears up her children lest they dash their feet against a stone. The storehouses of God are for His Church. The depths beneath of hidden treasure, of God's unutterable riches—all these are for His people. There is nothing which He has from His blazing crown to the darkness that is beneath His throne, that is not for His redeemed. All things must minister and work together for good for the chosen Church of God which is His house—His daily habitation. I think if you will turn that over and over again, when you are away, you will see there is much in the beautiful fact that as the house is the center, so is the Church the center of everything with God.

One other thought and I will have done. We have heard much talk of late about the French invasion. I shall begin to be alarmed about it when I see it, but certainly not till then. However, there is one thing we may say pretty safely. We are many of us peaceable men and would not like to wield the sword. The first sight of blood would sicken us—we are peaceful beings—we are not for fighting and war. But let the most peaceful man

imagine that the invader has landed on our shore, that our houses are in danger and our homes about to be sacked by the foe, our conscientiousness, I fear, would give way. Notwithstanding all we might say about the wrongness of war, I query whether there is a man among us who would not take such weapon as he could find next to hand to repel the enemy. With this for our war cry, "Our hearths and our homes," we would rush upon the invader, be he who he may or what he may.

There is no might so tremendous that it could paralyze our arm—until we were frozen in death—we would fight for our homes. There would be no command so stern that it could quiet us. We should break through every band and bond and the weakest of us would be a giant and our women would become heroines in the day of difficulty. Every hand would find its weapon to hurl at the invader. We love our homes and we must and will defend them. Yes, and now lift up your thoughts—the Church is God's home—will He not defend it? Will He suffer His own house to be sacked and stormed? Shall the hearth of Divinity be stained with the blood of His children? Shall it be that the Church is overthrown and her battlements stormed, her peaceful habitations given up to fire and sword?

No, never—not while God has a heart of love and while He calls His people His own house and His habitation. Come, let us rejoice in this our security. Let earth be all in arms abroad, we dwell in perfect peace, for our Father is in the house and He is God Almighty. Let them come on against us, we need not fear, His arm shall fell them, the breath of His nostrils shall blast them, a word shall destroy them, they shall melt away like the fat of rams, as fat of lambs shall they be consumed, into smoke shall they consume away. All these thoughts seem to me naturally to arise from the fact that the Church is God's habitation.

III. I was about to show you in the third place, that the Church is, by-and-by, to be GOD'S GLORIOUS TEMPLE. It does not yet appear what she shall be. I have, however, already mentioned this precious fact. The Church is rising today and she shall continue to rise until the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established upon the top of the mountains. And then, when all nations shall call her blessed and Him blessed, too—when they shall all say, "Come and let us go up to the House of our God that we may worship Him," then shall the Church's glory begin. When this earth shall pass away, when all the monuments of empires shall be dissolved and run down in the common lava of the last burning, then shall the Church be caught up in the clouds and afterwards be exalted to Heaven itself, to become a temple such as eye has not seen.

And now, Brothers and Sisters, in conclusion I make these remarks. If the Church of God is God's House, what should you and I do? Why, we should earnestly seek to be a part of that temple. Let us not grieve His

Spirit lest He leave His Church for awhile. Above all let us not be hypocrites lest He never come into our hearts at all. And if the Church is God's temple and God's House, let us not defile it. If you defile yourself you defile the Church, for your sin, if you are a Church member is the Church's sin. The defilement of one stone in the building virtually mars its perfection. Take care that you are holy even as He is holy. Let not your heart become a house for Belial. Think not that God and the devil can dwell in the same habitation. Give yourself wholly to God. Seek for more of His Spirit, that as a living stone you may be wholly consecrated.

And never be content unless you feel in yourself the perpetual presence of the Divine Inhabitant who dwells in His Church. May God now bless every living stone of the temple. And as for you that as yet are not hewn out of the quarries of sin, I pray that Divine Grace may meet with you, that you may be renewed and converted and at last be partakers of the inheritance of the saints of light.

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

A GRATEFUL SUMMARY OF TWENTY VOLUMES NO. 1209

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 27, 1874,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this
Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles
the unsearchable riches of Christ.”
Ephesians 3:8.*

THIS is a very remarkable day for me, for if I am spared to preach this present sermon, I shall have completed 20 years of printed discourses issued week by week. This will be the last sermon of my 20th volume, making 1,209 in all. This is by no means a common occurrence. Indeed, I have not heard of another case in which for so long a time published discourses have been welcomed by the Christian Church and scattered broadcast over the land. Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day testifying the Gospel of Christ Jesus. For this I magnify the name of the Lord and ask my dear friends associated with me to assist me in the expression of my thankfulness to Almighty God for such special lovingkindness.

I could not find, even in the rich volume of Inspiration, any language more expressive of the deep emotions of my soul than the verse which is now before us, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unspeakable riches of Christ.” How long or how short the time allotted to my future ministry may be, I do not wish to know. Whether I shall complete another 20 years or become silent in a few months, for these 20 years of blessed assistance in the ministration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ I must, and will, adore the name of the Lord, even if never again He should permit me to open my lips in His service. It is enough of mercy for one man to have enjoyed, even if there were no more to follow. Bless the Lord, O my Soul!

While we shall consider the verse as Paul’s own expression, we shall retain our own hold upon it, and use it very much as a summary of our own emotions. Note from the text that *Paul thought very little of himself*. “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints,” he says, “is this Grace given.” I am sure Paul was never guilty of mock modesty and never pretended to be more humble than he really was. At suitable times he could vindicate himself and claim his position among his fellow men. If any denied his Apostleship, he proved it by abundant arguments. Yes, he even became, on one occasion, what he calls a “fool in glorying”—he recounted his abundant labors and his frequent sufferings—he pointed to his success and protested that he was not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles though he was *nothing!*

Although all this was true and Paul expressed only the bare truth when he thus defended himself, yet in his heart of hearts he chose to take the lowest seat in the lowest room. And because there were no adjectives in

correct language which could express his opinion of himself, he did violence to language and said that he was “less than the least of all saints.” His straining of words is not to be censured, for language was made *for* man and not man for language. And when, within the bounds of grammar, a mighty heart cannot express itself, it does well to snap the bonds and let its strength have space to exercise itself.

I do not quarrel with Paul’s language, but I do dispute his right to push me out of my place! Less than the least is a position which *I* had hoped to occupy, but he has taken it from me and I would gladly give him a touch on the shoulder and say, “Friend, go up higher.” For as there are no lower seats and we could not think of sitting *above* the great Apostle, he must allow us to allot him a higher place. Was Paul really less than the least of all saints? Was not this too low an estimate of himself? Brothers and Sisters, I suppose he meant that he *felt* this to be the case when he looked at himself from certain aspects. He was one of the late converts—many of his comrades were in Christ before him—and he yielded precedence to the older ones.

He had been, before, a persecutor and injurious and, though God had forgiven him, he had never forgiven himself. And when he remembered his share in the sufferings and martyrdom of the saints, he felt that though now numbered among them, he could only dare to sit in the lowest place. Besides, any devout man, however eminent he may be in most respects, will find that there are certain other points in which he falls short. And the Apostle, instead of looking at the points in which he excelled, singled out with modest eye those qualities in which he felt he failed. It is in these respects he put himself down as, “less than the least of all saints.”

This strikes us as being a very different mode of speech from that which is adopted by certain Brethren. One friend asserts that he has ceased from known sin for some months. Then another Brother, to go a little further, asserts that the very *being* of sin in him has been destroyed, root and branch—of which I believe, in both cases, not one single word! If those Brothers had said that they were 16 feet high, that their eyes were solid diamonds and that their hair was Prussian blue, I should feel towards them very much as I do now. They simply do not know themselves and the best article of furniture they could have in their houses would be a mirror which would let them see their own reflection! If they had once had such a sight, I guarantee you they would sing another tune, pitched to a far lower key.

Many who now shine in the highest places of self-estimation will, one day, be glad enough to sit at the feet of the poorest of the saints, unless I am greatly mistaken—for everyone that exalts himself shall be abased. For my part I had sooner hear Paul say that he was less than the least of all the saints than I would hear the holiest Brother out of Heaven say that he had been living without sin. I could believe the one, but I could not believe the other. Paul was as holy as the holiest now upon earth, but among the humble he was the most humble. The Lord make us each so.

Our next remark is that *Paul thought very much of his Brethren*. These two things usually go together—a low opinion of one’s self and a high estimate of others. He calls himself less than the least—not of all the Apos-

bles, though even *that* would have been a lowly judgment—but less than the least of all *saints*. And yet there were some very imperfect saints among his acquaintance. His pastoral observation had discovered many weak, trembling, half-instructed and even backsliding Brothers and Sisters. Remember how he differed from Barnabas about John Mark and how he rebuked Peter to his face because he was to be blamed?

He was not insensible of the defects of the saints, for in some of his Epistles he gives us a very sad picture of the condition of some of the members of the Churches. Yes, and of some who were true saints he tells them that he could only write to them as to carnal, as to babes in Christ and that when they ought to have been teachers they needed, themselves, to be taught the very elements of the faith! And yet he says he was less than the least of them! He must have thought very highly of the least instructed and most imperfect of the Divine family. After all, dear Brothers and Sisters, though we hear much fault found with professing Christians and Church members, and hear it said that they are no better than men of the world, we dare not be among their detractors. If we cannot find saints in the Church of God, certainly we shall find them nowhere else.

They are faulty, no doubt, but still, they are the Lord's elect and the people on whom His heart is set! They are the excellent of the earth and if we may but be numbered with *them* we shall be thankful even if our name should stand lowest and last on the list! We count the regenerate and the sanctified to be the true aristocracy, the real nobility of the world. "O God You are my God, my goodness extends not to You, but to the saints that are in the earth and to the excellent in whom is all my delight." The Church, notwithstanding her spots, is fairest among women, and though her garments are sometimes stained, (would God they were not), yet, for all that, she is all glorious within—her clothing is of worked gold. She is beautiful in the eyes of her Lord! He loved her well enough to redeem her with His precious blood and to make her His bride!

It would be shameful on our part to despise her. She ought to be lovely in our eyes, yes, and she is, for we love the people of God beyond all others. My inmost soul can say of the Church of God—

***"My soul shall pray for Zion still
While life or breath remains.
There my best friends, my kindred dwell
There God my Savior reigns."***

The next reflection suggested by the text is that *Paul thought very highly of his work*. He says, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach." He looked upon his ministry as a great gift from God, an honor bestowed, a favor granted. Yet, my Brethren, Paul's office was not such a very attractive thing, after all, looking upon it after the manner of men. Paul was not a Lord Bishop or a Right Reverend. His salary was less than nothing. He received no homage from men. His greatest gains were his losses. His honors came from his dishonors and his glory from his sufferings!

Stripes and imprisonments awaited him in every city. Stoning and shipwreck, perils of robbers and perils of traitors, care and grief were his portion. He was made an outcast for Christ's sake. His Jewish brethren even foamed at the mouth at the very thought of the renegade Pharisee who

preached to the Gentiles! He had suffered the loss of all things for Christ's sake and he says he, "counted them but dung that he might win Christ and be found in Him." If the vacancy and next presentation of Paul's office had been put up at Garraway's, our modern imitators of Simon Magus would have been very slow in the bidding—they would rather have paid a heavy fee to be excused! Paul, himself, said of it, "If in this life, only, we have hope, we are of all men most miserable."

Yet so content was he to preach the Gospel that, notwithstanding all the hardships and reproaches which went with it, he considered it to be a special favor granted him of the Lord that he was permitted to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles! The Apostle even lifts up his hands in grateful astonishment that so great an honor should be bestowed upon him. He says "Unto *me*—unto *me*, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given, that I—the persecutor, the man who breathed out threats and slaughter—that *I* should preach among the Gentiles." He marvels at it! He cannot understand it!

The passage reads as if he paused in his writing and burst into a song of adoring gratitude because the Lord had honored him so exceedingly as to put him in trust with the Gospel! How deeply do I sympathize with him in his wonder at electing love! My heart cries, "Why *me*, Lord, why *me*?" Note well that the Apostle had a very clear view of what he had to do. "That I should preach," he says, "among the Gentiles." Paul does not claim to be sent to *regenerate* the Gentiles by sprinkling them, or to hear their confessions of secret sin, or to pry into their private lives with filthy questions and to absolve them on the fulfillment of appointed penances—he has not a word to say about playing the priest!

He does not glory in the Grace which enabled him to display a comely ritual, or restore a pompous ceremonialism. He boasts not of carrying a crucifix or a banner in a procession up and down the aisles to delight the Gentiles. Nor, in a word, does he set himself up as a sort of demi-god, able to kill and to make alive, to distribute pardons and to regenerate babes. Paul was quite satisfied to preach the Gospel—that was as far as his commission went—and whenever God, the Holy Spirit, sends forth a minister to bless the Church, *that* is the purpose of his mission and nothing else—he is to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ!

Neither our Lord nor His Apostles command us to set up altars—the grand command is "preach the Gospel to every creature." O you priests of the Church of England, take off your tag-rags and stand out like men and preach the Gospel, if, indeed, you are ministers of God and not sappers and miners for the pope of Rome! God sends men to preach the Gospel—He never sends them to intrude into the office of Christ and set themselves up as priests offering sacrifices for the quick and dead—when in Him the priesthood is fulfilled! Paul knew what his vocation was and he kept to it. Find me one instance of his acting the priest! Wherever he went, he was preaching and teaching—preaching and teaching, preaching and teaching—that was the one object of his life.

Whether in Damascus or Corinth, Jerusalem or Rome, he must preach! When he was amid the Areopagites on Mars' Hill, why did he not show

them the beauty of Divine service as performed in the most approved fashion? Why at Lystra did he not offer a sacrifice to God and wave a censor?—all the materials were ready! No. He *preached* everywhere! When detained at Rome he did not train a choir, or instruct a company of clergy in ecclesiastical calisthenics, or Church millinery—he taught Jesus to all around. We read nothing of his genuflections and intonations—but a great deal of his preaching the Word in season and out of season!

This, too, is *our* work. The Church must see to it that this ordinance is used above every other for the conversion of men. It pleases God, by the foolishness of *preaching*, to save them that believe! Stand to your guns, my Brothers—preach the Word of God—make full proof of your ministry and cease not to teach all men the Truth of God concerning Jesus. Remark how Paul calls his ministry a “Grace.” Every true preacher of the Gospel will have to thank God that he has been permitted to preach. I do not know how my soul would have been kept alive if it had not been for the searching of Scripture, the prayer, the faith and the joy which *preaching* has involved!

Though it may be true that professional familiarity with sacred things is apt to breed a lack of personal enjoyment in men, I do not find it so. To me it is a great blessing to have to prepare for preaching. Often the best means of Grace to my own soul are the groans, the pleading, the meditation and the communion needed for the selection of the right subject upon which to feed your souls. Preachers *have* to grow in Grace, for their very *calling* places them at a great advantage, since they are bound to search the Scriptures and to be much in prayer. It is a choice mercy to be permitted to preach the Gospel! I wish some of you would be desirous of it, for earnest preachers are needed. There are several Brothers here who ought to preach—and I believe they *would* preach with great power if they were once driven to the attempt. A modesty which may be cowardice silences many. A diffidence, which may also be culpable love of ease, keeps them back from speaking in the name of the Lord. Brothers, let it be so no longer!

Thus, you see, Paul thought little of himself, much of his Brethren, and highly of his work. Again, *Paul thought very lovingly of his congregation*. He counted it a great Grace that he was permitted to preach *among the Gentiles*. Peter had a much more respectable sphere, for he was the Apostle of the Circumcision and preached to the ancient aristocratic race of the Hebrews. But Paul was sent to preach to the Gentile dogs who were despised by the Jews as uncircumcised and unclean. Our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, gave the Gentiles a sad character, for when speaking of worldly things He said, “After all these things do the Gentiles seek,” as if they were utterly gross and carnal and entirely besotted with groveling pursuits.

Paul, however, rejoiced to preach to these “worldly-minded Gentiles.” He was glad to bring the outcasts to Jesus! They were such an ignorant crew, these Gentiles, ignorant of the true God and eternal life. Though there were some of them wise in their own conceits, yet were they sunk in spiritual ignorance. There were the Greeks, proud of their learned folly. The Romans, boasting of brute force and despising a merely spiritual kingdom. The Scythians, barbarous and uncouth. And the bondsmen,

sunk in vice and degradation. But he who was sent to labor among them preferred them to any other audience! Paul thanked God for his congregation, ignorant as they were.

Worse than ignorant, they were worshippers of idols—they had many gods and lords—and they bowed themselves before the personifications of their own wickedness. Yet Paul was glad to preach to idolaters! The first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans contains a fearful indictment against the Gentiles for their horrible vices. They were sunk in a horrible slough of corruption and yet Paul considered it a great privilege to preach among these ignorant, debased, vicious heathen Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ! And a privilege it was! It is a royal honor to preach to the lowest of the low.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, wherever you and I are called to labor we ought to be thankful that God has given us that particular place to labor in. I like to see Christian workers fall in love with their spheres. For instance, the Brethren who work in Golden Lane and Seven Dials do well to look upon their districts as the most important in London. And every city missionary, if he is to succeed, must feel that his particular part of the city is that which is best for him. I like to hear Mr. Moffat speak as if there were no people in the world of more consequence than Bechuanas and Hottentots. I never knew a man to succeed among a people unless he preferred them to all others as the objects of his care. When ministers despise their congregations, their congregations are very likely to despise them—and then usefulness is out of the question.

When a man thinks himself above his work, the probability is that he is altogether in the clouds, or stands in the way of some practical worker of a more commonplace kind who would do the work which he is despising. Oh you who teach little children, love them or you cannot teach them! If you preach in the street, feel a sympathy with the people who gather around you, or you had better give it up. Paul became a Gentile for the Gentiles' sake. Pharisee as he had been, we see nothing of his phylacteries or the broad borders of his garment. He always loved his kinsmen, according to the flesh, and would have gladly died to save them. Jew as he was and at one time bound by the strongest possible Jewish prejudices, he had broken them all down and had made the Gentiles his clients, his flock, his children! It was his daily joy that he was ordained to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ!

Upon our next remark we will more fully enlarge. It is this—*Paul thought most of all, of his Subject*. That he had to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ was his highest bliss. The glories of Jesus, whom once he had persecuted, were his one and only theme. All he had to say was contained within the circumference of that word, Christ, and all that he aimed at was to glorify his Lord. Neither ceremonies, nor orthodoxies, nor philosophies, nor sects, nor parties did Paul labor for—he exalted only in Christ Jesus the Lord! Nor did he feel that his engrossment by one solitary Subject restricted him in his thought or speech, for he looked upon his theme as full of riches, riches altogether unsearchable! He had a deep insight into the Truth which he had to proclaim and saw within it veins of

precious thought which he could never exhaust—lodes of more than golden treasure which no research could ever fully explore!

O to be in this fashion enamored of the Gospel, absorbed in it and wholly carried away by its charms! Let us meditate a few minutes upon the unsearchable riches of Christ, which it has been our joy to preach, even as it was Paul's. Notice, first, that the Apostle dwelt much upon *the essential riches of Christ's Person*. Beloved, there are unsearchable riches in Christ, for He is, by Nature, "God over all, blessed forever." Others may make Him a mere man, but we behold the unsearchable riches of the Deity in Jesus Christ, "In whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." He is the Creator, without whom was not anything made that was made!

He is the Preserver of all things and by Him all things consist. What riches there must be in Him who both makes and sustains the universe by the Word of His power! In Jesus Christ all the attributes of God are manifest—the Wisdom, the Power, the Immutability, the Truth, the Faithfulness, the Justice and Love of God are all to be found in the Character of Jesus Christ our Lord! Even while He was here on earth and clothed Himself in mortal flesh, the Godhead shone through the veil! The winds knew Him and were silent. The waves knew Him and kissed His feet. The angels ministered to Him and the devils fled before Him. Diseases were healed, for His touch was Omnipotent. The dead lived, for His voice was almighty. He was God, even while to mortal eye He was only the carpenter's son.

Today He has put off His servant's garments and laid aside the towel which with He wiped His disciples' feet—and all power is given unto Him in Heaven and on the earth! Let us, then, proclaim His unsearchable riches. Now is He crowned with universal Sovereignty and the government is upon His shoulders! His name is called, "Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Riches beyond compare belong to Him who, for our sakes, became poor, though He has riches unsearchable, for He is God, and, "Who, by searching, can find out God? Who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Jesus is "very God of very God" and as such we adore Him, and glory in the wealth of His Nature.

Jesus, our Lord, is also Man—Man of the substance of His mother—bone of our bone. And here we may sing of the wealth of human love which is treasured up in Him and manifested to His Brethren. His wealth of *sympathy* with His people, for He has been tempted in all points like as they are. His wealth of *discernment*, for He knows the secrets of our nature, having worn that nature, Himself. Because of the riches of His love He is not ashamed to call His redeemed ones Brethren. It is a wonderful subject, the wealth of pure Manhood which dwelt in Jesus, for He both thought and spoke and acted as man—with a richness of perfect Manhood which never dwelt in any other son of man! He was the true Adam—the sum of humanity's best Glory, made to have dominion over all the works of Jehovah's hands. Thus, in the two Natures which make up His mysterious Person, Son of man and Son of God, there was a measureless wealth—and this Paul preached.

My Brethren, I boldly ask you whether during these 20 years I have not tried to set forth the unsearchable riches of my Lord and Master in His blessed Person? I have preached Him to you as no mere abstraction, but as a real Christ. I have not talked of Him as if He were a myth. I have spoken of Him always as an actual Person who lived and died, and is risen and gone into Heaven. I have also preached Him as still among you in Spirit, Head of the Church and Lord over all. Neither have I preached to you a Christ stunted in power or Glory. I have endeavored, according to my ability, to set Him forth as King of kings and Lord of lords. Your hearts have rejoiced to hear of Him and mine has rejoiced to speak of One so altogether lovely, so good, so kind, so ready to forgive, so faithful and mighty! In a word, I have preached the unsearchable riches of His Person.

Next, we have to preach the riches of our Lord Jesus *as the Christ*. That is to say, in His relationship towards us. Now, think a minute or two. In the old eternity, before ever the earth was, the unsearchable riches of Christ were displayed when He entered into Covenant with the Father on our behalf. What matchless love it was which prompted the Second Person of the Divine Unity to become the Surety of the Covenant of Grace for His elect! Unsearchable were the riches of Love which suggested the Covenant and the riches of the Wisdom which planned it. It was worthy of a God!

Remember, that as time rolled on, His people, as they were one by one created, were saved simply on the ground of His word and pledge. And if the bare bond of Christ, before He had shed a drop of His blood, was able to save myriads of His elect, what riches there must be in His Atonement, itself! If His promise to redeem was enough for thousands of years to save multitudes from death and Hell, what must be the riches of the finished Righteousness and the accomplished Substitution?

Think of the riches of Christ's Grace from the day of man's Fall until the day of his redemption. He saw man in his waywardness and knew what he would be under the *best* conditions, yet He did not turn aside from His pledge of love because of the baseness of fallen humanity. He knew that men would prove ungrateful, yet He resolved to redeem His people. He had, throughout those ages, an opportunity of estimating what the pangs of death would be. He knew the cost at which He must seek and save the lost—but through those thousands of years such were the riches of His infinite Love that He never started back from the compact which He had made—but determined to push on till, by His death He had delivered man from sin and the earth from the curse!

Wealth of mercy! What can transcend this? Down the Lord descends to Bethlehem's manger and there He lies, a Baby wrapped in swaddling clothes! Who shall tell the riches of the condescending love which made the Infinite, Incarnate? Among the sons of men He tarries, going about doing good! Calculate, if you can, the riches of that generous heart which detained Him for years among a sinful and gainsaying generation! The life of Jesus on earth is a mint of Grace! But oh, the unsearchable Love which led Him to give His hands to the nails and His heart to the spear! What unspeakable love is centered in the Cross! What riches of Divine Grace that He should deign to die a malefactor's death for His enemies!

Can any of us conceive the unsearchable riches of merit which must lie in the holy life and painful death of our beloved Lord? If the Son of God, Himself, deigns to die, the Just for the unjust, surely no limit can be set to the virtue of that death! Neither, indeed, can we calculate how precious it must be in the Father's sight. O You bleeding Savior, when You had become poorest of all in Your own Glory, surely You did also become richest of all for the redemption of the sons of men! None shall ever know, nor even eternity, itself, fully declare the infinite value of Your tears and bloody sweat, and agony and death! But look, He rises again, for the tomb could not contain Him—He rises for our Justification! In the risen Savior what wealth may be seen, for while He justifies all His people by His rising, He also secures eternal life for them and guarantees to their bodies a glorious resurrection! Think of our Lord as the first fruits of them that sleep and you will see in His Resurrection a Truth of God which is the cornerstone of the entire Gospel—and the sure pledge of eternal bliss.

But lo, He spurns the hill of Olivet and mounts into the opened heavens—a cloud receiving Him from mortal sight! As He ascends, He scatters gifts among the sons of men. The Holy Spirit is given—He rests in tongues of fire upon the heads of chosen men. He gave “some Apostles, some pastors and teachers” for the building up of His Church. Those gifts He still continues to bestow, for He “received gifts for men, yes, for the rebellious, also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.” The riches of the ascended Savior—it is not possible for the mind to calculate! Look again! Behold Him in Heaven! There He sits at the right hand of the Father to represent His people! Is there not a wealth of comfort in that representation? He sits on the Throne to rule for His people—there is another mine of consolation! His Presence is the guarantee of *our* being there—is not this full of richness?

He intercedes for all His saints before the Eternal Throne—there is another treasure house of marvelous instruction and delight! Jesus sits forever at the right hand of God, because His work is done. He waits until His enemies become His footstool—is He not to us a treasure of unsearchable riches? But He is soon to come and who shall tell the riches which *then* shall be revealed—when sin shall fly before Him and this burdened earth shall be eased of the load which has made her continually groan? When, instead of thorn and thistle, shall come up the cedar and the rose! When the desert shall rejoice and blossom and men down-trod and weary, shall lift up their eyes to behold a new Paradise and enjoy a Glory such as eye has not seen nor ear heard—a splendor of millennial bliss of which may every one of us be partakers! All this shall be because He comes!

There are unsearchable riches in Christ, whether living, dying, rising, dwelling in Heaven, or descending a second time to earth. See what a subject Paul had to preach! And we have preached it, too. These 20 years our one theme has been Christ Jesus in His relationship to His people, in His everlasting love, in His once-offered, completely atoning Sacrifice, in His pleading before the Father's Throne and in the kingdom which is yet to subdue all things to itself. What a joy it is to have been privileged to preach all this!

Thirdly and briefly, Paul had preached the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ *in and to His people*. He had told them that Christ had paid their debts and they were free. How wondrously had he put it—"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." We cannot stop to repeat the texts, but Paul had been clear enough upon the point—that the riches of Christ in pardoning sin were unsearchable. He had told the saints that Christ had provided all that could be needed by them between where they were and the gates of Heaven, for, he said, "you are complete in Him." "All things are yours, whether things present or things to come."

Paul had delighted to dive into the depth of overflowing Grace. What a grand swimmer he was in the sea of Joy! He had also told the saints that they might have whatever they asked for in answer to believing prayer. How often had he put it before them that He who spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for them, would also, with Him, freely give them all things? What riches of Christ are found at the Mercy Seat! He who knows how to draw near to God by Jesus Christ will find great stores of wealth there. He had assured them that the Lord, Himself, was theirs, yes, he said, "all things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

He had told them that Heaven was theirs, for they had obtained an inheritance in Christ and were on their way to Glory, every hour bringing them nearer. Truly, if you want to know the deep things of God, you must listen to Paul, for he tells us of the eternity of Christ's Love, a Love without beginning and without end! He tells us of the Immutability of that Love, for Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, today, and forever." He tells us of the Infinity of that Love, and delights to declare that it passes knowledge. In fact, he tells us that God, Himself, is ours, to be our portion forever. Oh, children of God, if you are limited, you are not limited in the preaching of the Apostle—you are limited in yourselves! I venture, also, to say that in my own preaching I have not knowingly held back any of the blessings of the Covenant of Grace, nor spoken lightly of the blessings which Jesus gives to His beloved. No, I have delighted to speak upon what the Lord has given to His saints and have bid Believers enjoy the fat things full of marrow which He has provided for them. Happy people to have such a Savior!

But lastly, the point Paul most rejoiced to preach upon was this—*the unsearchable riches of our Lord towards sinners*, for he says that he preached *among the Gentiles*—the sinners—the unsearchable riches of Christ. This is the most delightful theme of all—to tell poor sinners that there is an unspeakably rich Savior! I lament to say that there are preachers who do not preach this among the Gentiles. They have a great deal to say to God's own people, but they have nothing to say to the Gentiles, to the *sinners*—to the insensible, unquickened sinners—nothing to say to them. I have known them close a sermon by saying, "The election has obtained it, the rest are blinded," and sit down with not a word for those dead in sin.

Brothers and Sisters, we have not so learned Christ! We delight to preach among the *Gentiles* the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make

all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery. What have we to say to Gentile sinners? Why, we have to tell them that our Lord Jesus is so rich in Divine Grace that He keeps open house all day and all night long—and, “Come and welcome,” is written over His palace gates! “Whoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.” We have to tell you that, though millions of sinners have already come, the banquet table is as loaded as it ever was! He has as much Grace and Mercy to distribute as He had 1,800 years ago! He is as able to cleanse from sin, as able to justify and to sanctify as He was when first He began His work of mercy! There is no limit to His Grace for those that come to Him! Whoever comes to Him shall receive eternal salvation!

My Master is so rich that He needs nothing from any of you. You need not bring a *rag* with you—He will cover you from head to foot. You need not bring a *moldy crust*—He will give you of the Bread of Heaven! You need not stop to cleanse away a single *spot*—He will wash you white as snow. Help from you? Does the sun need help from darkness? Christ needs no help from sinners! Let them come empty-handed, naked, sick, helpless and believe that He is able to do for them all that they require.

I am bold to tell you that my Master’s riches of Divine Grace are so unsearchable that He delights to forgive and forget enormous sin! The bigger the sin the more Glory to His Grace! If you are over head and ears in debt, He is rich enough to discharge your liabilities. If you are at the very gates of Hell, He is able to pluck you from the jaws of destruction. So mighty is His Mercy that no case did ever exceed His power to save or ever will! I will challenge you to a contest with regard to my dear Lord and Master, that if you will sit down and think the best and largest thoughts you can of Him, you will not think Him to be so good and loving as He really is! If you will try and wish for the largest blessings you can conceive, you shall not be able to wish for such blessings as He is prepared to bestow! And if you will open your mouth wide and make a request for the greatest favor that ever a human being asked of God or man, you shall not ask for a tenth of what He is prepared to give!

Come and try Him! Let it be a wrestling match between your needs and Christ’s abundance—and see which will win the day! I tell you that, as Aaron’s rod swallowed up the rods of the magicians, so my Master’s All-Sufficiency will swallow up all the demands of your dreadful necessities! Only come and try Him now! All that you need between the gates of Hell and the gates of Heaven you shall find in Christ—and you shall have it all for *nothing*—all just for the asking. Open your hands and take it, it is all He asks of you—that you believingly receive what He freely bestows! Trust in Him, in Him as dead and risen, and ascended, and reigning! Rely upon Him, and by so doing you shall find that there are unsearchable riches of Grace in Him.

Now, I have done when I have said just this. I have no doubt Paul would not have been so pleased to preach Christ as he was unless something had come of it. Now, at the close of 20 years of printed sermons, my great delight in having preached the unsearchable riches of Christ lies in this—that something, by the Grace of God, has come of it! How many souls have been converted is not in my power to tell. I do not think I ever

pass a single day, nor have done so for some years, without having intimations of some persons at the very ends of the earth, or at home, having been led to the Savior by the reading of the sermons.

I am not prepared to say how many persons have gone through this Church to other Churches or to Heaven. The number can hardly be far short of those which remain, and of these it may suffice to say that 4,700 souls are with us, still kept by the power of Grace, and knit together in Church fellowship. Is not this matter of great thankfulness to God? During these 20 years the dew has never ceased to fall! The Church has been planted like a tree by rivers of water—she has brought forth her fruit in her season—and whatever she has attempted has prospered. I joy, therefore, and will joy in this.

Yet, once more, I think Paul must have felt a special gladness that through his preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, others had been raised up to preach it, too. So has it been with us, by God's Grace. How many tongues this day are preaching Christ out of our Church members and students, I cannot assert definitely, but that they are to be counted by hundreds is certain. Would to God they were 10 times as many! I wish all the rest of this congregation who love Christ would go and talk about Him, too. Some among you are very diligent and I bless God for you. I wish more of you were trying to bring these unsearchable riches of Christ within the knowledge of the ignorant and sinful.

It is the last Sabbath of the year. Could we not begin, next year, with a great deal more industry than we have strewn this year? I am afraid there are many members who have no work to do for Jesus and these are the sort of people to backslide. You that have neither to do nor to suffer are the baggage of the army, the impediments which prevent the host from marching on to victory! Bestir yourselves! Feed upon Jesus and then take the good cheer to those who do not know the riches of Christ. And as God gives you Grace, go and fulfill this ministry and you will then say, as I do, and as the Apostle said of old, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." The Lord bless you. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Ephesians 3*.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—1,035, 1,041, 960.**

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THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST

NO. 745

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 14, 1867,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE AGRICULTURAL HALL, ISLINGTON.

*“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this
Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles
the unsearchable riches of Christ.”
Ephesians 3:8.*

THE Apostle Paul felt it to be a great privilege to be allowed to preach the Gospel. He did not look upon his calling as a drudgery or a servitude, but he entered upon it with intense delight. All God's truly-sent servants have experienced much delight in the declaration of the Gospel of Jesus, and it is natural that they should, for their message is one of mercy and love. If a herald were sent to a besieged city with the tidings that no terms of mercy would be offered, but that every rebel without exception should be put to death, I think he would go with lingering footsteps, stopping by the way to let out his heavy heart in sobs and groans.

But if he were commissioned to go to the gates with the white flag to proclaim a free pardon, a general act of amnesty and oblivion, surely he would run as though he had wings on his heels. With a joyful alacrity he would tell his fellow citizens the good pleasure of their merciful king! Heralds of salvation, you carry the most joyful of all messages to the sons of men! When the angels were commissioned for once to become preachers of the Gospel, and it was but for once, they made the sky ring at midnight with their choral songs, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

They did not moan out a dolorous dirge as of those proclaiming death, but the glad tidings of great joy were set to music and announced with holy mirth and celestial song. “Peace on earth! Glory to God in the highest” is the joyous note of the Gospel—and in such a key should it ever be proclaimed! We find the most eminent of God's servants frequently magnifying their office as preachers of the Gospel. Whitfield was accustomed to call his pulpit his *throne*—and when he stood upon some rising knoll to preach to the thousands gathered in the open air—he was more happy than if he had assumed the imperial purple, for he ruled the hearts of men more gloriously than does a king!

Carey was laboring in India and his son Felix had accepted the office of ambassador to the king of Burmah—Carey said, “Felix has driveled into an ambassador”—as though he looked upon the highest earthly office as an utter degradation if for it the minister of the Gospel forsook his lofty vocation. Paul blesses God that this great Grace was given to him, that he might preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ! He looked upon it not as toil, but as a Divine Grace.

Aspire to this office, young men whose souls are full of love to Jesus! Fired with sacred enthusiasm, covet earnestly the best gifts, and out of love to Jesus try whether you cannot in your measure tell to your fellow men the story of the Cross. Men of zeal and ability, if you love Jesus, make the ministry your aim! Train your minds to it! Exercise your souls towards it, and may God the Holy Spirit call you to it, that you also may preach the Word of reconciliation to the dying thousands. The laborers still are few—may the Lord of the harvest thrust you into His work.

But while Paul was thus thankful for his office, his success in it greatly humbled him. The fuller a vessel becomes the deeper it sinks in the water. A plenitude of Grace is a cure for pride. Those who are empty, and those especially who have little or nothing to do, may indulge a fond conceit of their abilities because they are untried. But those who are called to the stern work of ministering among the sons of men will often mourn their weakness, and in the sense of that *weakness* and *unworthiness* they will go before God and confess that they are less than the least of all saints.

I prescribe to any of you who seek humility, try hard work! If you would know your nothingness, attempt some great thing for Jesus. If you would feel how utterly powerless you are apart from the living God, attempt especially the great work of proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ! You will come back from the proclamation thankful that you were permitted to attempt it, but crying, "Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm the Lord revealed?" And you will know, as you never knew before, what a weak unworthy thing you are!

Although our Apostle thus knew and confessed his weakness, there is one thing which never troubled him—he was never perplexed as to the *subject* of his ministry. I do not find the Apostle in all his writings proposing to himself the question, "What shall I preach?" No, my Friends, he had been taught in the college of Christ, and had thoroughly learned his one Subject, so that preferring it beyond all else, he said, with solemn decision, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." From his first sermon to his last, when he laid down his neck upon the block to seal his testimony with his blood, Paul preached Christ, and nothing but Christ!

He lifted up the Cross, and extolled the Son of God who bled on it. His one and only calling here below was to cry, "Behold the Lamb! Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world." I pause, to ask, on my own account, the prayers of God's people yet again, that the Holy Spirit may be my Helper this morning. O deny not my earnest request! I call the attention of you all to this great master subject which engrossed all the powers and passions of such a one as Paul. And I shall beg you to notice first, a glorious Person mentioned—the Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, unsearchable riches spoken of. And thirdly, which shall make our practical conclusion—a royal intention implied—the intention which Jesus had in His heart when He bade His servants preach His unsearchable riches.

I. First then, may the Spirit of God strengthen us in our weakness while we try to speak upon THIS GLORIOUS PERSON, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ was the first promise of God to the sons of

men after the Fall. When our first parents had been banished from the Garden all was dark before them. There was not a star to gild the cheerless midnight of their guilty and despairing souls until their God appeared to them, and said in mercy, "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

That was the first star which God set in the sky of man's hope. Years rolled after years and the faithful looked up to it with comfort. That one promise stayed the soul of many a faithful one so that he died in hope, not having received the promise, but having seen it afar off, and having rejoiced in its beams. Whole centuries rolled away, but the Seed of the woman did not come. Messiah, the great bruiser of the serpent's head, did not appear. Why did He tarry? The world was foul with sin and full of woe! Where was the Shiloh who should bring it peace? Graves were dug by millions. Hell was filled with lost spirits, but where was the Promised One, mighty to save?

He was waiting till the fullness of time should come. He had not forgotten, for He had God's will in His inmost heart. His desire to save souls was consuming His heart. He was but waiting until the word should be given. And when it was given, lo, He came delighting to do the Father's will! Do you seek him? Behold, in Bethlehem's manger Emmanuel is born, God is with us! Before your eyes He lies who was both the Son of Mary, and the Son of the Blessed! An Infant, and yet Infinite, of a span long, and yet filling all eternity, wrapped in swaddling cloths, and yet too great for space to hold Him!

Thirty and more years He lived on earth. The latter part of His life was spent in a ministry full of suffering to Himself, but filled with good to others. "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth." Never man spoke like that Man, He was a Man on fire with love. A Man without human imperfections, but with all human sympathies. A Man without the sins of manhood, but with something more than the sorrows of common manhood piled upon Him. There was never such a Man as He, so great, so glorious in His life, and yet He is the pattern and type of manhood. He reached His greatest when He stooped the lowest. He was seized by His enemies one night when wrestling in prayer. He was betrayed by the man who had eaten bread with Him. He was dragged before tribunal after tribunal through that long and sorrowful night and wrongfully accused of blasphemy and sedition.

They scourged Him, though none of His works deserved a blow! But still the plowers made deep furrows on His back. They mocked Him. Though He merited the homage of all intelligent beings, yet they spat in His face, and smote Him with their mailed fists, and said, "Prophecy, who is he that smote You?" He was made lower than a slave. Even the abject opened their mouths with laughter at Him, and the slaves scoffed at Him. To end the scene, they took Him through the streets of the Jerusalem over which He had wept—they hounded Him along the Via Dolorosa, out through the gate, to the mount of doom.

I think I see Him, with eyes all red with weeping He turns to the matrons of Salem, and cries, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but for yourselves, and for your children." Can you see Him bearing that

heavy Cross, ready to faint beneath the burden? Can you endure to see Him, when, having reached the little mound outside the city, they hurl Him on His back, and drive the cruel iron through His hands and feet? Can you bear to see the spectacle of blood and anguish as they lift Him up between Heaven and earth, made a Sacrifice for the sin of His people?

My words shall be few, for the vision is too sad for language to depict. He bleeds, He thirsts, He groans, He cries—at last He dies—a death whose unknown griefs are not to be imagined, and were they known would be beyond expression by human tongue.

Now, it was the history of the Crucifixion which Paul delighted to preach—Christ crucified was his theme—this old, old story, which you have heard from your childhood, the story of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. You all know that our Lord, after He had been taken down from the Cross and laid in the tomb, lingered there but a few short hours. And then on the third day rose again from the dead, the same, yet not the same—a Man, but no more despised and rejected. He communed with His servants in a familiar and yet glorious manner for forty days, and cheered and comforted their hearts. And then, from the top of Olivet, in the sight of the company, He ascended to His Father's Throne.

Follow Him with your hearts if you cannot with your eyes. Behold Him as the angels meet Him, and—

***“Bring His chariot from on high,
To bear Him to His Throne.
Clap their triumphant hands, and cry,
“The glorious work is done.”***

There He sits—faith sees Him this very day—at the right hand of God, even the Father, pleading with authority for His people. He rules Heaven, and earth, and Hell, for the keys thereof swing at His waist—waiting till, on the flying cloud, He shall descend to judge the quick and dead, and distribute the vengeance or the reward. It was this glorious Person of whom Paul delighted to speak!

He preached the doctrines of the Gospel, but he did not preach them apart from the Person of Christ. Do not many preachers make a great mistake by preaching doctrine instead of preaching the Savior? Certainly the doctrines are to be preached, but they ought to be looked upon as the robes and vestments of the Man Christ Jesus, and not as complete in themselves. I love justification by faith—I hope I shall never have a doubt about that grand Truth of God! But the cleansing efficacy of the precious blood appears to me to be the best way of putting it. I delight in sanctification by the Spirit—but to be conformed to the image of Jesus is a still sweeter and more forcible way of viewing it.

The doctrines of the Gospel are a golden throne upon which Jesus sits as king—not a hard, cold stone rolled at the door of the sepulcher in which Christ is hidden. Brethren, I believe this to be the mark of God's true minister that he preaches Christ as his one choice and delightful theme. In the old romance they tell us that at the gate of a certain noble hall there hung a horn, and none could blow that horn but the true heir to the castle and its wide domains. Many tried it. They could make sweet music on other instruments. They could wake the echoes by other bugles.

But that horn was mute, let them blow as they might. At last, the true heir came, and when he set his lips to the horn, shrill was the sound and indisputable his claim.

The true minister is he who can preach Christ. Let him preach anything else in the world, he has not proved his calling, but if he shall preach Jesus and the resurrection, he is in the Apostolic succession! If Christ crucified is the great delight of his soul, the very marrow of his teaching, the fatness of his ministry—he has proved his calling as an ambassador of Christ. Brethren, the Christian minister should be like these golden spring flowers which we are so glad to see. Have you observed them when the sun is shining? They open their golden cups and each one whispers to the great sun, “Fill me with your beams!” But when the sun is hidden behind a cloud, where are they? They close their cups and droop their heads.

So should the Christian feel the sweet influences of Jesus—so especially should the Christian *minister* be subject to his Lord. Jesus must be his Sun and he must be the flower which yields itself to the Sun of Righteousness. Happy would it be for us if our hearts and our lips could become like Anacreon’s harp which was wedded to one subject and would learn no other. He wished to sing of the sons of Atreus, and the mighty deeds of Hercules, but his harp resounded love alone. And when he would have sung of Cadmus, his harp refused—it would sing of love alone. Oh, to speak of Christ alone—to be tied and bound to this one theme forever—to speak alone of Jesus and of the amazing love of the glorious Son of God, who, “though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor.” This is the subject which is both “seed for the sower, and bread for the eater.” This is the live coal for the lips of the preacher, and the master key to the heart of the hearer. This is the tune for the minstrels of earth, and the song for the harpers of Heaven! Lord, teach it to us more and more, and we will tell it out to others!

Before I leave this subject I feel bound to make two or three remarks. You will perceive that the Apostle Paul preached the unsearchable riches of Christ, not the dignity of manhood, or the grandeur of human nature. He preached not *man*, but man’s Redeemer. Let us do the same. Moreover, he did not preach up the clergy and the church, but Christ alone. Some of the gentlemen who claim to be in the Apostolic succession could hardly have the effrontery to claim to be the successors of Paul.

I believe that our modern “priests” of Rome are in the Apostolic succession—I have never doubted that they are the lineal successors of Judas Iscariot who betrayed his Master! But no other Apostle would endure them for so much as an hour. If Paul had been their leader would he have preached the unsearchable riches of priestcraft as they do? Do not they preach up their own priestly power? Did Paul do this? Is not their one great theme the unsearchable riches of baptism? The unsearchable riches of the Eucharist, the blessed bread and the blessed wine? The unsearchable riches of their confession and absolution? The unsearchable riches of their albs, and their dalmatics, and their chasubles and I know not what else of the rags of the Whore of Babylon?

A fine day is this in which we are to go back to the superstitions of the Dark Ages—so dark that our forefathers could not bear them—and for the unsearchable cunning of priests are to give up the unsearchable riches of Christ! We are told that the Reformation was a mistake—but we tell these false priests to their faces that they are liars and know not the Truth of God! Beloved, Paul cared nothing for priestcraft! And this Book has not a word in it in favor of priestcraft. With Paul and with this Book all believers in Jesus are priests, and God's only clergy.

Paul never posted bills upon the walls of Jerusalem, with black crosses on them, warning men that they would not be able to meet Christ at the Day of Judgment if they did not keep Good Friday! But I will tell you what Paul *did*—he wrote to the Galatians, “You observe days, months, and times, and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.”

This whole abomination of ritualism was the utter abhorrence of the Apostle. In its first form of Judaism it stirred up his whole soul with indignation. It brought the blood into his cheek. He never was mightier in denouncing anything than when dealing heavy blows at ceremonialism! He said, “Neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith that works by love.” Paul preached up no *priest* whether he lived at Rome or Canterbury! He exalted no class of men arrogantly pretending to have power to save. He would have been out of all patience with a set of simpletons decked out as Guys [effigy of Guy Fawkes paraded and burned on Guy Fawkes Day] and dressed up as if they were meant to amuse children in a nursery! He never taught the worship of these calves—Jesus alone was his subject, and the unsearchable riches of His Grace.

Mark you, on the other hand, Paul did not preach up the unsearchable riches of philosophy, as some do. “Yes,” say some, “We must please this thinking age, this thoughtful people. We must educate a people who will reject all testimony because they will not be credulous—who will believe nothing but what they can understand, because, indeed, their understanding is so amazingly clear, so perfect, so all but divine!” Not so, the Apostle. He would have said to these philosophical gentlemen, “Stand away. I have nothing at all that can make me kindred with you. I preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, not the uncertainties of philosophical speculation! I give the people something to believe, something tangible to lay hold of, not superstitious, it is true, but Divinely accredited! Not concocted by the wisdom of man, but revealed by the wisdom of God.”

My dear Friends, we must come back to the Gospel of Paul, and may God bring all His ministering servants more and more clearly back to it that we may have nothing to preach but that which clusters around the Cross! Nothing but that which glows and glistens like a sacred halo of light around the head of the Crucified One—that we may lift up nothing but Jesus, and say, “God forbid that we should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

II. Secondly, Paul preached THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST. Paul had no stunted Savior to present to a few. No narrow-hearted Christ to be the head of a clique. No weak Redeemer who could pardon only those little offenders who scarcely needed it. He preached a

great Savior to the great masses! A great Savior to great sinners. He preached the Conqueror with dyed garments, traveling in the greatness of His strength, whose name is “mighty to save.”

Let us enquire in what respects we may ascribe to our Lord Jesus the possession of unsearchable riches. Our answer is, first, He has unsearchable riches of *love* to sinners as they are. Jesus so loved the souls of men that we can only use the “so,” but we cannot find the word to match it. In the French Revolution there was a young man condemned to the guillotine and shut up in one of the prisons. He was greatly loved by many, but there was one who loved him more than all put together.

How do we know this? It was his own father, and the love he bore his son was proved in this way: when the lists were called, the father, whose name was exactly the same as his son’s, answered to the name and the father rode in the gloomy wagon out to the place of execution. And his head rolled beneath the axe instead of his son’s, a victim to mighty love. See here an image of the love of Christ to sinners—for thus Jesus died for the ungodly, viewed as such. If they had not been ungodly, neither they nor He had needed to have died. If they had not sinned, there would have been no need for a suffering Savior, but Jesus proved His boundless love in, “that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Your name was in the condemned list, my fellow Sinner, but, if you believe in Jesus, you shall find that your name is there no longer, for Christ’s name is put in your place, and you shall learn that He suffered for you, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring you to God. Is not this the greatest wonder of Divine love, that it should be set upon us as *sinners*? I can understand God’s loving *reformed* sinners and *repenting* sinners—but here is the glory of it—“God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners [yet sinners!] Christ died for us.” O my Hearers, from my inmost heart I pray that this boundless wealth of love on the part of Jesus to those who were rebels and enemies may win your hearts to love the heavenly Lover in return!

In the next place, Jesus has riches of *pardon* for those who repent of their sins. My Lord Jesus, by His death, has become immensely rich in pardoning power—so rich, indeed, that no guiltiness can possibly transcend the efficacy of His precious blood. There is one sin which He never will forgive—there is but one—and I am convinced that you have not committed that sin against the Holy Spirit if you have any feeling of repentance or desire towards God. For the sin which is unto death brings death with it to the *conscience*, so that when once committed the man ceases to feel. If you desire pardon, Sinner, there is no reason why you should not have it, and have it now!

The blood of Christ can wash out blasphemy, adultery, fornication, lying, slander, perjury, theft, murder. Though you have raked in the very kennels of Hell till you have blackened yourself to the color of a devil, yet, if you will come to Christ and ask mercy, He will absolve you from all sin! Do but wash in the bath which He has filled with blood and “though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Do not misunderstand me, I mean just this—that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not meant exclusively for you

respectable people who always appear to be so religious—but for you who are irreligious! For you who are not even moral, or sober, or honest!

I tell you the Gospel of Christ is meant for the scum of the population! It is meant for the lowest of the low, for the worst of the worst. There is no den in London where the Savior cannot work! There is no loathsome haunt of sin too foul for Him to cleanse. The heathen dreamed of their Hercules that he cleansed the Augean stables by turning a river through them, and so washing away the filth of ages. If your heart is such a stable, Christ is greater than the mightiest Hercules—He can cause the river of His cleansing blood to flow right through your heart, and your iniquities, though they are a heap of abominations, shall be put away forever! Riches of love to sinners as such, and riches of pardon to sinners who repent are stored up in the Lord Jesus.

Again, Christ has riches of *comfort* for all that mourn. Have I the happiness of having before me some who mourn before the Lord? Blessed are you, for you shall be filled! What is the cause of your weeping? Is it your sin? Christ has a handkerchief that can wipe away such tears. He can blot out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your iniquities. Do but come to Him, and your deepest sorrow shall disappear beneath the influence of His sympathetic love. Are you sorrowful because you have lost a friend? He will be a Friend to you. Have you been deceived and betrayed? My Master can meet that craving of your nature after friendship and sympathy. Confide in Him, and He will never forsake you.

Oh, I cannot tell you how rich He is in consolation, but the Holy Spirit can tell you. If you do but get Jesus, you shall find, as Bernard used to say, that He is “honey to the mouth, music to the ear, and Heaven to the heart.” Win Christ, and you shall want nothing beyond Him. Lay hold of Him, and you shall say with the Apostle, “I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content,” for He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

My Master’s unsearchable riches are also of another kind. Do you thirst for *knowledge*? Jesus has riches of wisdom! The desire to know has sent men roving over all the world, but he who finds Jesus may stay at home and be wise. If you sit at His feet, you shall know what Plato could not teach you, and what Socrates never learned. When the old school men could not answer and defend a proposition, they were apt to say, “I will go to Aristotle: he shall help me out.” If you do but learn of Christ, He shall help you out of all difficulties—and that which is most useful for your soul to know—the knowledge which will last you in eternity, Christ shall teach you!

Think not that the Gospel of Christ, because it is simple, is therefore mere child’s play. Oh, no! It has that in it which an angel’s intellect unillumined of the Holy Spirit might fail to master. The highest ranks of seraphim, still lost in wonder, gaze upon it. Come to my Master and you shall be made wise unto salvation. Let me not weary you with so great a message. Perhaps I tell it badly, but the matter of it is worthy of your ears, and worthy of your hearts. My Master has riches of *happiness* to bestow upon you. After all, he is the rich man who wears heart’s-ease in his but-

ton hole. The man who can say, "I have enough," is richer than the peer of the realm who is discontented.

Believe me, my Lord can make you to lie down in green pastures, and lead you beside still waters. There is no music like the music of His pipe when He is the Shepherd and you are the sheep, and you lie down at His feet. There is no love like His—neither earth or Heaven can match it. If you did but know it, you would prize it beyond all mortal joys, and say with our poet—

***"Such as find You find such sweetness
Deep, mysterious, and unknown.
Far above all worldly pleasures,
If they were to meet in one;
My Beloved,
Over the mountains haste away."***

I speak experimentally. I have had more joy in half-an-hour's communion with Christ than I have found in months of other comforts. I have had much to make me happy—many successes and smiles of Providence which have cheered and comforted my heart. But they are all froth on the cup, mere bubbles—the *foam* of life, and not its true depths of bliss. To know Christ and to be found in Him—oh, this is life! This is joy! This is marrow and fatness, wine on the lees well refined! My Master does not treat His servants churlishly. He gives to them as a king gives to a king. He gives them two Heavens—a Heaven below in serving Him here, and a Heaven above in delighting in Him forever.

And now I shall close this poor talk of mine about these priceless riches by saying that the unsearchable riches of Christ will be best known in *eternity*. The riches of Christ are not so much to be enjoyed here as there. He will give you by the road and on the way to Heaven all your needs. Your place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks, your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure. But it is there, there, THERE, where you shall hear the song of them that triumph, the shout of them that feast!

My dear Hearer, if you get Christ you have obtained riches which you can take with you in the hour of death. The rich man clutched his bags of money, and as he laid them on his heart, he murmured, "They will not do, they will not do. Take them away!" If you receive Jesus into your heart, He will be death's best antidote. When your disembodied spirit quits this poor clay carcass, as it must, what will your silver and gold do for you then? What will your farms and your broad acres do for you then? You must leave them all behind. Even if men buy you a coffin of gold, or bury you in a tomb of marble, yet of what good will that be? But oh, if you have Christ, you can fly up to Heaven, your Treasure, and there you shall be rich to all the intents of bliss world without end!

Now, dear Friends, if I could have spoken as I would have spoken, I would have done so, but the subject would have been the same. Paul preached the Gospel better than I do, but even *he* could not preach a better Gospel. Let me close this point by a few words. My Master has such riches that you cannot count them! You cannot guess them, much less can you convey their fullness in words. They are unsearchable! You may look, and search, and weigh, but Christ is a greater Christ than you think

Him to be when your thoughts are at their greatest. My Master is more able to pardon than you to sin! He is more able to forgive than you to transgress. My Master is more ready to supply than you are to ask, and ten thousand times more prepared to save than you are to be saved!

Never tolerate low thoughts of my Lord Jesus. Your highest estimates will dishonor Him. When you put the crown on His head, you will only crown Him with silver when He deserves gold. When you sing the best of your songs, you will only give Him poor, discordant music compared with what He deserves. But oh, do believe in Him, that He is a great Christ, a mighty Savior! Great Sinner, come and do Him honor by trusting in Him as a great Savior! Come with your great sins and your great cares, and your great needs! Come, and welcome! Come to Him now, and the Lord will accept you, and accept you without upbraiding you.

III. Lastly, there must have been A ROYAL INTENTION in the heart of Christ in sending out Paul to preach of His unsearchable riches because every man must have a motive for what he does. And beyond all question, Jesus Christ has a motive. Did you ever hear of a man who employed a number of persons to go about to proclaim his riches, and call hundreds of people together, and thousands, as on this occasion, simply to tell them that So-and-So was very rich? Why, the crowds would say, "What is that to us?"

But if at the conclusion, the messenger could say, "But all these riches he presents to you, and whoever among you shall desire to be made rich, can be enriched now by him." Ah, then you would say, "Now we see the sense of it! Now we perceive the gracious drift of it all." Now, my Lord Jesus Christ is very strong, but all that strength is pledged to help a poor weak sinner to enter into Heaven. My Lord Christ is a great king, and He reigns with irresistible power—but all that Sovereign power He swears to give to Believers to help them to reign over their sins. My Lord Jesus is as full of merit as the sea is full of salt, but every atom of that merit He vows to give to sinners who will confess that they have no merits of their own, and will trust in Him!

Yes, and once more, my Lord Christ is so glorious that the very angels are not bright in His Presence, for He is the Sun, and they are but as twinkling stars. And all this glory He will give *you*, poor Sinner, and make you glorious in His glory if you will but trust Him! There is a motive, then, on our Lord's part for bidding us preach a full Christ. I think I hear a whisper somewhere—there is a poor heart standing crowded in the aisle, and it is saying to itself, "Ah, *I* am full of sin. *I* am weak. *I* am lost. *I* have no merit." My dear Hearer, you do not need any merit, nor any strength, nor any goodness in yourself, for Jesus presents you with an abundance of all these in Himself!

I will not care whether I have money in my own purse or not, if I have a kind friend who says, "All that I have is yours." If I may go and draw upon him whenever I please for whatever I wish, I will not desire to be independent of him, but I will live upon his fullness. Poor Sinner, you must do the same. You do not need merits or strength apart from Christ. Take my Master, and He will be enough for you while you shall joyfully sing, "Christ is my All."

Two or three words, then. The first is this—How rich those must be who have Christ for a Friend! Will you not seek to be friends with Him? If it is true that all Christ has He gives to His people—and this is asserted over and over again in this Book—then, oh, how unspeakably blessed must those be who can say, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His!” They who get Christ to be their own, properly are like the man who, having long eaten of fruit from a certain tree, was no longer satisfied with having the fruit, but he needed take up the tree and plant it in his own garden!

Happy those who have Christ planted as the Tree of Life in the soil of their hearts! You not only have His Grace, and His love, and His merit, but you have HIMSELF! He is all your own. Oh, that sweet word, Jesus is *mine*! Jesus is *mine*! All that there is in His Humanity, in His Deity, in His living and in His dying—in His reigning and in His second Advent—all is mine, for Christ is mine!

How foolish, on the other hand, must those be who will not have Christ when He is to be had for the asking! Who prefer the baubles and the bubbles of this world, and let the solid gold of eternity go by! O Fools! You play with shadows and miss the substance! You dig and toil, and cover your faces with sweat, and lose your nightly rest to get this world’s fleeting good, while you neglect Him who is the eternal good! O Fools and slow of heart! You court this harlot world, with her painted face, when the beauties of my Master are infinitely more rich and rare! Oh, if you did but know Him! If you could but see His unspeakable riches you would fling your toys to the wind and follow after Him with all your heart and soul.

“But may I have Him?” asks one. May you, indeed? Who is to say no to you? Did not you hear the sweet notes of the hymn just now, “Come and welcome. Come and welcome”? When Heaven’s big bell rings, it always sounds forth that silver note for sinners—“Come and welcome! Come and welcome!” Leave your sins, leave your follies, leave your self-righteousness! Jesus Christ stands at the open door of Divine Grace more willing to receive you than you are to be received by Him. “Come and welcome, come and welcome.” At the top of the Hospice of St. Bernard, in the storm, when the snow is falling fast, the monks ring the great bell and when the way cannot be seen, the traveler can almost hear the way to the house of refuge across the snowy waste.

So would I ring that bell this morning. Poor lost Traveler, with your sins and your fears blowing cold into your face, “Come and welcome. Come and welcome,” to a Savior once dead and buried for you, but now risen and pleading at the right hand of God! If you cannot see your way, yet hear it. “Hear, and your soul shall live. And He will make an Everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” You need nothing but Christ, dear Heart. You need pump up no tears of repentance to help Christ, for He will give you repentance if you seek it of Him. You must come to Him to get repentance! You must not seek that Gospel blessing anywhere but at the Cross.

You will need no Baptisms and Lord’s Suppers to rely upon. It will be your *duty* as a Believer to profess your faith in Him and to remember Him at His table, but these things will not help your salvation. You will be saved by Jesus and by Him alone. You need experience no terrors. You

need undergo no preparation. Christ is ready to receive you now. Like the surgeon whose door is open for every accident that may occur. Like the great hospitals on our side the river, where, let the case be what it may, the door swings open the moment an entrance is demanded—such is my Master. Unsearchable riches are in Him, though unsearchable poverty may be in you—

***“Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream,
All the fitness He requires,
Is to feel your need of Him—
This He gives you,
‘Tis His Spirit’s rising beam.”***

All this week long I have been fretting and worrying because I cannot preach to you as I wish. And when each of my sermons, here, has been over, I have wished that I could preach it again in a more earnest and fervent manner. But what can I do? O my Hearers, I can preach Christ to you, but I cannot preach you to Christ! I can tell you that if you trust Him you shall be saved. I can declare to you that as the Son of God now risen He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to Him—but I cannot make you come!

Yet, I thank God that since last Sunday I have heard of some who have come! I have heard good news of some who, by the Holy Spirit’s power, have believed in Jesus! Are there no more eyes that will look at my Master’s wounds? Are there no more hearts that will fall in love with my Master’s beauties? Must I come a wooing for Him, and get so small a return? Must it be ones and twos out of the 20,000 of you? God forbid it! God send us a greater rate of fruit than this! A hundred-fold harvest to a hundred-fold congregation! Pray, Believers, pray for a blessing! Pray that God may strike these lips dumb before next Sunday if He will do more good by some other preacher than by me!

Ask nothing for me, but ask large things for my Lord, for the Crucified One! Pray that these great gatherings may not be without a permanent result which shall tell upon the impiety of this city! Yes, and tell upon the piety of it, too, slaying the first, and stimulating the second! God send forth the Spirit of His Grace, and unto Him shall be the praise, world without end. Amen.

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ANOTHER AND A NOBLER EXHIBITION NO. 448

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 4, 1862,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places
might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.”
Ephesians 3:10.***

ALL the world has been talking during the last three days of the splendid pageant which adorned the opening of the International Exhibition. Crowds have congregated in the palace of universal art. Representatives of all the nations of the earth have journeyed for many a league to view its wonders. Eminent personages of all empires have appeared in the gorgeous spectacle, and such a scene has glittered before the eyes of all men, as has never before in all respects been equaled and may not for many a year find a successor to rival it.

Why all these gatherings? Why muster you, all you nations? Why do you come here, you gazing sons of men? Surely your answer must be, that you have come together that you may see *the manifold wisdom of MAN*. As they walk along the aisles of the great Exhibition, what do they see but the skill of man? First in this department, and then in the other. At one moment in the magnificent, at the next in the minute. At one instant in a work of elegance in ornament, in the next in a work of skill and usefulness—“manifold wisdom”—the works and productions of many minds. The different hues and colors of thought, embodied in the various machines and statues and so forth, which human skill has been able to produce.

We grant you that God has been most rightly recognized there, both in the solemn prayer of the Archbishop and in the hymn of the Laureate. But still the great object, after all, was to behold the manifold wisdom of man. And had they taken away man’s skill and man’s art, what would there have been left? Brethren, may the greatest results follow from this gathering! We must not expect that it, or anything else short of the Gospel, will ever bring about the universal reign of peace. We must never look to art and science to accomplish that triumph which is reserved for the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet may it spread the feelings of benevolence—may it bind together the scattered children of Adam—may it fuse into a happy and blessed union the kindreds of men that were scattered abroad at Babel, and may it prepare the way and open the gates, that the Gospel may proceed to the uttermost ends of the earth. It is, however, very far from my mind to direct your attention to the marvels which crowd the area of the huge temple of 1862. I invite you, rather, to follow me to a nobler exhibition than this, where crowds are gathering—not of mortals but of immortal spirits.

The temple is not of art and science but of Divine Grace and goodness, built with living stones, cemented with the fair colors of atoning blood, “built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.” That temple, the Church of the living God, “the pillar and ground of the truth.” Into this great palace crowd ten thousand times ten thousand of the host of God, “cherubim and seraphim,” or by whatever other names those bright intelligences may be known among themselves—“principalities and powers.”

The different degrees in the hierarchy of immortal spirits, if such there is—they are all represented as intently gazing upon the wondrous fabric which God has reared. Along the aisles of that Church, along the ages of its dispensations, stand the various trophies of Divine Grace and love—the jewel cases of virtues and graces which adorn the Believer—the mementoes of triumphs gotten over sin and hardness of heart and of victories achieved over temptation and trial. And as the spirits walk along these corridors full of Divine workmanship, they stand, they gaze, they admire and wonder and speed back their way to Heaven and sing more loudly than before, hallelujahs to the God whose manifold wisdom they have beheld in the Church of God below.

Beloved Friends, our text is a strange one. If you will reflect that the angels, the elder-born of creatures when compared with us, have been with God for many an age. And yet I do not know that it is ever said that by anything else they ever learned “the manifold wisdom of God.” They were with Him when He made the earth and the heavens—perhaps during those long periods when the earth was forming. “In the beginning,” when “God created the heavens and the earth,” the angels were likely to visit this world and to behold alive, and in their glory, those strange shapes of mystery which now we dig up in fossil from the earth.

Certainly in that day when “the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face thereof,” the angels knew the hidden treasure. And when He said, “Let there be light and there was light,” when that first ray of light seemed like a living finger to touch the earth and waken it to beauty, then seraphic fingers swept their heavenly harps and “the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy.” Yet I do not learn, though they were with the Great Worker during the six days of creation, though they saw “the cattle after their kind and the fowls of the air after their kind,” and the fish of the sea and all the plants and herbs, yet I see not that in all this there was made known unto them “the manifold wisdom of God.”

No, more—when man, the Master’s last work, walked through Eden—when, with his fair consort by his side, he stood up to praise his Maker, though he was “fearfully and wonderfully made,” though in his mind and body there was a display of wisdom unrivalled before—yet I do not learn that even in man, as a creature, there was made known “the manifold wisdom of God.” Yes, and more than this, when other worlds were made, when the stars were kindled like glowing flames by light of Deity, if there were other peoples and other kindreds and other tribes in those myriads of far-off lands, I do not find in the creation of all those hosts of worlds

which adorn the wide fields of ether, that there was then made known to celestial spirits “the manifold wisdom of God.”

No, more, in all the dispensations of Divine Providence apart from the Church, in all the mystic revolutions of those wondrous wheels that are full of eyes, apart from the Church, there has not been made known to these beings to the fullest extent the wisdom of God. Ah, and Brethren, remember yet once more, that they with undimmed eyes look upon the glory of Him that sits upon the Throne, so far as it can be seen by created vision. They behold the Beatific Vision. They are glistening in the splendors of Deity and veil their faces when at His footstool they cry, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.”

And yet, though standing, as it were, in the sun, though they are foremost of all the creatures, nearest to the eternal Throne, I do not read that by all this they have in the highest sense learned “the manifold wisdom of God.” What an idea, then, does this give to us of the importance of the Church! Brethren, never let us despise any more the mean member of it, since there is more to be beheld in the Church than in creation in its utmost breadth. More of the wisdom of God in the saving of souls than in the building the arches of the sky. No, more of God to be seen than even Heaven with all its splendors can otherwise reveal.

Oh, let us open our eyes that we lose not those Divine mysteries which angels desire to look into! I have now already explained the meaning of the text. We have, therefore, but to direct your attention to those points of interest upon which angelic intelligence would be sure to linger. And we shall pray that, while we mention these in brief and running catalog, our hearts may be led to meditate much upon the manifold, the varied wisdom of God displayed in the Church which Christ has bought with His blood.

I. And first, dear Brethren, we think that the grand object of attention in the Church to the principalities and powers, is THE SCHEME AND PLAN OF SAVING THE CHURCH. It is this that they so much admire and wonder at. It has been exceedingly well said by others, that if a Parliament had been held of all the spirits in Heaven and in earth, and if it had been committed to this general assembly to ordain and fix upon a plan whereby God might be just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly, they must all have failed to achieve the task. Those lofty minds, doubtless, consider with delight the fact that in God’s way of saving His Church, all His attributes shine out with undiminished luster.

God is just. They know it in Heaven, for they saw Lucifer fall like lightning when God cast him out of his dwelling place on account of sin. God is just. And as much so upon Calvary, where his Son hangs and bleeds, “the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God,” as He was when He cast down the Son of the Morning. The angels see in salvation this great wonder of justice and peace embracing each other—God as sternly just as if there were not a particle of mercy in His being, smiting His Son for the sin of His people with all the force of His might—God, yet as merciful as if He were not just—embracing His people as though they had never sinned and loving them with a love which could not have been greater had they never transgressed.

They understand how God so hated sin that He laid vengeance on His only Begotten and yet, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him might not perish but have everlasting life.” As in the crowns of Oriental princes the most precious jewels shone in clusters, so as in one wonderful *corona* all the infinite attributes of God shine out at once in all their combined glory around Your Cross, O Jesus, earth’s wonder and Heaven’s prodigy! This difficulty, so delightfully met, so completely disposed of by the Atonement of Christ, causes the angels to behold “the manifold wisdom of God.”

But, further—when the angels see that by this great plan all the ruin that sin brought upon mankind is removed, they again wonder at the wisdom of God. And when they especially notice the way in which it was removed, the strange and mysterious methods which God used for rolling away the stone from the door of the human sepulcher, they yet more bow down with awe. Did we lose Eden in Adam? Lo, the Lord Jesus Christ has given us a better than Paradise! Did we lose the dignity of manhood? Lo, today we regain it in Christ—“for You have put all things under His feet.” Did we lose spotless purity? Again we have obtained it in Christ. For we are justified through His righteousness and washed in His blood.

Did we lose communion with God? We have obtained it this day. For “we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” Did we lose Heaven itself? Ah, Heaven is ours again. For in Him we have obtained an inheritance and are “made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” And all this mischief is made to destroy itself, God overruling it to be its own destruction. The dragon stung with his own sting. Goliath killed with his own sword. Death is slain by the death of the Man who was crucified. Sin is put away by the great sin offering, who “bore our sins in His own Body on the tree.”

The grave is plagued by its own victim since Christ lay a captive within it. Satan casts out Satan in this case. We rise by man as by man we fell—“As in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive.” The worm in whom Satan triumphed, is the worm in whom God is glorified. It was man whom Satan sought to make the instrument of Divine dishonor and it is man in whom God triumphs over all the crafts and cruelties of Hell. This the angels wonder at, for they see in this scheme of salvation, meeting as it does every mischief and meeting it on its own ground, “the manifold wisdom of God.”

Observe, also, that through the great scheme of salvation by the Atonement, God is more glorified than He would have been if there had been no Fall, and consequently no room for a redemption. The angels admire “the manifold wisdom of God” in the whole story of the human race, seeing that in the whole of it, from the beginning to the end, God is more glorified than He would have been had it all been written in letters of gold, without one sin or one suffering on the part of the human race. O Lord! When You did permit for a moment Your people to go astray like lost sheep, there might have been silence in Heaven, since Your enemy had triumphed, since the precious ones whom You had loved were given up into the hand of the enemy!

When the jewels of Christ were lost for a little season amidst the miry clay and ruins of the Fall, there might have been a furling of Jehovah's banner. For perhaps it seemed to angels as though God had been defeated in His highest praise. But when Christ comes back "from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah," wearing upon His royal head the crown in which every jewel is securely set that once was in the hand of the enemy—when the Shepherd comes back from the mountains, wearing on His shoulders the lost sheep which had gone astray, there is more joy in Heaven over the lost ones that are found again than there could have been over all of them had they never gone astray.

The deep bass of the Fall shall swell the song of the restoration. The hollow moans, as they seemed to be, when heard alone, shall but make a part of the grand swell of the eternal song, as it shall peal up to the Throne of the Lord God of Hosts. Brethren, if you would think for awhile upon the whole work of God, taking in it the Fall as being foreseen and foreknown, until the day when all the chosen seed shall meet around the Throne, I think you will be struck with its glory as a whole. It was within the compass of the power of God to make creatures that would love Him, to make beings that would be attached to Him by very close ties.

But—I speak with reverence—I do not see how Omnipotence itself, apart from the Fall and the Redemption by the sacrifice of Christ, when He gave Himself to die for us, could have made such creatures as the redeemed will be in Heaven. Brethren, if we had never fallen and never been redeemed, we could never have sung of redeeming Grace and dying love. We could not, and the angels could not. We could not have known the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of the love of Christ which passes knowledge. Feasted with heavenly food, we might have admired His bounty, but not as we now do when we eat the flesh of Christ.

Made to drink the wine pressed from Heaven's own clusters, we might have blessed the Giver of the feast, but not as we now can do, when we drink the blood of Jesus as our sweet wine, pure and holy. We could have praised Him and we should have done so, but not as we now can, when we have "washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." There is a nearer relationship now than there could have been in any other way, if God had not taken humanity into alliance with Himself, if the Word had not been made flesh and dwelt among us.

I say there may have been other plans but certainly no mortal mind can conceive any other. This seems to be the most wonderful, the most God-like, the most Divine, that a creature shall be made perfectly free. That that creature shall offend, shall discover the justice of God through the punishment being laid upon a Substitute, but shall learn the love of God through that Substitute being God Himself! This creature was ordained to be attached to the Eternal One by ties of filial relationship, by bonds of affection so strong that the pains of the rack and the flames of the fire should not be able to separate it from the love of God.

And in Heaven this creature shall feel that it owes nothing to itself, nothing to its own natural efforts, but all to Him who loved it, and who bought it with His blood. And therefore this grateful being shall praise

God, after a sort, superior by many high degrees to the attainment of any other. Oh, dear Friends, I think if we study the subject for a few hours alone, we shall see that in nothing that God has done is there such a discovery of His wisdom as in the plan of redeeming love.

Go round about her, O angels of the Lord! Mark well her bulwarks and tell the towers thereof—consider her palaces. Behold the impregnable strength of Covenant engagements! See the largeness and broadness of electing love. Behold the veracity and truthfulness of Divine promises! See the fullness of Divine Grace and efficacy in the pardoning blood. See the faithfulness and the immovability of the Divine affection, when once it is set on men. And when you have admired the whole, go back, Spirits, and more sweetly than before, unite with us in our song—“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honor and blessing and majesty and power and dominion forever and ever.”

II. Secondly, without a doubt the wisdom of God is made known to angels and principalities in THE VARIOUS DISPENSATIONS THROUGH WHICH THE CHURCH HAS PASSED.

At first the Church was, indeed, a little flock, a few chosen out of the mass—Abram, the Syrian, ready to perish and a few godly ones in his household. Then the stream widened a little and there became twelve tribes. And soon the dispensation became more clear. Moses was raised up, and Aaron, whom God had chosen. Then the angels desired to look into the typical rites and ceremonies of that ancient dispensation. They were pictured standing on the Mercy Seat, with wings outstretched, with their faces bent downwards as if they would gladly behold the secret which the golden lid concealed.

Doubtless, as they saw the sacrifice, whether it was the burnt offering, the peace offering, or the sin offering—as they saw the gorgeous ceremonies of the tabernacle, or the yet more splendid rites of the temple, they admired the wisdom of God, as it was set forth in the dim symbol and shadow. How much more must they have admired it, when the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing beneath His wings, when they saw the sacrifice superseded by the one great offering. The high priest set aside by the Man, who having once offered one sacrifice forever, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. How they have marveled since that time as truth after truth has been expounded in the experience of Believers, as doctrine after doctrine has been revealed to the Church of Christ by the illuminations of the Holy Spirit!

Oh, Brethren, the angels, when they compare the past with the present and again, the present with the past—the choosing of the Jewish olive and the leaving out of the rest of the trees and then, the grafting-in of the Gentiles from the wild olive and the casting out of the natural branches—how much they must have admired the singular variety of God’s dispensations, when they know, as certainly they do, that His Grace remains the same! In climbing or in descending a lofty mountain, one is struck with the sudden change of views. You looked on the right just now and you saw a populous city in the plain. But you turn a corner and looking through a break in the forest you see a broad lake.

And in a moment or two your road winds again and you will see a narrow valley and another range of mountains beyond. Every time you turn, there is a new scene presented to you. So it would seem to the angelic spirits. When first they began to ascend the hill on which the Church stands, "Mount Zion, which is above, the mother of us all," they saw the wisdom of God manifested as Abraham saw it. A turn in the road, and they saw it as Moses beheld it. Another, and they had a view as David was likely to gaze upon it. And then, when they ascended to clearer light, and the mists that hung about the mountainside had all been scattered and had fallen in one gracious shower of Divine Grace, they saw it as the Apostles beheld it when they stood upon Mount Olivet!

And since then, through every trial of the Church, as the eighteen centuries have rolled on since the Master went up to Heaven, they have been constantly catching fresh views and seeing fresh manifestations of the varied and constantly-changing wisdom of the unchanging God, as it is manifested in His dealings with the Church. So that both in the dispensations, as well as in the plan, there is made known to principalities and powers "the manifold wisdom of God."

III. Thirdly, to be brief upon each point, we may conclude, without any doubt, that they mainly see the wisdom of God in His Church, IN THE CHURCH'S COVENANT HEAD AND REPRESENTATIVE.

Oh, when first they heard that the Lord of Life and Glory was to be made flesh and to dwell among us, how they must have admired the plan of Heaven's going down to earth that earth might come up to Heaven! The Babe in the manger commanded all their songs. When they saw that Babe become a Man and heard Him preach, how they must have marveled at the wisdom of sending God Himself to be God's own Prophet! When they saw that Man living a life of perfect holiness, how they must have clapped their wings at the thought that that man could see perfection now in God's own Self, shrouded in human form!

But when it came to Atonement and they learned that God's people must be crucified in Christ, how struck must they have been, as the thought burst upon them for the first time, that the whole host of the elect were to sweat great drops of blood through one Man—that they were to be flagellated, to be scourged, bruised and spat upon, in one Man—that the host of the chosen were to carry the Cross of their condemnation upon one Man's shoulders—that that one Man was for them all—to take all their load of guilt and, nailed to the tree, bleed away His life for the whole body!

Oh, I say, when they saw that lowly Man, with all the sins of the whole chosen company resting upon His shoulders and knew this solitary Man to be God—able to carry the whole—they must have marveled, indeed, at the wisdom of God. And when that triumphant Man cried, "It is finished!" having drained the cup of damnation to its utmost dregs, till there remained not one black drop for another of the elect to drink—when that one Man descended into the grave and the whole company of the faithful were buried with Him, oh, how they marveled!

When again they beheld the second Adam bursting His cerements, rending the chains of death as though, like another Samson, He had broken the green withes of the Philistines as though they were but thread, how astonished they were when they thought that the elect were risen in that glorified Person! And when that Man was received up into Heaven and the cloud hid Him from mortal view, how they rejoiced to see Him rise! But much more to think that we, also were risen in Him and in Him had ascended up on high—in Him the whole Church, I say, leading their captivity captive!

When that representative Personage, with acclamation beyond all measure, rose to the throne of the Father and took His seat at the right hand of the dreadful Majesty on High, how wonderful must have been the admiration of the spirits when they thought that He had raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus! Perhaps there is no doctrine that is more astounding to Christians than this. I know if we want a theme that will enlarge our minds, the subject of the union of the chosen with Christ is certainly the most expansive—

***“O sacred union, firm and strong,
How great the Grace, how sweet the song,
That worms of earth should ever be
One with incarnate Deity!
One when He died, one when He rose,
One when He triumphed over His foes;
One when in Heaven He took His seat,
And angels sang all Hell’s defeat.
This sacred tie forbids all fears,
For all He has and is ours;
With Him our head we stand or fall,
Our life, our surety and our all.”***

“The manifold wisdom of God,” in thus constituting Christ the Covenant Head and representative of the elect in all its various shapes and shades, must have been discovered to angelic beings.

IV. Though that were a theme that might require a full discourse, we leave it at once to turn to another. In the fourth place, the manifold wisdom of God is made known to principalities and powers IN THE CONVERSION OF EVERY CHILD OF GOD.

There are some very singular implements in this present Great Exhibition. Marvelous feats of human skill. But there is one thing they have not there that is to be found in the Church of the living God and that is a heart-melter, an instrument for turning stone to flesh. There are inventions for melting granite and for liquefying flesh but I know of no invention, but one, and that is not to be found in any earthly show, for melting the adamant of the human heart.

Now when the Lord takes the profane man, or the infidel, or the proud, self-righteous Pharisee, or some tall, intimidating, careless sinner, and casts his heart into a fountain filled with Jesus’ blood, and it begins to melt with penitence, the angels see the matchless wisdom of God. But I am sure, also, that there is not in the Exhibition another instrument called a heart-healer—an invention for binding up broken hearts and

making them one again and healing all their wounds. But the Lord is pleased by the same instrument by which He breaks hearts to heal them.

That blood which melts the flint restores us the heart of flesh. Having first melted the heart, He next shows His matchless skill by taking away despair, despondency and terror, and giving to the poor conscience perfect peace and rest—no—exulting joy and boundless liberty. As the angels see the proud man bow his knee, as they hear him in his silent chamber pour out his heart in sighs and groans, they say, “It is well, great God, it is well.” And as they see him come down from that chamber, light of foot, and joyous of heart, because his sin is all forgiven, with his groans all turned into songs, the angels say, “It is well, great God, it is well. You wound, but You heal. You kill and You make alive.”

Conversion is the greatest prodigy that we know of. If there are no such things as miracles today, believe me, I have neither eyes nor ears. But you say, “What miracles?” I answer, not miracles in smitten rocks that yield rivers of water or seas that are divided by prophetic rods, but miracles in hearts and consciences, obedient to holy, heavenly power. I have seen in my short life more miracles, and stranger miracles than Moses ever worked, and wonders as great as Christ Jesus Himself ever performed on flesh and blood. For they are His miracles today that are worked through the Gospel.

If it were appropriate just now, I might point to some in these galleries and on this ground floor and ask them to tell what miracles God did for them and how they are here in one happy circle today met for the praise of God. Men who once were everything that was vile. But they are washed, they are sanctified. The tears start in their eyes now when they think of the drunkard’s cup and of the swearer’s oath with which they were once so well acquainted. Ah, too, and of the dens and kens of filth and of lasciviousness which they once knew. And they are here, loving and praising their Lord. Oh, there are some in this house today who, if they could speak, would say they are the greatest sinners out of Hell and the mightiest wonders out of Heaven!

If our Gospel is hid, it is only hid to those who willfully shut their eyes to it. When one sees harlots reclaimed, thieves, drunkards, swearers made to be saints of the living God, do not tell us that the Gospel has lost its power. O Sirs! Do not dream that we shall believe you while we can see this power, while we can feel it in our own souls, while every day we hear of conversions, while scarce a week rolls on without some score of brands being plucked from the eternal burning! And, I say, if the Church of God on earth admires these conversions, what must angels do who are more acquainted with the guilt of sin and know more of the loveliness of holiness and understand better the secret heart of man than we do?

How must they gladly and exultingly admire in each distinct conversion as it presents phases different from any other, the “manifold wisdom of God!” That ingenious toy called the kaleidoscope at every turn presents some new form of beauty, so the different converts who are brought to Christ by the preaching of the Word are every one unlike the other. There is something to distinguish each case. By them, to the very letter, our text

is proved, the manifold wisdom, the much varied wisdom of God is displayed.

I have sometimes understood the word “manifold” as comparing Grace to a precious treasure that is wrapped up in many folds. First this, then the next, then the next, must be unfolded. And as you unwrap fold after fold, you find something precious each time. But it will be long before you and I shall have unwrapped the last fold and shall have found the wisdom of God in its pure glittering luster, lying stored within as the angels behold it in the Church of the living God.

V. But time has failed me, and therefore I must leave points upon which I wanted to dwell. The principalities and powers to this day find great opportunities for studying the wisdom of God in THE TRIALS AND EXPERIENCE OF BELIEVERS, in the wisdom which subjects them to trial, in the Divine Grace which sustains them in it, in the power which brings them out of it, in the wisdom which overrules the trial for their good, in the Grace which makes the trial fit the back or strengthens the back for the burden.

They see wisdom in the prosperity of Christians when their feet stand like hinds’ feet upon their high places. They see the same in the despondencies of Believers when even in the lowest depths they still say, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” As every day brings to us our daily bread, so every day brings to Heaven its daily theme of wonder, and the angels receive fresh stores of knowledge from the ever-new experience of the people of God.

They lean from the battlements of Heaven today to gaze on you, you tried Believers. They look into your furnace as did the King of Babylon and they see the fourth man with you like unto the Son of God. They track you, O you children of Israel in the wilderness. They see the places of your encampment and the land to which you are hastening. And as they mark the fiery cloudy pillar that conducts you and the Angel of God’s house that leads the van and brings up the rear, they discover in every step of the way the wonderful wisdom of God.

VI. And lastly, beyond all controversy, WHEN THE LAST OF GOD’S PEOPLE SHALL BE BROUGHT IN and the bright angels shall begin to wander through the heavenly plains and converse with all the redeemed spirits, they will then see “the manifold wisdom of God.” Let the angel speak awhile for himself. “Here,” he says, “I see men of all nations and kindreds and tongues, from Britain to Japan, from the frozen north to the burning zone beneath the equator. Here I see souls of all ages, babes here snatched from the womb and breast, and spirits that once knew palsied age to whom the grasshopper was a burden.

“Here I see men from all periods, from Adam and Abel down to the men who were alive and remained at the coming of the Son of God from Heaven. Here I see them from the days of Abraham, and the times of David and the period of the Apostles and the seasons of Luther and of Wickliffe, even to the last times of the Church. Here I see them of all classes. There is one who was a king and at his side, as his fellow, is another that tugged the oar as a galley-slave. There I see a merchant prince

who counted not his riches dear unto him and by his side a poor man who was rich in faith and heir of the kingdom.

“There I see the poet who could sing on earth of Paradise lost and regained and by his side one who could not put two words together but who knew the Paradise lost and the Paradise regained within the Eden of his own nature, the garden of his own heart. Here I see Magdalene and Saul of Tarsus, repenting sinners of all shades and saints of all varieties, those who showed their patience on a lingering sick bed, those who triumphed with holy boldness amid the red flames, those who wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy.

“The monk who shook the world and he who cast salt into the stream of doctrine and made it wholesome and pure. The man who preached to his millions and brought tens of thousands of souls to Christ and the humble cottager who knew but this Bible true and herself the partaker of the life of Christ—here they all are.” And as the spirits wander and look first at this and then at that—first one trophy of Divine Grace and then at another monument of mercy, they will all exclaim, “How manifold are Your works, O God! In wisdom have You made them all. Heaven is full of Your goodness which You have worked for the sons of men.”

And now, dear Friends, the sermon is done, when I ask you just these questions. The first shall be a question for the children of God and the other for those who know Him not. First, to the children of God. Do you think you and I have sufficiently considered that we are always looked upon by angels and that they desire to learn by us the wisdom of God? The reason why our sisters appear in the House of God with their heads covered is “because of the angels.” The Apostle says that a woman is to have a covering upon her head, because of the angels, since the angels are present in the assembly and they mark every act of indecorum and therefore everything is to be conducted with decency and order in the presence of the angelic spirits.

Think of that, then, when this afternoon we shall be talking together. Let us not talk in such a way that a visitor from Heaven might be grieved with us. And when we are in our general assemblies met together, let us not discuss ignoble themes but let the matters which we discuss be truly edifying, seasoned with salt. Especially in our families, might we not say more about Christ than we do? Do we not often spend days, perhaps weeks, without making any mention of such things as we could wish angels to hear?

You are watched, Brethren, you are watched by those that love you. The angels love us and bear us up in their hands lest we dash our feet against the stones. They encamp about our habitations. Let us entertain these royal guests. Since they cannot eat our bread and sit at our table to partake of our good cheer, let us talk of subjects which will delight them in a manner with which they shall be gratified. And let their presence be to us a motive why we should so conduct ourselves that to angels and principalities may be made known by us the wisdom of God.

And, lastly, what do some of you think angels would say of *your* walk and conversation? Well, I suppose you don't care much about them and yet you should. For who, but angels, will be the reapers at the last and who but they shall be the convoy to our spirits across the last dark stream? Who but they shall carry our spirit like that of Lazarus into the Father's bosom? Surely we should not despise them. What has your conduct been? Ah, Sirs, it need not that the preacher speak. Let Conscience have her perfect work. There are some here over whom angels, could their eyes have known a tear, would have wept day and night.

You have been almost persuaded to be Christians. You have known the struggles of conscience, and you have said, "I would to God I were altogether such as the saints are!" But you are unconverted still. Stay, Spirit, guardian Spirit, you who has watched over this son of a sainted mother, wing not back your disappointed flight to Heaven! He relents, he relents! Now the Spirit of God is moving in him. "*It shall be,*" he says, "*it shall be.*" "I repent and believe in Jesus," but oh, Spirit, you will be disappointed yet, for he is about to say, "In a little time, go your way for a little season, when I have a more convenient season I will send for you."

Angel, you will be disappointed yet, but if the soul shall say, "Now, even now, in this House of Prayer, I cast myself upon the finished Atonement of Christ. I trust in Him to save me," wing your flight aloft, you glorious angel! Tell the cherubs around the Throne of God that the prodigal has returned and an heir of Heaven has been born! Let Heaven keep holiday and let us go into our homes rejoicing, for he that was dead is alive again and he that was lost is found!

May the Spirit of God do this, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

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ANGELIC STUDIES

NO. 933

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MAY 1, 1870
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers
in heavenly places might
be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.”
Ephesians 3:10.***

THE “principalities and powers in heavenly places” to whom the Apostle here refers, are, no doubt, the angels. These bright and glorious spirits, never having fallen into sin, did not need to be redeemed, and therefore, in the sense of being cleansed from guilt, they have no share in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Yet it is interesting to notice how our Lord did, as it were, pass and pass again their shining ranks when He sped His way down to the regions of death, and when He came back triumphant to the realms of Glory.

Thus in one place “we see Jesus made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death,” and in another place we learn, “that the Father raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion.” It is possible that the mediation of Christ has a bearing upon them, and has from now on confirmed them in their holiness, so that by no means shall they ever be tempted or led into sin in the future. It may be so, but this much seems to be evident, that though they had no direct share in redemption, they feel, nevertheless, an interest in it, and are to be instructed by its results.

The sublime plan of the Gospel of the Grace of God, which is so entirely beyond the compass of our natural faculties that we could never, by searching, have found it out, appears to have been equally beyond the grasp of angelic intelligence. It was a mystery that excited their wistful enquiry—until by the Church (that is to say, by the Divine Counsel and conduct in forming and perfecting the Church) there is made known unto them the manifold wisdom of God as they have never learned it before. They have kept their first estate, and have been obedient to God's behests. They delight to be known as the servants of God, doing His commandments, and hearkening unto the voice of His Word.

They are appointed to exercise some sort of power over various parts of God's creation, therefore they are called “principalities and powers.” Cer-

tainly they are engaged in singing Jehovah's praise. Much of the music that rises up before His Throne comes from the harps of spirits, pure and immaculate, who have never known sin. Yet, though they are thus pure, thus engaged in worship, of such eminent rank in the universe of God, they are never represented as indifferent spectators of anything which our mortal race can do or suffer, but their sympathy with men is constant.

Do they not watch over the saints? Is it not written, that they "encamp round about them that fear the Lord"? Are they not charged to take care of the saints, to bear them up in their hands, lest they dash their feet against the stones? Angels, we know, have often been messengers of God's will to the sons of men. They have never shown any reluctance—on the contrary, great has been their joy to bear God's tidings down from Heaven to earth. And their sympathy even with fallen men, with men who have grievously sinned and gone astray, is shown by the fact that they "rejoice over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance."

They are, as it were, in yonder gilded vessel, untossed of tempest. But they have sympathy with us in this poor heavy-laden boat, tossed with tempest and not comforted. I see them there on yonder sea of glass mingled with fire. I hear their harps, as incessantly their joy goes up in music to the Throne of the Most High. But they do not look down with scorn on us poor denizens of this dusky planet. On the contrary, they delight to think of us as their Brethren, as their fellow servants, as it will be the consummation of their happiness when we shall all be gathered to the Church of the First-Born, that they shall make up the innumerable company of angels that surround the blood-washed throng.

I. The subject of our meditation, which will be brief, resolves itself into a question, **HOW EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH THE CHURCH DO ANGELS COME TO SEE THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD?** Some other matters in connection with this we shall have to speak of afterwards.

Who can doubt that the angels had seen much of the wisdom of God in creation? With faculties keener and more elevated than ours, faculties that have never been blunted by sin, they can perceive the various contrivances of God's skill both in the animate and the inanimate world. Doubtless as each new star has been minted by God, as each planet has been struck off like a spark from the everlasting anvil, angels, those sons of the morning, have lifted up their songs, and have poured forth their paeans of joy and gladness.

They have seen the wisdom of God in the greatness of creation—in every sphere they have been able to perceive it, for their vision is far more comprehensive than ours. And they have also, no doubt, seen that wisdom in all its minuteness as manifest in the delicate structure of organ-

ized beings, and the skillful economy of the operations of creative power. For there again they are able with the singleness and certainty of superior optics to perceive what only after long years we have been able to discover—and that by reasoning from the ingenuity of the works to the excellence of the design.

What a scale of survey must a seraph have! How readily can we imagine an eye that takes in at once the landscape of the world! He need not confine himself to one single spot in God's universe, but with rapid wings he can steer far and wide over the infinity of space. May he not pause here a moment and there a moment, and with a glance peer into the multiform wisdom of God in all the ten thousand thousand worlds that stud the realms of space? Yet with all that facility of observation, it seems that the angels have some parts of the wisdom of God to learn. They have some lessons of heavenly science to study which creation cannot unfold to their view—to be ascertained and certified by them only through the transcendent work of Redemption which the Lord has carried on in His Church.

Fix your attention for a moment on the word "now" as it is used in the text. On that word, it seems to me, much of the meaning hangs. Long before our Lord came into the world God had been pleased to reveal somewhat of the wisdom of His Grace in the types of the old Law. These were full of significance, but at the same time not free from perplexity to the minds of most men. They appear not to have been very intelligible, even to the angels, for they are pictured as standing over the Mercy Seat, with wings outspread, looking down upon its golden lid, anxiously enquiring, but not clearly discovering the secret of the old Covenant dispensation.

Peter says, I suppose in allusion to this, "which things the angels desire to look into." But Paul here vehemently sets forth the yearnings of his heart in the exercise of his ministry, "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God."

May we not infer from this that though angels saw Moses and Aaron, and the long succession of priests that followed them. Though they doubtless mingled invisibly in the solemn gatherings that went up to Mount Zion, and heard the chants of the glorious Psalms. Though they saw the streams of blood that flowed at the altar of burnt offering, and marked the rising clouds of smoke that went up from the altar of incense that was in the Holy Place before the Lord, they had not as yet discovered the wisdom of God in its fullness and clearness, the spotless mirror of His power, the reflex image of His glorious perfection?

But it must have remained for them to learn it from the Church! Since Christ has come, angels are to be students of the manifold wisdom of God as revealed in His work towards His people, preparing them for that grand climax—the espousal of the Church and the marriage of the Lamb. To come closer to the matter we must trace it progressively, as though it were step by step that the angels pursued their study, and acquired an insight into this manifold wisdom. It may be they do so. Certainly among the children of men there is much pleasure in the getting of knowledge. The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

As we gradually break up fresh ground, decipher that which is obscure, sift out analogies, solve difficulties, and follow out the tracks of history in one continuous line, our enjoyment of study rises to enthusiasm. Do you not think that the angels perceived the manifold wisdom of God now that they began to understand what man was and what man is? They must have already seen that God had created an order of pure spirits who served Him faithfully and never sinned. There was one form of wisdom displayed in that. Other spirits, equally pure, went astray, and in the wisdom of God—for there is wisdom in it—these were suffered to continue astray, reserved in chains until the judgment.

Soon the angels perceived that God was about to make another intelligent creature, not altogether spiritual, but a spiritual creature that should be linked with materialism, a creature that should abide in a body of clay. And that God intended to make this creature a mixture of earth and Heaven—such a one that he should occupy the place which fallen angels had left vacant. They discerned in this at once the wisdom of God. He had formed a pure spirit. He had fashioned material substances. Now He was about to make a creature in which the two should be combined, a creature that should be spiritual, and yet should be material.

But before this creature should be permitted to take his place forever at the right hand of God, he was to be permitted to pass the test of temptation. Being tempted, he was to fall into sin. Out of the condemnation into which he should sink he was to be elevated by an act of Divine Grace. From the guilt of that sin he was to be cleansed by a matchless system of substitutionary sacrifice. And then, after having been alienated in heart, he should nevertheless become as pure as if he had never been conscious of evil! And contaminated with it, he should be redeemed from it and stand in allegiance to the Most High, to serve Him with as absolute a perfection as if he had never transgressed or lost his first estate.

Herein is manifold wisdom, that the Lord God should make so strange a creature, that He should be formed of the dust of the ground, and yet created in the image of God. A creature that should know sin, and what-

ever of pleasure there might be in it, and yet be restored to purity and holiness. A creature who though awhile estranged in heart, and guilty of rebelling with a high hand against his Creator, should return to its allegiance through the infinitely wise workings of God's Spirit, and from now on should remain forever the liege servant of God! And, something more, the child of God would be lifted up and exalted into a nearness of connection and intimacy of communion with the Great Father of Spirits into which no creature had ever been brought before! In that grand design, the angels must have seen much of the sublime wisdom of God, and that conspicuously through the Church.

But, Brethren, may not the admiration of angels at the unfolding of this wisdom have been increased by the mystery in which it had long been shrouded from their apprehension? Observe that Paul was exulting in a revelation "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit." What use will he make of it? First he looks round among the saints and sounds the note of welcome. Then he looks out among his fellow men and proclaims it to the Gentile world. And at length he looks up and descries among the angelic throng, creatures of noble mind and exalted rank, who could sympathize the joy and hail the solution of so grand a problem.

Be it remembered that the decree had previously been proclaimed from the throne of the Most High, for, "when He brings the First-Begotten into the world, He says, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." Yet the means by which the counsels of God concerning Christ and the Church should be brought to pass had not thus far been shown. With what pleasing wonderment, therefore, would the principalities and powers in heavenly places regard the plan as it was unsealed! How well might the Apostle look forward to those ages to come which have yet to prove the reality of all that has been foreshadowed!

The Truth of all that has been prophesied. And (the work now in progress being completed) the actual form and fashion of all that from the beginning was predestinated. Even while the mystery was unexplained, it was not for pure angelic minds to doubt. Still their thoughts must have been full of marvel, and startling questions must have occurred to them. Shall the Only-Begotten Son of the Father take the nature of man into union with the Godhead? Can it be safe to put such a creature as man into so sublime a relationship with the Creator? Will pride never inflame his breast and provoke his soul to transgress? By what strange process shall he be made meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light?

While the details are concealed, the destiny seems incomprehensible. It is therefore that the Church becomes as a museum which angels may visit with ever-expanding interest and ever-increasing delight. Over the

minutest particulars of the Divine workmanship in the saints they may pore with pleasure. For there they have open to their observation by the Church the manifold wisdom of God. And all this redounds to the glory of the Savior. That creature, man, when thus elevated, can never be proud, for he remembers what he was. If ever the feeling of exultation crosses his mind, he transfers the honor to Christ, who can receive it as his rightful due.

There is not in Heaven, of all the creatures, a humbler creature, though none more elevated—made to have dominion over all the works of God’s hands, with all things put under his feet. He is made to be akin to Deity itself by virtue of union with the Son of God, and yet safe to stand there, without cause to fear that he should pervert his high prerogative or usurp any adoration or prerogative which does not belong to him. The process through which he has passed—his annealing, as it were, in the fire of his fall and of his repentance—his deep obligations to Sovereign Grace, shall make it safe to grant that he shall sit with Christ on His Throne. Even as Christ also overcame, and is set down with his Father on His Throne.

I talk of these things feebly and superficially, but I am persuaded that this is a subject which angels can think of with enchantment, and as they think it over they see transparent proofs of the manifold wisdom of God. But to come down to more familiar topics. Probably you will be more impressed with the excellence of this wisdom as you look at the first principles of Christianity, than if you would arrest your attention in any refinements of reasoning. The wisdom of God is clearly seen by angels in this—that though God was dishonored in this world by sin—that sin has redounded to His greater honor.

Satan, when he led men astray and tempted them to rebel, thought he had marred the Glory of God, but he never did more palpably outwit God. As Augustine ventured to say of the Fall, “Happy thought,” so, when we see how God’s mercy and His love have shone resplendent through that dreadful breach, we can only admire the wisdom of God which has thus outmatched the subtlety of Hell. The serpent was exceedingly wise, but God was far wiser. Satan’s craft was dexterous, but God’s wisdom was infinite in its prescience. Wisdom has outmatched craft. Is it not glorious to think that this world where God was dishonored most is the world where He shall be most revered?

There is no such display of the attributes and perfections of Godhead in the whole universe beside as there is here. On our blighted soil God has stood foot to foot with moral evil. God incarnate, the Son of God, has sustained the conflict, and won the victory! While the heel of Christ was bruised, the head of the dragon has been most effectually broken! A tri-

umph that God would have us commemorate in time and in eternity has come through the *sin* that threatened the destruction of the world.

This wisdom of God is to be seen in the way that our redemption was worked. The doctrine of Substitution is a marvel which, if God had never revealed, none of us could by any possibility have discovered. You remember how it was. We had sinned and were condemned. How could God be gracious and yet be just? How could He keep His Law and yet at the same time show His mercy towards us? Of old that problem was solved by the Suretyship of Christ. He who had determined to be Man put Himself from before the foundation of the world into our place, and offered Himself to God as the Head of the race in Covenant that He might make recompense to the broken Law.

Angels could not have conjectured this, but when it was made known to them, how could they refrain to chant fresh songs to the praise of Him who could undertake so loving a responsibility? It became necessary when Christ was our Surety, that He should afterwards take upon Himself our nature. Oh, how it must have surprised the angels when they heard that the Son of God was coming down to earth to be born of a virgin! What marvel must there have been when the announcement was made through the courts of Paradise that He was going down to Bethlehem!

One of the angelic number who had been sent to attend Him proclaimed His advent, but while he was making the announcement, "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host," who now came in to swell the song, "Glory to God in the highest! On earth peace, good will toward men." The swell of that music—how grand! The cadence of those simple words—how charming! Yes, the angels must have discovered something of the wisdom of God when they saw that God thus tabernacled among men, that the Word was made flesh in order to be capable of carrying out His surety-engagements, and really become a Substitute for those who had offended.

I think His whole life must have struck them with wonder. They must often have observed wisdom in His actions and in His prayers, in His speech and in His silence. But, when at last He came to die, methinks even cherubim and seraphim were wrapt in amazement. That He should stoop from Heaven and become a friend to the fallen race might surprise them much. But that He should stoop to *die* must have appeared utterly incomprehensible! Something more of the love and wisdom of God should yet be revealed to them. I think our hymn must fitly describe how they gathered round that Cross—

***"And could their eyes have known a tear,
They must have wept it there."***

When they beheld the griefs and torments of the dying Son of God, the Lamb of God's Passover—when they heard Him say, "It is finished!"—what a door must have been opened to them! They saw, then, that He had finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. And then, perhaps, they saw more clearly than before how Christ, by suffering, put an end to our sufferings. And by being made a curse for us had made us the righteousness of God in Him. If they marvelled during the three days of His slumber in the tomb, His Resurrection must have opened up another door to them. And, when after His forty days' sojourn, they came to meet Him with glad acclaim.

When they joined Him, and with Him rode up to the gates of Heaven, singing, "Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lift up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in." When they came in triumph with "the Lord mighty in battle, the King of Glory," in that procession to His Throne, they must still have been more and more amazed, and said one to another, "What thing is this? What mighty marvel! He that became Man to suffer, is the very One that now rises to reign. He who was born to die now lives forevermore. Behold, He is now the Head over all things, and made to have dominion over all the works of God's hands, for it has pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell!"

Thus, Brethren, though time and voice fail me, permit me to say the whole history of our blessed Lord, who is the Head of the Church, is making known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God in such a way as they never could have otherwise seen it.

The wisdom of God is seen through the Church in the Holy Spirit's work as well as in the work of Christ. It is "manifold wisdom." You know the children's toy, the kaleidoscope. Every time you turn it there is some fresh form of beauty. You seldom see the same form twice. So it is with nature, each time and season has its special beauty. There is always variety in its scenery—diversities of form and color are strewn throughout the world. You never saw two hills molded in the same pattern, or two rivers that wound after the same fashion from their source down to the sea. Nature is full of variety. So is the work of the Holy Spirit.

In calling sinners to Christ, there is singleness of purpose but no uniformity of means. Your conversion, my dear Friend, in the main outline, is very much like mine—yet your conversion has its distinctive incidents. God's wisdom is displayed equally in bringing you in that way, and in bringing me in another way. I believe there will be found evidence at the last of the wisdom of God in the very date, the very place, the very means in and by which every soul is brought to believe in Jesus. And angels will, no doubt, be able to perceive in every conversion some singular marks of

beautiful originality proceeding from the inexhaustible Artist of Grace, the Holy Spirit.

That same wisdom will be seen in the biography of every convert—how the Lord afflicts, or how He comforts. How He upholds us, how He keeps back that which cannot yet be endured. How He gently leads us, how He makes us to lie down. We find fault, sometimes, with the way of Providence because we do not understand it. When we shall get a clearer sight of it we shall see that every mark and line was dictated by His love, and ordered by His Infinite Counsel. As each Christian shall be conformed to the likeness of Christ, angels will see in the products of Grace fresh displays of the manifold wisdom of God.

I could suppose that the death of a martyr must be such a spectacle as those holy watchers regard with extraordinary interest. Would they not have gathered around such a woman as Blandina, for instance, who was made to sit in a red-hot chair, after having been tossed upon the horns of a wild bull? Yet constant to the last, she maintained her faith in Christ while passing through the torture! Pure spirits as they were, they must have commiserated the physical anguish and admired the spiritual triumph of this feeble woman thus devoted in her love to their Lord and Master.

Yes, you ministering spirits, you who live to serve our Eternal King, surely you must rejoice at the loyalty of those servants of His who die for His Truth. In late years, since this House of Prayer was built, when the martyrs of Madagascar were burned at their stakes for Christ—as they stood erect in the fire, and began to sing—the angels, celestial vocalists as they are, must have been ravished with a music that they could not emulate. And when they breathed the prayer, “Into your hands we commend our spirits,” the angels must almost have envied them the ability of serving God in that sphere of suffering, and the possibility of bearing in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Yes, and when they have seen your boldness and your constancy, your self-denial, and your patience. And when they have heard your importunate prayers and groans, as you have pleaded for the souls of others, seeking with tears to bring others to Jesus, I do not doubt that they have ascribed to the manifold wisdom of God the production of such luscious fruits from such inferior creatures! Fruits that bring to His name so much of Glory, and so much of renown to His Grace. In all the saints, through the history of their vocation and the development of their sanctification, angels can discern the manifold wisdom of God.

The subject is far too large for me. I shall leave you to think it out, after thus introducing you to but a few aspects of it. There is much room for

meditation as to how these bright and happy spirits do and shall see the wisdom of God in the salvation of the Church.

II. But do you now ask, DO ANGELS GAIN ANYTHING BY THE CHURCH OF GOD? I think they do. Certainly they acquire increased knowledge. With us knowledge is sometimes sorrow. To know is often to mourn. What the eye does not see the heart does not rue. "Where ignorance is bliss"—and it sometimes is—there are those who think, "it is folly to be wise." But ignorance is not bliss in Heaven. Knowledge increases the joy of the angels, and I will tell you why—because it makes them take a greater delight in God when they see how wise and gracious He is. If it is possible for the angels to be happier than natural innocence and honorable service can render them, they must be happier through knowing and seeing more of God, as His attributes are reflected and His perfections mirrored forth in the Church.

Angels, methinks, will be enriched by the society of the saints in Heaven. Commerce always enriches, and commerce between angelic and human natures will be enriching to them both. They love in Heaven—they show their love by rejoicing over repenting men. They will be glad to see us there. I do believe they will make much of us, as we do if we have seen some poor child reclaimed, and afterwards grow up to honor. We like to think of such an one. It brings the tears into our eyes that our Father did so good a deed for the orphan, the pauper, or the outcast. And will not the angels rejoice over those in whom the Father's mercy has worked such wonderful happiness?

Again, to my imagining (can it be illusive?) angels are gainers by the Church because they get nearer to the Throne of God than they were before. Another order of beings, our own to wit, is advanced. Surely when one creature gets near to God, all unfallen creatures are promoted. God, in vital union with the creature, was not to be conceived of until Christ came down to earth, and clothed Himself in manhood, thus raising creatureship nearer to God by just that length. So angels, by inference, seem to me interested in the honor that Jehovah has put on His works—the endowed works of His own formation.

Do you not think, too, that perhaps they can see God better in Christ than even they did before? Is it not possible that even they who first did veil their faces with their wings in the presence of the Almighty, because the brightness of glory was excessive, may now stand with unveiled faces and worship God in Christ? I think it is so. They never saw much of God before until they saw God veiled in human flesh. There was too dazzling a splendor for them till the interposing medium of the manhood of Christ came in between them and the absolute Deity. It may be so.

And may not there be a reflex sense of gratitude in the very heart of angels when they see us in Heaven, or while they see us wending our way there? They perceive what it would have cost to have restored them had they been beguiled by sin, and therefore what debtors they are to God that they were never suffered to fall. Does it not make their state and standing more and more joyful to them when they see in us how the righteous scarcely are saved, and at what an expense men were lifted up from the ruins of death and the dread doom of the damned?

Why, methinks they say not one to another, with Phariseeism—"We thank You, great God, that we are not as men are." No, they say, with lowliness of mind—"We bless You, O God, that we were permitted to stand in our fidelity, and were not left to the natural weakness which might have succumbed to temptation, for You charged even Your angels with folly, but You have held us, and here we are to bless Your name." It may be so. It may be so.

III. Let me detain you one minute more while we meet the question, WHAT IS ALL THIS TO US? Ought it not to make us prize the Gospel? If the angels think so much of it, oh, what should we think? If they who have only seen it, esteem it so, how ought we to value it who have tasted it? If they admire the veins that filled the Fountain, what shall we say who have washed in that Fountain? If they wonder at Christ, who took not on Him the nature of angels, how shall we admire Him who espoused the house of Abraham and the seed of Adam? Let us appreciate the Gospel beyond all price, emolument, or honor.

How, too, should we study it, if it is the research of angelic intellects! Is the Church their schoolbook from where they learn lessons of the Divine wisdom, because no science is equal to that of the wisdom of God in Christ revealed in His Church? O be not, you converts, ignorant of the Word of God! Be not oblivious of the operations of God in your own souls! The angels desire to look into these things. Do you look into them? Blessed shall you be if you abide in the study of the Word of God! You shall be like trees planted by the rivers of water that bring forth their fruit in their season. O do apply every faculty you have to acquire increasing knowledge of that which angels love to study.

And now take courage, you feeble-minded ones, and never fear again the sneer of the man who calls the Gospel folly. Account him to be the victim of folly who despises this manifold wisdom. Shall I set the judgment of a poor puny mortal against the judgment of an angel? I suppose that even Newton, and Kepler, and Locke, and those mighty master spirits, would be mere infants compared with seraphs. Those great men loved to study the Scriptures, and when your modern pretenders to a little smack of philoso-

phy come in and sneer at our holy Gospel, we can well afford to sneer at them. What are their sneers to us?

In proportion to a man's ignorance is generally his impudence when he meddles with the Gospel. I think it was Hume who confessed that he had never read the New Testament and said he never would. Yet he was one of the most glib in caviling at that of which he knew nothing. Ah, you skeptics, pretenders, and scoffers—we can well afford to let you rail. But you can ill afford to rail when angels are awed into wonder, and so would you be if there were anything angelic about your temper, or anything of right wisdom in your attainments.

Last of all. If this is so, how we ought to love Christ, we who has a saving interest in it, and how they ought to tremble who have it not! Unsaved Men! Unsaved Women! If it needs manifold wisdom to save men, then men's ruin must be very great, and your peril must be very imminent. If it amazes angels to see how God saves, it must be a terrible destruction from which He saves them. That destruction is coming upon you—its dark shadows have already began to gather round you. How great your folly to refuse a salvation so wise, to reject a Savior so attractive as Jesus!

Think of His loving gentleness and consider the simple way in which He saves—believe and live! The supplies necessary for your salvation are all waiting. There is nothing to be done. It is all complete. There is nothing to be found. It is all ready. Salvation is finished. What a fool must he be that will not have it! O stretch out your withered hand and take it! God give you power. If you say "How?" I answer thus—Trust, trust, trust! Come and confide in Christ. Rely upon Christ, and He will save you. God grant you Grace to do it at once, and He shall have the praise. Amen.

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SAINTS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH

ONE FAMILY

NO. 1249

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 8, 1875,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“The whole family in Heaven and earth.”
Ephesians 3:15.*

BEREAVEMENTS are among the sorest griefs of this mortal life. We are permitted by God to love those whom He gives to us and our heart eagerly casts its tendrils around them and, therefore, when suddenly the beloved objects are withdrawn by death, our most tender feelings are wounded. It is not sinful for us to lament the departure of friends, for Jesus wept. It would be unnatural and inhuman if we did not mourn for the departed—we should be less feeling than the beasts of the field. The stoic is not a Christian, and his spirit is far removed from that of the tender-hearted Jesus.

The better the friend, the greater our regret at his loss, although there also lies within that fact more abundant sources of consolation. The mourning for Josiah was very sore because he was so good a prince. Because Stephen was so full of the Holy Spirit, and so bold for the faith, devout men carried him to his burial and made great lamentation over him. Dorcas was wept for and bewailed because of her practical care for the poor. Had they not been true saints, the mourning had not been so great.

Brethren, we cannot but sorrow this day, for the Lord has taken away a Sister in Christ, a true servant of the Church. She was a consecrated woman who'll be honored above many, and to whom He gave many crowns of rejoicing. And we cannot but sorrow all the more because so loving a mother in Israel has fallen asleep, so useful a life has come to a close and so earnest a voice is hushed in silence. I have, this day, lost from my side one of the most faithful, fervent and efficient of my helpers. And the Church has lost one of her most useful members. Beloved, we need comfort! Let us seek it where it may be found.

I pray that we may view this source of grief, not with our natural, but with our *spiritual* eyes. The things external are for the natural eye and from that eye they force full many a tear, for in his natural life man is the heir of sorrow. But there is an inward and spiritual life which God has given to Believers—and this life has an inner eye—and to this inner eye there are other scenes presented than the senses can perceive. Let that spiritual vision indulge itself now. Close your eyes as much as your tears will permit you to the things which are seen, for they are temporal and shadowy, and look to the eternal, secret, Truths of God, for these are realities.

Take a steady look into the invisible, and the text, I think, sets before us something to gaze upon which may minister comfort to us. The saints in Heaven, though apparently separate from us, are, in reality, one with us! Though death seems to have made breaches in the Church of God, it is, in fact, perfect and entire. Though the inhabitants of Heaven and Believers on earth might seem to be two orders of beings, yet in truth they are “one family.”—

**“Let all the saints terrestrial sing,
With those to Glory gone;
For all the servants of our King
In earth and Heaven are one.”**

So sings the poet. The text tells us that there is a “whole family.” It speaks not of a *broken* family, nor of *two* families, but of, “the whole family in Heaven and earth.” It is still one undivided household, notwithstanding all the graves which crowd the cemetery.

To this thought I shall call your attention, hoping that thereby you may enter into that “one communion,” in which saints above are bound up with saints below. I invite you to consider the ties which bind us to those who have gone before, and the indissoluble kinship in Christ which holds us as much as ever in one sacred unity.

I. First, let us think of THE POINTS OF THIS GREAT FAMILY UNION. In what respects are the people of our God in Heaven and earth our family? We answer, in very many, for their family relationship is so ancient, so certain and so paramount, that it may be seen in a vast variety of ways. Let us note, first, concerning those in Heaven and earth whom the Lord loves that their names are all *written in one family register*.

That mystical roll which eye has not seen contains all the names of His chosen. They are born by degrees, but they are chosen at once—by one decree set apart from the rest of mankind—by one declaration, “They shall be Mine,” separated forever as hallowed things unto the Most High! “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His Grace, in which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.”

We like to keep our own family registers. We are pleased to look back to the place where our parents recorded our names with those of our brothers and sisters. Let us gaze by faith upon that great Book of Life where all the names of the redeemed stand indelibly written by the hand of Everlasting Love. And as we read those beloved names, let us remember that they make but *one* record. The faithful of modern times are on the same page with the saints of the Old Testament, and the names of the feeblest among us are written by the same hand which inscribed the Apostles and the martyrs!

We confidently believe that Mrs. Bartlett’s name is found in the same roll which contains yours, my Sister, though you may be the most obscure of the Lord’s daughters. “Even as you are called in one hope of your call-

ing,” so were you all comprehended in one election of Grace. The saints above and below are also *one family in the Covenant*, “ordered in all things and sure,” made with them in the Person of their one great federal Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Sadly one are all the members of the human race in our first father, Adam, for in Adam we all fell.

We realize that we are one family by the common sweat of the face, the common tendency to sin, the common liability to death—but there is a second Adam, and all whom He represented are most surely one family beneath His blessed Headship! What the Lord Jesus has accomplished was achieved for all His people. His righteousness is theirs! His life is theirs! His Resurrection is the pledge of their resurrection! His eternal life is the source and guarantee of their immortal glory—

**“With Him, their Head, they stand or fall—
Their life, their surety, and their All.”**

Let us think how close we are together, then, for we are in very truth nearer to the saints in Heaven than we are to the ungodly with whom we dwell! We are in one Covenant Headship with just men made perfect, but not with the unregenerate. We are fellow citizens with the glorified, but we are strangers and foreigners among worldlings.

Christ Jesus represented us even as He represented the glorified ones in the old eternity, when the Covenant was signed, and in that hour when the Covenant stipulations were fulfilled upon the bloody tree. And He represents us with the glorified ones, still, as He takes possession of the inheritance in the names of all His elect, and dwells in the Glory which He is preparing for His one Church. It is sweet to remember that all the saints in Heaven and earth have *the Covenant promises secured to them by the same Seal*. You know the Seal of the Covenant—your eyes delight to dwell upon it, it is the Sacrifice of the bleeding Lamb! And what, my Brothers and Sisters, is the ground of the security of the saints above, but the Covenant of Divine Grace, sealed and ratified by the blood of the Son of God?

We are rejoiced to see that, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in connection with the spirits of just men made perfect, the Holy Spirit mentions Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and the blood of sprinkling, which speaks better things than that of Abel. The promise and the oath of God—those two Immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, are given to all the heirs of promise whether they are militant or triumphant. The Lord has said to them all, “I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people.” Glory be to His name, the blood which is the ground of our hope of Heaven guarantees to the perfected that they shall abide in their bliss! They are there as the “redeemed from among men,” which we, also, are this day. That same blood which has made white their robes has also cleansed *us* from all sin!

The family in Heaven and earth, again, will be plainly seen to be one, if you remember that they are *all born of the same Father*, each one in process of time. Every soul in Heaven has received the new birth, for that which is born of the flesh cannot inherit a spiritual kingdom and, therefore, even babes snatched away from the womb and before yet they had

fallen into actual sin, have entered Heaven by regeneration. All there, whether they lived to old age or died in childhood, have been begotten, again, into a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and are born as to their heavenly state, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The nature of all regenerate persons is the same, for in all it is the living and incorruptible Seed which lives and abides forever. The same nature is in the saints above as in the saints below. They are called the sons of God and so are we! They delight in holiness and so, also, do we! They are of the Church of the First-Born and so are we. Their life is the life of God and so is ours—immortality pulses through our spirits as well as through theirs. Not yet, I grant, is the *body* made immortal, but as to our real life we know who has said, “Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.” Is it not written, “You are made partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust”? I know there is no higher nature than the Divine, and this is said to have been bestowed upon the saints below!

The new life in Heaven is more developed and mature. It has also shaken off its dust and has put on its beautiful garments, yet it is the same. In the sinner born to God but yesterday there is a spark of the same fire which burns in the breasts of the glorified above. Christ is in the perfected and the same Christ is in us, for we are, “all of one,” and He calls us all Brethren. Of the same Father, begotten. Into the same nature born. With the same life quickening us, are we not one family? Oh, it needs but little alteration in the true saint below to make him a saint above! So slight the change that in an instant it is accomplished. “Absent from the body and present with the Lord.” The work has proceeded so far that it only remains for the Master to give the last touch to it and we shall be meet for Glory and shall enter into the heavenly rest with capacities of joy as suitable for Heaven as the capacities of those who have been there these thousands of years!

We are one, yet further, Brethren, because all saints, whether in Heaven or earth, are *partakers in the same Divine love*. “The Lord knows them that are His,” not merely those in Heaven but those below. The poor struggling child of God in poverty is as well known by God as yon bright songster who walks the golden streets! “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.” I tell you, timid, trembling woman, humbly resting on your Savior, that you are as truly beloved of God as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who sit down at His table in Glory! The love of God toward His children is not affected by their position, so that He loves those in Heaven better and those on earth less. God forbid!

You, being evil, are not so partial as to bestow all your love upon a son who has prospered in the world and give none of it to another who is bearing the burden of poverty. Our great Father loves the world of His elect with love surpassing thought and has given Himself to each one of them to be the portion of each individual forever. What more can He do for those in Heaven? What less has He done for us? Jesus has engraved the names of all the redeemed upon His hands and heart. He loves them all

unto perfection! If, then, they all dwell in the bosom of God as the dearly beloved of His soul, are they not, indeed, one family?

As they all receive the same love so are they all *heirs of the same promises* and the same blessed inheritance. I am bold to say that as a believer in Christ, Heaven is as much mine as it is Paul's or Peter's! They are there to enjoy it and I am waiting to obtain it—but I hold the same title deeds as they do and, as an heir of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ—my heritage is as broad and as sure as theirs! Their only right to Heaven lies in the Grace of God which brought them to believe in Jesus. And if we, also, have been brought, by Grace, to believe in Jesus, our title to eternal Glory is the same as theirs!

Oh, child of God, do not think that the Lord has set apart some very choice and special blessings for a few of His people—all things are yours. The land is before you, even the land which flows with milk and honey, and the whole of it is yours, though you may be less than the least of all saints. The promise is sure to all the seed and all the seed have an interest in it. Remember that blessed passage, "If children, then heirs, heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ"—not if full-grown children! Not if well-developed children! Not if strong, muscular children, but, "if children," and that is all! Regeneration proves you to be heirs, and alike heirs, for there can be no difference in the heirship if they are all heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

Will you think of this, you who are little in Israel? You who rank with the Benjamites? Will you sit down and think of this? You are one of the same family as those bright spirits who shine as the stars forever and ever! And their inheritance is also yours, though as yet you have not come of age, and like a minor must wait till you have been trained under tutors and governors and educated for Heaven! You are a prince, though as yet an infant. You are one of the Redeemer's kings and priests, as yet uncrowned. You are waiting, waiting, but still secure of the inheritance! You are tarrying till the day breaks and the shadows flee away, but sure that in the morning the crown of life so long reserved will be brought forth and you, also, shall sit with Jesus on His Throne.

So might I continue showing the points in which the saints above and the saints below are akin, but this last must suffice—*They are all members of one body*—and are necessary to the completion of one another. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are told, concerning the saints above, that, "they, without us, cannot be made perfect." We are the lower limbs, as it were, of the body, but the body must have its inferior as well as its superior members. It cannot be a perfect body should the least part of it be destroyed. Hence it is declared that in the dispensation of the fullness of time, He will gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven and which are on earth. The saints above with all their bliss must wait for their resurrection until we, also, shall have come out of great tribulation.

Like ourselves they are waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. Until all who were predestinated to be conformed to the image of the First-Born shall have been so conformed, the Church cannot be

complete. We are linked to the glorified by bonds of indispensable necessity! We think that we cannot do without them, and that is true—but they, also, cannot do without us! “As the body is one and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body, so also is Christ.” How closely this brings us together!

Those for whom we sorrow cannot be far away, since we are all “the body of Christ and members in particular.” If it is dark, my hands know that the head cannot be far off, nor can the foot be far removed—eyes, ears, feet, hands, head are all comprised within the limits of one body—and so if I cannot see my beloved friend, if I shall not, again, hear her voice on earth, nor see her pleading tears, yet am I sure she is not far away and that the bond between us is by no means snapped, for we are members of our Lord’s body, of which it is written, “not a bone of Him shall be broken.”

Thus have I, according to my ability, set forth some of the points of this family union. May the Holy Spirit give us to know them for ourselves.

II. Let us now speak upon THE INSEPARABLENESS OF THIS UNION. “The *whole* family in Heaven and earth” Not the two families nor the divided family, but the *whole* family in Heaven and earth. It appears at first sight as if we were very effectually divided by the hand of *death*. Can it be that we are one family when some of us labor on and others sleep beneath the greensward? There was a great truth in the sentence which Wordsworth put into the mouth of the little child when she said, “O master, we are seven.”—

**“But they are dead: those two are dead!
Their spirits are in Heaven!
‘Twas throwing words away, for still
The little maid would have her will,
And said ‘No, we are seven.’”**

Should we not thus speak of the Divine family, for death, assuredly, has no separating power in the household of God! Like the Apostle, we are persuaded that death cannot separate us from the love of God. The breach caused by the grave is only apparent—it is not real, the family is still united—for if you think of it, when there is a loss in a family the father is bereaved, but you cannot conceive of our heavenly Father’s being bereaved. Our Father which art in Heaven, You have lost none of Your children! We wept and went to the grave, but You did not, for Your child is not dead! Rather has Your child come closer unto Your bosom to receive a sweeter caress and to know more fully the infinity of Your love!

When a child is lost from a family, the elder brother is a mourner, for he has lost one of his siblings, but our Elder Brother is not bereaved—Jesus has lost none of His! No, has He not, rather, brought home to Himself, His own redeemed? Has He not rejoiced exceedingly to see His good work perfected in one whom He loved? There is no break towards the Father, and no break towards the Elder Brother, and therefore it must be *our mistake* to fancy that there is any break at all! It cannot be that death divides our Israel—were not the tribes of Reuben and Gad and Manasseh one with the rest of Israel, though the Jordan rolled between?

It is a *whole* family, that redeemed household in Heaven and in earth! How little death prevents actual communion it is impossible for us to tell. Some attractive but worthless books have been written pretending to unfold to us the connection between departed spirits and ourselves. But I trust you will not be led into such idle speculations. God has not revealed these things to us and it is not for us to go dreaming about them, for we may dream ourselves into grievous errors if we once indulge our fancies. We know nothing about the commerce of the glorified with earth, but we do know that all departed saints are supremely blessed and that they are with Christ! And if they are with Christ, and we are with Christ, we cannot be far from each other.

We meet all the saints of every age whenever we meet with God in Christ Jesus. In fellowship with Jesus you are come unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in Heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. It is impossible to restrict our communion with the people of God by the bounds of sect, race, country, or time, for we are vitally one with them all! Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us join our hands with those who have gone before, and let us, with equal love, join hands with those below, who before long will be numbered with the same company!

Death has removed part of the family to an upper room, but we are still one family! There may be two brigades, but we are one army! We may feed in two pastures, but we are one flock! We may dwell awhile in separate habitations, but one homestead will, before long, receive us all. As a matter which grows out of death, it may be well to say that *space* makes no inroads into the wholeness of the Lord's family. So far as spirits are limited to place, there must be a vast distance between the saint in Heaven and the saint on earth. But we ought to remember that space, which seems vast to us, is not vast relatively, either as to God or to spiritual beings. Space is but the house of God, no, God comprehends all space and space, therefore, is but the bosom of the Eternal.

Space, also, is scarcely to be reckoned when dealing with spiritual beings. We can love and commune with those who are across the Atlantic with as much ease as we can have fellowship with those in the next house. Our friends in Australia, though on the other side of the world, are by no means too distant for our spiritual embrace. Thought flies more swiftly than electricity. Spirits defy space and annihilate distance. And we, in spirit, still meet with the departed in our songs of praise, rejoicing with them in our Lord Jesus Christ! Space does not divide—there are many mansions, but they are all in our Father's house.

And, dear Brethren, it is such a great mercy that sin, that greatest of all separators, does not now divide us, for we are made near by the blood of Christ. When we think of those bright spirits before the Throne of God, they seem to be of a superior race to us and we are half tempted to bow at their feet. But this feeling is rebuked in us, as it was in John, by the voice which said, "See you do it not! I am of your fellow servants, the Prophets: worship God." They are one with us, after all, for they have washed their

robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb—and that is exactly what we have done, by God’s Grace!

Beloved in Christ, we are already justified and accepted in the Beloved as much as the glorified. The veil is torn for us as well as for them. The dividing mountains of sin are overturned for us as well as for them. Sinners as we are, we have access to God by the blood of Jesus—and with joy we draw near the Throne of God! They have attained to perfection and we are following after. They see the Lord face to face, but we, also, who are pure in heart, have Grace given us to see God. The atoning blood has removed the middle wall and we are one in Christ Jesus.

Neither do *errors* and failures of understanding divide the family of God. If, indeed, they did, who among us could be of the same family as those who know even as they are known? The little child makes a thousand mistakes and his elder brothers smile, sometimes, but they do not deny that he is their brother because he is so ignorant and childish. Even so, dear Brothers and Sisters, we know very little now. Like the Apostle, we may each one say, “I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child.” For now we see through a glass darkly and only know in part, but this does not disprove our kinship with those who see “face to face.”

We are of the same school, though on a lower form, and it is written, “All your children shall be taught of the Lord.” What they know they learned at those same feet at which we also sit. Neither can *sorrow* separate us. Ah, they know no tears, their griefs and their toils are ended, but we must abide awhile in the stern realities of life’s battle, to wrestle and to suffer. But it is evident that we are not divided from them, for we are all spoken of in one sentence as, “These are they that are coming out of great tribulation,” for so the translation may run. Those who are already arrived and those who are on the way are described as one company.

The sick child is of the same family as his brother in perfect health. Soldiers who are enduring the brunt of the battle are of the same army as those who have gained their laurels. To deny that your warring soldier is a part of the host would be a great mistake. To say that he is not of the army because he is in the midst of the conflict would be cruel and false. The saints militant are of the same host as the triumphant! Those who are suffering are of the same company as the beatified. None of these things part us—we are still one family in Christ Jesus. Who shall separate us?

III. A topic of deep interest now comes before us—THE PRESENT DISPLAY OF THE UNION. We have been speaking of our being one family, but perhaps it appears to you to be only a pleasing theory and, therefore, we will notice certain points in which our unity practically appears. I like to think, first, that the *service* of those who have departed blends with ours. I do not mean that they can descend to earth to preach and teach and labor. But I do mean this, that they being dead, yet speak. Their service projects itself beyond this life.

A good man is not dead as to his influential life and real service for God as soon as the breath leaves his body. His work has a momentum in it which makes it roll on—his influence abides. “Even in their ashes live

their known fires.” A very large part of the power which the Holy Spirit gives to the Church is found in the form of influence derived from the testimonies and examples of departed saints. Today the Church of God feels the influence of Paul and Peter. At this very moment the work of the Apostles is telling upon the nations. Is it not certain that the energetic souls of Luther and Calvin have left vital forces behind them which still throb and pulsate?

Perhaps the Reformers are doing as much today as they did when they were alive! So each man, according to his talent and Grace, leaves behind him not merely his arrow and his bow, his sword and his shield for other hands to use—but the arrows which he shot before he died are still flying through the air and the javelin which he hurled before his hand was paralyzed in death is yet piercing through the bucklers of the foe! The influence of my dear Sister, Mrs. Bartlett, will operate upon some of you as long as you live—and you will transmit it to your successors. You Christians will be the more intense because of her glowing example—and you sinners will find it the harder to live in sin when you remember her tearful warnings.

Some of you, I do not doubt, will be her posthumous children, born unto her after she has entered into her rest. Do not let the living think that they are the sole champions in this holy war, for, to all intents and purposes, the spirits of the just made perfect stand side by side with them! And the battle is being carried on, in no small measure, by cannon which they cast and weapons which they forged. Though the builders are absent in body, yet the gold, silver and precious stones which they gave to their Lord will establish forever. Then again, we are one family in Heaven and earth, and that very visibly, because the influence of *the prayers* of those in Heaven still abides with us.

Do not misunderstand me, I am no believer in the intercession of the saints above. I believe that they pray, but I believe it to be a damnable error to urge anyone to *seek* their intercession! What I mean is very different. I mean that prayers offered while they were here and unanswered in their lifetime still remain in the Church’s treasury of prayer. Many a mother dies with her children unsaved, but the prayers she continually offered for them will prevail after her death. Many a minister and many a private member pleads with God for blessing on the Church and, perhaps, does not see it, but prayer must be answered—and 50 years afterwards it is possible that the Church will reap the result of those supplications.

Is not Scotland, today, the better and the holier for the prayers of John Knox? Is not England the brighter for the prayers of Latimer and Ridley? The august company of the glorified have ceased to kneel with us in *person*, but in effect they do so! They have gone to other work, but the incense which they kindled when they were below still perfumes the chambers of the Church of God! Further, our unity with them will be seen in this, that their *testimony* from above blends with ours. The Church is ordained to be a witness. My brethren, we try to witness as God helps us to His Truth as it is in Jesus, even as those who are above once witnessed with us here in life and in death.

What a sweet witness dying Christians often bear when they cannot speak, in the gleam of the eyes, in the perfect rest of soul which others may well envy, enjoyed just in the moment when pain was most severe and the flesh was failing. But now that these spirits have entered within the veil, do they cease their testimony? No. Hear them. They bear witness to the Lamb, saying, "for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood." They make known to angels and principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We are engaged with them in revealing the abundant mercy and all-sufficiency of the Lord. You are comrades with us, you shining ones! You are fellow witnesses for Jesus and therefore you are one with us! The main employment of saints above is *praise*. Beloved, what is ours but praise, too? Is it not well put by our poet—

***"They sing the Lamb in hymns above,
And we in songs below"?***

Their music is sweeter than ours, freer from discord and from all that is cold or wandering, but still, the theme is the same and the song springs from the same motive—and is worked in the heart by the same Grace. I think I shall never praise my Lord in Heaven more sincerely than I often praise Him now, when my mouth cannot speak, for the flooding of my soul's delight and joy in my God, who has taken me up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a Rock and established my goings, and put a new song into my mouth!

The deep obligations of every day overwhelm me with indebtedness! I cannot but praise my God, when I think of dire necessities perpetually supplied, multiplied sin continually pardoned, wretched infirmity graciously helped. Yes, we are one family, because when holy worship goes up into the ears of the Eternal, our praise blends with the praise of those who are glorified above, and we are one! Brethren, I believe we are one in some other points as well. Do you not rejoice over sinners? Is it not one of our holidays on earth when the prodigal returns? "Verily I say unto you there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents."

Do you ever cry out against sin and groan because of the power of error in the land? Know you not that the souls under the altar also cry with the same indignation, "O Lord, how long! Will You not judge and avenge Your own elect?" Do you not expect, each day, the coming of your Lord, and look for it with rapture? They, also, do the same. They say there is no hope in Heaven, but who told them so? The saints, like ourselves, are looking for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Your joy, your desire, your hope—are not these the same as theirs before the Throne of God?

Towering over all is the fact that *The Well-Beloved is the common joy of saints in Heaven and on earth*. What makes *their* Heaven? Who is the Object of all their worship? Who is the Subject of all their songs? In whom do they delight themselves all the day long? Who leads them to living fountains of waters and wipes all tears from their eyes? Beloved, He is as

much All in All to us as He is to them! Jesus, *we* know You and *they* know You! Jesus, *we* love You and *they* love You! Jesus, *we* embrace You and *they* embrace You! Jesus, *we* are oftentimes lost in You, and *they* are lost in You. Sun of our soul, Life of our life, Light of our delight, You are that to us which You are to them and herein we are all one!

IV. Last of all, there is to come, before long, A FUTURE MANIFESTATION OF THIS FAMILY UNION, much brighter than anything we have as yet seen. We are one family and we shall meet again! If they cannot come to us we shall go to them, by-and-by. It does not often happen that we carry to the grave one who is known to all this congregation, but seldom does a week pass but what one or other of our number, and frequently two or three, are taken home. I have to look upon you and upon myself as so many shadows. And when I meet you, how often does the question occur to me, "Who will go next?"

Naturally, I think of some of you who have grown gray in your Master's service and have passed your threescore years and ten. You must go soon, my Brothers and my Sisters. And I know you are not grieved at the prospect. Yet the young as well as the old are taken Home. And men in middle life, with the marrow moist in their bones, are removed, even as those who lean upon their staff for very age. Who knows but what I may leave you soon? My Brother, who knows but that you may be called away? Well, in that blessed day when we leave the earth, we shall perceive that as we are free of the Church below, we are citizens of the Church above!

Whenever some of us enter an assembly of Believers, they recognize and welcome us—the same reception awaits us above! We shall be quite at home in Heaven when we get there. Some of you have more friends in Heaven than on earth. How few are left of your former friends, compared with the many who have gone above? In the day when you enter into Heaven, you will perceive that the Church is one family, for they will welcome you heartily and recognize in you a Brother and a friend, and so, together with them, you shall adore your Lord!

Remember there is coming another day in which the family union of the Church will be seen, and that is when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised. It may be that we shall all be of the company of those who sleep and, if so, when the trumpet sounds, the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we shall have our share in the first Resurrection. Or, if our Lord should come before we die, we shall be, "alive and remain." But we shall undergo a change at the same moment as the dead are raised, so that this corruptible shall put on incorruption! What a family we shall be when we all rise together and all the changed ones stand with us, all of one race, all regenerate, all clothed in the white robe of Jesus' righteousness! What a family! What a meeting it will be!—

***"How loud shall our glad voices sing,
When Christ, His risen saints shall bring
From beds of dust, and silent clay,
To realms of everlasting day."***

Beloved, I cannot dwell upon what Glory will follow on earth, but if our Lord shall live and reign on earth a thousand years, and if there shall be set up a great empire which shall outshine all other monarchies as much

as the sun outshines the stars, we shall all share in it, for He will make us all kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign with Him upon the earth. Then, when comes the end, and He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and God shall be All in All, we shall forever be with the Lord.

My soul anticipates that grandest of all family meetings, when all the chosen shall assemble around the Throne of God. It is but a little while and it shall come. It is but the twinkling of an eye and it shall all be matter of fact. We talk of time as though it were a far reaching thing. I appeal to you gray heads who know what 70 years mean—are they not gone as a watch in the night? Well, let the waiting be prolonged for 10,000 years, if the Lord pleases! The 10,000 years will end and then forever and forever we shall be as one family where Jesus is! This hope should cheer us. Death, where is your sting? Grave, where is your victory? Cheered by the prospect of an everlasting reunion, we defy you to sadden us! Encouraged by the Glory which God has decreed, we laugh at your vain attempts to make breaches in the ranks of the one and indivisible family of the living God!

The practical point is—*Do we belong to that family?* I will leave that naked question to work in every heart. Do I belong to that family? Am I born of God? Am I a believer in Jesus? If not, I am an heir of wrath and not in the family of God. If we do belong to the family, *let us show our relationship* by loving all the members of it. I should not like a Brother to be gone to Heaven and to reflect that I was unkind to him. I should not like to think that I might have smoothed his pathway but I did not. Or I might have cheered him and refused.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, we shall live together in Heaven forever! Let us love each other fervently, now, with a pure heart. Help your poor Brothers and Sisters, cheer your desponding Brothers and Sisters. Let no man look only on his own things, but every man, also, on the things of others. Brother, be brotherly! Sister, be a true sister. Let us not love in word, only, but in deed and in truth, for we shall soon be at home together in our Father's house on high.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Revelation 7.*
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—872, 832, 859.**

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HEAVENLY GEOMETRY

NO. 707

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 19, 1866,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“That He would grant you, according to the riches of His Glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.”
Ephesians 3:16-19.

THIS Divine measurement is an art of the most desirable kind, as appears from its being the object of most earnest Apostolic prayers. Paul was not content to travail in birth for souls and to become their spiritual parent—but he afterwards exercised the functions of a nursing father, tenderly caring for the souls to whom he had been blessed—and desiring to see them growing up in the faith to the ripeness of spiritual maturity. He was parent, nurse, and tutor—in fact he became all things, as far as lay within his power—to his spiritual children.

Paul’s wise tenderness leads us to an assured confidence that the blessing to pray for, which he suspended his writing of so important an Epistle, must have been of the very highest value. “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He felt that it was desirable to the very last degree that the saints should not only know themselves to be the objects of Divine favor, but should be well acquainted with its sublime qualities and perfections which he here compares to a fourfold measurement.

In this measurement may you and I be skilled. If we know nothing of mathematics, may we be well-tutored scholars in this spiritual geometry and be able to comprehend the breadths and lengths of Jesus’ precious love. It may be well at the outset to call your attention to the previous education which the Apostle desires for the saints as a preliminary to their measurement of Divine love. Then the measurement itself which he desires them to practice. And lastly, the practical results which would be sure to follow from their being able to comprehend the love of Christ Jesus our Lord.

I. Like a wise and enlightened teacher, Paul desires for the saints that they should receive **THAT PREVIOUS EDUCATION WHICH IS NECESSARY BEFORE THEY WILL BE ABLE TO ENTER UPON SUCH A SCIENCE AS THE MEASUREMENT OF CHRIST’S LOVE.** When lads go to school they are not at first put to study algebra, nor are they sent out to make a trigonometrical survey of a county. The schoolmaster knows that they must have a rudimentary knowledge of arithmetic, or else to teach them algebra would be a waste of time, and that they must have some acquaintance with common geometry, or it would be absurd to instruct them in surveying.

He therefore begins with the elementary information, and when they have learned simpler matters they are ready for the more difficult studies.

They climb the steps of the door of science and then they are introduced to her temple. The Apostle Paul does not propose that the new convert should at once be able to measure the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of Christ! He knows that this is not within the range of his infant mind, for the new-born spirit has a time of growth to go through before it can enter into the deep things of God. We must learn our alphabet at the dame's school of repentance and faith, and study the syntax of Christian holiness at the grammar school of experience before we can enter the university of full assurance and obtain a fellowship among those who comprehend the science of Christ Crucified in its highest degree.

It is not for the mere babe to compute distances or to fathom depths—this is work for men! The child will think as a child and understand as a child until instruction and years have developed his powers and fitted him for more sublime and manly thought. If you will kindly refer to the text you will see what this previous education is which the Apostle desired for the saints. It is very fully described in three parts. First, He desired that their spiritual faculties might be strengthened, for he prays that they might be “strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man.” He does not so much intend that they may be strengthened in their *mental* faculties as in their spiritual capacities, to which he refers by the term, “inner man.”

The schoolmaster knows that the boy's mind must be strengthened, that his understanding must be exercised, his discernment must be developed, and his memory must be rendered capacious before he may enter upon superior studies. And the Apostle knows that our spiritual faculties must undergo the same kind of development. Our faith, for instance, must be unwavering. Our love must become fervent. Our hope must be bright. Our joy must be increased, and then, but not till then, we shall be able to comprehend the length and breadth of Divine love. We are to be strengthened in the inner man by the Spirit of God—and who can strengthen as He strengthens? When the Divine Omnipotence pours its renewing energy into our poor fainting weakness, then we grow strong, indeed!

When the Divine Intelligence enlightens our pitiful ignorance, then we grow truly wise. When the Divine Infinity enlarges and expands our narrow capacities to receive the Truth of God, then are we blessedly elevated to otherwise unattainable points of blissful knowledge. Oh the blessedness of being strengthened of the Holy Spirit! How spiritually strong do we become when He infuses His might into us! But the Spirit of God works by *means*, and therefore we may expect to have our spiritual faculties strengthened by the *study* of the Word, by *communion* with Christ, by *listening* to the earnest exhortations of our Brethren, by *experience*, by *prayer*, and by all other hallowed exertions which Divine Grace has ordained to be the channels of communication between the heirs of the kingdom and the Comforter who abides with them forever.

Our strength to learn with must come from God the Holy Spirit. I suppose the expression, “strengthened with might,” is meant to refer to an eminent measure of strength. The Christian man will get to Heaven should he have only strength as a grain of mustard seed. Through many difficulties the work of faith, though almost water-logged, will be tugged into the harbor, for Christ is on board and secures her safety! But it is not desirable that we should thus struggle into eternal life. It is far more to be

hoped that our young faculties may come to healthy and vigorous manhood so that, to return to our former metaphor, our vessel—staunch and in good trim, with her sails well filled, and her flags flying right gallantly, having overcome every storm—may have an abundant entrance into the desired haven.

Brethren, I trust you are not among those who think it quite enough to be barely alive unto God. I trust that you wish to be not only babes in the family, but young men and fathers in the household, and that you aspire to be strengthened by the Holy Spirit with might that you may become powerful men—men able to enter into the soul and marrow of Divine things, and to discern between things that differ. I would have you not mere milk-fed infants, but men able to crack the nuts of the Gospel and to digest the strong meat, because by reason of years you have had all your senses exercised.

Why should we forever be obliged to lay again the foundations? Why not press onward and upward in heavenly attainments as men do in human learning? Why must our heads always wear the dunce's cap and our backs smart with the fool's rod? The Holy Spirit works in us to this very end that we may be no more mere children, but well-taught men of God! Oh grieve Him not, but be willing to be taught! This was the object of the Apostle's prayers and of our loving anxieties. Remember, Beloved, that none of you will be able to comprehend the measurement of the love of Christ unless first of all the Holy Spirit, our Instructor, shall have baptized your spiritual powers with His sacred influences. Then you will be strengthened with might in that refined and newly created part of your being which is called the inner man, because it is your truest, most precious, most secret, most vital, most essential self.

A second part of this preliminary education is mentioned by our Apostle in the next sentence—"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." He desires that the Object of study may be evermore before them. A good tutor not only wishes his scholar may have a disciplined mind able to grapple with the subject, but he endeavors to keep the subject always before him. In order to attain to any proficiency in a science, the mind must be abstracted from all other thoughts and continually exercised with the chosen theme. You will never find a man preeminent in astronomy unless astronomy has become the lord of his mind and holds a sway over his mind even in his dreams. The anatomist must be bound to nerves, and bones, and blood vessels—as the galley slave is bound to the oar—or he will never master his subject.

The botanist must be enamored of every flower, and wedded to every plant, or the fields will utterly baffle him. "Through desire, a man having separated himself, seeks and intermeddles with all wisdom." Solomon knew what he wrote when he said, "separated himself," for without separation or abstraction there can be no progress. Now, the Apostle desires that we who are Believers, our faculties being strengthened, may have the Person of Jesus constantly before us to inflame our love, and so increase our knowledge. See how near he would have Jesus be! "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." You cannot get a subject closer to you than to have it on the inner side of the eyes—that is to say, in the heart itself.

The astronomer cannot always see the stars because they are far away, and outside of him. But our Star shines in the Heaven of our hearts ever more. The botanist must find his flowers in their seasons, but our Plant of

renown blooms in our souls all the year round! We carry the instruments of our saintly art, and the Object of our devout contemplation within ourselves! As a scholar carries in his pocket a small edition of his favorite classic, so do we carry Christ in our hearts. What if I say we bear about with us a heart edition of the *Libra Crucis*, the Book of the Cross? Renewed hearts need no other library than themselves, for Jesus, in our inmost spirits, is library enough! If we knew more fully by experience the meaning of, “Christ in you the hope of glory,” our Heaven-taught affections, which are the best part of our inner man, might be continually exercised upon the Person, the work, and the love of our dear Redeemer. “That Christ may dwell in your hearts.”

Brothers and Sisters, it will be to small profit that we shall talk to you about the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ unless there is in your soul a devout longing ambition to set the Lord Jesus always before you, as the frequent, if not the *constant* Subject of your meditation! No progress to any extent is to be made in the school of the Cross unless you separate yourself and give yourself wholly to this. It must be the one great business of your life, to know Him and the power of His Resurrection. I would to God that we were all entered as diligent scholars in Jesus’ college—students of Corpus Christi, or the Body of Christ—resolved to attain unto a good degree in the learning of the Cross, a learning which angels desire to understand!

But to do this the heart must be full of Jesus, welling up with His love, flaming with it, overrunning with it! And therefore the Apostle prays, “that Christ may dwell in your hearts.” Observe the words, “that He may dwell”—not that He may call upon you sometimes, as a casual visitor enters into a house and tarries for a night—but that He may *dwell*. That Christ may take up His abode in your hearts. That the Lord Jesus may become the Lord and tenant of your inmost being, never more to go out, but to dwell there, world without end. Observe, too, the words that He may dwell in your *hearts*—that best room of the house of manhood—not in your thoughts alone, but in your affections! Not merely have Him in your *minds*, but have Him in your *loves*.

Paul wants you to have a love to Christ of a most abiding character. Not a love that flames up under an earnest sermon and then dies out into the darkness of a few embers, but a constant flame—the abiding of Jesus’ love in your hearts, both day and night—like the flame upon the altar which never went out. This cannot be accomplished except by *faith*. Faith must be strong, or love will not be fervent. The root of the flower must be healthy or we cannot expect the bloom to be sweet. Faith is the lily’s root, and love is the lily’s bloom. Now Jesus cannot be in your heart’s love except you have a firm hold of Him by your heart’s faith. Therefore Paul prays that you may always trust Christ, that you may always love Him. Thus, Brethren, the Lord Jesus, being constantly brought under your heart’s attention, you are likely to be able to comprehend the measurement of His love which would otherwise be impossible for you to do.

The Apostle prays further that they may have practical exercise in the art of holy love—“that you, being rooted and grounded in love.” Every experienced tutor knows that it is greatly helpful to the student to exercise him in his chosen pursuit upon some lower and inferior branch of it, so as to lead him gradually to the higher points of it. If, for instance, he means him to understand the surveying of estates, he bids him measure a field

containing an acre or two. If he means him to map out a country, he sets him first to make a plan of a neighboring field or a farm.

The Apostle acts upon the same method. "That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend the breadth and length of the love of Christ." Having the love of Jesus in you—possessed with love to Christ—you will be practiced in the exercise of love and so will understand the love which filled the Savior. You will learn to do business upon the greater waters of the Redeemer's infinite love to His people as you sail upon the stream of your love to Him. Two expressions are used—"rooted," like a living tree which lays hold upon the soil twists itself round the rocks, and cannot be upturned. "Grounded," like a building which has been settled, as a whole, and will never show any cracks or flaws in the future through failures in the foundation.

The Apostle wishes us to be rooted and grounded in love, a vital union being established between our souls and Jesus, so that we love Him because He first loved us. And also a fiduciary union, or a union of trust by which we rest upon Jesus as the stones of a wall are settled upon the foundation. He would have us, by love and by faith, to be knit to Christ, and to be firm, and fast, and fixed, and immovable in our loving attachment to Him. My dear Brothers and Sisters, you cannot know Christ's love to you, to any great extent, except you thus love Him. You must love, or you cannot comprehend love. A man who has never felt benevolence towards his fellow creatures—and there are some such monsters—sneers and laughs at those who can give their money to the poor or to the sick. He thinks such persons fools at least, if not absolutely mad.

"Ah," said one, "I know how to make money," and then he added significantly, clenching his fist, "and I know what some people do not know—I know how to take care of it, too." There are some benevolent people who do not know how to take care of it in *that* sense, but they know how to do good with it! And such people will never be comprehended by the mean money-grubbing wretch who pollutes the earth he lives upon. As though he were a very Solomon, and benevolent men were idiots, he mutters conceitedly, "Well, I cannot understand it. It is stupidity to give away your hard-earned money." Of course it is to him! He cannot comprehend it, and so the love of Jesus Christ cannot be comprehended by a man who does not love.

If you have no love to souls, you will not understand why Jesus wept over Jerusalem. It will puzzle you mightily! You will look to Matthew Henry, and Scott, and Gill, and be more puzzled still. But if you love the souls of men you will find no difficulty in the passage at all, for you will weep over sinners, too. If you do not love the saints, you will wonder how Jesus can love them. But when you have once felt an unselfish Christ-like love to your fellow men, the riddle will be answered. He who circumnavigated the world began by sailing upon brooks and mill ponds. And he who would measure the breadths and lengths of Jesus' love must feel his own soul filled with affection for his Lord.

Paul would have us, then, with developed faculties—with the Subject in our hearts, and with an exercise of love on our part—prepared to enter upon the science. My Brethren, when I consider what a science it is—the science of the love of Christ—the most masterly of all knowledge, too deep for the archangel's intellect, the wonder of all the hosts of Heaven! When I consider that the greatest human minds have confessed themselves to be

altogether lost in the contemplation, and have had to say, “Oh the depths! Oh the depths!” I do not wonder at all that the Apostle, instead of praying for us that we might immediately enter upon the study of it, first prays that we may be gratified to *learn* it. As some sciences, if taught to an illiterate man would be only taught in their letter, and could not be learned in their spirit for want of capacity to receive them, so the love of Jesus Christ in its length, and breadth, and depth, and height—if it could be taught in the letter of it to an untrained Believer—would be, in a great measure, lost upon him.

He would not be deriving true knowledge from it. He would observe the letter, but the inward spirit he would not be able to understand. Beloved, if you are to win the precious attainment of the knowledge of Christ’s love in its depth and breadth, you must pray that God would strengthen your spiritual powers. You must plead that Jesus may abide in your souls and that your love to Him may become vigorous and all-absorbing! For only then can you drink deeply into the unutterable and infinite love of Jesus!

II. We now come to consider more closely the SCIENCE OF HEAVENLY MEASUREMENT ITSELF. According to the text we have a solid body to deal with, for we are to measure its breadth and length, and depth, and height. This cubical measurement—for it lies foursquare, like the new Jerusalem—proves the reality of the body to be measured.

Alas, to a great many religious people the love of Jesus is not a solid substantial thing at all—it is a beautiful fiction, a sentimental belief, a formal theory—but to Paul it was a real, substantial, measurable fact. He had considered it this way, and that way, and the other way. And it was evidently real to *him*, whatever it might be to others. No one knows the love of Christ at all if he does not know it to be *real*, and no one has felt it in his soul at all unless it becomes so real as to constrain him and move him into actual activity.

We have a word which we sometimes use in a sense which I believe is not correct according to the dictionary. I mean the word “realize.” That word has been forced into the language of Christian experience, and can never be forced out again. We must *realize*, or make real to our hearts the love of Christ. That is just what I think the Apostle did—he made real to himself the love of his Master and Lord. It was not to him a *surface* theory, which might have breadth, but could not have depth—or a mere narrow statement with length, but no breadth! It was a thing as firm and solid as anything in the world.

It is true the love of Jesus is not material and earthly so as to be seen and handled, but it is even more substantial than if it were a thing to be seen, for the things which are seen are *temporal*, and the things which are not seen are *eternal*. To the carnal man the visible is real, and the invisible a mere dream. But to the spiritual man things are reversed—the visible is the shadow and the invisible the substance! May you be such men, dear Friends, all of you! The Apostle desires that when the love of Christ becomes to us a solid reality we may have close communion with it. You may measure the breadth and length of a thing at a great distance, but you cannot very well measure its depth without drawing near to it.

What a holy familiarity with Jesus do the words imply when we come to measurements of all kinds! What condescension is this which allows the sacred heart to be fathomed like a sea, and to be measured as a field! Shall the Infinite thus bow itself to man? Shall man refuse to commune

with such condescending love? Should it not be our deep desire to obtain and to retain the most intimate acquaintance with the thrice-blessed love of Jesus, so as not only to measure it in one form, but in all forms? That in every way in which the love of Christ may be regarded, from above or from below, we may be well acquainted with it.

We should know the inmost secrets of the Redeemer's love! Its doings and sacrifices which are the apparent part of it—its breadth, its counsels and its plans. Its depth—the secret part of it. Its length—its endurance and patience. Its height—its triumphs and glories. We would know all that is knowable, for when we know all that has been learned by mortals, there is still something that is beyond our view, and hence the Apostle adds, "to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge."

Let me come to the very words of our text, and point out to you their order. The first object of the Christian's knowledge should be the *breadth* of the Savior's love. I know a certain school of Christians who have need to study this point, for they have a very narrow idea of the Lord's loving kindness. They cannot be brought by any means to conceive of it as being broad—to them it is no wider than a razor's edge. They conceive of Divine love as a very narrow stream. They have never seen it to be a mighty, flowing, abounding, and rejoicing river such as it really is. The breadth of Christ's love, dear Friends, we are told in Scripture, is such that it extends to all ranks and races of mankind—not to the Jew only, but also to the Gentile.

The love of Jesus Christ does not surround our favored island alone, but like the ocean, it washes every shore. The love of Jesus Christ has been extended to kings upon their thrones, but with equal and more frequent bounty to the slaves in their dungeons. In some respects the love of Jesus comes to every man, for there is not a man or woman born who does not owe *something* to the benevolence of God through the love of Jesus. The respite which keeps the sinner out of Hell is no doubt the result of that love which said, "Spare it yet a little longer, till I dig about it and fertilize it, and if it brings forth fruit, well."

Beloved, the benevolent love of Jesus is more extended than the lines of His electing love, for we hear Him saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which kills the Prophets, and stones them that are sent unto you; how often would I have gathered your children together as a hen does gather her brood under her wings, and you would not." That is not the love which beams resplendently upon His chosen, but it is true love for all that—pitying and *benevolent* love which revealed itself in honest tears of grief. I would not have you omit this view of the subject when you are measuring its breadth, although we still feel that in its *utmost* depth and fullness that love flows only to His people.

Beloved, consider the breadth of special love. We are very apt to conceive the number of God's elect to be but few. Who told us that? When the Savior was asked, "Lord, are there few that shall be saved?" He never answered that question, but He said, "Strive to enter into the strait gate," as though He had said, "Whether there are many or not, you strive to the utmost to enter in." I hope that the multitude of the chosen will far exceed the number of the lost. It has always seemed to me that if in all things Christ will have the pre-eminence, He will not suffer the powers of darkness to drag away the major part of the human race.

On the contrary, a multitude that no man can number—so many as the stars in Heaven for multitude, and like the sands upon the seashore are innumerable—shall be the fruit of His suffering which shall make Him to see of the travail of His soul and to be satisfied. It is well to have as broad ideas of the love of Christ as Scripture will permit us, and there I trust we shall be content to stay. But, Brethren, we get the best idea of the breadth of Christ's love when we behold it flowing to our lost and guilty selves! I never thought it so broad a stream till I found that it reached to *me*, even to me! I feared that I was far away from its blessed margin, but the river swelled and overflowed its banks until at last it washed me, even me!

How broad it must have been to have reached to some here present who had wandered into the plains of sin, and had followed after their own wanton devices, and yet the breadth of the river embraced even them. You may measure the breadth of it by the sins which it covers. When a river is overflowing, you tell how broad it must be by the little hillocks and the treetops, which you can see in it. You may see how broad is the love of Christ, that it reaches to such offenses as these—it reaches to theft, to drunkenness, to blasphemy, to fornication, to adultery, to murder. The Savior's measurement of it is this, "All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men."

There is a boundary. It stops at one sin which is unto death, but of that we know nothing and I trust we never may! With that one exception, broad as sin is, so broad is this mighty love of Christ which covers it all. Do you not think, however, that we, most of us, fail to see the breadth of Christ's love in matters of Providence? You know what is meant by the breadth of a man's mind, the breadth of his thoughts when he can consider a great many subjects at once—when he has the ability to accomplish many designs and many purposes with one stroke. Now, the breadth of the Savior's love is just this—there is no part of His people's interests which He does not consider. And there is nothing which concerns their welfare which is not important to Him.

Not merely does He think of you, Believer, as an immortal being, but as a mortal being, too. Do not deny it or doubt it—the very hairs of your head are all numbered! There is nothing that concerns His elect that is unimportant to our Lord. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way." It were a sad thing for us if this river of love did not cover all our concerns, for what mischief might be worked for us in that part of our business which did not come under our gracious Lord's inspection. Oh, Believer, rest assured that the heart of Jesus concerns itself about your meaner affairs! Your buying and selling He cares for. Your counter and counting-house, your ships and your carts and your horses, and your barley, and your wheat, and your hay, and your straw—your children, your little ones, and everything which concerns you concerns Him, also.

The breadth of His tender love is such that you may go to Him in all matters—for in all your afflictions He is afflicted—and like as a father pities his children, so does He pity you. This invites us to look at the breadth of the Savior's love under a still greater aspect. All the concerns of all His saints that have ever lived or ever shall live, are all borne upon the broad bosom of the Son of God! Oh what a heart His is, that does not merely comprehend the persons of His people, but comprehends the diverge and innumerable concerns of all those persons! Alexander, it is said, knew the

names of his soldiers, but Alexander could not think of every soldier in every tent, and of all the business of every soldier. But this the love of Christ does—He thinks of all the cares and all the troubles and all the joys present and to come of every blood-bought one.

Now see, dear Friend, if you can measure the breadth of the love of Christ! You have a task before you which you will not yet accomplish, and if you could, there would still remain another breadth, namely, that breadth measured by the gifts which He brings. Think of what He has brought you! He has brought you justification! Yes, adoption, sanctification, eternal life! The riches of His goodness are unsearchable. You shall never be able to tell them out or even conceive them. Oh the breadth of the love of Christ! And yet you see this is merely a beginning because the breadth and measurement is but surface work. This is for you youngsters to think about, but yet I wish some of the elder Christians would, too.

Some of them seem to be so taken up with the height and length that they deny the breadth, and you would think from hearing them preach that Christ came into the world to save half-a-dozen, and that *they* were five of them—at least that nobody else could go to Heaven except such as they were who swore by their Shibboleth and agreed in every jot and tittle with their creed. Away with their narrowness! There will be more in Heaven than we expect to see there by a long way—and there will be some there with whom we had very little comfortable fellowship on earth—who had fellowship with Christ, and who are therefore taken to dwell with Him forever.

The next object of study is the length of Christ's love. It has been well observed that if Christ had thought upon His people for ten minutes it would have been a wonderful condescension. In fact it would have been a thing to sing of in Heaven that Christ Jesus did once think upon us, because we are not worthy of a minute of God's thoughts. Now just try, if you can, to grasp the thought. He has thought upon His people as long as He has existed! Is it not *eternal* love, and what is longer than that? "I have loved you with an everlasting love." As long, then, with Deity itself is the love of Deity towards its chosen ones!

God did love us in His Son long before the world began. If an angel were to start from today with the design of finding out when God's love began, he would doubtless fly on till he lingered at the Cross. "Here," he would say, "here is the fountain, here is the source of it all." But he would be reminded that, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." Then there was a love *before* the giving of His Son. He would fly onward till he paused at Isaiah's day and heard of God's love in the prophecy that the Son of man should bear the iniquity of His people. He would say, "Surely it begins here!" But saints would remind him of yet older words of comfort, and he would fly on till he stopped outside of the garden of Eden and heard the Lord say, "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

"Surely," he would say, "it began here." But divinely instructed he would go back yet further, even to the eternal councils where first of all salvation was planned and contrived in the cabinets of Wisdom before the world was. He would have to go back, back, back, till creation had vanished—till there remained not a shred of existence except the absolute self-existent Deity—and then in the Eternal Mind he would see thoughts of love toward a people to be formed for Himself. This knowledge of the

length of love does not always come to Christians early in their history. Some of my dear Brethren know the *breadth* of Christ's love right well, but they seem as if they never would learn its *length*.

Some of our Arminian friends know a great deal about the breadth of it, and can preach very sweetly upon it, too. And I thank God they can, for they are the means of bringing in many converts who might not be brought in if it were not for their broad preaching. Yes, dear Brothers and Sisters, it may be as broad as you like, but it must be long, too. You must not preach a love that begins when *you* begin, but a love which is before you—a *causeless* love which is the *cause* and not the effect of your love—a love which knows no beginning, but is ancient as the throne of Deity.

This love is not only without beginning but it is without pause. There is never a moment when Jesus ceases to love His people. The love of Jesus knows nothing of suspended animation. There are some rivers in Australia which lose themselves, and for miles along their bed you find nothing but dry stones at certain seasons of the year. It is never so with the love of Christ—it is long, and without a break from beginning to end—it is a chain without a single broken or feeble link. The love of Jesus possesses an eternal existence in which there is not a single intermission, nor even a sign of failure or hint of an end. Here let us rejoice without trembling. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end."

We lean our heads upon this pillow and we sleep right sweetly there—"He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." "He said, I am God, I change not, therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed." "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." There are no ifs and buts in this circle of Divine Grace! All is as certain as the Throne of God. Our conquering Captain shall bring many sons to Glory, and His shall be the praise.

Dear Friends, we studiously consider the length of this love of Christ, but I am persuaded, study it as we may, we shall never completely grasp it. It is so long that your old age cannot wear it out. So long that your continual tribulations cannot exhaust it. Your successive temptations shall not drain it dry—like eternity itself it knows no bounds.

My time has fled and I am only in the middle of my subject! Therefore the rest of the discourse must be in brief hints and hurried sentences. The depth of the love of Jesus! Consider it as stooping to look upon such an insignificant creature as man! View the depth of that love in receiving such sinful creatures into His embrace! What a depth is seen when the Lord Jesus Christ selects some guilty wretch who has openly broken the laws of his country and subjected himself to punishment from his fellow-men, and yet the Lord Jesus freely pardons him when he repents of sin, and receives Him into his heart's love!

The depth of this river of love is best seen, however, in the fact that Jesus became a Man. Deity became Incarnate! The Lord of angels slept upon a woman's breast! Nor is this all. Being a Man, He bears our sorrows, goes through the world weary, and poor, and patient. A Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Nor is this all—He bears our sins. The iniquities of

His people, like a huge load, are laid upon His shoulders, and He stands as their Substitute. Even yet it is not enough, for He bears our punishment, and on the bloody tree He bows His head, and is obedient even unto death. Hell's waves rolled over Him. The eternal wrath of God spent itself upon His blessed head! He was made lower than the angels, but He stooped lower still, till He called himself a *worm* and no man!

Oh the depth of the agony of Jesus smarting for sin! O Sinner! You cannot have gone too deep for Christ's love to reach you. O Backslider! You cannot have sinned too foully for forgiveness! You who have gone beyond conception in sin—you who have practiced the foulest and most devilish of sins—the depth of Christ's love is still deeper, and He is able to save even to the uttermost!

Think next of the height of the Master's love. You see it is put last, as the highest point of learning. There are some who have advanced as far as to understand somewhat of the depths who do not know the full dignity and glory of an heir of Heaven, and have felt but little of the power of His ascension. Why, the love of Jesus, even in this present life, is a height unspeakable, for has it not lifted us up to become sons of God? "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." It has given us an earnest of the inheritance! It has made us anticipate the hour when we shall dwell with the angels of light! It tells us that our conversation is in Heaven, and that our life is hid with Christ in God!

Yet, Brethren, the height of this love will be best seen in a future state. You shall be borne up to dwell with Christ in the clouds when the world is in a blaze, and when the judgment is passed you shall be carried by angels' wings up to the seventh Heaven where God dwells! Oh the breadth, the length, the depth, the height! To sum up what we have said in four words—for breadth the love of Jesus is *immensity*, for length it is *eternity*, for depth it is *immeasurability*—and for height it is *infinity*. O Christian, may the Holy Spirit instruct you in these great things!

III. Lastly, two or three words. If it shall be our privilege to study this science and to master it, it will still be over and above us, for it passes all knowledge. But there will flow the following PRACTICAL RESULTS. We shall be filled with all the fullness of God. Brethren, do try and get hold of this marvelous expression when you are alone in meditation. Set it before you as a great mystery to be dived into. "Filled with all the fullness of God." What can it mean?

Is it to have God within you? God dwelling in your inmost spirit? It is this, but more! "Filled with God"—to hold as much of God as your nature can hold—what a thought! "Filled with God," even this is not all. "Filled with the fullness of God." The fullness of His love and Grace, and power, and holiness can come to dwell in you! But *this*, even, is not all that the verse speaks of! It is written, "filled with *all* the fullness of God." What a transcendent expression! Here we have not only an indwelling God, but that God in the utmost fullness of His Godhead filling and overflowing the whole soul with His fullness!

I cannot help borrowing an illustration from a friend who took up a bottle by the seashore, filled it full of seawater, corked it down, and then threw it into the sea. "Now," he said, "there it is, there is the sea in the bottle, and there is the bottle in the sea." It is full to fullness, and then, in a still greater fullness. There is my soul with God in it, and my soul in God! The fullness of God in me as much as I can hold, and then myself in

the fullness of God. The illustration gives one as much of the text as one knows how to convey—ourselves swallowed up in the all-absorbing abyss of the love of God—and that same love of God flowing into all the parts and powers of our soul till we are as full of God as man can hold! Then shall we show that love in our lives, in our prayers, in our preaching, in everything that we do. We shall manifest not only that we have been *with* Jesus, but that we have Jesus dwelling in *us*, filling us right full with His loving, sanctifying, elevating Presence.

Beloved, if we shall reach the point indicated in the text, we shall then begin to imitate the love of God in its four aspects. I am sure if we shall ever learn the breadth of Christ's love our love will grow broad—we shall no longer confine our love to our own church—but shall care for all the churches of God. We shall feel an affection not only for Christians of our own name, but to Christians of all names. Then our love will gain length also. We shall love Christ so that we cannot leave off loving Him. We shall persevere in love, we shall abide in His love as He abides in it. We shall constantly have the flame of our love going up to Heaven.

And then our love will acquire depth. We shall be humbled on account of our own sinfulness. We shall sink lower and lower in our own esteem, and our love will become deeper and more grounded as it descends more fully into the core of our nature. And then love will climb the heights. We shall forget the world and the cares of it. We shall become Christians who lie no longer among the pots, but who have received the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. We shall attain to such a height in our love, that we shall scale the mountaintops of the promises, and with our foreheads bathed in the sunlight shall look down upon the world that still lies in darkness, and rejoice that we are made heirs of light!

Our love mounting to Heaven shall there be in its height as we appear before the Great White Throne and cast our crowns with many a song before Him who loved us with a breadth, and length, and depth, and height of love that even in Heaven shall surpass all measurement. God bless you, dear Friends, with this love, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE TOP OF THE LADDER

NO. 1755

**DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 25, 1883,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge,
that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.”
Ephesians 3:19.***

THIS is a part of Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian believers. It is the closing clause and consummation of it. It mentions the grandest gift for which he prayed. His prayer was like that ladder which Jacob saw, the top of which reached to Heaven and God—and the Apostle at the foot of it was not asleep—but looking up with eager eyes and marking each rising rung of light. Be it ours by sweet experience to ascend that staircase of light! May the Holy Spirit reveal it to us even now! You must begin to read at the 14th verse—“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”—this is one rung of the ladder. “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that”—here comes the second rung—one step helps you to reach the next and you are strengthened that you may rise higher and enjoy a further privilege!

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that”—this is the third rung. Oh, that the Holy Spirit may help you at once take a firm footing upon it! “That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge.” Surely we are at the top of the ladder now, are we not? What a height! How glorious is the view! How solid the standing! How exhilarating the sense of communion with all saints and with the Lord of saints! Yet this is *not* the top of it! Here is another step—“that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.” You see that the prayer begins with the gracious petition that we may be strengthened—“strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, according to the riches of His glory.”

The objective is that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. Before the Lord can dwell in us, we must be strengthened—mentally and spiritually strengthened. To entertain the High and Holy One—to receive into our soul the indwelling Christ—it is necessary that the temple be strengthened, that there be more power put into every pillar and into every stone of the edifice. It is taken for granted that we have already been washed and cleansed and so made fit for Christ to come and dwell within us. But we also need to be *strengthened*, for, unless we become stronger in all spiritual life, how is Christ to dwell in our hearts by faith? Unless we be-

come stronger in love and in all the Graces of the Spirit, how can we worthily entertain such a Guest as the Lord Jesus?

Yes, and we even need that our spiritual perception should be strengthened, that we may be able to *know* Him when He does come and dwell in us. We need that our spirit should be elevated and lifted into a higher condition than as yet it has known in order that we may be on a platform where we can have communion with Christ and may, by a heavenly enlargement of mind and heart, be made able, to the fullest, to entertain the Lord of Glory! We must be strengthened into stability of mind, that so Christ may dwell, abide, reside in our hearts by faith. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, everything has to be done for us, for even when we are made clean enough for Christ to enter us, we are not strong enough! Even when the Lord has taken away the defilement so that “sin no longer lies at the door” to shut Him out, yet even *then* we are too feeble to entertain so great a Guest!

We should be like Peter, who, when Christ came into his boat and filled it with fish, was too feeble to receive Him and, therefore, cried out in an agony of weakness, “Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” “Oh,” says one, “I would never say that.” I do not know, Brother. If the Lord were to favor you with such Divine manifestations as He has given to the stronger saints, you might be overcome and swoon with inward faintness, almost desiring that Christ would not draw so near to you. If the Lord should appear to you in His Glory, you would be afraid and, like John in the Apocalypse, fall at His feet as dead. You need to be strengthened, for how else could you endure the vision of His splendor or the divine excitement of His infinite love?

Paul, therefore, begins his requests for the Ephesians with a prayer for more strength for their inner man. Let us pray it tonight—“O Holy Spirit, strengthen my feeble mind that I may be able to receive more of my Lord! Give me more capacity; give me a clearer perception; give me a better memory; give me an intense affection; give me a larger faith.” This is the first prayer that you may be strengthened according to the riches of His Glory with might, by His Spirit, in the inner man. Be eager for this! Plead now with all your hearts for me and for yourselves, that we may *all* be strengthened by the power of the Spirit of our God!

Now, having stood on the first step of the ladder, Paul goes on to pray that when we *are* strengthened, we may be inhabited—that Christ may *dwell* in our hearts by faith. When the house is ready to receive Him and strong enough for such a wondrous Inhabitant, may Jesus come, not to look about Him as He did when He went into the Temple—for we read that He looked round about Him with indignation and did not remain there—but may He come on purpose to abide with us! May He come, not to tarry for a night and give us some transient visits of His love, sweet as that would be, but, “that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith.”

This will make you living temples for the indwelling Lord! Oh, but this is a great prayer! And when you are strengthened to receive so sacred a Gift, may the Lord fulfill it to you till your communion with Christ shall be

constant all the while you are awake! And when you awake in the night, may you still be with Him, being even now, “forever with the Lord.” I pray that you may no longer envy the disciples in their walk to Emmaus, as though they were the most privileged of all mankind because they had one walk with Jesus—but may your fellowship be such that you entertain the Savior day and night! Going, may you take Him where you go. And staying, find Him where you stay. May you have His perpetual, unclouded Presence with you, being strengthened up to that mark, for it is not every man that is capable of it.

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, you must aspire to the power of Grace at its fullest! Pray to be strengthened by the Spirit of God until Christ shall reside in your hearts by faith! Pray that you may always see Him within you, having so clear a view of what Jesus is and what He has done, that you may never again be vexed with doubts concerning Him or His Word. May you have such familiar communion with Him that you may believe Him implicitly and never *dream* of distrusting Him. As a child lies on its mother’s bosom, so may you rest upon the love of Christ, leaning all your weight upon Him. May you never have to inquire for your Well-Beloved, but know that He abides within you, as surely as your heart remains in living energy within your body. Be not afraid to ask, and seek, and believe for this—the ladder is meant to be climbed! This experience is attainable! Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith!

This second step of the ladder is worth reaching. Rise to it, you struggling Believers! The Lord bring us all to it by the Holy Spirit! And when we climb thus far, what next? This third step is a broad one and it has three parts to it. Its first part is establishment—“That you, being rooted and grounded in love.” When you are strengthened and when Jesus dwells in your heart, then you are no longer “carried about with every wind of doctrine,” but you are rooted, like a cedar in Lebanon which receives but fears not the stormy wind. You are no longer upset by doubts and fears, as a bowing wall is thrown over by a breeze, for you are grounded like a well-built house, settled on its rocky foundation. Your wall has made its last settlement and has settled down upon the eternal Foundation which can never be removed—“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

No man attains to this rooted and grounded state unless Christ dwells in his heart. The indwelling is necessary to the settlement of the house. He that has Jesus dwelling in him laughs to scorn the whimsies and fancies which men call philosophies. He knows nothing about “advanced thought,” for, by the Grace of God, he has advanced as far as he needs to advance since he has come to live in Christ and Christ has come to live in him! What is there beyond this as to firmness of basis and foundation? If there is anything beyond this, we do not know it, nor want to know it! We are perfectly content and satisfied to remain with the love of Christ abiding in our souls—“that Christ may dwell in our hearts, that we may be rooted and grounded in love.”

Oh, when the heart gets grounded in love—when it loves Christ and feels the love of Christ shed abroad in it by the Holy Spirit, it says, “To *where* do you invite me? To what fair havens could I sail? With what do you tempt me? What can be sweeter under Heaven or in Heaven than that which I now enjoy, namely, the love of an indwelling Christ? Oh, evil sirens, you sing to me in vain! You might sooner tempt the angels in Heaven to descend to Hell than persuade my spirit to leave my Beloved who dwells in me and lives in me—and who has grounded and settled me in a deep sense of His eternal love.”

Side by side with this very blessed establishment in the faith, for which I would bow my knees as Paul did for the Ephesians, that you may all have it, comes a comprehension of Divine love. How anxiously do I desire your firm settlement in the Truth of God, for this is an age which needs rooted and grounded saints! This is a time when men need to be confirmed in the present Truth of God and to hold it as with an iron hand. Side by side with that, however, we would have you receive this further blessing, namely, a comprehension of the love of Christ—“That you may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height”—that you may have no crude idea, but a clear and definite understanding of what the love of Christ is to you.

As a mathematician makes calculations and arrives at clear ideas; as a mechanic cubes a quantity and takes its length, and depth, and height, so may the Lord Jesus Christ’s love be to you no more an airy dream, but a substantial fact about which you know distinctly, being taught of the living God by the Holy Spirit. You know that Christ’s love is an *eternal* love, without beginning. It is an *everlasting* love, without end. It is a love that knows no boundary. It is a love that never lessens and cannot be increased. It is a love that burns freely in His heart towards you as an unworthy, undeserving sinner! It is a love which led Him to live for you in human nature and to die for you in His own body on the Cross. It is a love which made Him stand Sponsor, Surety and Substitute for you. It is a love which led Him to bear your load of sin and die while doing so—and bury that sin of yours in a sepulcher out of which it never shall rise!

You know that it is a love which made Him rise again and mount the heavens and sit at the right hand of God, still doing all for you—living, that you may live; pleading, that you may be preserved; preparing Heaven, that you may come there to dwell with Him—and intending to come, by-and-by, that He may receive you to Himself, that where He is, there you may also be. Oh, Beloved, this is a delightful thing! First, to be strengthened, then to have Christ dwelling in you, and then to begin to know the measure of His immeasurable love! This is to be taught of God—when you are able to speak of height, depth, length, breadth and so see the Savior’s love to be a tangible, real, practical, efficient thing!

How blessed to comprehend that Divine love which, after all, is incomprehensible! I know that some of you who have been lately converted think that you know all about it, but you do not, for I tell you freely that some of us who have now known the Lord for a third of a century must

still confess that we have only coasted along the shore of this great world of love, while into the center of the bright continent we have never yet been able to penetrate! I could introduce you to friends who have been 50 years in Christ and though they hold a constant jubilee in the sense of His love, yet they will tell you that they are only scholars on the lowest form, beginning to spell out the alphabet of the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!

You do not know what lies before you, young saints—but press on—ask the Lord to make you stronger and you shall then entertain your Lord as a perpetual Guest within your bosom! And you shall come to know what fathers in the Church have loved to learn—the heights and depths of unsearchable love! Be this our prayer at this moment—

***“Come, dearest Lord, descend and dwell
By faith and love in every breast!
Then shall we know, and taste, and feel
The joys that cannot be expressed!
Come fill our hearts with inward strength
Make our enlarged souls possess
And learn the height, and breadth, and length,
Of your immeasurable Grace!”***

Do not overlook the third part of this subject, which is, “that you may know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge”—that you may have acquaintance with that love which can never be fully known! This is the subject upon which I would briefly speak, taking the whole verse as a step that leads to another step. “That you may know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that”—and now we came to the top step of all—“that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.”

Here are four things to talk about. First, to know the love of Christ. Secondly, to know it so as to be filled with all the fullness of God. Thirdly, to be filled with the fullness of God. And then, fourthly, being full, what then? Does not that mean that when we are full we shall overflow to the glory of Him who filled us? God grant that we may! May the fullness of Jesus be glorified by our holy and useful outpourings!

I. First, then, TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST. Observe that Paul was not praying for people who did not know the love of Christ in the ordinary meaning of the term. They did know it—they had heard all about it from Paul. They had read about it in his Epistles and in other gracious records. They knew the whole story of the love of Christ through Apostolic teaching. Yes, and they knew it by faith, too. They had believed in the Lord Jesus Christ unto the salvation of their souls, so that in the first verse of this Epistle he calls them, “saints which are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus.”

What does he mean by his prayer that they might know the love of Christ? He intended another kind of knowledge. I know very many people, that is to say, I have read about them. I have heard of them. I have seen them in the streets and they touch their hats to me and I do the same to them. And thus I know them. This is a slender form of knowledge, yet I fear it is the kind of knowledge which most men have of Christ. They have seen Him. They have looked to Him and, blessed be His name, there is life

in a look—but they have gone no further. Even such a knowledge as that which comes by trembling faith is a knowledge that saves.

But I will tell you the people I know best. They live with me in my own house. I see them every day. I am on the most familiar terms with them—this is the knowledge here intended! Read our text again. “That Christ may *dwell* in your hearts by faith.” And then—“that you may know the love of Christ.” Is not this the best way of knowing it? Jesus resides in your heart, which is the center of your love, and then you know His love! He teaches you to love Him and, as you learn the sweet lesson, you begin to know how Jesus loves *you*. You come to know Him by personal acquaintance, by having Christ dwelling in you so that you see Him, hear Him, feel His touch and enjoy His blessed company! This kind of knowledge is the most precious of all knowledge—whatever the subject may be!

You see the method of this knowledge; the way in which it comes to us. It is a sure and efficient way, for by having Jesus dwell in us and by becoming rooted and grounded in love to Him, we come to know Him as we can never know Him by being taught by our fellow men, or by all the reading or study in the world. This is the highest style of the science of Christ Crucified, for this comes of personal proof and experimental test and, therefore, it is not to be taken from us, but is woven into our consciousness. We have been taught by certain modern philosophers that we do not know *anything*—I fancy our friends are not far off the mark if they only speak for themselves, but I object to their representing us. They tell us that we only know what our senses have been operated upon and, perhaps, we may know that certain things do thus operate, but we can hardly be sure.

One of these philosophers kindly says that religion is a matter of belief, not of knowledge. This is in opposition to all the teaching of Scripture! Take your pencil and read through all the Epistles of John and mark the word, “know.” It is repeated continually. In fact, it is the key word of the Apostle’s letters. He writes perpetually, “We know; we know; we know; we know.” Truly, Brethren, we know the love of Christ! When Jesus dwells in us, we do not merely *believe* in His love as a report, but we enjoy it as a *fact*! We have made its acquaintance—we have tasted, we have handled, we have experienced this heavenly gift! What a favor! To *know* the love of Christ! Do not forget that this only comes of Christ’s dwelling in us and of our being rooted and grounded in love to Him.

“We cannot be certain of anything,” someone says. Well, perhaps *you* cannot. But the man who has Christ dwelling in him says, “There is one thing I am certain of and that is the love of Christ to me. I am assured of the loveliness of His Character and the affection of His heart. I perceive that He, Himself, is Love and I am equally clear, since He has come to live with me, that He loves me, for He would not have lived in my heart at all if He had not loved me! He would not cheer and encourage me. He would not rebuke and chasten me, as He does, if He did not love me. He gives me every proof of His love and, therefore, I am sure of it. I will have no ques-

tion raised or if *you* raise it, you will kindly understand that I do not, for I have come to this—I know the love of Christ.”

What a blessed knowledge this is! Do they talk of science? No science can rival the science of Christ Crucified! Knowledge? No knowledge can compare with the knowledge of the love that passes knowledge! How sweet it is to know love! Who needs a better subject to exercise his mind upon? And how precious is the love of Christ! The sweetest of all the sweets that life can yield—the *source* of love, the *mirror* of love, the *model* of love, the love which surpasses all love, as the knowledge of it surpasses all knowledge! Who would not be a scholar when the book he reads in is the heart of Christ? Who would not be a student when the science is Christ Crucified; the lesson book Christ manifested; the Tutor Christ glorified and the prize Christ enthroned in the heart?

Jesus is most dear from every point of view, but how charming is it to see Him in the light of love, so as “to know the love of Christ”! You see, then, the way in which we come by our knowledge and the certainly there is in it—and the sweetness of the Subject! I shall have to show you, as we go on, the efficacy of this knowledge, for when we know the love of Christ that passes knowledge, it follows, before long, that we come to be filled with all the fullness of God. Here is a sweet perfume brought into a man’s house! For substance, it seems to be a little thing—it can lie on his finger. Wait a few minutes and it has actually filled the room! Everyone exclaims, “What sweetness!” The fragrance perfumes all the chamber. They open the door—the delicious scent is in the passage—it has gone upstairs into every bedroom till the fragrance is diffused through all the house!

And if you open a window it invades the street and charms the passersby. If the love of Christ is really known in the soul, it is like a precious box of rarest aromatics—it diffuses itself till it fills our entire being! I do not wonder to find my text saying, “And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God,” for the love of the Lord Jesus is the most filling thing in existence! In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily—and you are complete in Him, for of His fullness have all you received and Grace for Grace—how can we be otherwise than filled?

II. We must dwell a minute on that rung of the ladder to which we have ascended—TO KNOW SO AS TO BE FILLED. It is not every kind of knowledge that will fill a man. Many forms of knowledge make a man more empty than he was before. The knowledge of earthly luxuries tends to make a man hunger for them and so a new vacuum is created in his mind. When he perceives that there is this or that delight to be had, he becomes discontented till he gets it and so he is emptier than he was before. Much of human knowledge is described by the Apostle, thus, “Knowledge puffs up; but love builds up.”

Sometimes the more men know, the greater fools they become, for knowledge is not wisdom, though wisdom cannot be without knowledge. Knowledge in the hands of a fool is but a means of publishing his folly. Wisdom is the flower which grows out of knowledge, but all knowledge

does not bear that flower—much of it is barren. Brothers and Sisters, if you get a knowledge of Christ's love, it is a *filling* knowledge, for it contents the soul! When a man knows the love of Christ to him, every part of his being is satisfied. We are made up, as it were, of a number of horseleeches, every one of which cries, "Give! Give!" Here is the heart craving for something to love. Oh, but when you love Christ, you have a heart's love that will satisfy you for all time! Where can such sweetness be? Your heart shall never go hungering again. His charms shall hold you fast!

There is the intellect—what a horseleech it is! It is always craving for more—more certainty, more novelty, more wonder. But when the intellect comes to know Christ, it acknowledges that in Him dwells all wisdom! To know the Eternal Son is to know the Father and this is a knowledge which rests the understanding and fills up the mind. Imagination itself is content with Jesus. Hope cannot conceive anything more lovely—she gives up all attempts to paint a fairer than He and she cries, "Yes, He is altogether lovely! This is my Beloved and this is my Friend. O you daughters of Jerusalem!" No power or passion that is vital to our manhood is discontented with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before conversion we gad abroad and go to this house and to that to pick up scanty meals. But when Christ comes home to dwell with us, we sup with Him and no more go out since there is nowhere to be found anything that is as good as He, much less anything that can be better than He! When the love of Christ enters the heart, it is swiftly filled with a perfect satisfaction. A certain man of renown, not a thousand miles away, who has no very great love for the Gospel, says that he can influence and enlighten most people except those who hold the views of a certain "notorious individual." That epithet I take to myself!

He adds, "When once they receive his doctrinal teaching there is no stirring them an inch." Blessed be God for that! I scarcely hoped that the work was so well done and I am glad of the worthy gentleman's certificate. So it is—when once you cast anchor in the port of Christ's love, you wish for no more voyages! You will not change when you feel that it is well with your soul. You are convinced that there is no better article in the market than that which your soul has learned to feed upon and so you are not inclined to go further and fare worse!

Again, when the soul comes to enjoy Christ, it is filled in a most emphatic sense. It is not merely satisfied, but overjoyed! One said to me the other day, "I am sure that you have a contented heart." "Well," I replied, "if I were pinched with poverty you might talk of my contentment, but God blesses me so richly that I have passed beyond mere contentment—I have all things and abound! I feel as if I can bless God all day long." Christ's people are not merely safe and contented, they are filled! And well they may be, for there is enough in Christ for millions—and yet He is altogether ours. He has given Himself to us as a glorious whole!

A little patrimony may make a man contented, but what shall we say when our heritage is Christ, Himself? Contented? Why, our heart leaps as we survey our infinite portion—

***“In the heavenly Lamb thrice happy I am
And my heart does dance at the sound of His name.”***

When you live in the full enjoyment of the Lord’s Presence and abide under a sense of His love, you feel more happy than tongue can tell. Your heart is too full to hold—it is like a vessel needing vent—it possesses a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Once more, when the love of Christ comes to work upon the soul—when it brings with it all its choice treasures—then the mind of the Believer is filled with the fullness of God. What is it that the love of Christ gives to the objects of it? Let me ask another question. What is it which is worth having that it does *not* give? He gives us light for our darkness; eyes for our blindness; food for our hunger; cleansing for our defilement; garments for our nakedness; healing for our sickness. He gives us strength for our weakness, joy for our sorrow, comfort for our distress, deliverance for our peril and triumph for our conflict!

When Jesus comes to dwell in the heart, He brings with Him such furniture, such provision that our entire nature is equipped, furnished, provided for—in a word, “filled with all the fullness of God.” Christ does not long dwell in an unfurnished house. Oh, you that have a poor, poverty-stricken religion of which you have to say, like the elder brother in the parable, “These many years did I serve you, neither transgressed I at any time your commandment: and yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends,” I beseech you, say so no more! Come, Friends, alter that tune and hear what the great Father says—“Son, you are always with Me, and all that I have is yours.” If Christ dwells in your heart, His Father is *your* Father! His God is *your* God! His Heaven is *your* Heaven! Yes, and His Throne shall be your throne, for He will make you to sit where He sits at the right hand of God in Glory! Oh, the blessedness of knowing the love of Christ! It fills the spirit to the fullest!

III. In a sentence or two I will pass over the third point, namely, WHAT IT IS TO BE FILLED WITH ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD. Does it not mean that *self* is banished, for if the fullness of God has filled you, where is room for self? Does it not mean that the soul is perfectly charmed with all that God does for it? “Filled with all the fullness of God.” Does it not mean that every power of the entire nature is solaced and satisfied? Does it not mean that the whole man is occupied and inhabited by God—that the whole nature becomes permeated with Grace, saturated with love, satisfied with favor and full of the goodness of the Lord? I will not talk more of it at this time. I hope that you will know by experience what that fullness means, if you do not know it already. May the Holy Spirit give you this glad experience.

IV. I want to come to the practical point that WHEREVER CHRIST DWELLS IN THE HEART BY FAITH WE RECEIVE THE FULLNESS OF GOD INTO OUR SPIRIT WITH THE DESIGN THAT WE MAY OVERFLOW. Brothers, Sisters, I dare say you know what it is to be empty. Have you ever tried to pray when you are empty? Yes, and the result is a very empty prayer. “Out of nothing comes nothing.” And when there is no prayer in you and you pray, why, it is no prayer at all! You try to praise, but if there

is no praise in you, your attempted hallelujahs languish and expire. If true praise comes forth from you, it must first have been within you.

But do you know what it is to pray when you are full of prayer? When the Lord has filled you with hunger, thirst, desires, hopes and expectations—what an overflowing of prayer is with you! When the season of prayer is over and you go down to business, you cry, “Alas, I never knew a quarter of an hour fly so quickly as this has done! How refreshed I am! I made no effort to pray, but I poured out my soul like water before the Lord.” Yes, because you have been filled with all the fullness of God, therefore you have prayed readily and with fullness. In singing, you have felt the same plenitude of devotion. Sometimes when you have been praising the Lord, you have wished that you had all men’s tongues in your mouth and that you had all the songs of birds at your command, and all the music of the spheres! You have desired to make the stars your keyboard, to play upon them a glorious *Te Deum*—and yet you would not even *then* have praised your God as your heart desired. When you are full of praise, then you praise, indeed!

It is a blessed thing for our heart to get full towards God, for then we worship Him with a full soul. It may be only full of regrets, repentance and desires, but yet if it is full, it is a blessed fullness. Even if you are only full of groans, cries and entreaties, it is well. When God dwells in you, by the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of supplication and devotion, then you live towards God with vigorous life. And, dear Brothers and Sisters, when you are all full of Divine Grace, you are filled for all the circumstances of life. You have lately buried a greatly beloved one. The news came upon you all of a sudden, but you were not afraid of evil tidings. Why? Because your heart was “fixed, trusting in the Lord.” When the sad bereavement came, it did not overwhelm you—at another time it might have done so—but the Lord was pleased to fill you with His Presence that you were quite prepared for the trouble.

Tomorrow morning if you go into the world filled with the fullness of God, afflictions may come in business—perhaps an extra heavy account will be sent in and you will be perplexed as to how to meet it—but you will not mind. You will be ready for the difficulty because the fullness of God will ballast you and save you from the rough winds. Perhaps tomorrow you will meet with a great success and if you are not full of Grace you will grow proud and lifted up. But if you are filled with all the fullness of God, if the Lord should make you as rich as Solomon, you would not grow worldly. If you are filled with all the fullness of God, you are as ready for prosperity as you are for adversity! Whatever happens to you in the future you will be prepared for it. If you are called upon to confess His name, if you are filled with all the fullness of God, courage will be yours!

And if you are called to endure great suffering, patience will be ready, for the God of Patience will grant you strength equal to your need. If a knotty problem poses you and you are filled with God’s wisdom, you will work it out. If you go forth filled with God, you are provided for every emergency. Come calamity or prosperity, whatever shape the temptation

may assume, if the love of Christ has filled you with the fullness of God, you are ready for it! Look how prepared you will be to meet your Brethren and benefit them! Suppose you should meet a little gathering of Believers and they should ask you to speak a word? If you are full, your speech will be worth hearing. But if you are empty, your communications will be also empty.

Sometimes when we preach we are conscious of unfitness for the work because our soul is poverty-stricken. There cannot be much in our mouths if there is little in our hearts. Out of an empty sack you cannot shake a bushel of wheat, even if you shake it very hard. I have heard a Brother pray a wearisome while and I believe he was long because he had nothing to say. A horse can run many miles if he has nothing to carry. Long prayers often mean wind and emptiness. If you are full with a Divine fullness, your lips scatter gems more precious than pearls and diamonds. Filled with all the fullness of God, your paths, like God's paths, drop fatness!

Do you not know Christian men of that sort? They are millionaire Christians who make others rich. I know saints whom I rejoice to visit because I always learn from them. It is a privilege to be in the company of full saints, just as it is a misery to hear the clatter of empty professors. It is said that we English people feel delighted if we sit by the side of a lord—this I know, that if I get into the company of one of God's aristocracy and have a quarter of an hour's talk with him, and a little prayer as well, I feel quite lifted up! My heart is glad within me when I see the Grace of God abundant in a Brother or Sister in Christ. I want you, Brothers and Sisters, to be full of sympathy, full of pity, full of mercy, full of wisdom—and when your Brethren hear you speak, they will be as men who have found running springs and filled up their vessels!

Lastly, if the love of Jesus Christ is in us so that we are filled with all the fullness of God, how ready we shall be to meet common folk that are not the Lord's people as yet! We shall have a word on wheels for all who cross our path. You find it difficult to get the right words at the right time when you are talking to seekers? Just so, Brothers and Sisters, but may not that be because you are not full up to the brim? You are nearly empty and it takes you a long time to turn your tub up and pour out the little drop which hangs at the bottom. If you were full up to the brim, you would run over on all sides—and all around you there would be a holy moisture. If you are so full of spiritual life that you cannot help running over, you will, by the Holy Spirit's power, pour out the right expressions when they are needed—and thirsty souls will receive of the Living Water.

If we are quite full, we may move about among ungodly men and our presence will be a benediction to them. I read the other day of one who heard a man swear and tell a lie at the same time. He did not say anything, but the swearer was aware that the listener was aware of his falsehood. The reprover fixed his eye on the liar and was silent. That glance went to the other's heart, for it said more than a dozen hard names. What the reprover did *not* say had more power than what he might have said! If

you are only full of His life, the Lord will tell you what to do and guide you as how to do it! “But I do not know how to speak,” says one. Just so. You know that you have only a little Living Water at the bottom of your barrel and you do not know how to get it out.

“Oh, but I feel such a difficulty in speaking.” If there is only a little in the tub, the difficulty is to get it out. But if you are full, that difficulty will vanish. If the Lord has brought us to His fullness, it is a very high state to be in. Look at our blessed Master. Wherever He was and whatever happened—and wherever He went—He did the right thing, then and there, and said the best thing that could be said because the Holy Spirit rested upon Him without measure! Oh, that the Holy Spirit would fill us, also, according to our capacity! If the water carts go along the road in dusty weather with nothing in them, they will not stop the dust! And if you Christians go about the world empty, you will not stop the dust of sin which blinds and defiles society!

If you go to a fountain and find no water flowing, that fountain mocks your thirst—it is worse than useless. Likewise, therefore, do not forget that if you ever become empty of Grace, you mock those who look to you. Blessed is he of whom it is written, “Out of his belly shall flow rivers of Living Water.” This spoke Christ of the Spirit of God dwelling in men. God grant that you and I may understand His meaning! If anybody is saying, “This is out of my sphere—I have not come as far as this.” I know it is so. I have not been talking to you. Yet I will not be altogether silent to you. Look to Jesus Christ at once and you shall be saved. Trust Him! Trust Him wholly! By *faith* you will begin to live.

After you begin to live, you will be strengthened by the Spirit of the Lord. After you are strengthened, Christ will dwell in your heart. After Christ has dwelt in your heart, you shall know the love that passes knowledge—and after you know the love that passes knowledge, you shall be filled with all the fullness of God! Do not begin at the end, but take things according to God’s order. A man who wishes to climb a ladder does not expect to put his foot upon the top rung at the first step—he ascends by degrees.

There is your first rung—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” Take that first step at once! May the Lord help you! Beginning with faith in Jesus, you shall persevere and ascend till you reach the top of the ladder. The Lord be with you and in you to the fullest! Amen and Amen.

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“THE LOVE OF JESUS—WHAT IT IS—NONE BUT HIS LOVED ONES KNOW”

NO. 455

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, JUNE 18, 1862,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT SURREY CHAPEL, BLACKFRIARS ROAD.**

*“And to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge.”
Ephesians 3:19.*

IT is the distinguishing mark of God’s people that they know the love of Christ. Without exception all those who have passed from death unto life, whatever they may *not* know, have learned this. Without exception, all those who are not saved, whatever they may know besides, know nothing of this. An ungodly man may know something about Christ’s love. He may believe in the fact of it. He may perceive something of the theory of it. He may even be able to follow Believers in certain’ expressions of its enjoyments.

But to know the love itself, to taste its sweets, to realize personally, experimentally, and vitally, the love of Christ as shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, is the privilege of the child of God, and of the child of God, alone. This is the secure enclosure into which the stranger cannot enter. This is the garden of the Lord, so well protected by walls and hedges that no wild boar of the woods can enter. Only the redeemed of the Lord shall walk here. They, and only they, may pluck the fruits and content themselves with the delights thereof.

We may begin the exercises of this evening with a question of self-examination, and we may continue them throughout the whole service, trying to press that question home to your consciences—Do I know the love of Christ? Have I felt it? Do I understand it? Do I feel it now? Is it now shed abroad in my heart? Do I know that Jesus now loves me? Is my heart quickened, and animated, and warmed, and attracted towards Him through the great Truth of God that it recognizes and rejoices in—that Christ really loves me, and has chosen me, and set His heart upon me?

We have started the first point. Every child of God knows the love of Christ. We advance another step. All the children of God do not know this love to the same extent. There are in Christ’s family babes, young men, strong men, and a few who are fathers. Now, as they grow and progress in all other matters, so they most certainly make advances here. Indeed, an increase of love, a more perfect apprehension of Christ’s love, is one of the best and most infallible gauges whereby we may test ourselves whether we have grown in Divine Grace or not.

If we have grown in Grace, it is absolutely certain that we shall have advanced in our knowledge and reciprocation of the love of Christ. Many here present have believed in Jesus and they know the love of Jesus. But

oh, they know it not as some others here do who have gone into the inner chamber and have been made to drink of the spiced wine of Christ’s pomegranate! Some of you have begun to climb the mountain, and the view which lies at your feet is lovely and passing fair. But the landscape is not such as would greet your eyes if you could but stand where advanced saints are standing now—and could look to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south—and see all the lengths and breadths and depths and heights of the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

To change the figure—the love of Christ is comparable to Jacob’s ladder. Some of us are standing on the lower rungs, and there are others who are ascending and who rest half way. Others, still, are getting up so high that we can scarcely see them by reason of the dimness of our sight. And there are some, perhaps at this hour, who have just reached the topmost rung of this knowledge and are now stepping, as it were, into the arms of Christ who awaits them at the top! They have attained unto their perfection. Here they shall find repose. They shall rest in His love and with the eternal songs of Heaven they shall rejoice forever and forever.

I want, tonight, to bring you, who are the people of God, to the *bottom* of the ladder. I want to encourage you to put your feet upon the first rung of it. And then go step by step with you, till, I hope, before we have done, if God the Holy Spirit is with us here, we shall have gotten very high up that ladder. And then we shall go away hoping never to come down again, only wishing, with Peter, that we may tarry on the mount and build for us tabernacles that we may sit on the summit of the mountain with our Lord forever.

I. Well then, to come first of all to the bottom of the ladder. One of the lowest ways of knowing the love of Christ may be described as *the doctrinal method*—very useful one—but nothing to be compared to those that we shall have to mention afterwards. If a man would know the love of Christ, he should endeavor to study the Word of God with care, attention, constancy, and with dependence upon the Spirit’s illumination that he may be enabled to understand aright.

It is well for a Christian man to be thoroughly established in the faith once delivered to the saints. It is an ill day for a man when he ceases to hold fast to the form of sound words which was delivered to us by Christ Himself and His holy Apostles. Depend upon it, doctrinal ignorance will always make Churches weak. But where saints are fed upon the finest of the wheat, and are made to suck of the honey out of the rock, and to eat of the manna and fatness of Gospel doctrine, they will, all other things being equal, become the strongest and most valiant Believers on the face of the earth.

There is a tendency in these times to depreciate the value of Gospel doctrines. Oh, I beseech you, be not led astray by this error. There are in the Word of God certain things really taught. Do not believe that the Bible is a lump of wax to be shaped just as you please. Do not imagine that, “Yes,” is right, and that “No,” which contradicts it, is right, too. The Lord has written this Book intending to teach us something, and a moderate

understanding, sanctified by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, will enable you to know what the Lord does mean to teach you, especially upon such a vital point as this. Do not, I beseech you, say, “Oh, it does not much matter what doctrines I hold.”

You are as much responsible for using your judgment as you are for using your hands and your feet. God never did free a conscience from His jurisdiction. Conscience is free, but not before God. You have a right to your convictions as far as *I* am concerned. But if your convictions are wrong, you have no right to them before *God*. There are certain things that are Truths of God, and there are others that are contradictions—see that you get fast hold of Wisdom—and that you do not let her go.

There is a tendency, however, on the other hand in certain quarters, to make doctrinal knowledge *everything*. I have seen, to my inexpressible grief, the Doctrines of Grace made a huge stone to be rolled at the mouth of the sepulcher of a dead Christ. And I have seen sound doctrine, so called, made as a very seal to seal in the dead Christ, lest by any means the energy of His Grace should come out for the salvation of sinners. Oh, what is doctrine, after all, but a throne whereon Christ sits? And when that throne is vacant, what is the throne to us? It is the Monarch and not the *throne* that we reverence and esteem.

Doctrines are but as the shovel and the tongs of the altar, while Christ is the smoking sacrifice. Doctrines are Christ’s garments—verily they all smell of myrrh and cassia and aloes out of ivory palaces, whereby they make us glad—but it is not the *garments* we care for so much as for the Person, the very Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore, while I entreat you, (and I hope not to be misunderstood here), while I entreat you to be very jealous and earnest in attaining unto a clear doctrinal knowledge of the love of Christ to His people, yet when you have got it, do not say—“I am the man! I have attained to eminence. I may now sit still and be content.”

Sirs, this is but the threshold. This is but one of the first arches of a long vista of glorious Truths of God. This is but the lowest step of the ascent. You have but sat down on the lowest form in the school. You have much to learn yet! Oh, be not wise in your own conceits, lest you lose the blessed things which as yet have not been discovered by you. Verily it is a sweet thing to know Christ’s love in the doctrine, and to understand that it is without beginning. That it existed when as yet this world had not been made. When sun and moon and stars slept in the mind of God, like unborn forests in an acorn cup. When as yet the solemnity of silence had never been startled by the songs of seraphs, and the wings of cherubs had never stirred the unnavigated ether! It is delightful to believe that—

**“Before the day star knew its place,
Or planets went their round,
The saints in bonds of Sovereign Grace,
Were one with Jesus found.”**

Equally precious is it to know the doctrine that this love is without end. When all we see around us shall have passed away, as the foam dissolves

into the waves that bear it, the love of Christ to His people shall be the same. And on and on and on throughout eternity He shall never cast them from His heart. Sweet, too, is it, passing sweet, to know that He loves them without change and without limit. That He loves them because He will love them. That He loves them not for anything in them, but simply because He has so much love in His heart that He must let it out—and that He ordains to let it flow forth to them that they may rejoice in it.

All this is precious but, O Brothers and Sisters, if you only know these things as they stand in the creed book—if you only understand them as you find them in the catechism—I tell you that you know nothing yet as you ought to know. If this is all your knowledge, you have just begun to learn. May God help you to go further, and to mount to higher and clearer regions than these. It is a blessed privilege to know Christ doctrinally, but it is only the beginning, the steppingstone to something better, even as love longs for intimacy.

II. And what next? Let us lift our feet and take another step. True saints know Christ’s love *gratefully and thankfully*, having experienced it. O dear Friends! Let me refresh your memories and tell you what you do know, rather than attempt to say anything which might be new to you. Do you remember the place, the spot of ground where Jesus met with you? Some of us do. Oh, that day of days! That first day of our spiritual life! Other days have lost their freshness in our recollection, but this one is like a coin newly minted from time, though it is years ago with some of us. Oh, that day! That marriage day! That feast day! That day of Heaven on earth! Our soul was burdened and bowed down to the very dust, and we thought we should soon descend into the pit where despair would be our portion forever. But as we went mourning on our way, we heard a voice saying to us—

“Come here soul, I am the way.”

We turned our eyes to see what way this could be, when lo, we saw One nailed to a Cross. We marked the blood as it flowed from His hands and feet and side. We saw His eyes as they looked on us with inexpressible compassion. And we heard Him as He opened His lips and said, “Come unto Me, you weary one, and I will give you rest.” Oh, do you remember when you looked unto Him and when you came to trust Him—just as you were—with your soul? You had been learning about Christ, perhaps, for years. You had been taught about Him. You had got some knowledge of Him and some desire towards Him. But did you not learn more of Christ in one five minutes then, than you could have learned in a whole course of college education in theology, in years before?

And since that time, dear Friends, have we not learned Christ’s love thankfully to a very high degree? Day after day He comes to us. Night after night He draws the curtains of our bed. He is ever with us and all that He has is ours. He talks sweetly to us by the way, and He sits down by us in our afflictions and comforts us, and makes our hearts to burn within us. And as we think of all that He has done for us, we feel we do know something of Him, for gratitude has been our schoolmaster.

I know some Christians say they do not feel the love of Christ so much now as they did at first. Oh, shame on you, Brethren, shame on you, if this is true! What? When you owed Him for one mercy, did you love Him? And now when you owe Him for fifty thousand, do you love Him less? Why, if it is true that saints grow necessarily colder and colder, then it does not say much for their estimation of Christ. It would make Him out to be like some people we know, who are very agreeable to see once in a while, but we should not like to live with them long.

Let me share my witness that my Lord and Master improves upon acquaintance. The more I know of Him, the more I wish to know. And I think I do but speak the mind of all the Lord's people when I declare that instead of having less love to Him, the more I experience of His favor, the more warm is my heart towards Him. “Alas,” says one, “but I do not feel as I once did.” Well, dear Friend, it may be that you make some mistake in reference to your own experience. When the passion of love was first lighted in your breast, there was, as it were, a blaze of the match, the paper and the wood, although the coals had not yet ignited.

Yours was then the flush of joy, but not the vehement heat. Now your heart is all on fire like a solid ruby. There is much more heat, though there is less blaze. So it is with some young converts. The first love they have is wildfire, and to tell you the truth, I would rather have wildfire than no fire at all. But as men grow older in Divine Grace, the fire will not diminish in intensity, if God has kindled it. But perhaps the flash and the flame, the glitter and the noise, may not be quite so palpable.

Yet I fear that if you do not love Christ better than you did. If you do not feel that there are new tendrils which bind you to Him. If you do not feel that it would be harder now than ever to give up your hold on the Savior, you have not begun to learn the love of Christ. When we know *that* love, when we feel gratitude for mercies received, then we see every mercy, both temporal and spiritual, coming from that love. Ungrateful souls cannot learn this love. They have the book of mercy but they are blind and cannot read it. Grateful souls, in every letter from Jesus, their absent Friend, whom having not seen, they love, and in every book of daily fellowship, and of daily mercy, read again that glittering sentence—“He loved me and gave Himself for me.”

III. Let us pass on to the third step, we have not got far yet. We are only as schoolboys at our first school, and we have now to go on to something higher. The true children of God know Christ's love in a way which I can only describe by the word *practically*. If any man would know His doctrine, let him keep His commandments. You know if a man is to be taught to swim, you could not teach him in Surrey Chapel. You might get the most skillful master in the world who should come and explain the way in which he should spread his hands and move his feet, but he never can be taught to swim on dry land.

And we cannot make Christians know Christ except by imitating Christ and by obeying Christ. When soldiers are wanted, the best place to make them is, doubtless, the battlefield. If we would have veterans, there must

be the smoke and the smell of powder, for great commanders are not to be manufactured in Hyde Park. And we cannot expect to have men who shall win victories, drawn out from mere loungers at the clubs. They must attend the drills, and by practice become qualified for their duties. A young man cannot learn farming by the study of books. To read books may be useful, if he takes them as companions to the great book of nature.

He must be made apprentice to some farmer who sends him out into the fields to see how they plow, how they sow, how they mow, how they reap, and how they house their corn. By entering practically into the various toils and duties, he becomes skilled in them. Just so, if we would learn Christ, we must be practically engaged in His service. We must learn His love by keeping His Commandments. You may sit in these pews and be preached to every Sunday. You may hear God’s Truth plainly and simply unfolded. But if you want to learn, and learn in such a way that you never will forget, it is the back streets that must teach you, the lodging houses, the haunts of poverty, and the dens of vice.

If any man would know the love of Christ, let him go where Christ went and to the place where a Savior is needed. Let him carry Christ’s light to give light to others, and it shall enlighten himself. Let him go forth to water other men’s vineyards, and his own soul shall be watered, also. Whatever his Master bids him do, let him do it, and he shall *learn* his Master’s will while he is *doing* his Master’s will. But when men, at the very outset, make a profession of religion and then disobey Christ—when they refuse to keep His Commandments—when they say of this one, “It is non-essential.” And of the next, “It is unnecessary.”

And when they say of some duty, “Well, I can leave that to others.” And of some sphere of action for which they are especially adapted, “I need not attend to that. Others can do that quite as well”—when men, I say, enlist into Christ’s army and begin at once to refuse to march as they are told, and decline to go out to battle when the Captain gives them the command—it is a sure sign that they never will learn much of their Master, their Captain and their Lord. If you had asked Whitfield in his day, how he came to know so much about Christ’s love, I think he would have said that he learned more of it when he stood in Moorfields, or on Kennington Common, when the dead cats and filth were thrown at him as he preached Christ, than he ever learned in his bedchamber, or even in his closet.

If you had asked Rowland Hill how it was that he had learned so much of the love of Christ, I think he would have told you that he learned it while he was speaking to the poor, and to the needy, and while he was condescending to men of low estate, that by any means he might win some. Why, if a man should want to know about slavery, he might go and hear a lecture by an escaped slave and it would be very well for him to do so. But if he could go to the place where the whip is cracking, and the back is bleeding, and see the thing for himself—then he would understand the cruelty of slavery, indeed.

So, if a man would know the love of Christ, he must lay himself out to discover the deformity of sin, and the awful degradation into which crime casts mankind. And then he will know that love which stoops from the highest Heaven, reaches down to the gates of the deepest Hell, thrusts its arms up to the very elbows in the mire to pull these accursed ones out of the pit of distraction and make them blessed forever among the shining ones before the Truth of God. Strict and practical obedience to the Master's commands gives an amount of knowledge which is not to be attained by sentiments of gratitude, much less by systems of doctrine.

This is a higher stage of Divine Grace, though not much higher. Yet, I would to God that more of us had even got here, for I fear there are many who have a name to live but who do not obey Christ. Many, perhaps, to whom the minister's command would be more potent than Christ's command, and upon whom the law of the land would have far more influence than the Law of Christ. A Believer ought to be such a one that a mere word from Christ is enough for him. Or, as a Quaker was likely to express it, his heart should be like a cork upon the waters, which every undulation of the waves would affect. Thus should his heart float, as it were, in the Spirit's influences, till every motion of the Holy Spirit, every Law and wish of Christ should affect him instantly.

I would be passively active—if you can comprehend such a contradiction—I would be passive, so as never to have will or wish of my own. And active, so as to have the will and wish of Christ impelling me always to keep His commands. When a man comes *here*, he begins to show real progress in knowing “the love of Christ which passes knowledge.”

IV. There is a fourth and higher stage, by far, than these. There is a way, not known to many moderns, but much practiced by the ancients, of knowing the love of Christ by *contemplation*. Do you know that in the early ages of the Church they spoke more of Christ and of His Person, and thought more of Him than we do? When I have sometimes read the fathers, and some of the devotional books of Believers who are not much known, I have frequently had to say, “Well, I do not see much here about justification by faith, but I see a great deal about the efficacy of the precious blood.”

I do not read, perhaps, about the pardon of sin, but I read about the blood-shedding, and about being washed therein. The early preachers preached not so much of the Atonement—though they preached it—it was the five wounds, the bloody sweat, the Cross, and the passion. We talk of the fruits and the effects. They seem to speak of the first great cause—the Man, the Christ, the Cross, the vinegar, the nails, the spear, the cry of, “It is finished,” the “*Lama Sabacthani*,” the burial and the Resurrection. And in those times, whether or not it was that men had not so much to do as they have now, I cannot tell, but they found time to have long seasons of contemplation. And they would sit alone and worship and draw near to Christ and steadily fix their gaze upon His Person.

To them He was a real Person, whom the eye of their faith could see as clearly as the eye of sense can see outward objects. They looked, and

looked, and looked again, till the love of Christ grew brighter to them than the sun at his meridian, and for very dimness of mortal sight they veiled their faces and paused their speech—while their souls were bathed in inward joy and peace unspeakable. There have been some such in these later times but not many. There was Isaac Ambrose, author of that book, “Looking Unto Jesus.” He was pastor of a Church at Preston, in Lancashire, and, “it was his usual custom once a year,” says Dr. Calumy, “for the space of a month to retire into a little hut in a wood. And avoiding all human converse, to devote himself to contemplation.”

It was true he then only had eleven months in the year to preach, but those eleven were a great deal better than the twelve would otherwise have been. For there, alone with his Master, he received such riches from Him, that when he came back, he threw about jewels with both his hands and scattered glorious thoughts and words broadcast in his ministry. That book, “Looking Unto Jesus,” is a blessed memorial of his quiet hours and his secret communion with Jesus.

Then there was Rutherford, the man who has expounded the whole of Solomon’s Song without knowing it, in his celebrated letters. When he was in the dungeon at Aberdeen, he exclaimed, first of all, “I had only one eye and they put that out.” It was the preaching of the Gospel, and before long he has got both his eyes back again. Hear him writing in his letters, “My foes thought to punish me by casting me into a prison but lo! they have blessed me by taking me into Christ’s withdrawing room, where I sit with Him and am with Him both night and day without disturbance.”

The expressions he sometimes uses are so rapturous that I would not quote them here. Love letters are not to be read in the streets, and the words which souls inflamed with heavenly fire sometimes use towards Christ are not fit for public repetition. For there are passages of love, there are street embraces of affection which we must not tell, for this were to commit a treason such as Paul might have done if he had told on earth those words which he had heard in Heaven, and which it would not be lawful for a man to utter here.

Do you know anything about this, dear Friends? Oh, I pray you do not think I dream! These things are realities. I pray you think not that I am enthusiastic or fanatical. There are many Believers who could tell you that it is their daily delight to be much with Christ. Oh, perhaps some of you know what it is to have Christ with you in your shop. Your hands are busy weighing your goods or measuring out your wares, but Christ is with you, and your hearts are content. Or, as I remember hearing an old saint say one Sunday, when he was preaching from that text he pronounced so strangely, “When I saw Him I fell at His feet as dead.”

“Ah,” he said, “you do not know where I live. You think I live at so-and-so, in such-and-such a street, but I do not, for I am dead, and my life is hid with Christ in God.” Now there are some saints who, though they are in the world, are dead to it. It has no attractions for them. It cannot get their hearts. Their hearts are with Jesus. They are not here. And they

have sent their souls onward to that place where their bodies are one day to go, to the Throne where Jesus sits and reigns.

I remember hearing these expressions once used at a Prayer Meeting. They struck my mind and they still abide in my memory. A Brother had been praying and had asked a very great benefit. “O Lord,” he said, “give me Mary’s place—

***‘Oh, that I might forever sit
With Mary at the Master’s feet,
Be this my happy choice.’***

Lord, I would sit at Your feet and hear what You have to say and receive it as a willing scholar receives his master’s words.” I thought he would stop there but he said, “No, Lord, I have not asked enough. I have not asked according to the royalty of Your nature. Lift me higher! Lift me higher! Not at Your feet would I sit, but I would lean upon Your breast. Oh, put me where John was, so I may lean my head upon Your bosom. Let me not merely learn the Truth You teach, but may I feel Your heart beat and know Your love to me—

***‘Oh that I might with holy John
Forever lean my head upon
The bosom of my Lord.’***”

Well now, I thought that second prayer was a noble one. But he had yet a third one to offer and he said, “No, Lord, no. That is not enough. I have not asked yet according to the tenor of Your promise. You have lifted me from Your feet to your breast, now lift me higher, to your lips.” And then he quoted the words of the song—“Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for His love is better than wine.” And he very beautifully paraphrased it like this—“Lord, let me give to You the tokens of my love, and receive from You the present tokens of Your love to me. And not only know it, and feel Your heart beat, but receive the token of it as my lips of prayer meet Your lips of blessing, and my lips of thanksgiving touch Your lips of benediction.”

Oh, there are heights and depths in this blessed contemplative life which I must not tell you here! And I thank God that there are some men who, though they go very far wrong in doctrine, are very right on this point. And if they are right here, verily, they are right in the essentials. When a man can come right up to Christ and throw his arms around Him. When he can say, “That blood is mine. That Christ is my joy. His love is my love. His Presence is my Heaven, His Character is my great example. I trust in Him, and I love Him”—that man may say fifty things that are not right, but he has said the things that are essentially right—and his soul is safe.

“Well,” says one, “I shall never get to know Christ’s love by contemplation. I have no time.” Ah, you had better have an hour’s less sleep than lose this blessed contemplation of Christ. “Oh but I have so much to do.” Dear Friends, we can sometimes do more in one half an hour than we can do at other times in hours, according to the tenor of our minds. Now, I think that contemplating Christ winds up the soul and puts it into a right

frame, so that when we come back we can do more for the Master than we ever did before.

Perhaps you have seen them driving piles in the marshes. There is a large piece of timber that has to be driven deep into the ground, and you have seen those pile-driving machines. There is an immense weight and they pull it up, and up and up, before they let it fall. Now, if they only pull it up a little way and then let it drop—well it comes down with some force—but not a great deal. But when they lift it as high as ever they can draw it up and *then* let it come down at once, why what a drive it gives the pile! It is the going up that gives it such force in coming down.

And I believe that those are the best sermons for driving the Truth of God into the sinner’s heart that come from ministers who have been wound up very high before they come down in the sermon. And I think your usefulness will be sure to be powerful and mighty, if in private you are wound up to the very summit of contemplative delight by thinking of the work, the sufferings, and the triumphs of Christ. Certainly the sweetness of it alone is reward, and then the benefit which follows will be a sevenfold recompense for a most pleasant exercise.

V. Well now, we have taken you up some height but we must prepare for a flight which is higher, still. To know the love of Christ which passes knowledge by contemplation is very high—but there is a higher stage than this. There are times when I almost fear to speak of these things, but there are some here, surely, who will understand me, some here who have passed through the same state, and will not think that I am dreaming. There are times when the soul has long contemplated Christ, and there are some who know not only to contemplate but *to enjoy*. Even on earth, faith sometimes gives place to a present and conscious enjoyment.

There are times with the Believer when whether he is in the body, or out of the body, he can scarcely tell. God knows, and though not caught up to the third Heaven, he is brought to the very gates, and if not permitted to see Christ on His Throne, he does so see Him on His Cross, that if an infidel should say to him, “There is no Christ,” he could say, “I have seen Him. My eyes have looked upon Him, and my hands have touched Him after a spiritual sort.” There are many such rapturous seasons as this on record in the biographies of good men. I shall quote but one or two, and I hope there are some here who have known them in their own experience.

In the life of Mr. Flavel, who was one of the most temperate of the Puritans, and one not at all given to anything like fanaticism, there is an event mentioned which once occurred to him. He said that being once on a journey alone on horseback, the thought of the love of Christ came upon him with great power. And as he rode gently along the road, the thought seemed to increase in force and strength, till at last he forgot all about earth, and even where he was. Somehow or other his horse stood still but he did not notice it. And when he came to himself, through some passerby observing him, he found that he had bled very copiously during the time. Getting off his horse he washed his face at the brook and he said, “I did

verily think as I stood there, that if I was not in Heaven, I could hardly hope to be more blessed in Heaven than I was then.”

He mounted his horse and rode on to a place of lodging where he was to pass the night. Supper was brought in but left untasted on the table. He sat all night long without sleep, enjoying the presence of Christ, and he says, “I was more rested that night than with any sleep I ever had, and I heard and saw in my soul, by faith, such things as I had never known before.” The like occurred to Mr. Tennant, who was a man who spent many hours in private, and sometimes, when it was time to preach, he was quite unable to stand unless first carried into his pulpit. Then he would put his hands out and lean there and say such glorious things of Christ, that those who looked upon him verily thought that they looked upon the face of an angel.

Rutherford, too, is another specimen. When he preached about Christ, he preached so wonderfully, that on any other subject he was not at all like himself. And the Duke of Argyle was once so warmed when Rutherford got upon that subject, that he cried out in Church—“Now, Man, you are on the right strain! Keep to it.” And he did keep to it, and the little man’s thin voice seemed to swell with supernatural grandeur when he began to talk of his precious, precious Lord Jesus, and to extol and exalt Him who was the Bridegroom of his soul, his Brother and his blessed Companion.

“Oh, these are flights of the imagination,” you say. Yes, they may be, indeed, Beloved. But if you could get them some times, you would come back to the world’s cares and troubles like giants refreshed with new wine, caring nothing for anything that might happen. Christ would be so sweetly and blessedly within you, that you could bear the burden and think nothing of it. And though the grasshopper was a burden before, you could now carry it right readily.

Well, I have taken you up to where not many go in these times, but I hope there are some who will yet ascend there till they shall even embrace Christ, and who will sit down at His table till they shall know Ralph Erskine’s blessed sickness of love and, in the conscious enjoyment of a precious Savior, shall say in the words of the spouse, “Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love. His left hand is under my head and His right hand does embrace me.”

VI. But I want to take you higher than this. Not higher in some senses, but higher, really, for these raptures are, of course, only like angels’ visits, few and far between. But here is something which may be more lasting and which, certainly, is a higher state of mind as to the knowledge of Christ. To know Christ *sympathetically*, is a yet higher stage than any to which we have attained before. What do I mean by this? I will show you, first of all, what I do *not* mean. We will suppose ourselves standing on the brow of the hill with Jerusalem in the alley below. Jerusalem is to be destroyed by the Romans. The decree has gone forth that its sin must be punished.

Now, here is a Brother who holds very high doctrines in his head, but who has not much sympathy in his heart. Come up here, Brother. Do you see that city there? That is all to be destroyed! Do you see its streets? They are all to be crimsoned with blood! Do you see its temple? Not one stone of it is to be left upon another! What do you think of it? “Well,” he says, “if they are to be saved, they will be saved. If it is in the purpose and the decree it will be so. I am sure I am very sorry if they should not be, but I do not see that it is any particular business of mine. The Lord will have His own and it will all be well.”

Get down, Sir! What do you know about the love of Christ? Nothing! Give such a man as you that text, “He beheld the city and wept over it,” and you would not know how to preach from it, for you do not know the Savior’s heart, and have not known His love.

But bring here another man. He holds the same doctrinal truths, but he looks down on the city and what does he say?—

***“Oh, gladly my pity would reclaim
And snatch the firebrands from the flame.”***

“Lord, what must I do? Give me anything to do for them! My heart’s desire and prayer for them is that they may be saved.” And the tears begin to flow, and when he turns to the Book and reads that Jesus beheld the city and wept over it and said, “If you at least in this, your day, had known the things which belong unto your peace,” he says, “Well, I do not know how to explain that to my doctrinal friend. I do not know how to make these feelings quite square and tally with the doctrine. But somehow or other I know there is no disagreement, for I feel the one is true, and I also feel the sympathy in my heart. I know that God will have His own, but I hope He will have them through my instrumentality. I believe that His chosen will be brought in, but, O that it may be my happy lot to bring in some of them to the praise and the glory of His Grace!”

“Why,” some professors say, “I am not my Brother’s keeper.” No, but if you are not, I tell you what you are—you are your Brother’s killer! You are one of the two. If you say are not your Brother’s keeper, rest assured that you are a Cain, and that you will be your Brother’s murderer—for we either do good or hate. It is impossible for us to be devoid of influence. If the rill runs through the marshes it makes them fertile. If you dam it up and make it stagnant, you have not destroyed its influence. Ah, no, you have only changed it into a fetid pool and its influence shall curse the valley with disease.

So with a good man. If he serves his Master, he is scattering mercy abroad. But let him, if it were possible for him to do so, let him cease to serve the Lord, and become idle, and then he scatters plague and death. Oh, do we know the love of Christ by feeling it in our own hearts? There are some of us who can say that we have felt that we could do anything for souls. When we have heard it said of the Master, “He saved others, Himself He cannot save,” we have felt that we would not spare ourselves if God would only spare them. And when Paul said he could wish himself accursed from Christ for his Brethren, while commentators have been

thinking that over, and cannot make it out, we have had sympathy with it and have been able to say, “We have felt the same.”

We have felt that we could even be lost to save others and we have said, “Let my name perish. Let me be forgotten if my congregation may only be saved. If my children may be blessed. If my hearers may be converted to God.” Men in this state know Christ’s love after a wonderful and marvelous sort. May God teach you each this way. May He help you to weep like Christ, to work like Christ—yes, and to be ready to die like Christ—if it were necessary by such means to bring sinners to their Savior and their Lord. O that we could get here!

I know my dear Brother, the pastor of this Church, would desire nothing more for you than that you might know Christ’s love by feeling it in your hearts. O that Christ would come and look out of these eyes and weep down these cheeks! O that He would speak through these lips, till it should not be the old self, man, that thought, and spoke, and acted—but the new-born Spirit of the Lord Jesus that had come into us and possessed us with a higher and a nobler life—that we might spend and be spent for Him!

I think I shall have but one step further to take you, though there are some which are higher still. Before I do so I must tell you one anecdote to guard you against a possible mistake. There is a tendency, in the contemplative knowledge of Christ’s love, to self-indulgence. I know at the present moment a dear servant of Christ. I shall always regard him as such. He may be known to some of you, though I would not like to mention his name. He was once a notable minister in this city and was exceedingly useful. He began the contemplative life.

He lived very near to Christ and his preaching was exceedingly sweet to his hearers. There were many converts. He had a large Church and it exceedingly prospered. But so sweet were his private enjoyments that he began to relax in his public duties. He did preach, but he seldom allowed himself to see his hearers, and at last arrived at such a pitch of retirement, that he could walk into his pulpit without even speaking to his deacons, and then deliver himself. But the man’s usefulness ceased. Though still a gracious soul, yet he has missed his way, and ceased to be one of the honored leaders of Christ’s Church.

Now, there is a tendency, a wrong tendency, mark you, of getting so high and not wanting to get any higher. Even the contemplative life, itself, ought only to be considered as a steppingstone to something beyond. And when we get to the very highest point, we are still to say with Paul, as we sit down upon the milestone, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but this one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, press forward to those which are before.”

It is related of a certain monk, who, having been long in his cell alone, thought while in his devotions that he saw the Lord Jesus. Of course the tale is a fable, but I relate it for the sake of its moral. He thought he saw the Lord before him as crucified, and he heard His voice speaking sweet and comfortable words to him. Just at that moment, when his soul was in

a very flood of delight, he heard the convent bell ring, and he remembered it was his turn to go out to the gate and give away bread to the beggars who stood there.

Oh, he had never heard that bell ring so dolefully before! It seemed to him like the knell of all his joys. The impulse of duty, however, was stronger than that of delight, and he went his way with a heavy heart to distribute the bread. As he came back to his cell, he thought, “Ah, I shall never see that again! Christ is gone from me, and I shall never know these enjoyments again!” When, to his surprise, there was the vision still. As he bowed before it with delight, he heard a voice which said, “If you had stayed I would have gone. But since you did My work I tarried to give you your reward.”

Now, there is a tendency, when we have been alone and in private, and have had sweet fellowship with Christ, for us to feel—“I do not want to go out from this. I do not want to be disturbed just now. I would rather not do anything just now.” I do not suppose there are very many of you who get into this state, but there may be some who think at such times, “I do not want to preach today. I would rather not do anything. It is best that I should be alone.”

Ah, it is a strong temptation, and you must strive against it and say, “No, I have enjoyments in my religion, but I did not seek my religion for the enjoyment it would give me. I must look higher than that, to the God I serve, and to the Lord and Master whose I am. I love the jewels He gives me to wear upon my fingers, but I love His Person better. I am not to look upon these rings and forget to look into His eyes. I love the sweet couch that He makes for me at night, but I am not to lie there and forget the fields that are to be plowed and the battles that are to be fought. I must be up and doing. The contemplative life must lead me to duty and then shall I know Christ even as I am known.

VII. And now, the last and highest step of all, upon which we can only say a few words, is that which is called by deep writers and experienced Believers on this point, the *absorbing* love of Christ. How shall I tell you what this is? I cannot, except I quote Wesley’s words—

**“Oh, love Divine, how sweet you are!
When shall I find my willing heart
All taken up with you?”**

“I thirst”—can you get as far as that? “I faint”—that is a high state, indeed! “I die”—that is the top—

**“I thirst, I faint, I die to prove
The fullness of redeeming love,
The love of Christ to me.”**

“I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me,” said the Apostle Paul, and that is where we must get—when the man ceases to feel himself, the “I”—and only recognizes himself as part of Christ. It is our *individuality* that we really have to get rid of in this matter. It is our selfish separateness, I mean. We need to feel that we are a part of Christ, a member of His body, flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone.

We have to get to where we have no more desire to act, or think, or feel according to anything that is here—but to send our hearts up to the great heart of Christ in Heaven—only tarrying here while our souls are walking the golden streets with Christ. I do not know if I might be bold enough to say, “Blessed is the man who shall be able to attain to the state when that which thinks is the head of Christ, and that which feels is the heart of Christ—when the great seat of all the sensations, spiritually, is in Christ, and not in himself and he himself is—

**“Plunged into the Godhead’s sea
And lost in its immensity.”**

“The Brahmins believe that the highest perfection is to be absorbed into God, and there is a certain truth in it, though not as they mean it. When we are lost in God we are highest. When it is not we, but Christ—and we have come to be with Him and His heart is ours, and His love and soul, and wish are ours—then it is that we comprehend the height and depth and length and breadth and know the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

Now, I have not said much tonight to the ungodly. But if I could make any of you feel your mouths a-watering after Christ by what I have said, I should be pleased, indeed. Oh, if you did but know the sweetness of the love of Christ, you would not be careless about it—

**“His worth, if all the nations knew,
Surely the whole world would love Him, too.”**

Blind bat’s eyes are those that cannot see beauty in Christ! Hard, stony hearts, that cannot feel any love to Him! What do you say, Sinner? Do you say, “O that I knew Christ’s love! O that I knew His love to me!” Sinner, He has sent me to you tonight to preach His Gospel. And it *is* His Gospel, though not the Gospel which some preach, for I have heard some finish their sermons thus—“Go home and pray. Go home and do your best to find Christ.”

All this is good enough advice but it is not the Gospel. The Gospel is—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. To believe in Christ is to trust in Him. That is all it is—to trust in Him. “But I must repent,” one says. Repentance is a change of mind, and is a blessed *fruit* of faith and comes *with* faith. That repentance which comes *before* faith is not true repentance, for it is a repentance that needs to be repented of. Where there is no *faith*, it is impossible to please God.

That repentance which has no faith in it must be displeasing to God, and needs to be repented of. The first business you have, Sinner, is not to *feel* anything, but to put your trust in Christ. Your business is not to try to make yourselves fit to come to Christ, but to come to Him just as you are. You are to trust Christ and to trust Him now. “Oh but I am a black with sin!” Come and be washed. “Oh but I am a naked sinner.” Come and be clothed. “But I am lost.” Oh, Sirs, the Master has come to seek and to save that which is lost. You are not to find yourselves first, and then think He will come and find you. He is come to seek you.

Hark! While the trumpet sounds in the street without meaning, I would sound the Gospel trumpet here. Come and welcome! Come just as you are! To come is to trust and simply to fall flat at the foot of the Cross and say, “Jesus, I trust You to save me.” That done, you are saved, and your sin is gone. He took it and was punished for it. You are righteous in God’s sight, for His righteousness is yours, and you are saved. Christ, the Head, is your Representative. You are delivered. Christ has broken the neck of your foe, and you are emancipated the very moment when you believe.

Some persons dislike instantaneous conversions. Let them read the Bible and see what sorts of conversion are there. There is Saul of Tarsus, there is the Philippian jailer. There are the three thousand on the day of Pentecost—these are *all* instantaneous conversions. There is a man over there, near the door, who came in here. Perhaps he did not know what for, or to listen to some strange, out-of-the-way matter. That man, if Christ shall meet with him tonight, and lead him in the way of His Grace, may go out of this Chapel as much saved as if it were seven years ago when he first believed on Jesus, for—

***“The moment a sinner believes
And trusts in a crucified God,”***

he is saved, it is all done! The work is finished and there is no need that anything else should be done. The robe of righteousness has been completed. There is not a stitch to be added to it.

Sinner, this is the glory of the Gospel. Trust Jesus and you are saved and saved forever, beyond the reach of destruction. May God meet with some soul here tonight, and especially may He now stir up you, His people, to grow in Divine Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen and Amen.

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PAUL'S DOXOLOGY

NO. 1266

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 1, 1875,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Now unto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”
Ephesians 3:20, 21.***

This chapter has a whole service of worship within itself. It certainly contains a sermon, for Paul gives a very earnest address upon the unveiling of the hidden mystery so that the Gentiles are made partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel. It contains a prayer, for one of the verses begins, “For this cause I bow my knees.” And in the verses before us it closes with a hymn, a hymn of incomparable praise. Thus, in the compass of a short chapter, we have all those devout exercises with which our assemblies for worship are familiar, namely—instruction, supplication, and praise.

It was meet that the Apostle should close the chapter as he does, for the doxology here given grows out of the chapter. It is its natural outcome and crowns the whole, even as the flower of the lily is borne up by the stem, completes it and adorns it. The chapter would have been altogether incomplete without the ascription of praise—not perhaps in its sense, but certainly in its spiritual development.

Mount Zion doubtless possessed in itself both glory and beauty, but the temple on its summit constituted its most sacred charm. Even so to a noble chapter this doxology is a Divine climax, adding glory and sanctity to all the rest. If you look the chapter through, you will see that the Apostle has represented the Gospel in its various aspects to different persons and generally has set it forth with the word *unto*. In the fifth verse he speaks of it as manifested *unto the sons of men*. It was not revealed to them in the olden time so clearly as now, but now unto the holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit, the Gospel is revealed and we live in its clear light, for which we have reason for great thankfulness.

It were a good subject to dwell upon—the relation of the Gospel unto the sons of men. The Apostle, a little lower down, in the eighth verse, speaks of the relation of the Gospel *unto himself*, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given.” What the Gospel may do unto other men is of great importance for us to allow, but the knowledge will little avail us unless we can testify of what it has done unto each one of us *personally*. All the gold mines of California are of less worth to a man than the money in his own possession. Can you, beloved Hearers, speak, each one for himself and say of the Gospel—“unto me is this Grace given”?

Further on, the Apostle speaks of the angels, and in the 10th verse he says, "To the intent that now *unto the principalities and powers* in heavenly places might be made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." The Gospel has a relation to angels—they have always had something to do with it, for of old they desired to look into it. And it is written of our Lord that He was "seen of angels." We know, also, that they rejoice over penitent sinners and that they join in those ascriptions of Glory which the redeemed in Heaven present to the Lamb of God. Yet further, the Apostle, without exactly using the word, "unto," dwells upon the relation of the Gospel *to the people whom he addressed* when he declares that he had prayed to the Lord that He would grant them, according to the richness of His Glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.

Thus having mentioned how the Gospel bears upon mankind at large, upon Inspired men, upon himself, upon angels and then upon the saints to whom he was writing, he turns with a full heart to look at its bearings upon God Himself. And now it is no longer "unto principalities and powers." It is no longer, even, "unto me," or "unto the holy Apostles and Prophets." But his theme is "*unto HIM.*" I pray God the Holy Spirit to fulfill my desire at this time that every one of us who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, may look wholly *unto the Lord* and spend the little time appointed for our discourse in reverent adoration of Him from whom all Grace comes and to whom all the Glory, ought, therefore, to return, "for of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." If unto Him there should be glory in the Church throughout all ages, then, to Him should there be glory in *this* Church at this present moment. O Lord, help us to render it unto You!

In our text we have adoration, not prayer, the Apostle had done with that. Adoration—not even so much the act of praise as the full sense that praise is due and far more of it than we can render. I hardly know how to describe adoration. Praise is a river flowing joyously in its own channel, banked up on either side that it may run towards its one object. But adoration is the same river overflowing all banks, flooding the soul and covering the entire nature with its great waters—and these not so much moving and stirring as standing still in profound repose, mirroring the Glory which shines down upon it—like a summer's sun upon a sea of glass!

Adoration is not *seeking* the Divine Presence, but conscious of it to an unutterable degree and, therefore, full of awe and peace, like the sea of Galilee when its waves felt the touch of the sacred feet. Adoration is the fullness, the height and depth, the length and breadth of praise! Adoration seems to me to be as the starry heavens which are always proclaiming the Glory of God and yet, "there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." It is the eloquent silence of a soul that is too full for language. Adoration is to prostrate yourself in the dust in humility and yet to soar aloft in sublime thought—to sink into nothing and yet to be so enlarged as to be filled with all the fullness of God! It is to have no thought and yet to be all thought—to lose yourself in God—this is adoration.

This should be the frequent state of the renewed mind. We ought to set apart far longer time for this sacred engagement, or what shall we call it? Act or state? It were for our highest enrichment if we made it our daily prayer that the blessed Spirit would frequently bear us right out of ourselves and lift us above all these trifles which surround us till we were only conscious of God and His exceeding Glory. Oh that He would plunge us into the Godhead's deepest sea till we were lost in His immensity and could only exclaim in wonder, "Oh! The depths! Oh! The depths!"

In that spirit I desire to approach the text and I ask you to turn your eyes away from all else to HIM, even to the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. I do not ask you to remember what the Gospel does for you except as you remember it to render praise for it. I do not ask you to contemplate the Gospel in its reference to men and angels, but only to consider the Lord Himself and to render Him Glory for ability to bless, enrich and sanctify above all our asking or thinking. Looking to the Lord, alone, let us draw near unto Him in spirit and in truth.

I. Our first consideration shall be, UPON WHAT PART OF HIS GLORIOUS CHARACTER SHALL OUR MINDS REST? The text guides us to *the Divine ability*. "Now unto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly." And it selects the Divine ability to bless—"to do according to the power that works in us." This, then, is the subject. What does the Apostle say of it? He declares that the Divine ability to bless is *above what we ask*.

We have asked great things in our time. We remember when it seemed the greatest conceivable thing for us to say, "Father, forgive me." We asked a large thing when we requested the pardon of all our sins and an equally great thing when we prayed to be cleansed in spirit. When we felt our hearts hard and our natures depraved, it seemed almost too great a blessing to expect the heart of stone to be turned to a heart of flesh. We did, however, cry for gracious renewal, and the prayer was heard! Full many a time since then, in deep distress, we have besought the Lord for great deliverances. In abject need we have sought great supplies and in terrible dilemmas we have asked for great guidance—and we have received all these again and again.

The blessings sought and obtained have assuredly been neither few nor small. Some of us would almost seem to have tried the limit of prayer in the matters for which we have cried unto the Lord. We have, in times of holy boldness and sacred access, asked large things, such as one could only ask of the Great King. And yet our asking has been too short a line to reach the bottom of Divine ability—He is able to do above what we ask! Our prayer at its best and boldest has many a boundary. It is limited often by our sense of need. We scarcely know what we need! We need to be taught what we should pray for, or we never ask aright. We mistake our condition. We know not how deep and numerous our needs are.

Our soul's hunger is not keen enough—sin has taken the edge from our spiritual appetites and, therefore, we limit and cramp our prayers. But, blessed be God, He is not limited by our sense of need! His guests do but ask for bread and water, but behold, His oxen and fatlings are killed and a feast is made of fat things—"of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the

lees well refined." Yes, and our need, itself, is limited. We do not need everything. Empty as we are, there are some things that can fill us even to the brim. But God is able to go beyond our absolute needs and He has often already done so. He has given to His redeemed more than, as creatures, they absolutely require to make them happy and blessed!

We might have been restored to the full stature of unfallen manhood and in consequence have been as Adam was before his sin, but, wonder of wonders, the Lord has done *more*, for He has made us His children and His heirs, heirs of God, joint heirs of Jesus Christ! This is not the supply of necessity—it is the bestowal of honor, dignity and exceedingly great glory! And now, although our needs are, in themselves, very terrible and far greater than can be supplied by anything short of all-sufficiency, yet God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we actually need!

He will not treat us as men treat a pensioner, to whom they allot barely enough to live upon and count themselves generous for doing so. He will treat us as kings and princes and do exceedingly abundantly above all that we need! Thus does He leave our prayers far behind, outstripping both our sense of need and the need itself. Our prayer is also limited by our desire. Of course a man does not pray any further than his desires go—and our desires are not always as much awake as they should be. We are sometimes very cold and slow in desiring good things. The nether springs make us forget the upper fountains.

Alas, like the foolish king of Israel, we shoot but two or three arrows when we ought to have emptied out our quiver! We bring but small cups to the well and take home but little water. Our mouths are not opened wide enough, for our hearts are not warm enough to melt the ice which closes our lips. But, blessed be God, He is not limited by our desires! He is able to bless us beyond what our souls have yet learned to wish for! And, alas, when we do desire great things our faith is often weak and there we are restrained. We cannot believe God to be so good as to give us such unspeakable blessings and so we fail. How much we lose thereby I scarcely dare pause to consider! Our unbelief is a great impoverishment to us.

Even when faith does become developed, and sometimes it does, yet I guarantee you its stature never reaches the height of the promise. No man ever believed God as much as he might believe, nor trusted His promise so implicitly as he might do, or put so large a construction upon the Divine Word as it would bear. O Brothers and Sisters, we have to thank God that He is not bounded by our narrow faith, but even goes beyond what we believe concerning Him! How often, too, we are limited in prayer by our lack of comprehension—we do not understand what God means. Search to see if there is a single promise in the whole Covenant of Grace which any child of God perfectly understands. There is a meaning in the Covenant promises—a breadth, a length, a height, a depth not yet compassed.

God condescends to use human language and to us the words mean silver, but He uses them in a *golden* sense. He never means less than He says, but He always means far more than we think He says. For this let us magnify the Lord! His power to bless us is not bounded by our power to

understand the blessing! Grace is not measured to us according to our capacity to receive, but according to His efficacy to bestow! He can enlarge us, my Brethren! O that He would do so now! Prayer is an exercise in which our minds ought to be expanded and our hearts enlarged! Has not the Lord said, "Open your mouth wide and I will fill it"? Yet our widest mouth is not the measure of what He can give us! Our boldest prayer is not the boundary of what He is able to bestow! Pray at your utmost, like Elijah upon Carmel! Pray as you will till the keys of Heaven seem to swing at your side and yet you can never outrun that Omnipotence to bless which dwells in the Lord God Almighty!

The Apostle then goes on to say that *the ability of God to bless is above what we think*. Now we can think of some things we dare not pray for! Thought is free and scarcely can space contain it. Its wings bear it far beyond all visible things. It can even soar into the impossible, yet thought cannot attain to the power of God to bless, for that is immeasurable! Have you not, at times, been filled with great thoughts of what God might do with you? Have you not imagined how He might use you for His Glory? He can do more than you have dreamed! Turn your pleasant dreams into fervent prayers and it may yet please the Lord to make you useful to an amazing degree—so that you shall be astonished at what you will accomplish. If of a humble shepherd lad He made a David, He may do the same with you!

Have you not, at other times, conceived great ideas of what the Lord will make out of you when you shall be washed, cleansed, delivered from sin and carried away to serve Him in Heaven? Ah, but you have no idea what you will be! You do not know, when you have guessed your greatest, how perfect and pure and blessed you will be in your Father's house on high when He has completed in you all the good pleasure of His will! You have sung sometimes—

"What must it be to dwell above!"

And your thoughts and imaginations have gone to very great lengths in picturing the repose, the security, the wealth, the enjoyment, the perfect satisfaction of Heaven! Ah, yes, but the Lord is able to do *more* than has ever *entered* into your heart. There, fling the bridle on the neck of your imagination and let it, like a winged horse, not only scour the plains of earth, but fly through the clouds and mount above the stars—but its furthest flight on the most rapid wings shall not bring you near the confines of the possibilities of God!

Your thoughts, even at their best, are not His thoughts! As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are His thoughts above yours, think however you may! How amazing a subject is now before us! What language of mine can adequately set forth the Divine ability to bless, when both the eagle eye of prayer and the eagle wing of thought fail to discover a boundary?

Now, I need to call your attention, in this passage, to every word of it, for every word is emphatic. "He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above *all* that we ask or think." Not above *some* things that we ask, but, "ALL." Not above some of our dimmer conceptions, our lower thoughts, but above

“ALL” that we think! Now just put together all that you have ever asked for. Heap it up and then pile upon the top all that you have ever *thought of* concerning the riches of Divine Grace. What a mountain! Here we have hill on hill, Pelion on Ossa, as though Alp on Alp were heaped on end to build a staircase or a Jacob's ladder to the very stars!

Go on! Go on! It is no Babel tower you build and yet its top will not reach unto Heaven. High as this pyramid of prayers and contemplations may be piled, God's ability to bless is still higher—“above *all* that we ask or even think.” Some render it, “Now unto Him that is able to do above all things exceedingly abundantly,” and so on. Well, take it so. God is able to bless us above all things! Above all the blessings that others could give us—that is little. Above all the blessedness which resides in creatures—that is great, but not comparable to what He can do! Above all the blessings which can be imagined to be conveyed to us by all the creatures that are useful and beneficial to us—He is able to do above all good things for us. O Lord, help us to understand all this! Give us faith to get a grip of this and then to magnify and adore You! Alas, our adoration can never be proportionate to Your goodness!

Now, dwell on another word, “He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.” The *we* refers to the Apostles as well as to ourselves. Paul was a mighty man in prayer. What a wonderful prayer this chapter contains—how he finishes up, “That you might be filled with all the fullness of God.” I will defy any man to bring out the meaning of those words to the fullest. Yet when he had prayed that prayer, Paul felt that God could go far beyond his comprehension of it. I do not know how, but he says so—above all that *we* ask—and, of course, this includes himself!

Paul, in that, *we*, may be viewed as including the Apostles—we, the 12 who have come nearest to Jesus and have been personally taught how to pray by Him—we who have seen Him face to face and upon whom His Spirit specially rests. “He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above what *we* ask”! The Apostles were Inspired. The Spirit of God was in them to an unusual degree. Their thoughts were larger than ours, but, says Paul, He is able to do above what *we* think, even *we*, His Apostles, the best, the most holy, the most spiritual of Christian men!

Oh, then, Brethren, I am sure He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or think, for it is a terrible come down from the Apostles' asking and thinking to *ours*! He must be able to do exceedingly abundantly above the asking or thoughts of such poor, puny saints as we are! Now, notice the Apostle's use of the word, “*abundantly*.” He says, not only that God is able to do above what we ask or think, but “*abundantly*.” We might say of a man, “He has given much, but he has still something left.” That expression would fall sadly short if applied to the Most High! He has not only something left, but *all* abundance left! We have already understood but a part of His ways. We have been able to comprehend the mere remnant of His glorious Grace.

The reserve of goodness, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him far exceed our thoughts. Our Apostle, not content with the use of the word “*abundantly*,” adds another word, and says, “*exceedingly*

abundantly.” He has constructed here, in the Greek, an expression which is altogether his own. No language was powerful enough for the Apostle—I mean for the Holy Spirit speaking through the Apostle—for very often Paul has to coin words and phrases to show forth his meaning and here is one—“He is able to do exceedingly abundantly”—so abundantly that it exceeds measure and description! Yonder ship is on the sea and the sea can bear it up, though it weighs several thousand tons.

Does that surprise you, my Brethren? No, for you know that the ocean could float not merely one such ship, but a navy, yes, and more navies than you could count if you continued to number them throughout the lifelong day. The far-reaching main is able to bear upon its bosom, ships innumerable! It supports them “exceedingly abundantly.” God is as the great ocean. What you have seen Him do is but as it were the floating of one single boat! But what He can do, ah, that is “exceedingly abundantly” above what you ask or think! There flows our beautiful river among the meadows and the child dips its cup to drink and is fully refreshed. Yet all that the child can take is as nothing compared with what still remains—and if along the banks of Father Thames, crowds of thirsty ones should congregate and drink their fill, both men and cattle—yet all they could abstract from the waters would bear a very inconsiderable proportion to the volume which would still flow to the sea!

Lo, I see thousands of the redeemed crowding down to the all-sufficiency of God! I see them lie down to drink like men that must take draughts both long and deep or die! But after they have all drunk and all the creatures that live have all been supplied, I see no lessening in the blessedness which pours forth from the Throne of God and of the Lamb, which can only be described in these words, “He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or even think.” Now to help you to adore the Lord—for that is my one objective this morning—think how blessed you are in having such an all-sufficient God! It is always pleasant to take out of a great heap and to know that what you receive does not deprive others of their share.

Who cares to sit at a table where every morsel must be counted, for if you have more somebody must have less? It is a scant feast where the provision is exactly measured. Here, at the table of our God, there is need of no such economy. “Eat, O Friends, drink, yes, drink abundantly, O Beloved,” for the feast is of the King and His provisions are infinite! Thus we see that there need be no limit to our prayers. You need never rise from your knees and say, “Perhaps I was presumptuous. Perhaps I have asked more than God will give?” Down on your knees, Brother, Sister, and ask God to forgive you for dishonoring Him by harboring such a thought! He is able to give exceedingly abundantly above what you ask. Thus we see, also, that He is still able to bless us, upon whom the ends of the earth are come, for if He was able to do exceedingly abundantly in the Apostle’s time, He is quite as able, still, and we may come to Him without fear.

Now, I see, also, that if my case is very special, still I need not tremble or stand in dread of need. What if I require superabundant Grace? I may have it! If I need exceedingly abundant help, I can have it. Ah, if I need

more Grace than I dare ask for, I can have it! Yes, and if I require more than I think, I may have it, for still my Lord is able to give it to me, and what He is *able* to do, He is *willing* to do. What comfort this should afford even to poor sinners who are far away from God. He is able to give you great forgiveness for the greatest possible sin! Sins that you have not yet thought of, He can pardon! Do but come to God in Christ Jesus and you shall find Him able to save to the uttermost.

If this little hint is taken up by some despairing heart, it may give it immediate peace! It cannot be true that God cannot forgive, for in Christ Jesus, "He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or even think."

II. Our second business is to answer the enquiry, IN WHAT WAY DO WE PERCEIVE THIS ABILITY? We cannot well praise what we cannot in any measure discern. The Apostle says, "*according to the power that works in us.*" We know that God can give us more than we ask or think, for *He has given us more than we have asked or thought.* Our regeneration came to us *before* prayer, for prayer was the first sign of the new birth already given. To pray for life is not a faculty of the dead—but regeneration puts *into* us the living desire and the spiritual longing. The first principle of life imparted makes us long after more life.

We were dead in sin and far from God and He surprised us with His preventing mercy. And in us was fulfilled the words, "I was found of them that sought Me not." In this case He did for us above what we asked or thought. Redemption—whoever sought for that? Had it not been provided from of old, who would have dared to ask the Lord to give His Son as a Substitute to bleed and die for man? Sirs, in providing a Substitute for us from before the foundation of the world, the Lord has already gone beyond man's thoughts or requests! Thanks be unto Him for His unspeakable Gift! He gave us Christ and then gave us His blessed Spirit, another surprising blessing which man could not have supposed possible for him to have obtained. Having done that which we never sought for, nor thought of, He is still able to amaze us with unlooked for Grace!

Moreover, *where prayer has been offered, our heavenly Father has gone far beyond what we have asked or thought.* I said unto the Lord, in the anguish of my soul, that if He would forgive my sins I would be content to be the meanest servant in His house and would gladly lie in prison all my life, and live on bread and water. But His mercy did not come to me in that scanty way, for He put me among His children and gave me an inheritance! "Make me as one of Your hired servants" is a prayer the Father does not hear—He puts His hand on His child's mouth when he begins to talk so, and says, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him! Put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet." We have asked for a stone and He has given us bread! We have asked for bare bread and he has given us angels' food. For brass He has given silver and for silver, gold. We looked for a drop and the rain has filled the pools! We sought a morsel and He has filled us with good things! And therefore we are warranted in expecting that in the future He will continue to outdo our prayers.

Look at the plan of salvation, in the next place, and you will see how *it suggests the ability of God to do more for us*. Who is He that chose us? Who is He that has begotten us again unto a lively hope? It is God the Father! And when you mention Him as having put His hand to the work of Grace, you have opened a wide door of hope, for what is there He cannot do? He who has filled yon heavens with stars, scattering them broadcast as the sower sows corn, and could have made a thousand universes all full of worlds with as much ease as man speaks a word—has He begun to bless us and can there be any limit to His power to deal graciously with us? Impossible!

Look next at His dear Son. He that created the heavens and the earth is made a Man and lies in a manger! He whom angels obey is despised and rejected of men! He who only has immortality, hangs on a tree and bleeds and dies! There must be, in those groans and those drops of sweat, and those wounds, and that death of His, a power to save altogether inconceivable! Immanuel made a Sacrifice! What ability to bless must dwell in Him! He must be able to do exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or think!

And who is this, the Divine Spirit, who comes to dwell in us? Yes, *literally* to dwell in these mortal bodies and make these tabernacles of clay His temples! He has already mortified our lusts, already changed our hearts, already made us partakers of the Divine Nature! My Brothers and Sisters, is there any limit to the possibilities of the Spirit's work in us? May we not fairly conclude that when God, Himself, comes to inhabit our bodies, He will deliver us from every sin and make us spotless as God is spotless—till in us shall be fulfilled the command—"Be you holy, for I am holy"? Look at the plan—it is drawn to a wondrous scale! The Trinity in Unity is manifest in the Divine working within us and there must be something inconceivably great possible to us through the working of such mighty power!

Come then, dear Friends, and for a moment think of the power which actually dwells in you! If you are a Christian you must be conscious of a power in you far too great for your mental or physical constitution to bear if it were not restrained. Do you never experience groans which cannot be uttered, deep and terrible, like the moving of an earthquake, as though everything were loosed within you with extreme heaviness, anguish and travailing in birth? These pangs and throes betray the latent God within you, cramped for room within the narrow bounds of your new created and growing spiritual nature! Have you never felt the working and striving of strong desires, fierce hunger and insatiable thirsts? Have you not felt mysterious energies working like pent-up springs within your spirit, demanding space and vent, or threatening to burst your heart?

Are you never conscious of the Infinite struggling within you? Have you never felt like a little bird shut up within its egg, chipping at the shell to gain liberty? Are you not conscious that you are not what you shall be? Do you not feel Omnipotence rush through you, sometimes, with unutterable joy, till you have to cry, "Hold, my Lord, this joy becomes not man—it is the joy of Christ fulfilled in me and if I feel it any longer I must die, for in this body it is insupportable!"? There are ecstasies, but we must not tell

of them here. There are high mysterious delights of which it is scarcely lawful to speak! There are lifting up in which man so communes with his Maker as to rise above himself and to be far more than man—even as the bush in Horeb, though but a bush, was rendered capable of burning with fire without being consumed—and so was more than a bush, for it blazed with Deity!

Are not your hearts familiar with these sacred mysteries of the Heaven-born life? If they are, then you have the means of guessing at the Apostle's meaning when he said, "He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or even think, according to the power that works in us." God grant us to know this more fully.

III. Our third consideration is—WHAT, THEN, SHALL BE RENDERED TO GOD? "*Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.*" "*Unto Him be glory.*" Oh, my Soul, adore Him! Feel His splendor, let His exceeding goodness shine full upon your soul and warm you with its rays and let the warmth be adoring love! Oh, my Soul, proclaim His goodness and reflect the light which falls upon you from Himself—and so glorify Him by manifesting to the sons of men what He manifests to you!

Yes, my Soul, let all that is within you bathe in His boundless goodness and then glorify Him by perpetual service. Bow your strength to obedience! Be yoked to that mighty chariot in which Jesus rides forth conquering and to conquer, saving the sons of Adam. God deserves glory in the most emphatic sense and in the most practical meaning of that term. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, let us try to render it to Him!

But the Apostle felt that he must not say, "*Unto Him be glory in my soul.*" He wished that, but his one soul afforded far too little space and so he cried, "*unto Him be glory in the Church.*" He calls upon all the people of God to praise the Divine name! If all the world but it were dumb, the Church must always proclaim the Glory of God. If moon and stars and sun and sea no more reflect the majesty of the Creator, yet let the redeemed of the Lord praise Him, even those whom He has redeemed out of the hand of the enemy! As Israel sung at the Red Sea with dances and timbrel, so let the Church of God exult, for He has brought us through the sea and drowned our adversaries—"The depths have covered them, there is not one of them left." You, O Jesus, have redeemed our souls with blood, have set the prisoners free and made us to be a royal priesthood and, therefore, Your Church must praise You without ceasing!

But as if he felt that the Church, herself, was unequal to the task, though she is ordained to be the sphere of the Divine Glory, note how he puts it. "*In the Church by Christ Jesus.*" You, Lord Jesus, You are He alone among men eloquent enough to express the Glory of God. Grace is poured into Your lips and You can declare our praises for us! Brethren, do you not remember how our blessed Lord vowed to praise the Divine name among His brethren? Read the 22nd Psalm, and you will see how He becomes the chief musician, the leader of the choirs of the blessed! By Christ it is that our praises ascend to Heaven! He is the Spokesman for

us, the Interpreter, One of a thousand before the Throne of the Infinite Majesty!

O Christ—we are Your body, and every member of the body praises God! But You are the Head and You must speak for us with those dear lips that are like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh! You must offer our praises to the great High Priest and they shall be accepted at Your hands. Yet the Apostle was not satisfied, for he adds, “Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus *through all ages.*” And the Greek runs exactly thus, “unto all the generations of the age of ages.” Perhaps the Apostle half expected the world to last for ages although he did not know when Christ might come, and therefore stood watching for Him.

At any rate, he desired that generation after generation might show forth the Glory of God and when there were no more succeeding races of men, he desired that that age of ages, the golden age, God's age, the age of peace and joy and blessedness, whatever phases it might pass through, might never cease to resound with the Glory of God! Oh, blessed words of the Apostle! We cannot reach their meaning and if we did, still that meaning would be short of what God deserves—

***“I'll praise Him while He lends me breath;
And when my voice is lost in death!
Praise shall employ my nobler powers
My days of praise shall be never past,
While thought and life and being last,
Or immortality endures.”***

Our children shall follow after us and they shall praise the Lord. And their children and they shall praise Him and their children and they shall praise Him. And when the time comes that the earth grows old and Christ, Himself, shall descend from Heaven to renew all things, His saints shall magnify Him when He comes!

When He smites His foes and breaks them in pieces like potter's vessels, the saints shall still adore Him! And when comes the end and He shall have delivered up the power to God, even the Father, still the everlasting song shall go up to God and the Lamb! And through the ages of ages when God shall be All in All, it shall be the bliss of every redeemed one forever and forever to say, “Unto Him be Glory, unto Him be Glory forever and ever!”

IV. I have done when you have done—and the last point concerns what *you* have to do. WHAT SHALL WE SAY TO ALL THIS? The text tells us in one word. It concludes with your part of it—“Amen.” Some of you have newly been born to God. You are babes in His family. I pray you to glorify Him, this morning, who can do for you exceedingly abundantly above what you ask or think. Say “Amen” while we unite in ascribing Glory to Him!

And you, my Brothers and Sisters, who, like myself are in the vigor of manhood, in the very prime of life, working for God, let *us* heartily say, “Amen,” as well we may, for all the Grace we have had and still have comes from Him. And you, my venerable Brothers and Sisters who are getting near to Heaven, there is more mellowness in your voices than in ours, for there is a ripeness and maturity in your experience! Therefore

say you first and foremost, "Unto Him be Glory in the Church." Say it now, all classes of Believers—you who are rejoicing in the Lord this morning, and you, also, who are sorrowful and sad, say, "Amen." Though you have not the present joy, yet say, "Amen" in the expectation of it!

Be not laggard any one of you to say, "Unto Him be Glory in the Church throughout all ages. Amen." Say it, O Church, below, without exception! Say it, all you militant ones. You saints that lie upon your sick beds and you that are near to death, yet say, "Amen." You that suffer and you that labor, you who sow and you who reap, say, "Amen." And when the whole Church below has said, "Amen," O Church above take up the grand, "Amen." You triumphant ones who have washed your robes in the blood of the Lamb, I need not challenge you to say, "Amen," for I know you do it louder and more sweetly than saints below!

You sinners who have not yet tasted of His Grace, I think I might almost urge you to say, "Amen," for if you have not yet obtained mercy, He is able to give it to you! You have come here, this morning, thirsty like Hagar and God sees you. You are searching for a little water to fill your bottle. See, yonder is a well, a well which flows finely. Drink of it, drink and live, and say, "Amen," as you bless the Lord who looks on you in love! Perhaps you came here like Saul, seeking your father's donkeys, or some such trifles. Behold, He gives you a *kingdom*—He gives you more than you ask or think—freely He gives it according to the riches of His Grace!

Accept it, and then say, "Amen." Oh, with one heart and one soul let all of you that have been redeemed from death and Hell, or even hope to be so, join in this ascription—

***"Now to the Lord, whose power can do
More than our thoughts or wishes know,
Be everlasting honor done,
By all the Church, through
Christ His Son."***

Amen and amen!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Ephesians 3.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—166, 450, 412.**

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TRUE UNITY PROMOTED

NO. 607

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 1, 1865,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”
Ephesians 4:3.***

YOU will remember that for several years I have received my morning's text for the first Sunday in the year from an esteemed Brother, a clergyman of the Church of England. This year he very kindly sends me this verse, which I hope will be useful to us all, reminding us of our former faults and of our present duty in the matter of “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” The Pope has lately been most lustily cursing us all. According to his nature, of course, must be his utterances. We could not expect a blessing where no blessing abides. And if we get a curse we only receive a polluted stream from a polluted fountain. It is an old saying that England never prospers so well as when the Pope curses her. I hope to see a year of great prosperity this year!

Let the poor deluded priest curse as long as he will, our God shall turn it into a blessing. In former days, when some of the Churches of Christ began to shake off the yoke of Popedom from their necks, the plea urged against reformation was the necessity of maintaining unity. “You must bear with this ceremony and that dogma no matter how antichristian and unholy, you must bear with it, ‘endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.’ ” So spoke the old serpent in those early days. “The Church is one, woe unto those who shall create schism! It may be true that Mary is set up in the place of Christ, that images are worshipped, sticks and rotten rags adored and pardons bought and sold for crimes of every kind. It may be that the so-called church has become an abomination and a nuisance upon the face of the earth, but still, ‘endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,’ you must lie down, restrain the testimony of the Spirit of God within you, keep His Truth under a bushel and let the lie prevail.”

This was the grand sophistry of the church of Rome. When, however, she could not seduce men by talking of love and union, she took upon herself to use her natural tone of voice and cursed right and left right heartily—and so let her curse till she expires! Brethren, there was no reason in the argument of the Papist! If you will look at the text for a moment, you will see the text bids us endeavor to keep the unity of the *Spirit*—but it does not tell us to endeavor to maintain the unity of evil, the unity of superstition—or the unity of spiritual tyranny! The unity of error,

of false doctrine, of priest-craft may have in it the spirit of Satan—we do not doubt that—but that it is the unity of the *Spirit of God* we do utterly deny!

The unity of evil we are to break down by every weapon which our hands can grasp—the unity of the Spirit which we are to maintain and foster is quite another thing. Remember that we are forbidden to do evil that good may come. And it is evil to restrain the witness of the Spirit of God within us! To conceal any Truth of God which we have learned by revelation of God is evil! To hold back from testifying for God's Truth and Word—against the sin and folly of man's inventions—would be sin of the blackest hue. We dare not commit the sin of quenching the Holy Spirit even though it were with the view of promoting unity!

The unity of the Spirit never requires any sinful support—that is maintained not by *suppressing* the Truth of God, but by publishing it abroad. The unity of the Spirit has for its pillars, among other things, the witnessing of spiritually enlightened saints to the one faith which God has revealed in His Word. That is quite another unity which would gag our mouths and turn us all into dumb driven cattle to be fed or slaughtered at the will of priestly masters. Dr. McNeil has, very properly, said that a man can scarcely be an earnest Christian in the recent day without being a controversialist. We are sent forth today as sheep in the midst of wolves—can there be agreement? We are kindled as lamps in the midst of darkness—can there be concord?

Has not Christ Himself said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword"? You understand how all this is the truest method of endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, for Christ, the Man of War, is Jesus the Peacemaker. But in order to the creation of lasting, spiritual peace, the phalanx of evil must be broken and the unity of darkness dashed to shivers. I pray God evermore to preserve us from a unity in which Truth shall be considered valueless! In which principle gives place to policy! In which the noble and masculine virtues which adorn the Christian hero are to be supplemented by an effeminate affectation of charity! May the Lord deliver us from indifference to His Word and will! This only creates the cold unity of masses of ice frozen into an iceberg chilling the air for miles around—the unity of the dead as they sleep in their graves, contending for nothing—because they have neither part nor lot in all that belongs to living men.

There is a unity which is seldom broken—the unity of devils, who, under the service of their great liege master, never disagree and quarrel! From this terrible unity keep us, O God of Heaven! The unity of locusts have one common object—the glutting of themselves to the ruin of all around! The unity of the waves of Tophet's fire, sweeping myriads into deeper misery—from this also, O King of Heaven, save us forevermore! May God perpetually send some Prophet who shall cry aloud to the world,

“Your covenant with death shall be disannulled and your agreement with Hell shall not stand.” May there ever be found some men, though they are rough as Amos, or stern as Haggai, who shall denounce again and again all league with error and all compromise with sin and declare that these are the abhorrence of God!

Never dream that holy contention is at all a violation of my text. The destruction of every sort of union which is not based on the Truth of God is a preliminary to the edification of the unity of the Spirit. We must first sweep away these walls of untempered mortar—these tottering fences of man’s building—before there can be room to lay the goodly stones of Jerusalem’s walls one upon the other for lasting and enduring prosperity!

In this spirit have I spoken to clear a way to reach my text. It is clear from the text that there is a unity of the Spirit to be kept. Secondly that it needs keeping. And thirdly, that a bond is to be used. When we have enlarged upon these points we shall use the text in its practical application—first to Christians in their connection with other churches and then to members of the same Church in their connection with each other.

I. First, THERE IS A UNITY OF THE SPIRIT OF WHICH THE TEXT SPEAKS WHICH IS WORTHY TO BE KEPT. You will observe it is not an *ecclesiastical* unity. It is not endeavoring to keep the unity of the *denomination*, the community, the diocese, the parish—no, it is “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit.” Men speak of the Episcopal Church, the Wesleyan Church, or the Presbyterian Church. Now I hesitate not to say that there is nothing whatever in Scripture at all parallel to such language, for there I read of the seven Churches in Asia, the Church in Corinth, Philippi, Antioch, etc.

In England, if I speak according to the Word of God, there are some thousands of churches holding the Episcopal form of government. In Scotland, some thousands of godly churches are ordered according to Presbyterian rule. Among the Wesleyans, there are churches adhering to the form of government first carried out by Mr. Wesley. But it is not according to the method of Scripture, but only according to human invention to speak of a whole cluster of churches as one church.

Although I myself am much inclined to a Presbyterian union among our churches, I cannot but perceive in Holy Scripture that each church is separate and distinct from every other church. The whole being is connected by those different bonds and ligaments which keep all the separate members together—but not so connected as to run into one another to lose their separateness and individuality. There is nothing in Scripture which says, “Endeavoring to keep up your ecclesiastical arrangements for centralization.” The exhortation runs thus—“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit.”

Again, you will observe it does not say, “Endeavoring to keep the *uniformity* of the Spirit.” The Spirit does not recognize uniformity. The anal-

ogy of His work in nature is against it. The flowers are not all tinted with the same hue, nor do they exhale the same odors. There is variety everywhere in the work of God. If I glance at Providence, I do not perceive that any two events happen after the same form—the page of history is varied. If, therefore, I look into the Church of God, I do not expect to find that all Christians pronounce the same shibboleth, or see with the same eyes.

The same, “one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all,” we rejoice to recognize. But as to uniformity of dress, liturgical verbiage, or form of worship, I find nothing of it in Scripture. Men may pray acceptably standing, sitting, kneeling, or lying with their faces upon the earth. They may meet with Jesus by the river’s side, in the temple porch, in a prison, or in a private house. And they may be one in the same Spirit although the one regards a day and the other regards it not.

So what is this unity of the Spirit? I trust, dear Brothers and Sisters, that we know it by having it in possession. It is most certain that we cannot keep the unity of the Spirit if we don’t already have it! Let us ask ourselves the question, “Have we the unity of the Spirit?” None can have it but those who have the Spirit and the Spirit dwells only in new-born believing souls. By virtue of his having the Spirit, the Believer is in union with every other spiritual man and this is the unity which he is to endeavor to keep.

This unity of the Spirit is manifested in *love*. A husband and wife may be, through Providence, cast hundreds of miles from one another—but there is a unity of spirit in them because their hearts are one. We, Brethren, are divided many thousands of miles from the saints in Australia, America and the South Seas—but loving as Brethren—we feel the unity of the Spirit. I was never a member of a Church meeting in the backwoods of America. I never worshipped God with the Samoans, or with my Brethren in New Zealand—but notwithstanding all this, I feel the unity of the Spirit in my soul with them and everything which concerns their spiritual welfare is interesting to me.

This unity of the Spirit is caused by a similarity of nature. Find a drop of water glittering in the rainbow, leaping in the waterfall, rippling in the rivulet, lying silent in the stagnant pool or dashing in spray against the vessel’s side—that water claims kinship with every drop of water the wide world over because it is the same in its elements. And even so there is a unity of the Spirit which we cannot imitate which consists in our being “begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

We bear in us the Holy Spirit as our daily Quickener and walk in the path of faith in the living God. Here is the unity of spirit, a unity of life working itself out in love. This is sustained daily by the Spirit of God. He who makes us one, keeps us one. Every member of my body must have a communion with every other member of my body. I say *must*. The ques-

tion never arises, that I know of, between the members of my body whether they will do so or not. As long as there is life in my frame, every separate portion of my body must have communion with every other portion of it.

Here is my finger—I may discolor it with some noxious drug. My head may not approve of the staining of my finger—it may suggest a thousand ways by which that finger ought to be put through a purgation and this may be all right and proper—but my head never says, “I will cut off that finger from communion.” My tongue speaks loudly against the noxious fluid which has done my finger mischief and has blistered it so as to cause pain to the whole body, yet the head cannot say, “I will have that finger cut off,” unless the body is willing to be forever mutilated and incomplete.

Now, it is not possible to mutilate the body of Christ. Christ does not lose His members or cast off parts of His mystical body. And therefore it never ought to enter the head of any Christian whether or not he shall have communion in spirit with any other Christian, for he cannot do without it—as long as he lives he *must* have it. This does not stop him in boldly denouncing the error into which his Brother may have fallen, or in avoiding his intimate acquaintance while he continues to sin. But it does forbid the thought that we can ever really sever any true Believer from Christ, or even from us, if we are in Christ Jesus.

The unity of the Spirit is preserved, then, by the Holy Spirit infusing daily life-floods into the one mystical body. And in proportion as the life-floods become more strong, that union becomes more manifest. Let a spirit of prayer be poured out on all our churches and conventionalities will be dashed down—divisions will be forgotten and locked in each others arms—the people of God will show to the world that they are one in Christ Jesus! There are some points in which this unity of the Spirit is certain to discover itself. In prayer, how truly does Montgomery put it—

***“The saints in prayer appear as one
In word and deed and mind,
While with the Father and the Son,
Sweet fellowship they find.”***

There is a unity of praise, too. Our hymn books differ, after all, very little. We still sing the same songs and praise the same Savior. This unity will soon discover itself in co-working—they have a union in their conflict with the common foe and in their contention for the common Truth of God. This will lead to communion—I do not mean sitting down to the same table to eat bread and drink wine—that is only the *outward* union—but I mean that communion which consists in heart beating true to heart and in the feeling that they are one in Christ Jesus. It was a motto with Bucer, “To love all in whom he could see anything of Christ Jesus.”

Be this your motto, Brothers and Sisters in Christ. Make not your love an excuse for not offering stern rebuke, but rebuke because you love!

Some persons think that unless you smooth your tongue and cover your words with sugar, no matter though it may be sugar of lead—unless you cringe and compliment and conceal—there is no love in your heart. But I trust it will be our privilege to show in our own persons, some of us, how sternly we can dissent and yet love. How truly be Nonconformists to our Brethren's error and yet in our very nonconformity prove our affection to them and to our common Master.

It is said of some men that they appear to have been born upon the mountains of Bether, for they do nothing but cause division. And baptized in the waters of Meribah, for they delight in causing strife. This is not the case with the genuine Christian—he cares only for the Truth, for his Master, for the love of souls—and when these things are not imperiled, his own private likes or dislikes never affect him. He loves as much to see another Church prosper as his own—so long as he can know that Christ is glorified, it is a matter of comparative indifference to him by what minister God's arm is made bare, in what place souls are converted, or to what particular form of worship men addict themselves.

Yet ever does he hold to this—that there is no unity of the Spirit where there is a lie in the teaching—that where the souls of men are concerned he would be a traitor to God if he did not bear witness against the error which damns, and testify to the Truth which saves. And where the crown jewels of his Master's kingdom are concerned he dares not traitorously hold his tongue. And though his fellow subjects cast his name out as evil, he counts it all joy so long as he is faithful to his Master and discharges his conscience as before the Judge of the quick and the dead.

II. Secondly, THIS UNITY NEEDS KEEPING. It is a very difficult thing to maintain and that for several reasons. Our sins would, very naturally, break it. If we were all angels we should keep the unity of the Spirit and not need even the exhortation to do so. But, alas, we are proud, and pride is the mother of division! Diotrefes, who loves to have the pre-eminence, is very sure to head a faction.

Envy, too, how that separates friends! When I cannot be satisfied with anything which is not hammered on my anvil or run in my mold. When another man's candle grieves me because it gives more light than mine. And when another man troubles me because he has more Divine Grace than I have—oh, there is no unity in this case! Anger—what a deadly foe is that to unity! When we cannot take the smallest disrespect—when the slightest thing brings the blood into our face—when we speak unadvisedly with our lips—but surely I need not read the long list of sins which spoil this unity of the Spirit, for they are legion! O, may God cast them out from us, for only so can we keep the unity of the Spirit!

But, Beloved, our very virtues may make it difficult for us to keep this unity. Luther is brave and bold, hot and impetuous. He is just the man to lead the van and clear the way for the Reformation. Calvin is logical, clear,

cool, precise—he seldom speaks rashly. It is not in the order of things that Luther and Calvin should always agree. Their very virtues cause them to fall out and, consequently, Luther, in a bad temper, calls Calvin a pig and a devil. And, albeit, Calvin once replied, “Luther may call me what he will, but I will always call him a dear servant of Christ.”

Yet John Calvin knew how to pierce Luther under the fifth rib when he was in humor. In those days the courtesies of Christians to one another were generally of the iron-gauntlet order rather than the naked hand. All were so much called to war for the sake of the Truth of God that even their fellow soldiers were treated with suspicion. And it may be with us that the very watchfulness of Truth, which is so valuable, may make us suspect where there is no need for suspicion and our courage may take us as sometimes a fiery horse has carried a young warrior beyond where he intended to have ridden—where he may be taken prisoner to his own damage.

We must watch—the best of us must watch—lest we fight the Lord’s battles with Satan’s weapons and so even from love to God and His Truth violate the unity of the Spirit. The unity of the Spirit ought to be kept, dear Friends, because Satan is so busy to mar it. He knows that the greatest Glory of Christ will spring from the unity of His Church. “That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I in You. That they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me.”

There is no Church happiness where there is not Church unity. Let a Church be disaffected and divided, the schism in the body is death to all hallowed fellowship. We cannot enjoy communion with each other unless our hearts are one. Our work for God—how feebly it is done when we are not agreed! The enemy cannot desire a better ally than strife in the midst of our camp. “Can you not agree,” said a warrior of old, “when your enemy is in sight?” Christians, can you not agree to keep the unity of the Spirit when a destroying Satan is ever on the watch seeking to drag immortal souls down to perdition?

We must be more diligent in this matter! We must seek to purge out from ourselves everything which would divide and to have in our hearts every holy thought which would tend to unite us with our Brethren. I am not, when I join a Christian Church, to say, “I am quite certain I shall never break its unity.” I am to suspect myself of a liability to that evil and I am to watch with all diligence that I keep the unity of the Spirit.

III. In the third place, in order to the keeping of this, THERE IS A BOND PROVIDED, THE BOND OF PEACE. Beloved, there should be much peace, perfect peace, unbounded peace between the people of God. We are not aliens. We are “fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God.” Realize your fellow citizenship! Treat not Christian people as foreigners and this bond of fellow citizenship will be one bond of peace. You are not enemies. Men may be fellow citizens and yet hate one another, but

you are *friends*, you are all friends to Christ and in Him you are all friends to one another. Let that be another bond.

But you go farther—you are not mere friends, you are Brethren born of the same parent—filled with the same life. And shall not this be a bond? See that you fall not out by the way. Strive not one with another, for you are Brethren. This is not all. You are closer than this—you are members of the same body. Shall this mysterious union fail to be a bond of peace to you? Will you, being the foot, contend with the eye? Or will you, being the eye, contend with the hand and say, “I have no need of you”?

If it is, indeed, the Truth of God and not a fiction that we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones—because the joints and bones in other men’s bodies may not agree—let it never be said of the mystical body of our blessed Lord that there was such a monstrous thing in it! Let it never be said that the various parts would not co-work but fell to battling with another! I believe I have brought out the meaning of the text. There is a unity of the Spirit which is worthy to be kept—we ought to keep it—we must try to keep it in the bond of peace.

To come to the practical conclusion of the subject. First, in the connection of one Church with another. And secondly, in the connection of one Church member with another. It is not a desirable thing that all churches should melt into one another and become one. The complete fusion of all churches into one ecclesiastical corporation would inevitably produce another form of Popery since history teaches us that large ecclesiastical bodies grow more or less corrupt as a matter of course.

Huge spiritual corporations are, as a whole, the strongholds of tyranny and the refuges of abuse. And it is only a matter of time when they shall break to pieces. Disruption and secession must occur and will occur where a unity is attempted which is not meant in God’s Word. But it will be a blessed thing when all the churches walk together in the unity of the Spirit! When this Church, although it has been baptized into the Lord Jesus Christ and laments the neglect of that ordinance by others, yet feels that the unity of the Spirit is not to be broken and holds out its right hand to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

When yonder Church, governed by its elders, feels a unity with another Church which is presided over by its bishop. When a certain Church, which holds with mutual edification and no ministry, is yet not quarrelsome towards those who love the ministry of the Word! When, in fact, we have agreed in this one thing—that we will search the Word independently and act out according to our light what we find to be true—but having so done we will keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. I say this is most desirable and this, it is, that we are to seek after—not the fusion of all into one denomination! But the keeping of each Church in its own distinct independent testimony in love with every other Church that is doing the same.

Now, in order to this, I have a few suggestions to offer. It is quite certain we shall never keep the unity of the Spirit if this Church shall declare that it is superior to every other. If there is a Church which says, "We are the Church and all others are mere sects. We are established and others are only tolerated," then it is a troubler in Israel and must hide its head when the unity of the Spirit is so much as hinted at! Any Church which lifts up its head on high and boasts over other churches has violated the unity of the Spirit. If other churches reply, "One is our Master and all we are Brethren," they do not violate the unity of the Spirit, for they simply claim their rights and speak the Truth of God.

That other Church which forgets its true position as one in the family and begins to set itself up as mistress and claim pre-eminence over its fellow servants has put it out of its own power to keep the unity of the Spirit, for it has violated it once and for all. A Church that would keep the unity of the Spirit, again, must not consider itself to be so infallible that not to belong to its membership is sin. What right has any one Church to set itself up as the standard, so that those who do not join it are necessarily Dissenters?

It is true my Episcopal brother is a Dissenter—he dissents from *me*! It is true he is a Nonconformist, for he does not conform to *me*—I would not, however, call him by such names lest I should arrogate to my own Church to be the one true church and so should break the unity of the Spirit. If I turn to history I may believe that my Church can claim a long line of ancestors descending from the Apostles, without ever running through the Church of Rome. But shall I therefore call a Brother who does not quite see this succession, a schismatic and denominate his assembly illegal? If he is a schismatic because he does not come to *my* place, why am I not a schismatic because I do not go to *his*?

Well, but he divides the church! He ought to come and worship with me. Ought I not to go and worship with him? Ah, but we are the larger number! Are Divine things to be ruled by the majority? Where would the Church of God be any day if it came to polling? I am afraid the devil would always be at the head of the poll. We wish to keep the unity of the Spirit and if we have a little sister, we will treat her all the more kindly, owing to the fewness of her members. If I want to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," I must never call in the magistrate to force my Brother to pay for washing my surplice, ringing my bell and winding up my clock.

I must not tell my Brother that he is bound to pay for the support of my worship. "Oh," he says, "my dear Friend, I pay for the maintenance of the worship which I believe to be correct and I am quite willing that you should do the same for yours." I would voluntarily assist you if you were poor. But you tell me you will put me in prison if I do not pay and yet tell me to keep the unity of the Spirit? My dear Friend, it is not keeping the unity of the Spirit to take away my stool and my table and my candlestick,

and say you will put me in “limbo,” or hail me before an ecclesiastical court. You send the constable after me. And then if I say a word about it, you say, “Charity hopes all things.”

Yes, among the rest it hopes that you will give up your sin in this matter. If we should stand possessed of a piece of ground where we bury our dead, and if there should happen to come a member of another Christian Church who would wish to lay his poor dead baby in our ground, there being no other convenient spot anywhere and he asks the favor, I think we can hardly be thought to keep the unity of the Spirit if we tell him, “No, nothing of the kind! You had your child sprinkled, therefore it cannot be buried with us Christians! We will not have your sprinkled baby lying alongside our baptized dead.”

I do not think that is keeping the unity of the Spirit. And I do not think when some churches have turned from their graveyard gate the mourners who have brought an unbaptized infant—and the mourners have gone back weeping to their homes—I do not think such churches have been endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Again, if churches are to agree one with another they must not make rules that ministers who are not of their own denomination shall not occupy their pulpits. I should be ashamed of you, if you passed a resolution that no one dissenting from us should stand in my pulpit. But we know a church which says, “No matter how good a man may be. He may be a man as venerated as John Angell James, or he may have all the excellencies of a William Jay—we would not, perhaps, mind hearing him in a Town Hall—but into the sacredness of our particular rostrum these interlopers must not intrude.”

For, says this church, “Ours are ministers, yours are only lay teachers. Ours are sacraments—the cup of blessing which we bless is the blood of Christ and the bread which we break is the body of Christ—you have no sacramental efficacy with you. In fact, you are not a church, but only a body of schismatics meeting together to carry out what you think to be right. We tolerate you, but that is all we can do.” Where is the unity of the Spirit there?

My dear Friends, I received this text from one of the most holy men in the Church of England—if I expound it slightly for her benefit, he will, I trust, excuse me, for I do so in all honesty, desiring to aid him and many others in revision and reform. If this Church were in the same condition as the Church of England I would pray to be as plain in my remarks. I say it is an anachronism! It is a thing out of date for the nineteenth century for any one church in this land and that church the only one which defiles her hand by taking State pay, to stand up and say, “We are *the* church! Our ministers are *the* ministers! Our people are *the* people! And now, dear Brethren, shake hands and endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit of God.”

Why, it is preposterous! Let us meet on equal ground! Let us lay aside all pretences to superiority! Let us really aid and not oppress each other! Let us mingle in prayer. Let us unite in confession of sin. Let us join heartily in reforming our errors and a true Evangelical Alliance will cover our land! If any church will take the Bible as its standard and in the power of the Spirit of God preach the name of Jesus, there are thousands of us who will rejoice to give the right hand of fellowship with a hearty greeting to all such! We are striving every day to get other churches and ourselves more and more into that condition in which, while holding our own, we can yet keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!

Now, a few words to you in regard to your relationship to one another as members of the same church. If we are to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace in the same church, then we must avoid everything that would mar it. Gossip—gossip is a very ready means of separating friends from one another. Let us endeavor to talk of something better than each other's characters. Dionysius went down to the Academy to Plato. Plato asked what he came for. "Why," said Dionysius, "I thought that you, Plato, would be talking against me to your students."

Plato made this answer—"Do you think, Dionysius, we are so destitute of matter to converse upon that we talk of you?" Truly we must be very short of subjects when we begin to talk of one another. It is better far that we magnify Christ than detract from the honor of His members. We must lay aside all envy. Multitudes of good people liked the Reformation, but they said they did not like the idea of its being done by a poor miserable monk like Martin Luther. And so there are many who like to see good things done and good works carried on, but do not care to see it done by that upstart young Brother, or that poor man, or that woman who has no particular rank or state.

As a Church let us shake off envy! Let us all rejoice in God's light. And as for pride—if any of you have grown vainglorious of late, shake it off. I hope to exercise a ministry in this place which will drive out those of you who will not acknowledge your Brethren when they are poorer or of less education than yourselves. What if the man does mar the Queen's English when he talks—what does that matter, so long as his heart is right? As long as you can feel he loves the Master, surely you can put up with his faults of language—if he can put up with your faults of action. Then let us cultivate everything that would tend to unity.

Are any sick? Let us care for them. Are any suffering? Let us weep with them. Do we know one who has less love than others? Then let us have more, so as to make up the deficiency. Do we perceive faults in a Brother? Let us admonish him in love and affection. I pray you be peacemakers, every one of you! Let this Church go on as it has done for the last eleven years in holy concord and blessed unity. Let us remember that we cannot keep the unity of the Spirit unless we all believe the Truth of God. Let us

search our Bibles, therefore, and conform our views and sentiments to the teaching of God's Word.

I have already told you that unity in error is unity in ruin. We want unity in the Truth of God through the Spirit of God. This let us seek after it! Let us live near to Christ, for this is the best way of promoting unity. Divisions in churches never begin with those full of love to the Savior. Cold hearts, unholy lives, inconsistent actions, neglected closets—these are the seeds which sow schisms in the body! But he who lives near to Jesus—wears His likeness and copies His example—will be, wherever he goes, a sacred bond, a holy link to bind the Church together more closely than ever.

May God give us this and from now on let us endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. I commend the text to all Believers to be practiced through the coming year. And to those who are not Believers, what can I say but that I trust their unity and their peace may be broken forever and that they may be led to Christ Jesus to find peace in His death! May faith be given and then love and every Divine Grace will follow, so that they may be one with us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

NO. 982

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 26, 1871,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Unto every one of us is given Grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Therefore He says, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. (Now that He ascended, what is it, but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things). And He gave some, Apostles. And some, Prophets. And some, Evangelists. And some, pastors and teachers. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”
Ephesians 4:7-12

OUR blessed Lord and Master has gone from us. From the Mount of Olives, the place where in dread conflict His garments were rolled in blood, He has mounted in triumph to His Throne. After having shown Himself for forty days among His beloved disciples, giving them abundant evidence that He had really risen from the dead, and enriching them by His Divine counsels, He was taken up. Slowly rising before them all, He gave them His blessing as He disappeared. Like good old Jacob, whose departing act was to bestow a benediction on his twelve sons and their descendants, so before the cloud received our Lord out of their sight, He poured a blessing upon the Apostles, who were looking upward, and who were the representatives of His Church.

He is gone! His voice of wisdom is silent for us, His seat at the table is empty, the congregation on the mountain hears Him no more. It would be very easy to have found reasons why He should *not* have gone. Had it been a matter of choice to us, we should have entreated Him to tarry with us till the dispensation closed. Unless, perhaps, Divine Grace had enabled us to say—“Not as we will! But as You will,” we should have constrained Him, saying, “Abide with us.”

What a comfort to disciples to have their own beloved Teacher visibly with them! What a consolation to a persecuted band to see their Leader at their head—difficulties would disappear, problems would be solved, perplexities removed, trials made easy, temptations averted! Let Jesus Himself, their own dear Shepherd be near, and the sheep will lie down in security. Had He been here we could have gone to Him in every affliction, like those of whom it is said, “they went and told Jesus.”

It seemed expedient for Him to stay, to accomplish the conversion of the world. Would not His Presence have had an influence to win by eloquence of gracious words and argument of loving miracles? If He put forth His power the battle would soon be over, and His rule over all hearts would be forever established. “Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the

king's enemies, whereby the people fall under You." Go not from the conflict, You mighty Bowman, but still cast Your all-subduing darts abroad.

In the days of our Lord's flesh, before He had risen from the dead, He did but speak, and those who came to take Him fell to the ground! Might we but have Him near us, no persecuting hand could seize us. At His bidding the fiercest enemy would retire. His voice called the dead out of their graves—could we but have Him still in the Church His voice would awaken the spiritually dead! His Presence would be better to us than ten thousand Apostles, at least, so we dream. And we imagine that with Him visibly among us, the progress of the Church would be like the march of a triumphant army!

Thus might flesh and blood have argued—but all such reasoning is hushed by our Lord's declaration, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." He might have told us that His majestic Presence was expected by the saints in Heaven to complete their felicity. He might have said that for Himself it was fitting that after so long an exile and the performance of such stupendous labors He should rise to His reward. He might also have added that it was due to His Father that He should return into the bosom of His Love.

But, as if He knew that their trembling at His departure was mainly occasioned by fear for their own personal interests, He puts the consoling word into this form—"It is expedient *for you* that I go away." He has gone, then, and whether our weak understandings are able to perceive it or not, it is better for us that Jesus should be at the right hand of God than here corporeally in our assemblies below. Gladly would a hundred Bethanies entertain Him, a thousand synagogues would rejoice to see Him open the Scriptures.

There are women among us who would kiss His feet, and men who would glory to unloose the latches of His shoes. But He has gone away to the mountains of myrrh and the hills of frankincense. He no more sits at our tables, or walks with us on our highways. He is leading another flock to living fountains of waters, and let not His sheep below imagine that He has hurt them by His absence—unerring Wisdom has declared that it is expedient for us that He is gone.

This morning, instead of standing here gazing up into Heaven like the men of Galilee, deploring that we have lost our Lord, let us sit down in quiet contemplation and see if we cannot gather profit from this great thing which has come to pass. Let our meditations ascend the yet glowing trackway of our Lord's ascension—

***"Beyond, beyond this lower sky,
Up where eternal ages roll."***

We shall, by the Holy Spirit's aid, first consider, with a view to practical good, *the fact of His Ascension*. Secondly, *the triumph of that Ascension*. Thirdly, *the gifts of that Ascension*. And then we shall conclude by noticing *the bearings of that Ascension upon the unconverted*.

I. First, then, let our earnest thoughts gaze upward, viewing THE FACT OF THE ASCENSION. We lay aside all controversy or attempt at mere doctrinal definition and desire to meditate upon the Ascension with a view to comfort, edification, and soul profit. *It should afford us supreme joy to remember that He who descended into the lower parts of the earth has now, "ascended up far above all heavens."*

The descent was a subject of joy to angels and men, but it involved Him in much humiliation and sorrow, especially when, after having received a body, which, according to the Psalmist, was “curiously worked in the lowest parts of the earth,” He further descended into the heart of the earth, and slept as a prisoner in the tomb.

His descent on earth, though to us the source of abounding joy, was full of pain, shame, and humiliation to Him. In proportion, then, ought to be our joy that the shame is swallowed up in Glory—the pain is lost in bliss, the death in immortality. Did shepherds sing at His descent? Let all men sing at His rising! Well deserves the Warrior to receive Glory, for He has dearly won it! Our love of justice and of Him compels us to rejoice in His rejoicing. Whatever makes the Lord Jesus glad makes His people glad. Our sympathy with Him is most intense.

We esteem His reproach above all wealth, and we set equal store by His honor. As we have died with Him and were buried with Him in Baptism—we have also risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God who raised Him from the dead. So also have we been made to sit together in the heavenly places, and have obtained an inheritance. If angels poured forth their sweetest minstrelsy when the Christ of God returned to His royal seat, much more should we! Those celestial beings had but slight share in the triumphs of that day compared with us.

For it was a Man who led captivity captive, it was One born of woman who returned victoriously from Bozrah! We may well say with the Psalmist, in the sixty-eighth Psalm, to which our text refers, “Let the righteous be glad. Let them rejoice before God: yes, let them exceedingly rejoice. Sing unto God, sing praises to His name: extol Him that rides upon the heavens by His name YAH, and rejoice before Him.”

It was none other than Christ, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. It was the second Adam who mounted to His Glory. Rejoice, O Believers! As those who shout because of victory, divide the spoil with the strong—

***“Bruised is the serpent’s head,
Hell is vanquished, death is dead,
And to Christ gone up on high,
Captive is captivity.
All His work and warfare done,
He into His Heaven is gone,
And beside His Father’s Throne,
Now is pleading for His own—
Sing, O heavens!
O earth, rejoice!
Angel harp and human voice,
Round Him, in His Glory, raise
Your ascended Savior’s praise.”***

Reflect yet again that from the hour when our Lord left it, *this world has lost all charms to us*. If He were in it, there were no spot in the universe which would hold us with stronger ties. But since He has gone up He draws us upward from it. The flower is gone from the garden, the first ripe fruit is gathered. Earth’s crown has lost its brightest jewel, the star is gone from the night, the dew is exhaled from the morning, the sun is eclipsed at noon. We have heard of some who, when they lost a friend or favorite child, never smiled again—for nothing could supply the dreary vacuum.

To us it could not be that any affliction should bring us such grief, for we have learned to be resigned to our Father's will. But the fact that, "Jesus, our All, to Heaven is gone," has caused something of the same feeling in our souls. This world can never be our rest now—its power to content us is gone. Joseph is no more in Egypt, and it is time for Israel to be gone. No, Earth, my treasure is not here with you, neither shall my heart be detained by you. You are, O Christ, the rich treasure of Your people, and since You are gone, Your people's hearts have climbed to Heaven with You.

Flowing out of this is the great Truth that "*our conversation is in Heaven*, from where, also, we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Brethren, inasmuch as Christ is gone, our life is hid with Him in God. To Heaven our Head is gone, and the life of the members is there. Since the Head is occupied with things celestial, let not the members of the body be groveling as slaves to terrestrial things.

"If you, then, are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Our Bridegroom has gone into the ivory palaces. He dwells in the midst of His Brethren. Do we not hear Him calling us to commune with Him? Do you not hear His voice, "Rise up My love, My fair one, and come away"? Though awhile our bodies linger here, let our spirits even now walk the golden streets, and behold the King in His beauty.

Begin, O faithful Souls, today, the occupation of the blessed—praising God even while you linger below, and honoring Him—if not by the same modes of service as the perfect ones above, yet with the same obedient delight. "Our conversation is in Heaven." May you and I know what that means to the fullest. May we take up our celestial homestead rights, exercise our privileges and avocations as heavenly citizens, and live as those that are alive from the dead, who are raised up together and made partakers of His resurrection life.

Since the Head of the family is in Glory, let us, by faith, perceive how near we are to it, and, by anticipation, live upon its joys and in its power! Thus the Ascension of our Lord will remind us of Heaven and teach us the holiness which is our preparation for it. Our Lord Jesus Christ has gone from us. We return again to the thought. We cannot speak into His ears and hear His voice reply in those dear accents with which He spoke to Thomas and to Philip. He no longer sits at feasts of love with favored friends, such as Mary and Martha and Lazarus. He has departed out of this world unto the Father, and what then?

Why He has taught us by this the more distinctly, that *we must henceforth walk by faith and not by sight*. The Presence of Jesus Christ on earth would have been, to a great extent, a perpetual embargo upon the life of faith. We should all have desired to see the Redeemer. But since, as Man, He could not have been Omnipresent, but could only have been in one spot at one time, we should have made it the business of our lives to provide the means for journey to the place where He might be seen. Or if He Himself condescended to journey through all lands, we should have fought our way into the throng to feast our eyes upon Him, and we should

have envied each other when the turn came for any to speak familiarly with Him.

Thank God we have no cause for clamor or strife or struggle about the mere sight of Jesus after the flesh! For though once He was seen corporally by His disciples, yet now, after the flesh, we know Him no more. Jesus is no more seen of human eyes. And it is well, for faith's sight is saving, instructing, transforming—and mere natural sight is not so. Had He been here, we should have regarded much more the things which are visible. But now our hearts are taken up with the things which are not seen, but which are eternal.

This day we have no priest for eyes to gaze upon, no material altar, no temple made with hands, no solemn rites to satisfy the senses. We have done with the outward and are rejoicing in the inward. Neither in this mountain nor in that do we worship the Father, but we worship God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth. We now endure as seeing Him who is invisible—Whom, having not seen, we love. In Whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

In the same fashion, as we walk towards our Lord, so walk we towards all that He reveals. We walk by faith, not by sight. Israel, in the wilderness, instructed by types and shadows, was ever prone to idolatry. The more there is of the visible in religion, the more difficulty there is in the attainment of spirituality. Even Baptism and the Lord's Supper—were they not ordained by the Lord Himself—might be well given up, since the flesh makes a snare of them, and superstition engrafts on them baptismal regeneration and sacramental efficacy.

Our Lord's Presence might thus have become a difficulty to our faith, though a pleasure to sense. His going away leaves a clear field for faith. It throws us necessarily upon a *spiritual* life, since He who is the Head, the Soul, the Center of our faith, hope, and love is no more within the range of our bodily organs. It is poor believing which needs to put its finger into the nail prints. But blessed is he that has not seen and yet has believed! In an unseen Savior we fix our trust. From an unseen Savior we derive our joy. Our faith is now the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Let us learn this lesson well, and let it never be asked of us, "Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?" Let us never attempt to live by feeling and evidence. Let us banish from our souls all dreams of finding perfection in the flesh, and equally let us discard all cravings for signs and wonders. Let us not be like the children of Israel who only believed while they saw the works of the Lord. If our Beloved has hidden Himself from our sight, let Him even hide everything else, if it so pleases Him.

If He only reveals Himself to our faith, the eye which is good enough to see Him is good enough to see everything else, and we will be content to see His Covenant blessings, and all else with that one eye of faith, and no other, till the time shall come when He shall change our faith to sight. Beloved, let us further reflect *how secure is our eternal inheritance* now that Jesus has entered into the heavenly places.

Our Heaven is secured to us, for it is in the actual possession of our legal Representative, who can never be dispossessed of it. Possession is

nine tenths of the law, but it absolutely secures completely our tenure under the Gospel. He who possesses a Covenant blessing shall never lose it, for the Covenant cannot be changed, nor its gifts withdrawn. We are heritors of the heavenly Canaan by actual hold and sure title—for our legal Representative, appointed by the highest court of judicature—has entered into possession and actual occupancy of the many mansions of the great Father's house.

He has not merely taken possession, but He is making all ready for our reception and eternal inhabitation. A man who enters a house and claims it, if he has any question about his rights, will not think of preparing it for the inhabitants—He will leave any expenditure of that kind till all doubts are cleared up! But our good Lord has taken such possession of the city of the new Jerusalem for us that He is daily preparing it for us, that where He is, we may be also.

If I could send to Heaven some mere human being like myself to hold my place for me till my arrival, I should fear that my friend might lose it—but since my Lord, the King of Heaven and the Master of angels, has gone there to represent all His saints, and claim their places for them, I know that my portion is secure! Rest content, Beloved, and sing for joy as the Apostle's heart did when he wrote, "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance."

Further, if Jesus has gone into Glory, how successful must our prayers be! You send a petition to court, and you hope for its success—it is drawn up in proper style—and it has been countersigned by an influential person. But when the person who has backed your plea for you is himself at court, to take the petition and present it there, you feel safer still. Today our prayers do not only receive our Savior's imprimatur, but they are presented by His own hand, as His own requests.

"Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God," "let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need." No prayer which Jesus urges can ever be dismissed unheard—that case is safe for which He is Advocate—

***"Look up, my Soul, with cheerful eye
See where the great Redeemer stands.
The glorious Advocate on high,
With precious incense in His hands.
He sweetens every humble groan,
He recommends each broken prayer!
Recline your hope on Him alone,
Whose power and love forbid despair."***

Once more, though I feel this theme might detain us long, we must leave it, and remark further, that, as we consider Christ ascended, our hearts burn within us at the thought that *He is the type of all His people*. As He was, so are we, also, in this world. And as He is, so shall we, also, be. To us, also, there remains both a resurrection and an ascension. Unless the Lord comes very speedily, we shall die as He did, and the sepulcher shall receive our bodies for awhile. There is for us a tomb in a garden, or a rest in the Machpelah of our fathers.

For us there are winding sheets and grave clothes. Yet, like our Lord, we shall burst the bonds of death, for we cannot be held by them. There is a resurrection morning for us because there was a rising again for Him.

Death could as soon have held the Head as the members. The prison doors once taken away, post and bar and all, the captives are set free. Then, when we have risen from the dead at the blast of the archangel's trumpet, we shall ascend also, for is it not written that we shall be caught up together with the Lord in the air, and so shall be forever with the Lord?

Have courage, Brothers and Sisters! That glittering road up to the highest heavens, which Christ has trod, you, too, must tread. The triumph which He enjoyed shall be yours in your measure. You, too, shall lead your captivity captive, and amidst the acclamations of angels you shall receive the, "well done," of the ever-blessed Father, and shall sit with Jesus on His Throne, even as He has overcome and sits with the Father upon His.

I have rather given you suggestions for meditation than the meditations themselves. May the Holy Spirit bless them to you. And as you, in imagination, sit down on Olivet and gaze into the pure azure, may the heavens open to you, and, like Stephen, may you see the Son of Man at the right hand of God.

II. Let us advance to the second point, and dwell upon it very briefly—THE TRIUMPH OF THE ASCENSION. Psalmists and Apostles have delighted to speak upon our Lord's triumphal Ascension to the hill of the Lord. I shall not attempt to do more than refer to what they have said. Call to your minds how the Psalmist in vision saw the Savior's Ascension, and, in the twenty-fourth Psalm, represented the angels as saying—"Lift up your heads, O you gates. And be you lift up, you everlasting doors. And the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."

The scene is described in rich poetic imagery of the most sublime kind, and it evidently teaches us that when our Savior left the sight of mortals, He was joined by bands of spirits who welcomed Him with acclamations and attended Him in solemn state as He entered the metropolis of the universe. The illustration which has usually been given is, I think, so good that we cannot better it. When generals and kings returned from war, in the old Roman ages, they were accustomed to celebrate a triumph.

They rode in state through the streets of the capital, trophies of their wars were carried with them. The inhabitants crowded to the windows, filled the streets, thronged the housetops and showered down acclamations and garlands of flowers upon the conquering hero as he rode along. Without being grossly literal, we may conceive some such a scene as that attending our Lord's return to the celestial seats. The sixty-eighth Psalm is to the same effect—"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the Holy Place. You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive: You have received gifts for men; yes, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

So also in Psalm forty-seven—"God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." Angels and glorified spirits saluted our returning Champion! And, leading captivity captive, He assumed the mediatorial Throne amidst universal acclamations. "Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly triumphing over them in it."

Our Lord's Ascension was a triumph over *the world*. He had passed through it unscathed by its temptations. He had been solicited on all hands to sin, but His garments were without spot or blemish. There was no temptation which had not been tried upon Him—the quivers of the earth had been emptied against Him—but the arrows had glanced harmlessly from His armor of the Truths of God. They had persecuted Him relentlessly. He had been made to suffer all that cruel scorn could invent, but He came forth from the furnace with not the smell of fire upon Him.

He had endured death itself with love unquenched and courage invincible. He had conquered by enduring all. As He rose He was infinitely beyond their reach. Though they hated Him no less than before, He had been forty days among them and yet no hand was outstretched to arrest Him. He had shown Himself openly in various places, and yet not a dog dare moved his tongue. In the clear air, from far above the hills of Salem, He who was once tempted in the desert looked down upon the kingdoms of the earth, which had been shown Him by Satan as the price of sin, and reserved them all as His own by right of merit.

He rises above all, for He is superior to all. As the world could not injure His Character by its temptations, so no longer could it touch His Person by its malice. He has defeated altogether this present evil world. There, too, He led captive *sin*. Evil had assailed Him furiously, but it could not defile Him. Sin had been laid upon Him, the weight of human guilt was borne upon His shoulders, it crushed Him down—but He rose from the dead, He ascended into Heaven, and proved that He had shaken off the load and left it buried in His sepulcher. He has abolished the sins of His people! His Atonement has been so efficacious that no sin is upon Him, the Surety—and certainly none remains upon those for whom He stood as Substitute!

Though once the Redeemer stood in the place of the condemned, He has so suffered the penalty that He is justified now, and His atoning work is finished forever. Sin, my Brothers and Sisters, was led captive at our Immanuel's chariot wheels when He ascended. *Death* also was led in triumph. Death had bound Him, but He snapped each fetter, and bound death with his own cords—

***“Vain the stone, the water, the seal,
Christ has burst the gates of Hell.
Death in vain forbids His rise,
Christ has opened Paradise.
Lives again our glorious King!
‘Where, O death, is now your sting?’
Once He died our souls to save—
‘Where’s your victory, boasting grave?’ ”***

Our Savior's Ascension in that same body which descended into the lower parts of the earth is so complete a victory over death that every dying saint may be sure of immortality, and may leave his body behind without fear that it shall forever abide in the vaults of the grave. So, too, *Satan*, was utterly defeated! He had thought that he should overcome the Seed of the woman when he had bruised his heel, but lo, as the Conqueror mounts aloft, He breaks the dragon's head beneath His feet!

See you not the celestial coursers as they drag the war chariot of the Prince of the house of David up the everlasting hills? He comes who has fought the Prince of Darkness! Lo, He has bound him in iron fetters. See

how He drags him at His chariot wheels amidst the derision of all those pure spirits who retained their loyalty to the almighty King! Oh, Satan! You were worsted, then! You did fall like lightning from Heaven when Christ ascended to His Throne.

Brethren in Christ, *everything that makes up our captivity Christ has led captive*. Moral evil He has defeated. The difficulties and trials of this mortal life He has virtually overcome. There is nothing in Heaven, or earth, or Hell, that can be thought to be against us which now remains—He has taken all away. He has fulfilled the Law—its curse He has removed. The handwriting against us—He has nailed to His Cross. All foes of ours He has made a show of openly. What joy there is to us in this triumph! What bliss to be interested in it by the *gift* of faith in Him!

III. We may now turn to consider THE GIFTS OF THE ASCENSION. Our Lord ascended on high, and gave gifts to men. What were these gifts which He both received from God and gave to men? Our text says that He ascended that He might fill all things. I do not think this alludes to His Omnipresence—in that respect He does fill all things. But allow me to explain, as I receive it, the meaning of the passage by a very simple figure.

Christ descended into the lowest parts of the earth and thereby He laid the foundations of the great temple of God's praise—He continued in His life laboring, and thereby He built the walls of His temple—He ascended to His Throne, and there He laid the topstone amidst shouting. What remained, then? It remained to *furnish* it with inhabitants, and the inhabitants with all things necessary for their comfort and perfection.

Christ ascended on high that He might do that. In that sense the gift of the Spirit fills all things, bringing in the chosen, and furnishing all that is necessary for their complete salvation. The blessings which come to us through the Ascension, are “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

Observe next, that these filling blessings of the ascension are *given to all the saints*. Does not the first verse of our text say—“Unto *every one* of us is given Grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ”? The Holy Spirit is the particular benediction of the Ascension, and the Holy Spirit is in measure given to all truly regenerated persons. You have all, my Brothers and Sisters, some measure of the Holy Spirit. Some more. Some less. But whatever you have of the Holy Spirit comes to you because Christ, when He ascended up on high, received gifts for men, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

Every Christian having the gift of Christ in his measure is bound to use it for the general good. For in a body no joint or member exists for itself, but for the good of the whole. You, Brothers and Sisters, whether you have much Grace or little, must, according to the effectual working in you, supply your part to the increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. See that you regard your gifts in this light—trace them to Christ—and then *use them* for the object for which He designed them.

But to some persons the Holy Spirit is given more largely. As the result of the Ascension of Christ into Heaven the Church received Apostles—men who were selected as witnesses because they had personally seen the Sav-

ior—an office which necessarily dies out, and properly so, because the miraculous power also is withdrawn. They were needed temporarily, and they were given by the ascended Lord as a choice legacy. Prophets, too, were in the early Church. They were needed as a link between the glories of the Old and New Covenant.

But each Prophetic gift came from the Spirit through the Redeemer's ascent to Glory. There remain rich gifts among us, still, which I fear we do not sufficiently prize. Among men, God's richest gifts are men of high vocation, separated for the ministry of the Gospel. From our ascended Lord come all true Evangelists. These are they who preach the Gospel in various places, and find it the power of God unto salvation. They are founders of Churches, breakers of new soil, men of a missionary spirit who build not on other men's foundations, but dig out for themselves.

We need many such deliverers of the Good News where as yet the message has not been heard. I scarcely know of any greater blessing to the Church than the sending forth of earnest, indefatigable, anointed men of God—taught of the Lord to be winners of souls. Who among us can estimate the value of George Whitfield to the age in which he lived? Who shall ever calculate the price of a John Williams or a William Knibb? Whitfield was, under God, the salvation of our *country*, which was going down straight to pandemonium.

Williams reclaimed the islands of the sea from cannibalism, and Knibb broke the Negro's chains. Such Evangelists as these are gifts beyond all price. Then come the *pastors and teachers*, doing one work in different forms. These are sent to feed the flock. They abide in one place, and instruct converts which have been gathered—these also are invaluable gifts of the Ascension of Jesus Christ. It is not given unto all men to be pastors, nor is it needed. For if all were shepherds, where were the flock? Those to whom this Divine Grace is especially given are fitted to lead and instruct the people of God, and this leading is much required.

What would the Church be without her pastors? Let those who have tried to do without them be a warning to you. Wherever you have pastors or Evangelists they exist for the good of the Church of God. They ought to labor for that end, and never for their own personal advantage. Their power is their Lord's gift, and it must be used in His way. The point I want to come at is this—Dear Friends, since we all, as Believers, have some measure of the Spirit, let us USE it! Stir up the gift that is in you! Be not like he in the parable who had but one talent and hid it in a napkin.

Brother, Sister, if you are in the body the least known joint, rob not the body by indolence or selfishness, but *use* the gift you have in order that the body of Christ may come to its perfection! And if you do not have great personal gifts, serve the Church by praying to the Lord who has ascended to give us more Evangelists, pastors, and teachers. He, alone, can give them! Any that come without Him are imposters.

There are some prayers you must *not* pray—there are others you *may* pray—but there are a few you *must* pray. There is a petition which Christ has commanded us to offer, and yet I very seldom hear it. It is this one—“Pray you, therefore, the Lord of the Harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.” We greatly lack Evangelists and pastors. I do not mean that we lack muffs who occupy the pulpits and empty the pews. I

believe the market has for many years been sufficiently supplied with those! But we lack men who can stir the heart, arouse the conscience, and build up the Church.

The scatterers of flocks may be found everywhere. The *gatherers* of them—how many have we of such? Such a man at this day is more precious than the gold of Ophir. The Queen can make a bishop of the Established Church, but only the ascended Lord can send a bishop to the *true* Church. Prelates, popes, cardinals, vicars, prebends, canons, deans—the Lord has nothing to do with these! I see not even the *name* of them in His Word—but the very poorest pastor whom the Lord ordains is a gift of His ascending Glory.

At this moment we are deploring that in the mission field our good men are gray. Duff, Moffat and the like are passing from the stage of action. Where are their successors? I was almost about to say, Echo answers, Where? We want Evangelists for India, for China, for all the nations of the earth. And though we have many godly fathers among us who are instructors in the faith, yet have we in all our pastorates few of eminence who could be mentioned in the same day as the great Puritanical Divines.

If the ministry should become weak and feeble among us, the Church richly deserves it, for this, the most important part of her whole organization, has been more neglected than anything else. I thank God this Church has not only prayed for ministers, but has proved the sincerity of her prayer by helping such as God has called—by affording them leisure and assistance for understanding the way of God more perfectly. We have thought that Christ's gifts were valuable enough for us to treasure up and improve them.

Our College has now received and sent forth, in the name of Jesus Christ, more than two hundred ministers of the Word of God. Look around you and see how few churches care to receive the ascension gifts of Christ, and how few pastors encourage young men to preach. I read the other day, with unutterable horror, the complaint that our churches were likely to have too many ministers! That is an almost blasphemous complaint—impugning the value of Christ's Ascension gifts! O that God would give us ten times the number of men after His own heart, and surely there would be then a great lack of more!

But there are too many, say they, for the present pulpits. Oh, miserable Soul, is it come to this—that a minister of Christ must have a pulpit ready at hand? Are we all to be builders on other men's foundations? Have we none among us who can gather their own flocks? In a city of three million like this, can any man say that laborers for Christ are too many? *Loiterers* are too many, doubtless! And when the Church drives out the drones, who shall pity them? While there remain hundreds of towns and villages without a Baptist Church, and whole districts of other lands without the Gospel, it is idle to dream that of Evangelists and pastors we can have too many!

No man is so happy in his work as he who presides over a flock of his own gathering, and no pastor is more beloved than he who raised from ruin a destitute Church and made it to become a joy and praise in the earth! Pray the Lord to send true pastors and true Evangelists. Christ procured them by His Ascension. Let us not forget this. What? Shall it be

thought that the blessings of the Crucifixion are worth the having, and the blessings of the Resurrection worth receiving, but the blessings of the Ascension are to be regarded with indifference or even with suspicion?

No! Let us prize the gifts which God gives by His Son, and when He sends us Evangelists and pastors, let us treat them with loving respect. Honor Christ in every true minister—see not so much the man as his Master in him. Trace all Gospel success to the ascended Savior. Look to Christ for more successful workers. As they come, receive them from His hands. When they come, treat them kindly as His gifts, and daily pray that the Lord will send to Zion mighty champions of the faith.

IV. We shall conclude by noticing THE BEARING OF OUR LORD'S ASCENSION UPON SINNERS. We will utter few words, but full of comfort. Did you notice in the sixty-eighth Psalm the words—"He received gifts for men; *yes, for the rebellious also*"? When the Lord went back to His Throne He still had thoughts of love towards rebels. The spiritual gifts of the Church are for the good of the rebels as well as for the building up of those who are reconciled.

Sinner, every true minister exists for your good, and all the workers of the Church have an eye to you! There are one or two promises connected with our Lord's Ascension which show His kindness to you—"I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." An ascended Savior draws you—run after Him! Here is another word of His—"He is exalted on high." To curse? No! "To give repentance and remission of sins." Look up to the Glory into which He has entered—ask for repentance and remission. Do you doubt His power to save you? Here is another text—"He is able, also, to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them."

Surely He has gone to Heaven for you as well as for the saints! You ought to take good heart, and put your trust in Him at this happy hour. How dangerous it will be to despise Him! They who despised Him in His shame perished. Jerusalem became a field of blood because it rejected the despised Nazarene. What will it be to reject the King, now that He has taken to Himself His great power?

Remember that this same Jesus who is gone up to Heaven will so come in like manner as He was seen to go up into Heaven. His return is certain, and *your* summons to His bar equally certain. But what account can you give if you reject Him? O come and trust Him this day! Be reconciled to Him lest He be angry, and you perish from the way while His wrath is kindled but a little. The Lord bless you, and grant you a share in His Ascension. Amen, and Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE Sermon—
Psalm 68. 1-19; Ephesians 4:1-16.**

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THE HEAD AND THE BODY

NO. 2653

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, DECEMBER 17, 1899.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 6, 1882.

*“The head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”
Ephesians 4:15, 16.*

IF I had to preach fully and accurately upon all that is taught in this text, I would certainly need to deliver a course of sermons, say five or six at least! There is such a wonderful depth of meaning in these Inspired Words that I might keep on expounding them and all the while be as one who takes water out of the sea—always wondering that there is so much more left than I can possibly draw from it. One writer says that the sense of this passage is as “compacted” as the joints of which it speaks, and that remark is a very true one, for here we have thought compressed as by hydraulic pressure! There is any quantity of it packed into the smallest possible space.

Our translation of the words here used by the Apostle is not, in every point, absolutely accurate. I wonder whether one could be made that would be so? We would need a paraphrase rather than an exact rendering of the original, for such is the fullness of meaning that no one translation into our poor tongue could really convey all that the Holy Spirit intended to teach by the Greek words. They seem to totter and tremble beneath the burden of the massive thought they are meant to carry. I am, therefore, only going to preach a plain, simple sermon upon the passage as it appears in our Authorized Version, which, though it is not strictly and literally correct in this case, is, at any rate, quite according to the analogy of the faith—and can be abundantly supported by other passages of Scripture of similar import.

Turning to the text, we find that the Apostle was very anxious that the saints at Ephesus should be knit together, like the different parts of one body. Unity is not an easy thing to attain. Have you found it so in your own family? In many large families and even in small ones, there are sometimes most unfortunate jars and disagreements—and it is a happy household, indeed, that is wholly joined together as one body. Look at the world in general, in its various corporations, societies and associations, and see what disunion and discord are manifested everywhere! Half the newspapers are occupied with reports of the squabbles in the different vestries, or in the big vestry that meets in the House of Com-

mons—or the other one that assembles in the House of Lords. I suppose we would scarcely be men if we always agreed on all points. Certainly, there is plenty of division among us. We seem to remember the Tower of Babel and the dispersion, for our tongues are still confounded and we misunderstand one another! And what is more criminal, we often misrepresent one another and we are all too apt to forget our Lord's Words, "It must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!"

Paul was most anxious to have the Ephesian Church thoroughly knit together. And the chapter from which our text is taken is all about unity and how to maintain it. With his manacled hands, the prisoner of the Lord writes to beseech them to be truly one—to walk worthy of the vocation by which they were all called by the one Spirit of God. He entreats them, with all lowliness, meekness and long-suffering, to bear and to forbear with one another in love. He most touchingly and tenderly pleads his own imprisonment as an argument with them to endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." "By the remembrance of my bonds," he seems to say, "put yourselves into the blessed bonds of brotherly love." And then he adds, "There is one body and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Both in the inward creed and the outward confession of it they were all one—they were not divided on these points—so he begged them to be divided in nothing, especially as he was able to assure them that they had one God and Father, above all, through all and in all—and one Christ, the Savior of all!

When he reminded them that He who ascended up on high is the same Jesus who descended first into the lower parts of the earth, I think he intended to remind them of the continuity of the work of Christ—that it was the same Christ who both descended and ascended. There was no change in the Worker, for the one work was worked by the one Person, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Why, then, should we split up, divide and hold a hundred opinions as if Christ were divided? Paul tells us that when He ascended on high, He gave all sorts of officers that were necessary for His Church—Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists and so on—all for this purpose—"for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." It is this that the Apostle aimed at—that the saints should be one in Christ Jesus and then, remembering that one very frequent cause of division is the instability of many minds, he urged them to "be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."

But that they might know what they believed and not be driven away from it with every puff of wind. That they might not be misled and deceived by the sleight of men, by cleverness, by magicians who spirit the Truth of God away—as so many religious tricksters are continually doing nowadays, establishing lies and overthrowing the Truth by their magical deception—Paul seems to allude to the casting of dice when he speaks of "the sleight of men." And I am afraid that there are many people whose religion comes to them according to what they call, "luck." They hap-

pened to be born on a certain street and their parents attended a particular place of worship, so they believed what was taught there. But if the dice had fallen in some other way, they might have been Muslims, or Mormons, or Roman Catholics, or God knows what, for they have not any solid reasons for believing what they are supposed to believe! They hold it, as it were, by a kind of chance and they are quite ready to let it go if “chance” should so arrange.

The Apostle beseeches us to guard against this evil and to hold fast the faith, to be established in it and to know why we believe it, so that, “speaking the truth in love,” we may grow up in all things into Christ, who is the one and only Head of the Church and to whom every living member is vitally joined. Every man who is indeed, saved, is a part of Christ’s mystical body and he is to develop in harmony with the growth of the entire body until he and every other one joined with him in the living structure shall attain to the stature of a perfect man—the whole Church with its Head, Christ Jesus, becoming God’s mystic, “perfect man” to be glorified forever and ever!

You see, dear Friends, that even when I am only trying to introduce this great subject to you, I am overwhelmed with the vastness of it! There is a mint of meaning. There are masses of un-coined bullion in the heavenly treasury to which the Apostle brings us! It is impossible for me to set forth all the spiritual wealth which is revealed here, but I shall endeavor to point out four things which are brought to our notice in the text. First, *our union to Christ the Head*. Secondly, *our individuality*—“every joint”—“every part.” Thirdly, *our relationship to each other*—“joined together”—“that which every joint supplies.” And, lastly, our compact unity in the one Church of Jesus Christ “makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

I. First, then, Beloved, I have to speak to you concerning OUR UNION TO CHRIST. We cannot do better than begin with this great Truth of God—that Christ is the Head of His Church.

Hence, we learn, first, that union with Christ is essential to the life of His Church. Men sometimes lose a foot, or a leg, or an arm, or an eye, or an ear. It is very remarkable how a man may continue to exist after he has lost several of his limbs, but he cannot live if his *head* is taken away. Cut that off and the decapitated body is dead in an instant! So, Brothers and Sisters, the Church of God lives because Christ lives and its life is entirely derived from Him. If there were no Christ, there would be no Church. And if there is, anywhere, a body of professors without vital union to Christ, they are *not* a church! They may have the name of a church, but they are assuredly dead! The Spirit of God flows through Christ into the whole of His true Church, permeating every part of His wonderful mystical body. But the Spirit of God is first on the Head and in the Head—and then from Him the gracious unction of the Holy One descends to the entire body. Ask yourselves, dear Friends, whether you are joined to Christ. Do you belong to that Church which is really one in Christ—the true Catholic and Apostolic Church? By *Catholic*, of course, I mean *universal*—the one and only Church of the living God! All who are in Christ belong to His Church, but those who are out of Christ are outside the pale of His Church and if there is a church that is not in Him, it

is not Christ's Church at all! So you see that union with Christ is essential to the life of His Church.

Next, *union with Christ is essential to the growth of His Church.* Christ's Church must grow. We, as a Church, must seek continually to increase. A living Church is not like the building in which it meets—the material structure may never be enlarged—but if the Church is a living one, it keeps on growing. The true Church of Christ in the world is always advancing and multiplying. As the Apostle says, in our text, it “makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” But, Beloved, there is no edification except that which comes from Christ! He is the Church's true Teacher. He is the great Master Builder and it is by Him that the whole spiritual building is fitly joined together. We try to preach those Truths of God which are the nutriment of men's souls, but they do not nourish them because they come from us—they only nourish them as they come from Christ! If you want to grow in Divine Grace, you must get from Christ all that is necessary for your growth. Do not think that Christ begins the great work and then leaves you to finish it. Oh, no! He makes us alive and He *keeps* us alive. He strengthens and develops the life that He has given—all its force and power must come from Him. Need I remind you of this? Yes, for I find it necessary to remind *myself* and, therefore, I judge that I must also stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. Not a step heavenward, not in the least likeness to God, not to the smallest degree of holiness can you proceed apart from Jesus Christ your Head! Never forget this fact, simple though it is.

Further, *union to Christ our Head is also essential to our perfection.* Will a time ever come when a saint will be perfect in himself, apart from Christ? Never, for we are only perfect in Christ Jesus, or, as the Apostle puts it, “You are complete in Him.” Shall I ever get to be so holy that I can stand before God without my Mediator? Shall I ever have a spiritual beauty of my own which shall render the imputed righteousness of Christ unnecessary for me? Never! For even in our highest estate in Heaven, we shall still need to have our vital union with Christ perpetually maintained. He is the Head of the Church triumphant as well as of the Church militant! He will forever be the Head of the Church made perfect as surely as He is the Head of His poor, weak, feeble, but ever-growing Church on earth!

Remember one more point, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, and that is that union to *Christ the Head is essential to every member of His Church*—not only is it essential to the body as a whole, but to every member of that body in detail. It is no use for my little finger to have unity with my hand and my arm if that arm is not united to my body, and my body is not united to my head. So each Believer must be personally joined to Christ. Whether he is only comparable to a little finger, or is like the strong bone of the leg, he must equally be joined to the Head—the smallest member of the mystical body of Christ cannot live apart from the Head, nor can the largest member. All alike, both great and small, comely and uncomely, manifest or concealed, must draw their life from Christ the Head! You must do so, my Brother or my Sister in Jesus, and so must I—let us always keep this great Truth of God in memory—a

church that is only united in itself, but not united to Christ, is no living church at all.

You may attain to the unity of the frost-bound earth in which men and women are frozen together with the cold proprieties of aristocracy, but it is not the unity of life! Or you may get the union of mere worldly enthusiasm in which men are fused together like molten metal, but the fire, if it is not of God, though it creates a certain sort of unity, creates not that *living union which God designs and effects*. The one all-important question for each of us is, Do I love the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, there is between my soul and my Savior a living, loving, lasting union. And if we all love Him, then Christ loves all of us, and we are living in Christ and Christ is living in us—and this is that marvelous miracle of union between the Divine and the human which, when men see it, are astonished! They cannot see the union itself, but they can behold its effects, as our Lord said, “By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love, one to another.” This was Christ’s prayer for us, for in that great intercessory supplication of His, He pleaded, first, for His immediate followers and then He added, “Neither pray I for these, alone, but for them, also, who shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they, also, may be one in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.”

That is the first point in the text, and a very essential one, *our union to Christ the Head*.

II. From that I want to lead you, Beloved, as best I can, to the consideration of the second point, which is OUR INDIVIDUALITY.

The Apostle speaks of “every joint” and “every part.” We are many as well as one and it is a great Grace of God when men and women merge their individuality in the community of which they form a part. Remember, dear Friends, that you, by yourselves, are not the Church and you must not always keep on saying, “we,” if you are not doing anything at all in connection with it! You are yourself and you must look upon yourself as a distinct individual—your first care, in the sight of God—must be concerning yourself. The body is made up of many bones, sinews, muscles, veins, arteries and so on, and each one has its special place and function. And each of you has a particular position and office in the corporate body which is called by the name of the Church.

Think of your individuality and think of it thus. *See that you are really united to the body*. It does not matter how beautiful a member may be if it is not in the body, for it is not where it ought to be—and it is not where it will be of any service. There is an eye which has just been taken from a dead body. It lies on the operating table—what will you give for it? It is worth nothing and it must be put out of sight, for it is of no use. There is a finely-formed ankle, but it is useless apart from the rest of the body. How beautiful that leg is! Yes, but as it is not joined to a body, you must bury it out of sight. Now mark particularly what I am going to say and if any of you are wicked enough to misrepresent my words, on you will be the responsibility. This is what I say—*Nobody can possibly have spiritual life unless he is joined to the Church*. “Oh,” somebody says, “Mr. Spurgeon said that people had no spiritual life unless they were members of his church.” He did *not* say anything of the kind and he never

thought anything of the sort! “But he means that they must be members of the Baptist Church.” He does not mean anything of the sort! “Oh, but he means that they must be members of some visible church!” Well, we would have to talk a little while about *that* matter, but I did *not* say that and I did not mean it!

I believe that every Christian ought to be joined to some visible Church—that is his plain duty according to the Scriptures. God’s people are not dogs, otherwise they might go about one by one. They are *sheep* and, therefore, they should be in flocks. If I meet a man all by himself, snapping at everybody—I may be called uncharitable, but, I should hardly think that he was a sheep—I would be afraid that he was a dog. But when I see a man who consorts with his fellow men, feeds with them, takes delight in their company and with them draws near to the Great Shepherd of Souls, I say to myself, “I think he must be one of the sheep, for that is the way in which that animal always acts.” So, Beloved, you should go in flocks or companies—that is to say, you should be joined to some Christian Church.

But I was speaking just now of *the Church*. There is a Church which is the Church of Christ. I see it not, but it is visible to Him who bought it with His precious blood. The members of *that* Church are scattered up and down throughout all the world. Some are in this Church, some are in other churches, but Christ is causing that Church to grow up for Himself from the girlhood state, in which she now is, till she shall come to the measure of the perfect stature of what God designs her to be when she is ready to become “the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” This Church, chosen before all worlds, redeemed upon the Cross, quickened, fashioned and called out by degrees by the Holy Spirit and united to Christ, is the one of which you and I must be members, or else we shall be lost forever! See to it, then, dear Friends, that you are vitally joined to Christ’s Church and specially that you are united to Him who is the Head of it.

Next, *we must be careful to find and keep our true position in that body*. I call your attention to a point which may not seem to be as important as it really is. A body owes its beauty, comfort, healthfulness, happiness—perhaps its very life—to the position of the different members of which it is composed. Any book on anatomy will teach you that this is the case. There is no other place where our eyes could be but just where God has fixed them. Try whether you can find another position where your eyes could be so fitted for their work as where they now are. Our feet, with which we walk, are the best members to walk with and they are put in the proper place for that purpose. Suppose they were attached to our shoulders and we had to walk with them? I do not know how we would manage it. And if our hands were where our feet now are, it would be exceedingly awkward and difficult for us to use them. We would, indeed, be monstrosities rather than men if any part of us should be shifted from its present position! When men write romances about mythical beings, they describe hideous creatures whose heads are under their arms, or like the fabled Cyclops, with one eye in the middle of his forehead—but Christ’s Church is not a monstrosity! Mind that you do not act as though you thought that she was.

Try, dear Friends, to be in the body of Christ what you were meant to be. I have known some men who were very eager to preach. They have had wonderful gifts of dispersion, but no power to gather or hold a congregation together. They have fomented a quarrel within a month and split up the church into fragments in order to purge it from some fancied evil—and they have purged it till there is nobody left in it! They think that it is the wickedness of men which makes hearers unwilling to listen to them, whereas it is only their own folly. They, who might have been useful as ears, listening to somebody else, are altogether useless as a tongue! Do not get out of your position, Brother, if you are already in it. But if not, get into your right place as soon as you can and do there what the Lord would have you do. Some persons have a very great gift of finding fault with other people, but I do not know any place that God has arranged in the body for *that* particular faculty! It is a kind of disease or, rather, an evil spirit which needs to be cast out! If you who are thus afflicted would try to do something, yourselves, you would perhaps discover that while it is exceedingly easy to complain of others, it is more difficult to do your own work in such a way that people cannot justly find fault with you! Do, dear Friends, seek to have every joint and every part in their right place. Let every ligament and tendon of the body be just where it should be. If we were to put the doors of our houses where the windows now are—and to put the roof where the foundation stones are, we should have very strange houses—and you will not find a true Church of Christ unless every part of it is in its right place according to God's order and arrangement.

A third thing about our individuality is that *every part of the body should be careful of its own health*. If I happen to be only like a little finger in the body of the Church, it is a great pity that I should be ill, for the whole body will be affected. If my little finger is full of some evil complaint, it may cause great inconvenience to my whole system. Did you ever have a splinter in your hand and yet the rest of your body did not know that anything was the matter? Instead of that being the case, your finger has been of greater consequence to you than all the other parts of your body when it has once begun to smart and to be full of pain—and to swell and fester! Now, you little members, you can do any quantity of mischief if you like. It is possible for a Christian to have so little Grace, and so much sin, that he may cause pain to the entire Church of God. For people will point to the most obscure of you if you do wrong! They will say, "That is one of the people that go to the Tabernacle and no doubt they are all alike."

It is very unjust to say that we are all like the worst person we have among us. If we have one especially godly and gracious member, the world never says, "They are all like he." No, no! They say, "Ah, he is quite an exception! If they were all like he, then we would go there, too." But they take as their standard and test the most sickly and unhealthy in the whole flock. Therefore, I pray you, dear members of this Church, ask God to make each one of you healthy in spiritual things. Do not think you are of no importance. Never belittle yourself by saying, "It does not matter whether I pray, or whether I live near to God." It *does* matter, Brothers and Sisters, for it may give some of us the greatest pain if we see you be-

having unworthily or living inconsistently with your profession. Therefore let your individuality lead you to see, first, that you are in the Church. Next, that you are in your right position in the Church. And then, that you are a healthy member of the Church, which is Christ's body.

And, once more, *be careful of your growth for the sake of the whole body.* "Oh," you say, "I do not know that I need to *grow!* I have believed in Christ and I am saved—that is enough for me." But, my dear Friend, you *must* grow because the whole Church of Christ is to grow! Suppose that, when I was a lad, one of the bones of my arm had persisted in not growing. If all the rest of my body had been properly developed—what would happen if that particular bone did not grow? Why, I would have a short arm! Suppose that one of the bones of your leg had said to itself, "I am in the body and that is enough for me! I do not mean to grow any more." You would have had to go hopping through the world with one short leg all your life—and that would have been a very uncomfortable thing for you—you would probably have had great pain as well as inconvenience. So, if one Christian in the Church does not grow, he will give trouble to others, for the next Brother to him is growing and it makes matters very awkward when some advance and others do not. I would like to have a Church composed of effective soldiers—but I suppose that I shall never have that. Usually we have a certain number of lame folk among us.

We cannot leave them behind, yet they cannot fight in our ranks. We cannot do as Gideon did with his followers—send the faint-hearted ones home. No, they will stay with us and their inefficiency cuts off a certain number of those who would be good for fighting, for they are so ill that they need somebody to wait upon them and, perhaps, a third of the Church has to be employed in driving the ambulances and attending to the invalids. Then, when the battle begins to get hot and we need all our regiments to the front, there is a certain number of soldiers who cannot stand fire—they turn their backs and so bring shame upon the Church. I wish it were not so, yet it often is because all are not of one heart and one soul—there is not the living unity that there ought to be, for then all would grow at the same rate and the body, growing harmoniously, would be strong and beautiful—and in the day of conflict it would be able to vanquish the foe. Look, then, to this matter, each one of you. Laggards, come on! You that have been slothful, quicken your pace! You that have been sick and weary, may God restore and refresh you, so that the whole body may be healthy and vigorous. So much, then, about our union to Christ and our individuality.

III. Now for a few words about OUR RELATIONSHIP TO EACH OTHER.

The Apostle says a good deal here about joints—"That which every joint supplies." That expression conveys the idea of relationship and teaches us that *we are, in our desire and spirit, to be fitted to work with others.* This bone is so wisely constructed at this end that it fits into the next one and thus both work together. Our joints are very amazing things. This wrist joint is, perhaps, the most wonderful piece of mechanism in the world! The bones fit into each other so beautifully and work together so harmoniously. I know some Brothers who would make splendid men if all the rest of the people were dead, for they are very loving

and amiable to themselves. They would be just the sort of folk to become hermits—shut them up in a cave with a bucket of water and a loaf of bread—and all their virtues would shine out! They have taken the motto which our Scotch friends link with the thistle and which I might freely translate—“Nobody shall touch me without catching it.” Whoever comes near them, they are always upon their guard. They are sure that person means them no good, so they repel his advances at once.

When we get such people as that into a Christian Church, it is very awkward for the rest of the members. It is as if we had bones in our body without any joints to them—they grate against each other and constantly wear each other away when they come into contact. Now, dear Friend, if you are in a Church, try to make yourself a bearable person as far as you can. Keep your own peculiarities, if they are worth retaining, yet do not display them so as to make yourself obnoxious! And do not let everybody, or even *anybody*, if you can help it, be obnoxious to you. Perhaps you have some bone joints outside of you—if so, then pray God to make those joints fit into the persons that happen to be near you. In this wondrously complex body of Christ, we need to be jointed all over so that we may, in our various relationships, be to others just what Christ would have us to be!

Next, notice that the Apostle says that there is something “which every joint supplies.” So there is. Every joint supplies oil and if there were not any, it might be very awkward for the rest of the system. *In the Church of Christ, which is His body, we need the joint oil of love.* If you are traveling by railway, you will see, when an express train pulls up, that a man goes round and puts fresh grease into the box to keep the wheels from firing. What a wonderful machine our body is, for it puts the grease into its own box and keeps all the joints right without friction by supplying them with its own oil! There are some Brothers and Sisters, with whom I come in contact, who expect me to find all the joint oil for them, but even then they are often very trying. Yet I must not lose my temper, or be at all hard with them! Well, I can supply the oil for my own joints, but you must put the oil into yours, or else we cannot work well together.

Perhaps someone says that there is no love in the Church. Quite right, Brother. You mean that there is none in *you!* Your bones have no joint oil. But if you had your own measure of holy, hearty love to your Brothers and Sisters, I believe that you would find that some oil would exude out of them, for there are none of the bones of Christ’s body that are quite dry. There is some oil in them all, although you may not know how to get at it. And some bodies that are called strange are so reckoned because, perhaps, they are better than we are. But if we could get at them in the right way, we would find them to be full of love and we would rejoice that we knew them. Do let every joint, therefore, take care to supply its oil when it comes into contact with the next bone.

In this way, *we would aid the compactness of the body.* That is the expression in our text—“compactness by that which every joint supplies.” When all the bones work well together, they greatly assist the compactness of the body, for the muscles, tendons and so forth bind the whole together. The bones of the body are its strength and give it compactness—and so strengthen certain other parts of the system that are soft

and would give way if left to themselves. So, in every Church, when there is bad doctrine preached, there are certain pieces of flesh that seem to give way under the heretical touch. Yes, but you who are like the sturdy, stiff old bones that do not give way, you must just stand firm and steadfast in the faith, whatever is preached! Stand fast by the Truth of God under all opposition, for so you will give compactness and stability to the entire Church! I pray that we may always have, in this Christian community, a number of godly men and matrons who know what they know, so that when the younger sort are a little perplexed, they may go to them and say, "Tell us, dear Brothers and Sisters, are we right or wrong on these matters?" And they will say, "We have tasted and handled the good old Doctrines of Grace and we are afraid that you will go quite off the right lines if you accept these new notions. Therefore, cleave to the Truth which you have received." That is the way that the Church is made strong, by all the joints ministering the oil which holds it together, or helps to the harmonious working of all—the bones being themselves confirmed while strengthening others.

Besides that, *let every member offer his own services to the Church.* Let each one be doing what he or she can. No one minister, no 20 ministers, no elders, if there were a hundred, no deacons, if there were a thousand, could ever fulfill all the ministries of the Church! God has given Apostles, Evangelists, pastors, teachers and so forth to bring the Bread of Life to us. That is the outward feeding of the flock, but, then, each living person must take the food into himself—the Church must edify itself. There must go on, within the Church, the proper processes of digestion and assimilation of the Truth of God, the reception of and yielding to the Spirit of God by which the Church is built up by itself, as well as by all the external influences which God has prepared for its strengthening and increase.

IV. Now I must close, for our time has gone, by only a few sentences concerning OUR COMPACT UNITY AS A CHURCH.

The Church of God should be one, but not piled into one heap. It should be one in Christ Jesus by a living union. May I ask each one of you whether it is so? Is the life of God in you, dear Brother, dear Sister? If it is and you feel that it is the same life which is in the other members, then you have a unity of the most indestructible kind—one which never can be broken! This union must be a *growing* union. We ought so to grow continually as to love each other better and bear with each other more and more. It is often my prayer for this Church, when I am anxiously thinking of the great work here, that nothing may ever arise to divide us in spirit and in love to each other. It is, to my mind, a standing miracle that all these years [Almost 30 years.—EO.] we have been bound together in the unity of the Spirit and in the bonds of peace. But, for the years that are yet to come, shall we quarrel with one another? Shall there be a root of bitterness to spring up and trouble us? I see no trace or sign of it at present, but before it does appear, I beg of you, by the years in which we have worked together, by the blessings we have been made to see, by the benefits which God has given to thousands of souls by this Church, let us not tear this garment of Christ, let us not do anything in any way

by which our union may be marred. But let us be “compact by that which every joint supplies.”

I may be speaking to some friends who are a little out of temper with a Brother or Sister. Go and settle the difficulty at once. Resolve in your heart that you will settle it tonight if possible. If you have any disagreements, if there is any coldness at all between you, before you come to this Table, bury it all! Get closer to Christ and then get closer to one another—and may our blessed Lord, when He comes, find us all one in Him! We ask it for His dear name’s sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
1 PETER 1:1-12.**

Verses 1, 2. *Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.* How sweetly the Apostle is obeying his Master’s command, “When you are converted, strengthen your brethren.” This is the same Peter who once began to sink beneath the waves, yet now he is helping others to stand! This is the very Peter who denied his Master, but he begins his Epistle by acknowledging himself to be “an Apostle of Jesus Christ.” What wonders the Lord Jesus had worked for Peter by His Grace! It is no marvel, therefore, that he should say to others, “Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.”

3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.* And, truly, this is a blessing beyond all comparison or imagination, that we have been begotten again by the Divine Father unto a “living” hope, for that is a better rendering than, “lively.” Our first birth brought us into sin and sorrow, but our second birth brings us into purity and joy. We were born to die—now are we born never to die, “begotten again” unto a life that shall remain in us forevermore—a life which shall even penetrate these mortal bodies and make them immortal, “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

4, 5. *To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.* Joy, my Brothers and Sisters, in the glorious inheritance which is prepared for you—unstained, uncorrupted, perfectly pure and, therefore, to last forever because the elements which produce decay are not in it! It is without sin and, therefore, it shall be without end. What a mercy it is to be “kept by the power of God”! See, Heaven is kept for us and we are kept for Heaven! Heaven is prepared for us and we are prepared for Heaven! There is a double action of God’s Grace thus working in us and working for us unto eternal bliss!

6. *Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations.* Or “trials.” Some people cannot comprehend how a man can greatly rejoice and yet be in heavi-

ness at the same time. But there are many things, in a Christian's experience, that cannot be understood except by those who experience them! And even they find many a mystery which can only be expressed by a paradox. There are some who think that God's people should never be heavy in spirit, but the Apostle says, "Now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness." He does not say, "If need be, you are in manifold trials," but, "If need be, you are in heaviness *through* manifold trials," for the "need be" is as much for the depressed spirit as for the trials themselves.

7, 8. *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it is tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* And does not the joy agree well with the Object of it? Paul said, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." And Peter, speaking of the same Savior, says, "In whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

9-11. *Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the Prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.* Do you wonder if, sometimes, you find in the Bible a Truth which you cannot quite comprehend? You ought not to marvel, for even the Prophets, who prophesied of the Grace which has come to us, did not always fully understand their own messages! I am sure that their Inspiration was verbal because the Inspired men frequently did not, themselves, know the meaning of what they were moved to write.

12. *Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you which the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.* See the kind of preaching that we should all desire to hear and that all God's ministers should aim at? "Them that have preached the Gospel unto you which the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven." Nothing but a Gospel full of the energy of the Holy Spirit and set on fire by Him can effect the eternal purposes of God! And this is the kind of preaching that will live and that will also make men live! God send it to every Church and congregation throughout the world! Amen.

—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.**

TRUE LEARNING NO. 2719

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MARCH 24, 1901.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 20, 1880.**

***“But you have not so learned Christ, if, indeed, you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus.”
Ephesians 4:20, 21.***

THE first two words of our text call attention to the distinction which must always be drawn between true Christians and other people, “But you.” The Apostle had been writing concerning other Gentiles and the evil lives they lived, so, to the Believers at Ephesus, he said that they were not to walk as unbelievers ordinarily did. Thus we learn at the very opening of our subject that if we are, indeed, Christians, there is a manifest distinction between us and the men of the world. I may be told that, of course, there was a great contrast between Christ’s followers and the heathen who lived in the Apostle’s day. And some persons will, perhaps, say that we cannot expect that there should now be the same difference between Christian men and unbelievers. I reply that there may be a variation as to the outward form of that contrast, but, essentially, it must be quite as true and real.

Someone was asking, the other day, how it was that the church, nowadays, was not so separate from the world as it used to be, and one who heard the question suggested that, possibly, the world had grown better. But someone more truly said that, probably, the church had grown worse. There are two ways of our coming together—the world may rise to our proper height, or we may descend to the world’s level. Well, now, I am quite certain that candor requires us to say that, in some respects, the condition of society is much better than it was. There are some of the grosser vices which were common enough 50 years ago, which are now held in general reprobation. To a very considerable extent, Christianity has leavened society. Men are not, as a rule, so coarsely vicious as they were in the days of our grandfathers, yet after making all the abatement I possibly can on that score, I cannot help feeling that the difference between the church and the world has been mainly changed by the church coming down from what it used to be! I wish we were as liable to be called fanatics as the first Methodists were simply because men judged us to be as earnest as they were. I would be glad if we were as worthy to be called Puritans as were the men of the days of Dr. John Owen and Oliver Cromwell. For my part, I think that, nowadays, we are

not Puritan enough, or precise enough and, without any hesitation, we may make the assertion, which we are sure God's Word will support, that whatever improvements there may be in the world, there must always be a marked distinction between the children of God and the seed of the serpent! There can never be a time in which death and life will be exactly alike, nor a season in which darkness will be the same thing as light. We must still, to the end of the chapter, be either born of God, born from above, or else continue to lie under the power of Satan. We must either be dead in trespasses and sins or else be quickened by Divine Grace. We must either have passed from nature's darkness into God's marvelous light, or else we are still abiding in that darkness!

You must also remember, my Brothers and Sisters, whoever you may be, that if there is no distinction between you and the world around you, you may be certain that you are of the world, for, in the children of God there must always be some marks to distinguish them from the rest of mankind so that we can contrast them with the ungodly, and address to them the words of our text, "But you have not so learned Christ." There is a something in them which is not to be found in the best worldling. Something which is not to be discovered in the most admirable carnal man. A something in their character which can be readily perceived and which marks them as belonging to another and higher race—the twice-born, the elect of God, eternally chosen by Him and, therefore, made to be choice ones through the effectual working of His Grace. Note this fact at the very commencement of our meditation, that there is a clear distinction between Christians and all other people.

Further, it appears from the text that the great means of this distinction is our being made into disciples to be taught of God, for the Apostle says, "But you have not so learned Christ." So that it is something which we have *learned* that makes us different from the rest of mankind. In our spiritual life, the first essential is conversion. This great change is like the turning of the helm which makes the boat head up in a new direction. But conversion is not everything. After the boat is turned, it has to be rowed, or else it will drift down the stream. If a man becomes Christ's disciple by conversion, he must remain Christ's disciple throughout the rest of his life by sitting at his Master's feet and receiving instruction from Him, for it is only as we are taught of God that we shall be able to keep up the high spiritual distinction between ourselves and the rest of mankind. We are under the tutorship of the Holy Spirit—He has taken us into His school—He has already taught us something—He is now teaching us more and He will keep on teaching us more and more till we shall know even as we are known.

I want, at this time, as His Divine power rests upon me, to try to speak a little, first, upon *our lesson*. "You have not so learned Christ." Secondly, I will say something upon *how we have not learned that lesson*. "You have not so learned Christ." And then, thirdly, I will endeavor to tell you *how we have learned it*. We have learned it in this fashion—"If, indeed, you have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus."

I. First, then, we are to think about THE CHRISTIAN'S LESSON. "You have not so learned Christ."

It is a very uncommon expression which the Apostle here employs, for it is not usual to *learn a person*, yet Paul says, "You have not so learned Christ," by which he did not mean merely learning the doctrine of Christ. Many a man knows what Christ taught and yet has not learned Christ. He has read the Bible. He may even have studied it, after a fashion, and may know what orthodox doctrine is so that he does not care to hear any other—he could stand up and tell you very correctly what the teachings of Jesus Christ are, yet he has not learned Christ. It is quite right that we should learn the teachings of Christ and value every word that He has spoken. Still, that is not the main lesson that the Christian has to learn.

Nor is it merely learning Christ's precepts, for we might learn them all and yet not have learned the one lesson that is essential to our Christian life—to learn Christ. Some men are very earnest, and rightly so, to learn all the ceremonies that Christ has taught us. There are not many of those ceremonies and people make great mistakes concerning them, notwithstanding their earnest zeal to be correct. But, supposing a man should know all about Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to their Scriptural mode and meaning—still, that is not the lesson spoken of in the text! Neither doctrines, nor precepts, nor ordinances will suffice as the life-lesson of a Christian—it is the blessed Person of our Lord that we must learn!

Paul also meant a great deal more than merely learning about Christ. I think the distinction will readily strike you. A man may know much about Christ—whose Son He is, what work He came to do, what He is still doing and what He will yet do at His glorious appearing—he may have sufficient understanding about Christ to be able to be a teacher of others and to be reckoned a theologian. And yet, for all this, he may never have learned Christ. That is quite another thing. I know much about many people as far as their history can be known by a stranger to them, yet I do not know them. I have never spoken to them, I have never even seen them. There are many persons, I am sure, of whom you can truly say that you know everything that can be known about them, for their whole career in so well known and you have been told so much concerning them—yet you do not know them. To use Paul's word, you have never "*learned*" them. Beware, then, of being satisfied with knowing *about* Christ, for the life-lesson of a Christian is to *know* Him—to *learn* Him. What does this mean?

It means, first, that you and I must *know Him as a personal Christ*. We must know Him as being a real Savior, actually existing, to whom we have come, with whom we have spoken and who has spoken to us—and of whose existence we can have no doubt because we know Him and are known of Him. It does not mean that He is so little known to us that we can just detect and discover Him, but that we have so learned Him that we *know* Him—know His heart, know His voice, know that secret of the Lord which only He can reveal and which He tells to none but those who are truly His own. This is the very essence of true religion—personally

living with a personal Savior, personally trusting a personal Redeemer, personally crying out to a personal Intercessor and receiving personal answers from a Person who loves us and who manifests Himself to us as He does not unto the world. To many people, Christ is only a name to bow at, not a Person to embrace. To some, Christ is merely the name by which they designate their religion, such as it is. But to us, Beloved, I trust that He is much more than a name—"a living, bright reality," who abides with us and in whom we also abide.

Next to this realization of His personality and the entering into communion with Him, learning Christ means *knowing His Nature*. As long as we have known Christ, we have known that He is Divine. Indeed, many of us knew that before we really and savingly knew Him. Since we were little children we never had any question about Jesus Christ being "very God of very God" and if anybody had called us Socinians or Unitarians, we would have been deeply grieved, because we always held the doctrine of His Divinity. But now we know that He is God, for "His eternal power and Godhead" have been proved in our spirit. He has taken away from us a mass of sin which none but God could have removed. He has breathed peace into us, even the peace of God which passes all understanding. He has helped us when we have been staggering under a burden too heavy for us to bear—He has borne it for us as none but God could have done. Our Lord Jesus has not only revealed Himself to us, but He has also made our true selves known to ourselves by that Omniscient power which dwells in none but God! And we have said to Him as emphatically as Thomas did when he put his finger into the print of the nails, "My Lord and my God." I never care to read any arguments about the Deity of Christ—I would as soon think of reading a book which sought to prove the existence of my mother! This is a matter which I know for myself. I have tried it and proved it—and felt its power.

As to the Humanity of Christ, beloved Friends, we always knew that He was Human. I suppose that none of us ever had a doubt about that as a matter of head knowledge, but now we know Him to be Human because we have been with Him. He has felt for us as none but a Brother born for adversity could feel. He has looked at us, sometimes, in our griefs, with such eyes as no angel ever had! And only such a wondrous Person as the Son of Mary, the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, would have given us such a look as we have received from Him. And He has spoken home to our heart, words of such matchless tenderness as only one who was akin to us, and who had been tempted in all points like as we are could even have invented and uttered to us. Just as truly as we know Him to be God, we also know Him to be Man. It is not now to us a matter of only doctrine—it is not a matter needing to be proved—we do not now desire even Scriptural proof, for we have seen Him, ourselves! We have spoken with Him personally and now we not only believe His Word, but our own heart has proved and tested beyond all question that He is Emmanuel—God With Us! I hope I have made plain the distinction between knowing doctrinally that Christ is God and Man, and *personally learning* Him in His combined Nature.

The next part of the lesson we have to learn is *to know Christ in His various offices*. Did they not tell us, in our first Sunday school, that Christ is Prophet, Priest and King? Yes, and from our childhood's days we believed that He was all that. But now, Beloved, many of us know that He is a Prophet, for, as I have already observed, He has read our hearts and He has told us things that none but a Prophet of God could know. He has revealed the condition of our hearts to us. He has shown us our sins. He has discovered our needs and He has also supplied those needs and restored peace to us, and brought us to Himself, and revealed to us the Truth of God as we were able to bear it.

We also have no question concerning His priesthood. We always did believe in it, but now we have learned it in another fashion. Not long ago some of us stood covered with filth from head to foot, and we heard one sing—

***“There is a Fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins.
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains”—***

and we came to that Fountain and were plunged beneath that flood, and we lost all our guilty stains. By faith we saw the Lord Jesus as our great High Priest, standing at the altar, and offering Himself as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world! And now that He has taken away our sins, and our conscience has a sweet rest, in a sense, of acceptance in the Beloved, we have learned Christ's Priesthood not only out of the Book, but because the blood of His Atonement has been sprinkled upon us! God has seen the blood and has passed over us. The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, has cleansed us from all sin. That blood has brought us near to God and, at this very hour, it is speaking to our heart better things than the blood of Abel ever spoke! And thus we have learned Christ as our Priest.

It is the same with His Kingship. Some of us never doubted that Christ is a King. We were brought up to believe it, but, in a much higher sense, we feel Him to be our King now. We have bowed our willing neck to His gracious rule and we can feel Him reigning over our stubborn but subdued lusts which would never have been conquered, and we ourselves would never have been led into happy captivity except through His gracious Sovereignty. And now we rejoice that within our spirit we have learned Christ for ourselves, and we know Him as “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.”

Dear Hearers, can you follow me in all this? Do you know anything experimentally concerning what I have been saying? Perhaps some of you do not—and that is not altogether surprising, for there is many “a master of Israel,” like Nicodemus, who knew not these things. It is one thing to be a fluent talker about theological truths, but it is quite another thing to know Christ *personally*, to lay hold of Him by faith so as to be able to say, “I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine; let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Your love is better than wine.” Where that declaration is true, there is more in it than in all the eloquence of Demosthenes and Cicero! Doctors of divinity may know many things and

yet not have learned Christ. But he who has learned Christ has been taught of God.

This blessed instruction will go still further, dear Friends, when we come to *know Christ as to His Character*. frequently I advise you all to read the life of Christ as it is recorded by the four Evangelists. That is the best, “Life of Christ,” that was ever written, or ever will be! And all the rest of the “Lives of Christ” might as well be burnt, for you can get a better idea of Christ’s life from the four Gospels than from all other books put together! If you read aright the life of Christ as it is recorded in the Inspired Word, you will be struck with it and delighted with it. And if you are a candid person, you must be charmed with it. But you will never truly learn it until God the Holy Spirit renews your own heart and teaches you to love it—and makes you to be like Christ Himself was!

A man has not learned writing till he can write, and a man has not fully learned Christ till he lives like Christ—and that fact puts many of us on a very low form in the school of the Divine Teacher. If a man wants to learn a trade, he will have to do a great deal beside walking in and out of a workshop and seeing how everybody else does certain things. He who properly learns a trade must learn it himself by practically working at it. And he who really learns Christ’s Character is the man who *has* Christ’s Character—there is at least something of likeness to Christ about him. I hope I can say of many here present that they are learning Christ, and that they have learned Christ so that, in one point and another, there is something about you which should make men say, “They have been with Jesus”—“they have learned Him.” He who lies down in beds of spices will smell of their sweetness. And he who lives with Christ will soon catch the savor of Christ! This is what we are aiming at—to learn how to write as Christ did, imitating both the upstrokes and the down strokes that are in the perfect copy—to learn the trade and business of holiness after the manner in which Christ carried it on while here below! There will be, doubtless, many flaws and imperfections in our imitation of Him, but still, we shall have learned something of the sacred art of doing our Father’s business and giving ourselves up wholly to His Glory. I pray that we may all practically learn Christ in this way.

When that comes to pass and we know the Character of Christ, we then come to *know the sweet influences of Christ’s Person*. Knowing Him, we see what charms there are in Him and what power He has over human beings under all manner of circumstances. Did you ever feel Christ’s power to break the heart? You have not learned Him till you know that, for He has a way of speaking in such loving tones that the heart seems broken all in pieces. Have you ever learned His power to heal the heart that He has broken? Do you know it for yourself? Has your poor broken spirit, bleeding from a thousand wounds, suddenly found an effectual remedy for its impending destruction and rested in peace? Oh, what charms there are in Christ to all true Christians! If you have ever really learned Him, you know how He can take you up out of the cold world where you are lying freezing at His door, and lift you right inside where the fire is brightly burning—and fill you with intense delight!

You know how, when you are creeping along the road, He can come and bear you up as on eagle's wings and how, when you can scarcely stir a foot towards Heaven, He can, all of a sudden, make your soul like the chariots of Amminadib. Have you ever felt such raptures as Paul experienced when he was caught up to the third Heaven and did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body? Have you ever felt that influence of Christ which makes a man's life to become sublime and causes his every action to become something far beyond what mortal man unaided could ever perform? Have you ever known what it is, through the power of Christ, to sit with Him in the heavenly places and from that altitude to look down on all the world and to utterly despise it as thing for babes to play with, or as a fool's bauble, while you have revelled in the eternal glories and the infinite bliss that God has prepared for you? Read Rutherford's letters and if you have a spiritual understanding, you will say, "This man had, indeed, learned Christ." He was like a harp, responsive to Christ's lightest touch. His Master did but lay His hand upon the string, and the music came out at once! But you and I are often like an untuned harp—even our Lord's hand brings no music out of us because we are not in a fit condition. Oh, that we might all truly know Christ and the power of His Resurrection—yes, and the power of His glorious Second Coming—and the power of His spiritual Presence when He draws near to us in all His love and Grace!

So, dear Brothers and Sisters, learning Christ really comes to this—personal acquaintance with Christ, personal knowledge of His Nature and His offices, a personal experience of His power over the human heart, a personal knowledge of Him by the surrender of yourself to Him and, by His coming to incorporate you with Himself till, as it were, Christ shall live in you, and you shall live in Christ, and you two shall be one henceforth and evermore! There is a great deal more in this subject than I can bring out of it, but I must leave this part of it with you for your quiet meditations.

II. Now, secondly, and very briefly, the Apostle says something about HOW WE HAVE NOT LEARNED OUR LESSON. "You have not so learned Christ."

There are some people who say that they have learned Christ, *yet they remain just as they were before*. They say that they are Christians, yet their lives give the lie to their language. They walk as other Gentiles walk, yet they go to godly assemblies and they sing pious hymns. But, Beloved, "you have not so learned Christ"

Some even profess to have learned Christ *so as to make an excuse for their sin* out of the very fact that He is so ready to pardon. They think that sin is a small matter and that it will have no serious consequences—"but you have not so learned Christ." We never hated sin as much as we have since we learned what it cost our Lord to put it away. There are some who say that they have learned Christ, *yet they never obey Him nor serve Him, nor try to imitate Him*. "You have not so learned Christ." God save us from a dry doctrinal knowledge of Christ! God save us from any kind of knowledge of Christ which is not in connection with true saving

faith in Him and with a practical obedience to Him! There are some who talk much of what they know concerning Christ, who even commit sin in His name. We have nations marching to battle to kill and plunder and murder in the name of Christ! What did the Spaniards do, in years gone by, with the Indians, but plunder and slaughter them professedly in the name of Jesus Christ? And there are some, in nominally Christian countries today, who act in the same fashion! The Lord have mercy upon them! “But you have not so learned Christ.”

We have met with some people who imagine that *they cannot have their sin conquered*. They think that they will be saved, but that sin is to have the mastery over them—but we have not so learned Christ. We have learned Him after this fashion, that we desire to be perfectly like He, and we believe that we shall be. We are aiming at this, and asking Him, by His Spirit, to change us into His own image from glory unto glory. And we are looking forward to the day when we shall see Him as He is, and shall be altogether like He. When a man enters a room where the walls are covered with mirrors, he sees his own likeness reproduced on all sides—here, and there, and there, and there—so is it with Christ in Heaven. All the saints reflect His image and He sees Himself in them all. This is their glory and it is also His Glory that He has given His image to them and it is that image which we desire to reproduce even now.

Beware, dear Friends, of trying to learn Christ in any other way but this practical way of which I have been speaking. Never be satisfied with a theoretical knowledge of Christ, nor with mere head knowledge of Christ, nor with a hypocritical knowledge of Christ.

III. Now, in the third place, we will notice HOW WE HAVE LEARNED CHRIST.

I call your particular attention to the latter part of the text. “If, indeed, you have heard Him.” *We must be taught by Christ and by the Holy Spirit.* Dear Brothers and Sisters, do you say that you know Christ, that you have learned Christ? Tell me *how* you have learned Him. “I heard our minister preach.” Yes, yes, but did you hear Christ? The only way of learning Christ is this—“If, indeed, you have *heard* Him.” You never know Christ by merely hearing men, you must hear Christ Himself! Do you not remember His own words, “My sheep hear My voice”? They not only hear the voice of the under-shepherd, but they hear the voice of the Chief Shepherd, the Good Shepherd, that Great Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep! And you never can know Christ unless you have thus heard Him speaking personally to you. You must regard the various sayings of Christ, recorded in this Book, not merely as things written in the Bible, but as the very words of the living Christ spoken afresh to you each time you read them—just as though they had never been uttered before.

Perhaps you say, “Well, Sir, all I know of Christ, I have learned from the Bible.” It is quite right that it should be so, but how did you read the Bible? Did you merely become familiar with the letter of it and get what you could out of it by your own wit and wisdom? Then you have not yet learned Christ, for it is only as the Holy Spirit shall make the printed let-

ter to be the very voice of Jesus Christ, Himself, to you that you will ever truly know Him. I do not see how I am to know a man to whom I have never spoken and who has never spoken to me. He may pass my house day by day yet if we never speak to one another, I cannot get to know him. A certain philosopher once said, "Speak, and I shall see you." So we may say to the Lord Jesus Christ, "Speak to me, Lord, and then I shall know You." None but Christ can manifest Christ. You cannot see the sun except by its own light—neither can you see Christ except by His own light, that is, by the Holy Spirit.

Now notice the next sentence. "And have been taught by Him." The Greek is "in" Him—"and have been taught in Him." That is to say, *the only way of learning more of Christ is by being in fellowship with Him*. It very frequently happens to me that somebody calls to see me professing to have a message from God to deliver to me. It is usually some crack-pot individual or other who is not quite right in the upper story. But I will not receive messages that come in that fashion—if the Lord wants to say anything to me, He knows where I live! I feel inclined to talk to these people as John Bunyan did to the Quaker who went to Bedford Jail and said to him, "Friend Bunyan, the Lord has sent me with a message for you, and I have been over half of England trying to find you." "No," said honest John, "you are telling a lie, Friend, for if the Lord had sent you to me, He would have directed you straight here. I have been in this prison for the last 12 years and He has known all the time where I was."

These roundabout, cross-country messages do not come from Christ at all. We learn Him by being with Him. Is it not said that if you want to know a man, you must live with him? Mr. Whitefield was once asked the character of a certain person, but he replied, "I cannot tell you." "Why not?" the enquirer asked. "Because I have never lived with him. After I have lived with him for a while, I shall be able to tell you what I think of him." So, if you want to know the Lord Jesus Christ, you must live with Him! First He must Himself speak to you and, afterwards, you must abide in Him. He must be the choice Companion of your morning hours. He must be with you throughout the day and with Him you must also close the night. And as often as you may wake during the night, you must say, "When I awake, I am still with You." There is no way of fully learning Christ except by being perpetually with Him.

I should suppose that a man who has been in Heaven five minutes, actually beholding Christ, knows more of Him than the most instructed member of the assembly of divines ever learns here below! Oh, how much we shall learn of Christ in our first glimpse of Him! Oh, that these eyes could behold Him even now! Some people talk and write a great deal about what we shall see in Heaven, but I do not pay much heed to what they say. It will be a long while before I shall want to take my eyes off my Savior. I agree with Dr. Watts in that verse which we have often sung—

***"Millions of years my wondering eyes
Shall o'er Your beauties rove
And endless ages I'll adore
The glories of Your love."***

We shall learn Christ faster there than we can here because we shall always be with Him and we shall see Him as He is.

The last part of the text says, “and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus.” There is no word, “the,” in the original, it is “as truth is in Jesus.” That is to say, we must truly know Christ as Truth, and *it should be our desire to know truth even as it is in Him*. Truth is fully in Christ, so we must seek to know it fully. Truth is also in Christ, practically—it is embodied in Him. Truth in Christ was not a mere philosophy, not simply dry doctrine—He lived the truth, yes, He *was* the Truth. This is how we need to know Christ—till truth in Christ shall be truth revealed to us, truth embodied in us, truth lived out again by us “as truth is in Jesus”—every lie put far away from us, all guile and deceit forever banished. As truth was in Jesus, with no fiction and no guile—as He was pure, simple-minded, childlike—so shall we become through learning Him and being made like He! We, too, shall become true, transparent, candid, honest, upright, Christ-like men and women.

I wish we were all like that, dear Friends, but we know too much, or think we do. We are too cunning and look too much round about us to be as Christ was. People laugh at us if we wear our hearts upon our sleeve for birds to peck at. And we think that we should keep ourselves to ourselves, and be careful, and cautious, and even suspicious of all we meet. Oh, but I would rather be taken in a thousand times than suspect other people! It is better to wear your heart wide open, though men laugh at its every movement, than it is to cover it up and try to conceal what we really are. God make us like the holy Child Jesus—children of God, with Christ Jesus for our elder Brother! That is what we shall be when we have learned Christ, have heard Him and have been taught by Him as truth is in Him! May it be so with all of us! God bless you and help you to cherish and to realize this desire, for Christ’s own name’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ZECHARIAH 13.

Verse 1. *In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness. They shall see their pardon when they have truly seen their sin. When once the foulness of their transgression is perceived, then the fountain of cleansing shall be perceived, too. No man ever knows the preciousness of the God-given remedy till he has felt the force of the terrible disease. No one by faith plunges into the crystal fount of perfect cleansing without first lamenting the filthiness which needs to be removed!*

2. *And it shall come to pass in that day, says the LORD of Hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the false prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. Where there is pardon, there is sure to be sanctification. The idols must fall and the false prophets must go. We cannot have our sins and have a Savior, too. If we have Christ to blot out*

our sin, we must have the same Christ to remove sin as to its authority, power and dominion over us.

3. *And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy. When any false prophet shall still pretend to prophesy—*

3. *Then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, You shall not live, for you speak lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesies. So intense shall be the hatred of false prophets, that men shall not spare even their own children! They shall abhor them when they stand up against the Lord of Hosts and against His truth.*

4. *And it shall come to pass in that day that the prophets shall be ashamed, every one, of his vision, when he has prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive. They shall give up this wicked employment at once and forever. Just as when one who has pretended to tell fortunes, is converted, and he forsakes that evil occupation, so converted men must never be in association with those who are familiar with the spirits of the dead and who practice sorcery and the like abominations! Everything of the kind is to be abhorred by godly men and they must turn away from it with holy horror and disgust.*

5, 6. *But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for a man taught me to keep cattle from my youth. And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in your hands? What are these marks of the idol gods and goddesses? Have you not been branded with them? Did you not belong to the accursed fraternity that worship idols and receive the stigmata in their hands?*

6. *Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. Idolatry shall become so detestable a thing that he will say anything rather than acknowledge that he has had anything to do with idols. Those very marks in which the false prophets once gloried, they shall loathe. The Brahmin shall throw away his sacred thread and those who have been tattooed in honor of other false gods shall hate the marks of shame that are upon their persons. Now, Brothers and Sisters, inasmuch as the heathen prophets received in their bodies the marks of their gods, we understand something of what Paul meant when he wrote to the Galatians, "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." He regarded his Baptism as a kind of watermark that could not be removed. He looked upon the marks of the scourge, with which he had been beaten again and again for Christ's sake, as being proofs that he belonged to Jesus. They stamped him with the broad arrow of the great King, so that all men might know that he was dedicated to Him and to His service, tattooed with marks in his flesh that were indelible and never to be removed!*

7, 8. *Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, says the LORD of Hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn My hand upon the little ones. And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, says the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. So, in the times of God's fiercest judgments, He has a remnant according to the election of*

Grace who shall escape the sword because that sword has been awakened against Him who was their Representative, their Surety—and who stood as Substitute in their place.

9. *And I will bring the third part through the fire.* “Saved, yet so as by fire.” This is true in a certain sense of all the righteous. They shall certainly be saved and though the fires of persecution should rage around, the Lord will bring them through the fire. They shall not perish in it, but they shall even derive good from it—“I will bring the third part through the fire.”

9. *And will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried.* If you are God’s people, you will certainly be tried and tested. As surely as ever God has put you in the third part that He will save, He has also ordained that you should pass through the fire. You shall have both within and without, that which shall test your sincerity, and prove whether your faith is of Divine origin or not. There is no easy road to Heaven—

***“The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.”***

Yet we who believe in Jesus are not an unhappy people—the character of God’s saints is still according to Paul’s paradoxes, “As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”

9. *They shall call on My name, and I will hear them.* What a precious little sentence—“they shall call on My name”! And God will give ear to their prayer—“and I will hear them.” The “shall” and the “will” are put close together, and the one is as much the work of God’s Grace as the other is! “They shall call on my name, and I will hear them.”

9. *I will say: This is My people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.* Note these quick responses—echoes, as it were. They call and God hears! God speaks and they reply. God says, “This is My people.” They answer, “The Lord is my God.” Blessed are you if you can join in these heart echoes, or can say, with the spouse, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.” Is there this mutual interchange of love between you and the all-glorious Lord? If so, thrice happy are you! But if not, God grant that you may speedily enter into this secret of the Lord! May He bless to every one of us the reading of His Word, for His dear 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.**

GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

NO. 278

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, OCTOBER 9, 1859,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed
unto the day of redemption.”
Ephesians 4:30.***

THERE is something very touching in this admonition, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.” It does not say, “Do not make Him angry.” A more delicate and tender term is used—“Grieve Him not.” There are some men of so hard a character that to make another angry does not give them much pain. And indeed, there are many of us who are scarcely to be moved by the information that another is angry with us. But where is the heart so hard that it is not moved when we know that we have caused others grief?—for grief is a sweet combination of anger and of love. It is anger, but all the gall is taken from it. Love sweetens the anger and turns the edge of it, not against the person, but against the offense. We all know how we use the two terms in contra-distinction, the one to the other.

When I commit any offense, some friend who has but little patience suddenly snaps asunder his forbearance and is angry with me. The same offense is observed by a loving father and he is grieved. There is anger in his bosom, but he is angry and sins not, for he is angry against my *sin*. And yet there is love to neutralize and modify the anger towards *me*. Instead of wishing me ill as the punishment of my sin, he looks upon my sin itself as being the ill. He grieves to think that I am already injured, from the fact that I have sinned. I say this is a heavenly compound, more precious than all the ointment of the merchants. There may be the bitterness of myrrh, but there is all the sweetness of frankincense in this sweet term “to grieve.”

I am certain, my Hearers, I do not flatter you when I declare that I am sure that the most of you would grieve if you thought you were grieving anyone else. You, perhaps, would not care much if you had made anyone angry without a cause. But to *grieve* him, even though it were without a cause and without intention, would nevertheless cause you distress of heart and you would not rest until this grief had subsided—till you had made some explanation or apology and had done your best to allay the smart and take away the grief. When we see anger in another, we at once begin to feel hostility. Anger begets anger. But grief begets pity and pity is next akin to love. Now, is not this a very sweet expression—“Grieve not the Holy Spirit:?” Of course the language is to be understood as speaking after the manner of men. The Holy Spirit of God knows no passion or suffering, but nevertheless His emotion is here described in human language as be-

ing that of grief. And is it not, I say, a tender and touching thing, that the Holy Spirit should direct His servant Paul to say to us, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit." Do not excite His loving anger, do not vex Him, do not cause Him to mourn. He is a dove—do not cause Him to mourn, because you have treated Him harshly and ungratefully.

Now, the purport of my sermon this morning will be to exhort you not to grieve the Spirit. But I shall divide it thus—first I shall discourse upon the love of the Spirit. Secondly, upon the seal of the Spirit. Then, thirdly, upon the grieving of the Spirit.

I. The few words I have to say UPON THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT will all be pressing forward to my great mark—stirring you up not to grieve the Spirit. When we are persuaded that another loves us, we find at once a very potent reason why we should not grieve him. The love of the Spirit! How shall I explain it? Surely it needs a songster to sing it, for love is only to be spoken of in words of song. The love of the Spirit! Let me tell you of His early love to us. He loved us without beginning. In the Everlasting Covenant of Grace, as I told you last Sabbath, He was one of the high contracting parties in the Divine contract, whereby we are saved.

All that can be said of the love of the Father and of the love of the Son, may be said of the love of the Spirit—it is eternal, it is infinite, it is sovereign, it is everlasting—it is a love which cannot be dissolved, which cannot be decreased, a love which cannot be removed from those who are the objects of it. Permit me, however, to refer you to His acts, rather than His attributes. Let me tell you of the love of the Spirit to you and to me. Oh how early was that love which He manifested towards us, even in our childhood!

My Brethren, we can well remember how the Spirit was desirous to strive with us. We went astray from the womb speaking lies, but how early did the Spirit of God stir up our conscience and solemnly correct us on account of our youthful sins? How frequently since then has the Spirit wooed us! How often under the ministry has He compelled our hearts to melt and the tear has run down our cheeks and He has sweetly whispered in our ear, "My son, give Me your heart. Go to your chamber, shut your door about you, confess your sins and seek a Savior's love and blood." Oh—but let us blush to tell it—how often have we done despite to Him! When we were in a state of unregeneracy, how we were desirous to resist Him!

We quenched the Spirit. He strove with us but we strove against Him. But blessed be His dear name and let Him have everlasting songs for it, He would not let us go! We would not be saved, but He would save us. We sought to thrust ourselves into the fire, but He sought to pluck us from the burning. We would dash ourselves from the precipice, but He wrestled with us and held us fast. He would not let us destroy our souls. Oh, how we ill-treated Him, how we did set at nothing His counsel! How did we scorn and scoff Him. How did we despise the ordinance which would lead us to Christ! How did we violate that holy cord which was gently drawing us to Jesus and His Cross! I am sure, my Brothers and Sisters, at the rec-

ollections of the persevering struggles of the Spirit with you, you must be stirred up to love Him.

How often did He restrain you from sin when you were about to plunge headlong into a course of vice! How often did He constrain you to good, when you would have neglected it! You, perhaps, would not have been in the way at all—and the Lord would not have met you—if it had not been for that sweet Spirit, who would not let you become a blasphemer, who would not suffer you to forsake the House of God and would not permit you to become a regular attendant at the haunts of vice, but checked you and held you in, as it were, with bit and bridle. Though you were like a bullock, unaccustomed to the yoke, yet He would not let you have your way. Though you struggled against Him, yet He would not throw the reins upon your necks, but He said, “I will have him, I will have him against his will. I will change his heart, I will not let him go till I have made him a trophy of My mighty power to save.” And then think, my Brethren, of the love of the Spirit after that—

***“Do mind the time, the spot of land,
Where Jesus did you meet?
Where He first took you by the hand,
Your bridegroom’s love—how sweet!”***

Ah, then, in that blest hour, to memory dear, was it not the Holy Spirit who guided you to Jesus? Do you remember the love of the Spirit, when, after having quickened you, He took you aside and showed you Jesus on the tree? Who was it that opened our blind eyes to see a dying Savior? Who was it that opened our deaf ears to hear the voice of pardoning love? Who opened our clasped and palsied hands to receive the tokens of a Savior’s grace? Who was it that broke our hard hearts and made a way for the Savior to enter and dwell therein? Oh, it was that precious Spirit—that same Spirit—to whom you have done so much despite, whom in the days of your flesh you have resisted! What a mercy it was that He did not say, “I will swear in My wrath that they shall not enter into My rest, for they have vexed Me and I will take My everlasting flight from them.” Or thus, “Ephraim is joined unto idols, I will let him alone!”

And since that time, my Brethren, how sweetly has the Spirit proved His love to you and to me. It is not only in His first striving and then His Divine quickening, but in all the sequel, how much have we owed to His instruction. We have been dull scholars with the Word before us, plain and simple, so that he that runs may read and he that reads may understand—yet how small a portion of His Word has our memory retained—how little progress have we made in the school of God’s grace! We are but learners yet—unstable, weak and apt to slide—but what a blessed Instructor we have had! Has He not led us into many a Truth of God and taken of the things of Christ and applied them unto us?

Oh, when I think how stupid I have been, I wonder that He has not given me up. When I think what a dolt I have been, when He would have taught me the things of the kingdom of God, I marvel that He should have had such patience with me. Is it a wonder that Jesus should become a

babe? Is it not an equal wonder that the Spirit of the living God should become a teacher of babes? It is a marvel that Jesus should lie in a manger—is it not an equal marvel that the Holy Spirit should become an Usher in the sacred school, to teach fools and make them wise? It was condescension that brought the Savior to the Cross, but is it not equal condescension that brings the mighty Spirit of Grace down to dwell with stubborn unruly, wild asses' colts, to teach them the mystery of the kingdom and make them know the wonders of a Savior's love?

Furthermore, my Brethren, forget not how much we owe to the Spirit's consolation, how much has He manifested His love to you in cherishing you in all your sicknesses, assisting you in all your labors and comforting you in all your distresses. I can testify He has been a blessed Comforter to me. When every other comfort failed, when the promise itself seemed empty, when the ministry was void of power, it is then the Holy Spirit has proved a rich comfort unto my soul and filled my poor heart with peace and joy in believing. How many times would your heart have broken if the Spirit had not bound it up! How often has He who is your teacher become also your physician, closed the wounds of your poor bleeding spirit and has bound up those wounds with the plaster of the promise? And thus He has stanchd the bleeding and has given you back your spiritual health once more.

It does seem to rise a marvel that the Holy Spirit should become a Comforter, for comforting is, to many minds, but an inferior work in the Church, though really it is not so. To teach, to preach, to command with authority—how many are willing to do this because this is honorable work. But to sit down and bear with the infirmities of the creature, to enter into all the stratagems of unbelief, to find the soul a way of peace in the midst of seas of trouble—this is compassion like a God, that the Holy Spirit should stoop from Heaven to become a Comforter of disconsolate spirits. What? Must He Himself bring the cordial? Must He wait upon His sick child and stand by his bed? Must He make his bed for him in his afflictions, must He carry him in his infirmity? Must He breathe continually into him his very breath? Does the Holy Spirit become a waiting servant of the Church? Does He become a lamp to enlighten? Does He become a staff on which we may lean? This, I say, should move us to love the Holy Spirit, for we have in all this, abundant proofs of His love to us.

Stop not here, Beloved—there are larger fields yet beyond—now that we are speaking of the love of the Spirit. Remember how much He loves us when He helps our infirmities. No, not only does He help our infirmities, but when we know not what to pray for as we ought He teaches us how to pray and when “we ourselves groan within ourselves,” then the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered—groans as we should groan, but more audibly—so that our prayers, which otherwise would have been silent, reach the ears of Christ and is then presented before His Father's face. To help our infirmities is a mighty instance of love. When God overcomes infirmity altogether, or removes it, there is something very noble and grand and sublime in the deed. When

He permits the infirmity to remain and yet works with the infirmity, this is tender compassion indeed.

When the Savior heals the lame man you see His Godhead, but when He walks with the lame man, limping though his gait may be—when He sits with the beggar, when He talks with the publican, when He carries the babe in His bosom—then this helping of infirmities is a manifestation of love almost unequalled. Except for Christ's bearing our infirmities upon the tree and our sins in His own body, I know of no greater or more tender instance of Divine love than when it is written, "Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities." Oh how much you owe to the Spirit when you have been on your knees in prayer! You know, my Brethren, what it is to be dull and lifeless there. To groan for a word and yet you cannot find it. To wish for a word and yet the very wish is languid. To long to have desires and yet all the desire you have is a desire that you may be able to desire.

Oh, have you not sometimes, when your desires have been kindled, longed to get a grip at the promise by the hand of faith? "Oh," you have said, "if I could but plead the promise, all my necessities would be removed and all my sorrows would be allayed." But, alas, the promise was beyond your reach. If you touched it with the tip of your finger you could not grasp it as you desired, you could not plead it and therefore you came away without the blessing. But when the Spirit has helped our infirmities how have we prayed! Why, there have been times when you and I have so grasped the knocker at the Gate of Mercy and have let it fall with such tremendous force, that it seemed as if the very gate itself did shake and totter.

There have been seasons when we have laid hold upon the angel, have overcome Heaven by prayer, have declared we would not let Jehovah Himself go except He should bless us. We have and we say it without blasphemy, moved the arm that moves the world. We have brought down upon us the eyes that look upon the universe. All this we have done, not by our own strength, but by the might and by the power of the Spirit. He has so sweetly enabled us, though we have so often forgotten to thank Him. He has so graciously assisted us though we have often taken all the glory to ourselves instead of airing it to Him—must we not admire His love and must it not be a fearful sin, indeed, to grieve the Holy Spirit by whom we are sealed?

Another token of the Spirit's love remains, namely, His indwelling in the saints. We sing in one of our hymns—

"Do You not dwell in all the saints?"

We ask a question which can have but one answer. He does dwell in the heart of all God's redeemed and blood-washed people. And what a condescension is this, that He whom the Heaven of heavens cannot contain, dwells in your breast, my Brothers and Sisters! That breast often covered with rags, may be a breast often agitated with anxious care and thought, a breast too often defiled with sin and yet He dwells there. The little narrow heart of man—the Holy Spirit has made His palace. Though it is but a

cottage, a very hovel and all unholy and unclean—yet does the Holy Spirit condescend to make the heart of His people His continual abode.

Oh my Friends, when I think how often you and I have let the devil in, I wonder the Spirit has not withdrawn from us! The *final perseverance of the saints* is one of the greatest miracles on record. In fact, it is the sum total of miracles. The perseverance of a saint for a single day is a multitude of miracles of mercy. When you consider that the Spirit is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity and yet He dwells in the heart where sin often intrudes—a heart out of which comes blasphemies and murders and all manner of evil thoughts and concupiscence—what if sometimes He is grieved and retires and leaves us to ourselves for a season? It is a marvel that He is there at all, for He must be daily grieved with these evil guests, these false traitors, these base intruders who thrust themselves into that little temple which He has honored with His presence—the temple of the heart of man.

I am afraid, dear Friends, we are too much in the habit of talking of the love of Jesus, without thinking of the love of the Holy Spirit. Now I would not wish to exalt one Person of the Trinity above another, but I do feel this—that because Jesus Christ was a Man, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh and therefore there was something tangible in Him that can be seen with the eyes and handled with the hands, therefore we more readily think of Him and fix our love on Him, than we do upon the Spirit. But why should it be? Let us love Jesus with all our hearts and let us love the Holy Spirit, too. Let us have songs for Him, gratitude for Him. We do not forget Christ's Cross, let us not forget the Spirit's operations. We do not forget what Jesus has done for us, let us always remember what the Spirit does *in us*.

Why do you talk of the love and grace and tenderness and faithfulness of Christ? Why do you not say the same of the Spirit? Was ever love like His, that He should visit us? Was ever mercy like His, that He should bear with our ill manners, though constantly repeated by us? Was ever faithfulness like His, that multitudes of sins cannot drive Him away? Was ever power like His, that overcomes all our iniquities and yet leads us safely on, though hosts of foes within and without would rob us of our Christian life?—

***“Oh, the love of the Spirit I sing
By whom is redemption applied.”***

And unto His name be glory forever and ever.

II. This brings me to the second point. Here we have another reason why we should not grieve the Spirit. IT IS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WE ARE SEALED. “BY whom we are sealed unto the day of redemption.” I shall be very brief here. The Spirit Himself is expressed as the Seal, even as He Himself is directly said to be the Pledge of our inheritance. The sealing, I think, has a three-fold meaning. It is a sealing of attestation or confirmation. I want to know whether I am truly a child of God. The Spirit itself also bears witness with my spirit that I am born of God. I have the writings, the title-deeds of the inheritance that is to come—I want to know

whether those are valid, whether they are true, or whether they are mere counterfeits written out by those old scribes of Hell, Master Presumption and Carnal Security.

How am I to know? I look for the Seal. After we have believed on the Son of God, the Father seals us as His children, by the gift of the Holy Spirit. "Now He which has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." No faith is genuine which does not bear the seal of the Spirit. No love, no hope can ever save us, except it is sealed with the Spirit of God, for whatever has not His seal upon it is spurious. Faith that is unsealed may be poison, it may be presumption. But faith that is sealed by the Spirit is true, real, genuine faith. Never be content, my dear Hearers, unless you are sealed, unless you are sure, by the inward witness and testimony of the Holy Spirit, that you have been begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

It is possible for a man to know infallibly that he is secure of Heaven. He may not only hope so, but he may know it beyond a doubt and he may know it thus—by being able with the eye of faith to see the seal, the broad stamp of the Holy Spirit set upon his own character and experience. It is a seal of attestation.

In the next place, it is a sealing of appropriation. When men put their mark upon an article, it is to show that it is their own. The farmer brands his tools that they may not be stolen. They are his. The shepherd marks his sheep that they may be recognized as belonging to his flock. The king himself puts his broad arrow upon everything that is his property. So the Holy Spirit puts the broad arm of God upon the hearts of all His people. He seals us. "You shall be Mine," says the Lord, "in the day when I make up my jewels." And then the Spirit puts God's seal upon us to signify that we are God's reserved inheritance—His peculiar people, the portion in which His soul delights.

But, again, by sealing is meant preservation. Men seal up that which they wish to have preserved and when a document is sealed it becomes valid. Now, it is by the Spirit of God that the Christian is sealed, that he is kept, he is preserved, sealed unto the day of redemption—sealed until Christ comes fully to redeem the bodies of His saints by raising them from the death and fully to redeem the world by purging it from sin and making it a kingdom unto Himself in righteousness. We shall hold on our way, we shall be saved. The chosen seed cannot be lost—they must be brought home at last—but how? By the sealing of the Spirit. Apart from that, they perish, they are undone. When the last general fire shall blaze out, everything that has not the seal of the Spirit on it shall be burned up. But the men upon whose forehead is the seal shall be preserved. They shall be safe "amid the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds." Their spirits, mounting above the flames, shall dwell with Christ eternally. And with that same seal on their forehead upon Mount Zion, they shall sing the everlasting song of gratitude and praise. I say this is the second reason why we should love the Spirit and why we should not grieve Him.

III. I come now to the third part of my discourse, namely, THE GRIEVING OF THE SPIRIT. How may we grieve Him—what will be the sad result of grieving Him—if we have grieved Him, how may we bring Him back again? How may we grieve the Spirit—I am now, mark you, speaking of those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God is in your hearts and it is very, very easy, indeed, to grieve Him. Sin is as easy as it is wicked. You may grieve Him by impure thoughts. He cannot bear sin. If you indulge in lascivious *expressions*, or if even you allow imagination to coat upon any lascivious act, or if your heart goes after covetousness—if you set your heart upon anything that is evil—the Spirit of God will be grieved, for thus I hear Him speaking of Himself, “I love this man, I want to have his heart and yet he is entertaining these filthy lusts. His thoughts, instead of running after Me and after Christ and after the Father, are running after the temptations that are in the world through lust.”

And then His Spirit is grieved. He sorrows in His soul because He knows what sorrow these things must bring to our souls. We grieve Him yet more if we indulge in outward acts of sin. Then is He sometimes so grieved that He takes His flight for a season, for the Dove will not dwell in our hearts if we take loathsome carrion in there. A clean being is the Dove and we must not strew the place which the Dove frequents with filth and mire—if we do, He will fly elsewhere. If we commit, sin if we openly bring disgrace upon our religion, if we tempt others to go into iniquity by our evil example, it is not long before the Holy Spirit will begin to grieve. Again, if we neglect prayer, if our closet door is cob-webbed, if we forget to read the Scriptures, if the leaves of our Bible are almost stuck together by neglect, if we never seek to do any good in the world, if we live merely for ourselves and not for Christ, then the Holy Spirit will be grieved, for thus He says, “They have forsaken Me, they have left the fountain of waters, they have hewn unto themselves broken cisterns.”

I think I now see the Spirit of God grieving, when you are sitting down to read a novel and there is your Bible unread. Perhaps you take down some book of travels and you forget that you have got a more precious book of travels in the Acts of the Apostles and in the story of your blessed Lord and Master. You have no time for prayer, but the Spirit sees you very active about worldly things and having many hours to spare for relaxation and amusement. And then He is grieved because He sees that you love worldly things better than you love Him. His spirit is grieved within Him—take care that He does not go away from you—for it will be a pitiful thing for you if He leaves you to yourself.

Again—ingratitude tends to grieve Him. Nothing cuts a man to the heart more than after having done his utmost for another, he turns round and repays him with ingratitude or insult. If we do not want to be thanked, at least we do love to know that there is thankfulness in the heart upon which we have conferred a blessing. When the Holy Spirit looks into our soul and sees little love to Christ, no gratitude to Him for all He has done for us, then is He grieved.

Again—the Holy Spirit is exceedingly grieved by our unbelief. When we distrust the promise He has given and applied, when we doubt the power or the affection of our blessed Lord—then the Spirit says within Himself—“They doubt My fidelity, they distrust My power, they say Jesus is not able to save unto the uttermost”—thus again is the Spirit grieved. Oh, I wish the Spirit had an advocate here this morning that could speak in better terms than I can. I have a theme that overmasters me, I seem to grieve for Him. But I cannot make you grieve, nor explain the grief I feel. In my own soul I keep saying, “Oh, this is just what you have done—you have grieved Him.” Let me make a full and frank confession even before you all. I know that too often, I, as well as you, have grieved the Holy Spirit. Much within us has made that sacred Dove to mourn and my marvel is that He has not taken His flight from us and left us utterly to ourselves.

Now suppose the Holy Spirit is grieved—what is the effect produced upon us? When the Spirit is grieved, He first bears with us. He is grieved again and again and again and again and still He bears with it all. But at last His grief becomes so excessive, that He says, “I will suspend My operations. I will leave life behind Me, but My own actual Presence I will take away.” And when the Spirit of God goes away from the soul and suspends all His operations, what a miserable state we are in. He suspends His instructions. We read the Word, we cannot understand it. We go to our commentaries, they cannot tell us the meaning. We fall on our knees and ask to be taught, but we get no answer, we learn nothing. He suspends His comfort. We used to dance, like David before the ark and now we sit like Job in the ash pit and scrape our ulcers with a potsherd.

There was a time when His candle shone round about us, but now He is gone. He has left us in the black of darkness. Now He takes from us all spiritual power. Once we could do all things. Now we can do nothing. We could slay the Philistines and lay them heaps upon heaps, but now Delilah can deceive us and our eyes are put out and we are made to grind in the mill. We go preaching and there is no pleasure in preaching and no good follows it. We go to our tract distributing and our Sunday-School—we might almost as well be at home. There is the machinery there, but there is no love. There is the intention to do good, or perhaps not even that, but alas, there is no power to accomplish the intention. The Lord has withdrawn Himself, His light, His joy, His comfort, His spiritual power, all are gone.

And then all our graces flag. Our graces are much like the flower called the Hydrangea, when it has plenty of water it blooms, but as soon as moisture fails, the leaves drop down at once. And so when the Spirit goes away, faith shuts up its flowers—no perfume is exhaled. Then the fruit of our love begins to rot and drops from the tree. Then the sweet buds of our hope become frostbitten and they die. Oh, what a sad thing it is to lose the Spirit. Have you ever, my Brethren, been on your knees and have been conscious that the Spirit of God was not with you and what awful work it has been to groan and cry and sigh and yet go away again and no light to shine upon the promises, not so much as a ray of light through the chink

of the dungeon? All forsaken, forgotten and forlorn, you are almost driven to despair. You sing with Cowper—

***“What peaceful hours I once enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void,
The world can never fill.
Return, you sacred Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest,
I hate the sins that made You mourn,
And drove You from my breast.
The dearest idol I have known,
Whatever that idol be,
Help me to tear it from its throne,
And worship only You.”***

Ah, sad enough it is to have the Spirit drawn from us! But, my Brethren, I am about to say something with the utmost charity, which, perhaps, may look severe, but, nevertheless, I must say it. The Churches of the present day are very much in the position of those who have grieved the Spirit of God. For the Spirit deals with Churches just as it does with individuals. Of these late years how little has God worked in the midst of His Churches. Throughout England, at least some four or five years ago, an almost universal torpor had fallen upon the visible body of Christ. There was a little action, but it was spasmodic. There was no real vitality. Oh, how few sinners were brought to Christ, how empty had our places of worship become. Our Prayer Meetings were dwindling away to nothing and our Church meetings were mere matters of farce.

You know right well that this is the case with many London Churches to this day. And there are some that do not mourn about it. They go up to their accustomed places and the minister prays and the people either sleep with their eyes or else with their hearts and they go out and there is never a soul saved. The pool of Baptism is seldom stirred. But the saddest part of all is this—the Churches are willing to have it so. They are not earnest to get a revival of religion. We have been doing something, the Church at large has been doing something. I will not just now put my finger upon what the sin is, but there has been something done which has driven the Spirit of God from us. He is grieved and He is gone.

He is present with us here, I thank His name—He is still visible in *our* midst. He has not left us. Though we have been as unworthy as others, yet has He given us a long outpouring of His presence. These five years or more we have had a revival which is not to be exceeded by any revival upon the face of the earth. Without cries or shouts, without fallings down or swooning, steadily God adds to this Church numbers upon numbers, so that your minister’s heart is ready to break with very joy when he thinks how manifestly the Spirit of God is with us.

But Brethren, we must not be content with this, we want to see the Spirit poured out on *all* Churches. Look at the great gatherings that there were in St. Paul’s and Westminster Abbey and Exeter Hall and other

places—how was it that no good was done—or so very little? I have watched with anxious eyes and I have never from that day forth heard but of one conversion and that in St. James' Hall, from all these services. Strange it seems. The blessing may have come in larger measure than we know, but not in so large a measure as we might have expected, if the Spirit of God had been present with all the ministers.

Oh would that we may live to see greater things than we have ever seen yet. Go home to your houses, humble yourselves before God, you members of Christ's Church and cry aloud that He will visit His Church and that He would open the windows of Heaven and pour out His Grace upon His thirsty hill of Zion, that nations may be born in a day, that sinners may be saved by thousands—that Zion may travail and may bring forth children. Oh, there are signs and tokens of a coming revival. We have heard but lately of a good work among the Ragged School boys of St. Giles's and our soul has been glad on account of that. And the news from Ireland comes to us like good tidings, not from a far country, but from a sister province of the kingdom. Let us cry aloud to the Holy Spirit, who is certainly grieved with His Church, and let us purge our Churches of everything that is contrary to His Word and to sound doctrine and then the Spirit will return and His power shall be manifest.

And now, in conclusion, there may be some of you here who have lost the visible presence of Christ with you—who have in fact so grieved the Spirit that He has gone. It is a mercy for you to know that the Spirit of God never leaves His people finally. He leaves them for chastisement, but not for damnation. He sometimes leaves them that they may get good by knowing their own weakness, but He will not leave them finally to perish. Are you in a state of backsliding, declension and coldness? Hearken to me for a moment and God bless the words. Brothers and Sisters, stay not a moment in a condition so perilous. Be not easy for a single second in the absence of the Holy Spirit. I beseech you use every means by which that Spirit may be brought back to you. Once more, let me tell you distinctly what the means are.

Search out for the sin that has grieved the Spirit. Give it up, slay that sin upon the spot. Repent with tears and sighs. Continue in prayer and never rest satisfied until the Holy Spirit comes back to you. Frequent an earnest ministry, get much with earnest saints—but above all, be much in prayer to God and let your daily cry be, "Return, return, O Holy Spirit return and dwell in my soul." Oh, I beseech you be not content till that prayer is heard, for you have become weak as water and faint and empty while the Spirit has been away from you.

Oh, it may be there are some here this morning with whom the Spirit has been striving during the past week. Oh yield to Him, resist Him not. Grieve Him not, but yield to Him. Is He saying to you now, "Turn to Christ"? Listen to Him, obey Him, He moves you. Oh I beseech you do not despise Him. Have you resisted Him many times? Then take care you do not again, for there may come a last time when the Spirit may say, "I will

go unto My rest, I will not return unto him, the ground is accursed, it shall be given up to barrenness.”

Oh, hear the word of the Gospel, before you separate, for the Spirit speaks effectually to you now in this short sentence—“Repent and be converted, every one of you, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” And hear this solemn sentence, “He that believes in the Lord Jesus and is baptized, shall be saved. But he that believes not shall be damned.” May the Lord grant that we may not grieve the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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GRIEVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT

NO. 738

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 3, 1867,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.”
Ephesians 4:30.

IT is a very clear proof of the Personality of the Holy Spirit that He can be grieved. Now, it would be very difficult to imagine an *influence*, or a mere spiritual *emanation* being grieved. We can only grieve a *person*, and, inasmuch as the Holy Spirit may be grieved, we see that He is a distinct subsistence in the sacred Trinity. Rob Him not of the glory which is due to Him but be ever mindful to do Him homage. Our text, moreover, reveals to us the close connection between the Holy Spirit and the Believer. He must take a very tender and affectionate interest in us since He is grieved by our shortcomings and our sins. He is not a God who reigns in solitary isolation, divided by a great gulf, but He, the blessed Spirit, comes into such near contact with us, takes such minute observations, feels such tender regards that He can be *grieved* by our faults and follies.

Although the word, “grieve,” is a painful one, yet there is honey in the rock! For it is an inexpressibly delightful thought that He who rules Heaven and earth, and is the creator of all things, and the infinite and ever blessed God, condescends to enter into such infinite relationships with His people that His Divine mind may be affected by their actions! What a marvel that Deity should be said to *grieve* over the faults of beings so utterly insignificant as we are! We may not understand the expression literally, as though the sacred Spirit could be affected with sorrow like to human sorrow, but we must not forego the consolatory assurance that He takes the same deep interest in us as a fond parent takes in a beloved but wayward child! Is not this a marvel? Let those who cannot feel, be unmoved. As for me, I shall not cease to wonder and adore!

I. The first point which we will consider this morning, is THE ASTOUNDING FACT that the Holy Spirit may be grieved. That loving, tender Spirit who, of His own accord, has taken upon Himself to quicken us from our death in sin and to be the Educator of the new life which He has implanted within us—that Divine Instructor, Illuminator, Comforter, Remembrancer whom Jesus has sent forth to be our abiding Guide and Teacher—may be grieved! He whose Divine energy is life to our souls, dew to our graces, light to our understandings and comfort to our hearts may be vexed by us! The heavenly Dove may be disturbed! The celestial Fire may be dampened! The Divine Wind may be resisted! The blessed Paraclete may be treated with despite!

The loving grief of the Holy Spirit may be traced to His holy Character and perfect attributes. It is the nature of a holy being to be vexed with unholiness. There can be no concord between God and Belial. A Spirit immaculately pure cannot but take umbrage at uncleanness, and especially must He be grieved by the presence of evil in the objects of His affections. Sin everywhere must be displeasing to the Spirit of

holiness, but sin in His own people is grievous to Him in the highest degree. He will not *hate* His people, but He does hate their *sins*—and hates them all the more because they nestle in His children’s bosoms.

The Spirit would not be the Spirit of Truth if He could approve of that which is false in us. He would not be pure if that which is impure in us did not grieve Him. We could not believe Him to be holy if He could look with complacency upon our unholiness. Nor should we think of Him as being perfect if our imperfection could be regarded by Him without displeasure. No, because He is what He is—the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of holiness—therefore everything in us which falls short of His own Nature must be grievous to Him. He helps our infirmities, but He grieves over our sins. He is grieved with us mainly for our own sakes, for He knows what misery sin will cost us. He reads our sorrows in our sins.

“Ah, silly sheep,” He seems to say, “I know the dark mountain upon which you will stumble. I see the thorns which will cut you, and the wounds which will pierce you! I know, O wayward child, the rod which you are making for your own back by your follies! I know, poor erring one, into what a sea of trouble you will plunge yourself by that headstrong will, that quick temper, that love of self, that ardent pursuit of gain.” He grieves over us because He sees how much chastisement we incur, and how much communion we lose.

When we might have been upon the mountain of fellowship, we are sighing in the dungeon of despondency, and all because, from motives of fleshy ease, we preferred to go down By-Path Meadow, and forsake the right way because it was rough. The Spirit is grieved that we should thus bring ourselves into the darkness of a loathsome dungeon, and subject ourselves to the blows of the crab tree club of giant Despair. He foresees how bitterly we shall rue the day in which we parted company with Jesus and so pierced ourselves through with many sorrows. He foresees that the backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways, and grieves because He foresees the backslider’s grief. A mother’s grief for the wrong-doing of her prodigal son is not so much the pain which he has directly occasioned her, as the sorrow which she knows that he will bring upon himself.

David did not so much lament his own loss of his child, as Absalom’s death, with all its dread results, to Absalom himself. “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom!” Here is deep sorrow. But the next sentence shows that it was by no means selfish, for he is willing to take a greater grief upon himself—“Would God I had died for you, O Absalom, my son, my son!” Such is the holy grief of the Spirit of God for those in whom He dwells. It is for *their* sakes that He is troubled.

Moreover, it is doubtless for Jesus Christ’s sake that the Spirit is grieved. We are the purchase of Jesus’ death upon the tree—He has bought us dearly and He should have us altogether for Himself—and when He does not have us completely as His own, you can well conceive that the Spirit of God is grieved. We ought to glorify Christ in these mortal bodies! It should be the one end and object of our desire to crown that head with gems which once was crowned with thorns. It is lamentable that we should so frequently fail in this reasonable service. Jesus deserves our best—every wound of His claims us, and every pang He bore, and every groan that escaped His lips is a fresh reason for perfect holiness and complete devotion to His cause! And, because the Holy Spirit sees us so traitorous to the love of Christ, so false to that redeeming blood, so forgetful of our solemn obligations, He grieves over us because we dishonor our Lord.

Shall I be wrong if I say that He grieves over us for the Church’s sake? How might some of you be useful if you did but live up to your privileges! Ah, my Brethren, how the Comforter must surely grieve over those of us who are ministers, when He sets us as watchmen and we do not watch and the Church is in-

vaded! When He commissions us as sowers of the good seed, and our hands are only half filled, or we scatter cockle and darnel instead of sowing the good wheat! How must He grieve over us because we have not that tenderness of heart, that melting of love, that vehemence of zeal, that earnestness of soul which we ought to exhibit! When the Church of God suffers damage through us—the Spirit loves the Church and cannot endure to see her robbed and despoiled, her children left to wander, her wounded sons unsuicored, and her broken hearts unhealed—because we are indifferent to our work, and careless in our labor for the Church, the Holy Spirit is much displeased.

But it is not only with ministers, but with all of you, for there is a niche that each of you should fill. And if that is vacant the Church loses by you—the kingdom of Christ suffers damage, the revenue which ought to come into Zion is cut short—and the Holy Spirit is grieved. Your lack of prayer, your lack of love, your deficiency in generosity—all these may be sad injuries to the Church of God—and therefore is the loving Spirit of God much disquieted once more. The Spirit of God mourns over the shortcomings of Christians for sinners' sakes, for it is the Spirit's office to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. But the course of many Believers is directly counter to this work of the Spirit. Their lives do not convict the world of sin, but rather tend to comfort transgressors in their iniquity.

We have heard the actions of professors quoted by worldlings as an excuse for their sins. Openly profane persons have said, "Look at those Christians! They do so-and-so, why may not we?" It is ill when Jerusalem comforts Sodom, and when the crimes of the heathens find precedents in the sins of Israel! It is the Spirit's work to convict the world of righteousness, but many a professor convicts the world of the opposite. "No," says the world, "there is no more righteousness to be had in Christ than anywhere else, for, look at those who follow Him, or pretend to do so—where is their righteousness? It does not exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees."

The Spirit of Truth convicts the world of judgment to come—but how few of us help Him in that great work! We live and act and talk as if there were no judgment to come—toiling for *wealth* as if this world were all careless of souls, as though Hell were a dream! Unmoved by eternal realities, unstirred by the terrors of the Lord, indifferent to the ruin of mankind, many professors live like worldlings and are as unchristian as infidels. This is an indisputable fact, but one to be lamented with tears of blood! Brothers and Sisters, I dare not think how much of the ruin of the world must be laid at the door of the Church! But I will dare to say this, that although the Divine purposes will be fulfilled, and God will not miss the number of His chosen, yet the fact that this London of ours is now rather a heathen than a Christian city can be laid at no one's door but that of the professing Church of God and her ministers!

Where else can it be? Is the city wrapped in darkness? It need not have been so. If we had been faithful it would not have been so! If we are faithful in the future it shall not long remain so. I cannot imagine an Apostolic Church, set down in the midst of London, and filled with the ardor of the first disciples, remaining long without influencing sensibly upon the masses. I know the increase of our population is immense—I know that we are adding every year a fresh town to this overgrown city. But I will not—I *dare* not tolerate the idea that the zeal of God's Church, if at its right pitch, is too feeble to meet the case! No, there is wealth enough among us, if it were consecrated, to build as many Houses of Prayer as shall be needed.

There is ability enough among us, if it were but given to the ministry of the Word, to yield a sufficiency of preachers of the Cross. We have all the pecuniary and mental strength that is needed. The point in which we fail is this—we are straitened in *spiritual* power! Poverty-stricken in Divine Grace! Luke-

warm in zeal, meager in devotedness, staggering in faith. We are not straitened in our *God*, we are straitened in our own *hearts*. Brethren, I believe the Spirit of God is very greatly grieved with many Churches for the sake of the sinners in their congregations who are scarcely cared for, seldom prayed for, never wept for. Would that the thought of this might move us and our Brethren to mend our ways.

II. Secondly, let us refer to DEPLORABLE CAUSES which produce the grief of the Holy Spirit. The context is some assistance to us. We learn that sins of the flesh, filthiness, and evil speaking of every sort, are grievous to Him. Note the preceding verse: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." Let a Christian fall into the habit of talking in a loose, unchaste style. Let him delight in things that are indecorous, even if he shall not plunge into the commission of outward uncleanness, and the Spirit of God will not be pleased with him.

The Holy Spirit descended upon our Lord as a Dove. And a dove delights in the pure rivers of water and shuns all kinds of filthiness. In Noah's day the dove found no place for the sole of its feet on all the carcasses floating in the waste. And even so, the heavenly Dove finds no repose in the dead and corrupt things of the flesh. If we live in the Spirit, we shall not obey the desires of the flesh. They who walk after the flesh know nothing of the Spirit. It appears, from the thirty-first verse, that the Holy Spirit is grieved by any approach to bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking and malice.

If in a Christian Church there shall be dissension's and divisions. If Brother shall speak evil of Brother, and Sister of Sister, love is absent—and the Spirit of love will not long be present. The dove is the emblem of peace. One of the early fruits of the Spirit is peace. My dear Friends, I hope as a Church if there is any secret ill feeling among us, any hidden root of bitterness—even though it may not yet have sprung up to trouble us—it may be removed and destroyed at once! I do not know of any such abominable thing, and am happy to be able to say so. I trust we walk together in holy unity and concord of heart. If any of you are conscious of bitterness in ever so small a measure, purge it out lest the Spirit of God be grieved with you and grieved with the Church of God for your sake.

I have no doubt it greatly grieves the Spirit to see in Believers any degree of love of the world. His holy jealousy is excited by such unholy love. If a mother should see her child fonder of someone else than of her—if she should know that it was more happy in the company of a stranger than when in the bosom of its own parent—she would feel it a very hard trial to bear. Now the Spirit of God gives to Believers celestial joys and abounding comforts. And if He sees us turn our back upon all these to go into worldly company, to feed greedily upon the same empty joys which satisfy worldlings, He is a jealous God and He takes it as a great slight put upon Himself.

What? Does the Good Shepherd load the table with Heaven's own dainties, and do we prefer to devour the husks which the swine eat? When I think of a Christian man trying to find his enjoyment where the lowest of worldlings find theirs, I can scarcely imagine him to be a Christian! Or, if he is, he must very greatly grieve the Spirit of God. Why, you set the world, which you profess to have found empty, vain, and deceitful—you set *that* before the choice things of the kingdom of Grace! And while you profess to be, "raised up to sit together with Christ in heavenly places," you still grovel in the dust as others do!

What does the world say? "Ah, ah," they say, "Here is one of those Christian people coming after a little happiness! Poor soul! His religion gives him no joy and, therefore, he is looking for a little elsewhere. Make room for him, poor fellow, he has a hard time of it on Sundays." Then the notion goes abroad that Christians have no joy in Christ! That we have to deny ourselves all true happiness and only get a little delight by stealth, when we do as others do. What a libel is this! And yet how many professors

are responsible for it! If we live in communion with Jesus we shall not hanker after the world. We shall despise its mirth and trample on its treasures. Worldliness, in any shape, must be very grievous to the Spirit of God—not only the love of *pleasure*, but the love of *gain*.

Worldliness in Christian men and women in imitating the world in dress—worldliness in luxury, or in conversation—must displease the Spirit of God because He calls us a peculiar people, and He tells us to, “come out from among them and be separated, and touch not the unclean thing.” And then He promises, “I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters.” And if we will not be separate how can we expect Him to be otherwise than grieved? Israel was constrained to quit Egypt for the wilderness, and God said, “I remember you, the love of your espousals, when you went after Me in the wilderness.”

He seems to dote upon Israel’s early separation to Himself! And so I believe the Lord delights to see His people severing fond connections, giving up carnal pleasures, and going outside the camp bearing the reproach of Christ. It ravishes the heart of Jesus to see His Church forsake the world! Here are His own words to His bride, “Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear; forget also your own people, and your father’s house; so shall the king greatly desire your beauty.” He loves to have His saints entirely to Himself! He is a jealous Savior, and hence Paul says he labored that he might, “present the Church as a chaste virgin unto Christ.”

Jesus wants to have our chastity to Himself maintained beyond suspicion that we may choose Him as our sole possession, and leave the base things of the earth to those who love them. Beware, my Brothers and Sisters, of grieving the Holy Spirit by worldliness! Moreover, the Spirit of God is greatly grieved by *unbelief*. What would grieve you more, dear Friend, than to have your child suspect your truthfulness? “Alas,” cries the father, “Can it have come to this, that my own child will not believe me? Is my promise to be thrown in my teeth and am I to be told by my own son, ‘My father, I cannot trust you’?”

It is not come to that with any of us, as parents, yet, and shall it be so with our God? Alas, it has been! We have done despite to the Spirit of Truth by doubting the promise and mistrusting the faithfulness of God! Of all sins, surely this must be one of the most provoking. If there is the virus of diabolical guilt in anything, it must be in the unbelief—not of sinners—but of God’s own people! Sinners have never seen what saints have seen—never felt what we have felt, never known what we have known—and, therefore, if they should doubt, they do not sin against such light, nor do despite to such invincible arguments for confidence as we do. God forgive our unbelief, and may we never grieve His Spirit anymore!

Further, the Spirit is doubtless grieved by our *ingratitude*. When Jesus reveals His love to us, if we go away from the chamber of fellowship to talk lightly and forget that love. Or if, when we have been raised up from a sickbed we are no more consecrated than before. Or if, when our bread is given us and our water is sure, our heart never thanks the bounteous Giver. Or if, when preserved under temptation we fail to magnify the Lord—surely this, in each case, must be a God-provoking sin! If we add pride to ingratitude we sorely grieve the blessed Spirit. When a saved sinner grows proud he insults the wisdom of the Spirit of God by his folly, for what can there be in us to be proud of?

Pride is a weed which will grow in *any* soil. Proud of the mercies of God? As well be proud of being in debt! Why, some of us are so foolish that God cannot exalt us, for if He did we should straightway grow dizzy in the brain, and should be sure to fall! If the Lord were to put so much as one gold piece of comfort into our pockets, we should think ourselves so rich that we should set up in business on our own account, and cease from dependence upon Him! He cannot indulge us with a little joy—He has to keep us as the

father in the parable did the elder brother, who complained, “You never gave *me* a kid, that I might make merry with my friends.”

Oh it is sad that we should be so foolish as to become proud of our graces! This is a great grief to the Spirit in a private person, and even more so when it becomes the fault of an entire Church. If you as a Church shall boast that you are numerous, or generous, or rich, it will be all over with you. God will abase those who exalt themselves! If your soul can make her boast in the *Lord*, you may boast as much as you will. But if you glory in anything else, God will hide His face, and you will be troubled though your mountain once stood so firm that you dreamed it could never be moved. I cannot give you a full list of all the evils which grieve the Spirit of God, but let me mention here, particularly, one—a lack of prayer.

This is grievous, either in the Church or in an individual. Does not this touch some of you? How little do some of us pray! Let each conscience now be its own accuser. My dear Brother, how about the Mercy Seat? How about the closet and secret communion with God? How about wrestling for your children? How about pleading for the pastor? Have you not been backward in interceding for the conversion of your neighbor? Could you read the story of Abraham’s interceding for Sodom and say that you have interceded for London like that? Can you read of Jacob at the brook Jabbok, and say that you ever spent an *hour*, much less a *night*, in wrestling with the Angel? The prayerlessness of this age is one of its worst signs, and the prayerlessness of some of our Christian Churches looks as if God were about to withdraw Himself from the land!

In many Churches, as I am told, they have a difficulty in getting enough men to attend the Prayer Meetings to carry them on. I know of some—“Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon!”—I know of some Churches that have given up Prayer Meetings because nobody comes! Ah, if this case were a solitary one, it ought to be daily mourned over—but there are *scores* of Churches in the same condition—the Lord have mercy upon them and upon the land in which such Churches dwell!

To sum up many things which might be said, I think the Holy Spirit will be grieved with any one of us if we shall indulge any known sin, let it be what it may. And I will add to that, if any one of us shall neglect any known *duty*, let it be what it may. I cannot imagine the Spirit of God being pleased with a Brother who knows his Master’s will, and does it not. I know the Word says that he shall be beaten with many stripes. Surely, beating with stripes must be the result of grief on the part of the hand that administers such stripes. Let any person or any Church know good and do it not, and to him or to it, it shall be sin! And that which might not be sin in the ignorant, will become sin to those blessed with light.

As soon as your conscience is enlightened and you know the path of duty, you need not say, “Others ought to do it,” (so they should, but to their own Master they must stand or fall). If your judgment is enlightened, make haste and delay not to keep the Commandments of God. John Owen, in his treatise upon the Holy Spirit, makes a remark that he believes the Spirit of God was greatly grieved in England by the public affirmation in the articles of the doctrine that the Church of God has power to decree rites and ceremonies for herself. God’s *Word* is the only rule of God’s *Church*. Inasmuch as the Church of England, so called, claims to be her own lawmaker, she has grieved the Spirit!

When a Church claims to itself the right to judge what are to be its own ordinances instead of willingly and obediently acknowledging that she has no right of choice whatever—but is bound to obey the revealed will of her Great Head—she sins terribly! It is the duty of all Christians to search the Word as to what are the ordinances which God has fixed and commanded. And being once clear as to the rule of the

Word, it is ours to *obey* it! If you see infant Baptism in the Word, do not neglect it! If it is not there, do not regard it!

Here I must give utterance to a thought which has long followed me. Perhaps the present sad condition of the Christian Church, and the prevalence of the dogma of “baptismal regeneration,” may be traceable to the neglect that reigns in the Church almost universally with regard to the great Christian ordinance of Believers’ Baptism. Men laugh at all talk about this as if the question were of no importance. But I take leave to say that whatever may be the Truth of God upon that ordinance, it is worth every Believer’s while to find it out.

I meet constantly with people who have no sort of faith in infant Baptism, and have long ago given it up. And yet, though they admit that they ought to be baptized as Believers, they neglect the duty as unimportant. Now mark it—when the Last Great Day shall reveal all things, I am persuaded it will reveal this—that the Church’s supplanting the Baptism of Believers by that of *infants* was not only a great means in the original establishment of Popery, but that the maintenance of the perverted ordinance in our Protestant Church is the chief root and cause of the present revival of Popery in this land.

If we would lay the axe to the roots of Sacramentarianism, we must go back to the old Scriptural method of giving ordinances to Believers only—the ordinances *after* faith—not *before* faith. We must give up baptizing in order to regenerate and administer it to those alone who profess to be *already* regenerate. When we all come to this we shall hear no more of “baptismal regeneration,” and a thousand other false doctrines will vanish away. Lay down the rule that unbelievers have no right to Church ordinances, and you put it out of the power of *men* to establish the unhallowed institution of a State Church! For, mark you, no National Church is possible on the principle of Believers’ Baptism—a principle much too exclusive to suit the mixed multitude of a whole nation.

A State Church must hold to *infant* Baptism! Necessarily it must receive all the members of the State into its number—it must or else it cannot expect the *pay* of the State. Make the Church a body consisting only of professedly faithful men, believers in the Lord Jesus, and let the Church say to all others, “You have no part nor lot in this matter until you are converted,” and there is the end of the unholy alliance between the Church and the world which is now a withering blight upon our land. Errors of doctrine, practice, and polity may cause the dew of Heaven to be withheld. You will say, “Such errors did not hinder revivals in other days!”

Perhaps not, but God does not always wink at our ignorance. In these days no one needs to be ignorant about the mystery of “baptismal regeneration”—the error has worked itself to its full development and reached such a climax that every Christian man ought to give it his most earnest consideration. Guilt will come upon us if we are not earnest in seeking out the roots of an evil which is the cause of such deadly mischief in the land. If, as a Church, we are clear in our testimony on this point, I entreat you to see if there is any other error with which you may be charged. Is there a part of Scripture which we have not attended to? Is there a Truth of God which we have neglected? Let us hold ourselves ready to relinquish our most cherished opinions at the commands of Scripture, whatever they may be.

I say to you what I say to others—if the form of our Church government, if the manner of our administration of Christian ordinances, if the doctrines we hold are unwarranted by the Word of God—let us be faithful to our consciences and to the Word and be ready to alter, according to our light. Let us give up the idea of stereotyping anything! Let us be ready at any moment and every moment to do just what the Spirit of God would have us do! For if not, we may not expect the Spirit of God to abide with

us. O for a heart to serve God perfectly! O that such a heart were given to all His people so that they were ready to renounce authority, antiquity, taste, opinion, and bow before the Holy Spirit alone! May the Church yet come to walk by the simple rule of God's Book and by the light of God's Spirit, and then shall we cease to grieve the Holy Spirit!

III. Thirdly, and very briefly—much too briefly—THE LAMENTABLE RESULT of the Spirit's being grieved. In the child of God it will not lead to his utter destruction, for no heir of Heaven can perish. Neither will the Holy Spirit be utterly taken away from him, for the Spirit of God is given to abide with us forever. But the ill-effects are nevertheless most terrible. You will lose, my dear Friends, all sense of the Holy Spirit's Presence—He will be as one hidden from you—no beams of comfort, no words of peace, no thoughts of love.

There will be what Cowper calls, "an aching void which the world can never fill." Grieve the Holy Spirit and you will lose all Christian joy. The light shall be taken from you and you shall stumble in darkness. Those very means of Divine Grace which once were such a delight shall have no music in your ears. Your soul shall be no longer as a watered garden, but as a howling wilderness. Grieve the Spirit of God, and you will lose all power. If you pray, it will be a very weak prayer—you will not prevail with God. When you read the Scriptures you shall not be able to lift the latch and force your way into the inner mysteries of the Truth of God.

When you go up to the House of God, there shall be none of that devout exhilaration, that running without weariness, that walking without fainting. You shall feel yourself like Samson when his hair was lost—weak, captive, and blind. Let the Holy Spirit depart and assurance is gone! Doubts follow, questions and suspicions are aroused—

*"Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I His, or am I not?"*

Grieve the Spirit of God, and usefulness will cease. The ministry shall yield no fruit. Your Sunday school work shall be barren. Your speaking to others and laboring for others souls shall be like sowing the wind. Let a *Church* grieve the Spirit of God, and oh, the blights that shall come and wither her fair garden! Then her days of solemn assembly shall have no acceptance with Heaven! Her sons, although all of them ordained as priests unto God, shall have no acceptable incense to offer.

Let the *Church* grieve the Spirit, and she shall fail to bless the age in which she lives. She shall cast no light into the surrounding darkness. No sinners shall be saved by her means. There shall be few additions to her number. Her missionaries shall cease to go forth. There shall be no marriage feasts of communion in her house. Darkness and death shall reign where all was joy and life. Brothers and Sisters, Beloved in the Lord, may the Lord prevent us from grieving His Spirit as a Church, but may we be earnest, zealous, truthful, united, and holy so that we may retain among us this heavenly Guest who will leave us if we grieve Him.

IV. Lastly, there is one PERSONAL ARGUMENT which is used in the text to forbid our grieving the Spirit— "Whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption." What does this mean? There are many meanings assigned by different commentators. We shall be content with the following—A seal is set upon a thing to attest its authenticity and authority. By what can I know that I am truly what I profess to be— a Christian by profession? How do I know whether I am really a Christian or not? God sets a seal on every genuine Believer—what is it? It is the *possession* of the Holy Spirit of God!

If you have the Holy Spirit, my dear Friend, that is God's seal set upon you that you are His child! Do you not see, then, that if you grieve the Spirit you lose your seal, and you are like a commission with the seal torn away? You are like a note of hand without a signature! Your evidence of being God's child is the Spirit, for if "any man have not the Spirit of Christ, He is none of His." If you have not the Spirit in you, that will be decisive evidence for you that you do not belong to Christ, for you lack the groundwork of true assurance, which is the indwelling Presence, power, and enjoyment of the Spirit.

Moreover, I have said a seal is used for attestation, and so it is, not only to you, but to others. You say to the world around, "I am a child of God." How are they to know it? They can only judge as you must judge yourself, by looking for the seal. If you possess the Spirit of God, they will soon see you to be a Christian. If you have it not, whatever else you have, you will soon be discovered to be a forgery, for you lack the seal. Beloved, all Church history proves this, that when the Christian Church has been filled with the Spirit of God, the world has confessed her pedigree because it could not help doing so. But when the Church has lost her enthusiasm and fervor because she has lost the heavenly fire, then the world has asked, "What is this Christian Church more than the synagogue of the Jews, or the company of Mahomet?"

The world knows God's seal! And if it does not see it, it soon despises that society which pretends to be the Church of God and has not the mark and proof of it. The same truth holds good in all cases. For instance, in the matter of the Christian ministry. When I first came to minister in London there was some little talk about my being ordained. "If I am ordained of God, I do not need human ordination. And if, on the other hand, God has not called me to the work, no man or set of men can do it." But it was said, "You must have a recognition service, that others may signify their approval!"

"No," I said, "if God is with me, they will recognize me quickly enough as a man of God. And if the Lord's Presence is denied me, human approval is of little worth." Brethren, if you profess to be called to any form of ministry, your only way of proving your call will be by showing the seal of the Spirit! When that seal is affixed to your labors, you will require no other recognition! The camp of Dan soon recognized Samson when the Spirit came upon him, and when he went among his enemies—the Philistines—with the jaw-bone of an ass, they soon recognized him as they saw him piling the slain heaps upon heaps!

This is how the Christian man or minister must compel the recognition of his status and call. Knights of the Cross must win their spurs upon the battlefield. The only way for a Christian to be discerned to be a Christian, or for a Church to be manifested as a Church of God is by having the Spirit of God, and in the name of the Spirit of God doing exploits for God and bringing glory to His holy name! Once more, a seal is used for preserving, as well as for attesting. The Easterner seals up his moneybags to secure the gold within, and we seal our letters to guard the enclosure. A seal is set for security.

Now, Beloved, as the only way by which you can be known to be a Christian is by really possessing the *supernatural* power of the Holy Spirit, so, also, the only way by which you can be *kept* a Christian, and preserved from going back to the world is by still possessing that same Holy Spirit. What are you if the Spirit of God is gone? Salt that has lost its savor. With what can you be salted? "Trees twice dead, plucked up by the roots...wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." The Holy Spirit is not to you a luxury, but a *necessity*—you must have Him or you die—you must have Him, or you are damned! Yes, and with a double damnation.

Here comes in this choice promise that the Lord will not leave you, and will not forsake you—but if He did leave you forever, there would remain no more sacrifice for sin—it would be impossible to renew

you again unto repentance, seeing that you would have crucified the Lord afresh, and put Him to an open shame. Grieve not, then, that Spirit upon whom you are so dependent! He is your credentials as a Christian! He is your life as a Believer! Prize Him beyond all price! Speak of Him with bowed head, with reverent awe! Rest upon Him with childlike, loving confidence! Obey His faintest monitions—neglect not His inward whispers. Turn not aside from His teachings in the Word, or by His ministers.

And be as ready to feel His power as the waves of the sea are to be moved by the wind, or a feather to be wafted by the gale. Hold yourselves ready to do His bidding. As the eyes of the handmaiden are to her mistress, so let your eyes be unto Him. When you know His will, ask no questions, count no costs, dare all hazards, defy all circumstances! Let the will of the Spirit be your absolute law, apart from gain or loss, apart from your own judgment or your own taste. Let the will of the Spirit, when once plainly perceived by you, be *instantly* obeyed, and try to perceive that will. Do not willfully shut your eyes to an unpleasant duty, or close your understanding to an unwelcome Truth. Lean not to your own understanding! Consider that the Holy Spirit alone can teach you, and that those who will not be taught of Him must remain hopelessly foolish.

Oh, if I might but live to see the Church of God recognize the power of the Holy Spirit! If I could but see her cast aside the grave clothes which she has so long persisted in wearing! If I could see her put no confidence in State or power—rely no longer upon eloquence and learning! If I could see her depend upon the Holy Spirit, even though her ministers should again be fishermen and her followers should again be the “base things of this world, and the things that are not”! Even though she should have to be baptized in blood. Even though the Man-Child should excite the dragon’s wrath and he should pour floods out against her—yet the day of her final victory would have dawned—if she did but obey the Spirit!

If only her directories, creeds, rules, prayer books, rubrics, and canons were cast to the winds, and the free Spirit of the living God ruled everywhere! If, instead of the decrees of her councils and the slavish bondage of priestcraft and ritual, she would only embrace the liberty with which Christ has made her free, and walk according to His Word and the teachings of her heavenly Teacher—*then* might we hear the shout of the King in our midst, and the battlements of error would fall! God send it, and send it in our time, and His shall be praise!

I fear there are some here who do not grieve the Spirit, but do worse than that—they *quench* the Spirit—they *resist* the Spirit. May the Lord grant them forgiveness of this great sin, and may they be led to the Cross of Christ to find pardon for every sin! At the Cross, and there alone, can everlasting life be found. God bless you for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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FORGIVENESS MADE EASY

NO. 1448

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

***“Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.”
Ephesians 4:32.***

THE heathen moralists, when they wished to teach virtue, could not point to the example of their gods, for, according to their mythologists, the gods were a compound of every imaginable and, I had almost said, unimaginable vice! Many of the classic deities surpassed the worst of men in their crimes—they were as much greater in iniquity as they were supposed to be superior in power. It is an ill day for a people when their gods are worse than themselves! The blessed purity of our holy faith is conspicuous, not only in its precepts, but in the Character of the God whom it reveals. There is no excellency which we can propose but we can see it brightly shining in the Lord our God! There is no line of conduct in which a Believer should excel but we can point to Christ Jesus our Lord and Master as the pattern of it! In the highest places of the Christian faith, you have the highest virtue and unto God our Father and the Lord Jesus be the highest praise.

We can urge you to the most tender spirit of forgiveness by pointing to God who, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven you. What nobler motive can you require for forgiving one another? With such high examples, Brothers and Sisters, what manner of people ought we to be? We have sometimes heard of men who were better than their religion, but that is quite impossible with *us*—we can never, in spirit or in act, rise to the sublime elevation of our divine religion. We should constantly be rising above ourselves and above the most gracious of our fellow Christians and yet above us we would still behold our God and Savior. We may go from strength to strength in thoughts of goodness and duties of piety, but Jesus is higher, still, and evermore we must be looking up to Him as we climb the sacred hill of Grace.

At this time we wish to speak a little concerning the duties of love and forgiveness and here we note, at once, that the Apostle sets before us the example of God, Himself. Upon that bright example we shall spend most of our time, but I hope not quite so much as to forget the practical part which is so much needed in these days by certain unforgiving spirits who nevertheless assume the Christian name. The theme of God’s forgiving love is so fascinating that we may linger awhile—and a long while, too—upon that bright example of forgiveness which God has set before us, but from it all I hope we shall be gathering Grace by which to forgive others even to 70 times seven. We shall take the text, phrase by phrase, and so we shall obtain the clearest divisions.

I. The first phrase to think about is, “FOR CHRIST’S SAKE.” We use these words very often, but probably we have never thought of their force.

And even at this time we cannot bring forth the whole of their meaning. Let us touch thereon with thoughtfulness, praying the good Spirit to instruct us. "For Christ's sake." All the good things which God has bestowed upon us have come to us, "for Christ's sake." But *especially* the forgiveness of our sins has come, "for Christ's sake." This is the plain assertion of the text. What does it mean? It means, surely, first, for the sake of the great Atonement which Christ has offered.

The great God can, as a just Lawgiver and King, readily pass by our offenses because of the expiation for sin which Christ has offered. If sin were merely a personal affront toward God, we have abundant evidence that He would be ready enough to pass it by without exacting vengeance—but it is a great deal more than that. Those who view it as a mere personal affront against God are but very shallow thinkers. Sin is an attack upon the moral government of God. It undermines the foundations of society and were it permitted to have its way, it would reduce everything to anarchy and even destroy the governing power and Ruler, Himself.

God has a great realm to govern, not merely of men that dwell on the face of the earth, but beneath His sway there are angels, principalities, powers and we know not how many worlds of intelligent beings! It would certainly be a monstrous thing to suppose that God has made yonder myriads of worlds that we see sparkling in the sky at night without having placed some living creatures in them—it is far more reasonable to suppose that this earth is an altogether insignificant speck in the Divine dominion—a mere province in the boundless empire of the King of kings.

Now, this world, having rebelled against God high-handedly, as it has done, unless there were a satisfaction demanded for its rebellion, would be a tolerated assault upon the dominion of the great Judge of all and a lowering of His royal influence over all His domain. If sin in man's case were left unpunished it would soon be known through myriads of worlds and, in fact, by ten thousand times ten thousand races of creatures, that they might sin with impunity. If one race had done so, why not all the rest? This would be a proclamation of universal license to rebel. It would probably be the worst calamity that could happen—that any sin should go unpunished by the supreme Judge. Sometimes in a state, unless the lawgiver executes the law against the murderer, life will be in peril and everything will become insecure and, therefore, it becomes mercy to write the death warrant.

So is it with God in reference to this world of sinners. It is His very love as well as His holiness and His justice which, if I may use such a term, *compels* Him to severity of judgment so that sin cannot and must not be blotted out till *atonement* has been presented. There must, first of all, be a sacrifice for sin, which, mark you, the great Father, to show His love, supplies—for it is His own Son who is given to die! And so the Father Himself supplies the ransom through His Son, that Son being, also, One with Himself by bonds of essential unity, mysterious but most intense. If God demands the penalty in justice, He, Himself, supplies it in love. It is a wondrous mystery, this mystery of the way of salvation by an atoning Sacrifice, but this much is clear, that God, for Christ's sake, has

forgiven us, because satisfaction has been made to the injured honor of the Divine government and justice is satisfied.

I want you to consider, for a moment, how readily God may now blot out sin since Christ has died. The blotting out of sin seems hard till we see the Cross and then it appears easy enough. I have looked at sin till it seemed to blind me with its horror and I said to myself, "This damned spot can never be washed out; no fuller's soap can change its hue; sooner might the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots. O Sin, you deep, eternal evil, what can remove you?" And then I have seen the Son of God dying on the Cross and read the anguish of His soul and heard the cries which showed the torment of His spirit when God, His Father, had forsaken Him—and it has seemed to me as if the blotting out of sin were the easiest thing under Heaven!

When I have seen Jesus die I have not been able to understand how any sin could be difficult to remove. Let a man stand on Calvary and look on Him whom he has pierced—and believe and accept the Atonement made—and it becomes the simplest thing possible that his debt should be discharged now that it is paid, that his freedom should be given now that the ransom is found and that he should be no longer under condemnation, since the guilt that condemned him has been carried away by his great Substitute and Lord! It is because of what Jesus Christ has suffered in our place that God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us.

The second rendering of the text would be this—that God has forgiven us because of the representative Character of Christ. It should never be forgotten that we originally fell by a *representative*. Adam stood for us and he was our federal head. We did not fall, personally, at the first, but in our representative. Had he kept the conditions of the Covenant, we would have stood through him, but, inasmuch as he fell, we fell in him. I pray you do not quibble at the arrangement, because there lies the hope of our race! The angels probably fell individually, one by one, and hence they fell irretrievably—there was no restoring them.

But as *we* fell in *one* Adam, there remained the possibility of our rising in *another* Adam and, therefore, in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son Jesus Christ, born of a woman, made under the Law to become the Second Adam! He undertook to remove our burdens and to fulfill the conditions of our restoration. According to the Covenant, He must appear in our nature and that nature, in the fullness of time, He assumed. He must bear the penalty—that He has done in His personal suffering and death. He must obey the Law—that He has done to the utmost. And now Christ Jesus, having borne the penalty and fulfilled the Law, is, Himself justified before God and stands forth before God as the Representative of all that are in Him.

God, for Christ's sake, has accepted us in Him, has forgiven us in Him and looks upon us with infinite love and changeless in Him. This is how all our blessings come to us—in and through Christ Jesus! And if we are, indeed, in Him, the Lord does not only *forgive* us our sins, but He bestows upon us the boundless riches of His Grace in Him. In fact, He treats us as He would treat His Son—He deals with us as He would deal with Jesus! Oh, how pleasant to think that when the just God looks upon us, it is

through the reconciling medium—He views us through the Mediator. We sometimes sing a hymn which says—

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

and this is just what the Lord does. He counts us just for the sake of our Savior’s Atonement and because of His representative Character!

Now go a little further. When we read, “for Christ’s sake,” it surely means for the deep love which the Father bears Him. My Brothers and Sisters, can you guess, even, a little of the love which the Father has toward the Only-Begotten? We cannot pry into the wondrous mystery of the eternal filiation of the Son of God lest we are blinded by excess of light, but this we know, that they are *one* God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—and the union which exists between them is intense beyond conception. “The Father loves the Son,” was always true and is true now! But how deeply, how intensely He loves the Son, no mind can conceive!

Now, Brethren, the Lord will do great things for the sake of a Son whom He loves as He loves Jesus, for in addition to the fact of His eternally loving Him, as being one with Him by Nature and Essence, there is now the superadded cause of love arising out of what the Lord Jesus has done as the Servant of the Father. Remember that our Lord Jesus has been obedient to His Father’s will—obedient to death, even to the death of the Cross—therefore God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name. One of the sweetest thoughts, to my mind, which I sometimes suck at when I am alone, is this—that God the Father will do anything for Christ. Here is also another piece of a honeycomb—when I can plead Christ’s name I am sure to win my suit because of Him. “For Christ’s sake” is a plea that always touches the heart of the great God.

Prove that for you to receive such-and-such a blessing will glorify Christ and the Father cannot withhold it, for it is His delight to honor Jesus! We speak after the manner of men, of course, and on such a theme as this we must be careful, but still, we can only speak as men, being only men. It is the joy of the Father to express His love to His Son. Throughout all ages they have had fellowship, One with Another—they have always been One in all their designs—they have never differed upon any point and cannot differ! And you notice when our Lord says, “Father, glorify Your Son,” He is so knit with the Father that He adds, “that Your Son may also glorify You.” Their mutual love is inconceivably great and, therefore, Brothers and Sisters, God will do anything for Jesus.

God will forgive us for Christ’s sake. Yes, He has done so in the case of thousands around me. And you, big evil sinner, if you will go to God at this moment and say, “Lord, I cannot ask You to forgive me for my own sake, but do it out of love for Your dear Son,” He will do it, for He will do anything for the sake of Jesus! If you are, at this time, conscious of sin so as to despair of yourself, it is well that you should be so, for self-despair is only common sense, since there is nothing in yourself upon which you can rely. But do catch at this hope—it is not a straw, it is a good substantial life-buoy—if you can ask forgiveness for the sake of Jesus, God will do anything for Jesus and so He will do anything for *you* for His dear sake!

So we read our text once more in the light of a Truth of God which grows out of the love of God, namely that God forgives sin for the sake of glorifying Christ. Christ took the shame that He might magnify His Father and now His Father delights to magnify Him by blotting out the sin. If you can prove that any gift to you would reflect glory upon Christ, you may depend upon it, you will have it! If there is anything under Heaven that would make Christ more illustrious, the Father would not spare it for a moment! If you see that for you to have your sin forgiven would raise the fame of the Savior, go and plead that argument with God and you shall surely prevail! Will it not make Christ glad if He saves such a sinner as you are? Then go with this argument in your mouth, "Father, glorify Your Son by exalting Him as a glorious Savior in saving me."

I find this often a great lever at a dead lift—to say unto the Lord, "Lord, You know the straits I am in. You know how undeserving I am. You know what a poor, undone creature I am before You. But if Your dear Son shall help and save me, the very angels will stand and wonder at His mighty Grace! And so it will bring glory to Him and, therefore, I entreat You to be gracious to me." You can be certain to prevail if you can plead that it will glorify Christ and surely you would not wish to have a thing that would not glorify Him! Your prayer shall always be prevalent if your heart is in such a state that you are willing to have or *not* to have according as it will honor your Lord! If it will not glorify Christ, be more than content to do without the choicest earthly good. But be you doubly grateful when the gift that is granted tends to bring honor to the ever dear and worshipful name of Jesus. "For Christ's sake." It is a precious phrase—dwell upon it and then lay up this sentence in the archives of your memory—the Father will do anything for the sake of Jesus Christ His Son.

II. Now, secondly, we pass on to observe what it is which we are told in the text has been done *for* us and *to* us, for Christ's sake. "God for Christ's sake HAS FORGIVEN YOU." First notice that He has done this certainly. The Apostle does not say he *hopes* so, but he says, "God for Christ's sake has forgiven you." Are you in the number of the forgiven, my dear Hearer? Have you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ? Then, as sure as you have believed, God for Christ's sake has forgiven you! Have you put your trust in the atoning Sacrifice? Then God for Christ's sake has forgiven you! You have not begun to be a Christian, I hope, with the idea that one day, at some future period, you may obtain forgiveness. No. "God for Christ's sake has forgiven you."

Pardon is not a prize to be run for, but a blessing *received* at the first step of the race! If you have believed in Jesus your sins are all gone—all gone—all your sins have been erased from the records of the past, never to be mentioned against you forever! The moment a sinner looks to Christ, the burden of his sins rolls from off his shoulders never to return. If Christ has washed you, (and He has if you have believed in Him), then you are clean every whit and before the Lord you stand delivered from every trace of guilt! Pardon is not a matter of *hope*, but a matter of FACT. Expectation looks for many a blessing, but *pardon* is a realized favor which Faith holds in her hand even now.

If Christ took your load, your load cannot remain on your own back—if Christ paid your debts, then they do not stand in God’s books against you. How can they? It stands to reason that if your Substitute has taken your sins and put them away, your sins lay no more on you. God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you. Get hold of that grand Truth of God and hold it, though all the devils in Hell roar at you! Grasp it as with a hand of steel! Grip it as for life—“God for Christ’s sake has forgiven me”—and may each one of us be able to say that. We shall not feel the Divine sweetness and force of the text unless we can make a *personal* matter of it by the Holy Spirit.

Then notice that God has forgiven us *continuously*. He not only forgave us, at the first, all our sins, but He continues daily to forgive, for the act of forgiveness is a continuous one. I have sometimes heard it said that we were so forgiven when we first believed that there is no need to ask for further forgiveness. I reply—We were so completely forgiven when we first believed that we ought *continually* to ask for the perpetuity of that one far-reaching act, that the Lord may continue to exert towards us that fullness of forgiving Grace which absolved us perfectly at the first, that we may continue to walk before Him with a sense of that complete forgiveness, clear and unquestioned.

I know I was forgiven when first I believed in Christ. And I am equally sure of it now—the one absolution continues to ring in my ears like joyous bells which never cease. Pardon once given continues to be given. When, through doubt and anxiety, I was not sure of my pardon, yet it was still true, for he that believes on Him is not condemned, even though he may write bitter things against himself. Beloved Friend, catch hold of that and do not let it go! Divine pardon is a continuous act—and this forgiveness on God’s part was most free. We did nothing to obtain it by merit and we brought nothing with which to purchase it! He forgave us for Christ’s sake, not for anything that *we* had done.

True, we did repent and believe—but repentance and faith He *gave* us, so that He did not forgive us for the sake of *them*, but purely of His own dear love because He delights in mercy and is never more like Himself than when He passes by transgression, iniquity and sin. Remember, also, that He forgave us *fully*. It was not here and there a sin that He blotted out, but the whole horrible list and catalog of our offenses He destroyed at once! The substitution of our Lord has finished that matter even to perfection—

**“Because the sinless Savior died,
My sinful soul is counted free,
For God, the Just, is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me.”**

All our transgressions are swept away at once, carried off as by a flood and so completely removed from us that no guilty trace of them remains. They are all gone!

O you Believers, think of this, for the “all” is no little thing—sins against a holy God, sins against His loving Son, sins against Gospel as well as against Law, sins against man as well as against God, sins of the body as well as sins of the mind, sins as numerous as the sands on the

sea shore and as great as the sea itself—all, ALL are removed from us as far as the east is from the west! All this evil was rolled into one great mass and laid upon Jesus—and having borne it all, He has made an end of it forever. When the Lord forgave us He forgave us the whole debt. He did not take the bill and say, “I strike out this item and that,” but the pen went through it all—PAID. It was a receipt in full of all demands. Jesus took the handwriting which was against us and nailed it to His Cross to show before the entire universe that its power to condemn us had ceased forever. We have in Him a full forgiveness.

And let it be remembered that this forgiveness which God has given us for Christ’s sake is an *eternal* forgiveness. He will never rake up our past offenses and a second time impute them. He will not find us on an evil day and say, “I have had great patience with you, but now I will deal with you after your sins.” Far from it! He that believes in Jesus has *everlasting life* and shall never come into condemnation! Irreversible is the pardon of Heaven. “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” He never repents what He has given, or forgiven. ‘Tis done, ‘tis done forever—Jehovah absolves and the sentence stands fast forever. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns?” Blessed be God for eternal pardon!

And since I could not find a word to finish with but this one, I will use it—He has Divinely pardoned us! There is such a truth, reality and emphasis in the pardon of God as you can never find in the pardon of man. Though a man should forgive all you have done against him, if you have treated him very badly, yet it is more than you could expect that he should quite forget it, but the Lord says, “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more forever.” If a man has played you false, although you have forgiven him, you are not likely to trust him again. It is an old proverb, “Never ride a broken-knee’d horse.” And it is not a bad proverb, either.

But see how the Lord deals with His people. When Peter was set on his legs again, he was a broken-knee’d horse enough and yet see how gloriously the Lord rode that charger on the day of Pentecost! Did He not go forth conquering and to conquer? The Lord lets bygones be bygones so completely that He trusts pardoned souls with His secrets, for “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him” and He entrusts some of us with His choicest treasures, for Paul said, “He has put me in trust with the Gospel, though I was a blasphemer.” He commits to our keeping that priceless case which encloses the best hope of men, namely, the Gospel of Jesus! “We have this treasure in earthen vessels.” This shows how perfect is our forgiveness—no, I *must* say it, how *Divine* is the forgiveness which we have received!

Let us rejoice in that grand promise which comes to us by the mouth of Jeremiah of old, “In those days and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for and there shall be none. And the sins of Judah and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.” Here is annihilation—the *only* annihilation I know of—the absolute annihilation of sin through the pardon which the Lord gives to His people!

Let us sing it as though it were a choice hymn—"The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for and there shall be none!"

III. Now, if you have drunk into the spirit of our subject, you will be strengthened to hear what I have to say to you upon a point of practice. "FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you." Let me say at the commencement that I do not know of anyone here present who has fallen out with anybody else and, therefore, I shall make no personal allusions. If I did know of quarrels and bickering, it is very likely that I should talk about the same, but I do not happen to know of any and if, therefore, my remarks should come home, I would earnestly beg each one so affected to believe that what I say is *intended* for him or her and to receive it as a pointed, personal message from God.

"Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you." Now observe how the Apostle puts it. Does he say "forgiving another"? No, that is not the text. If you look at it, it is "forgiving *one* another." One another! Ah, then that means that if you have to forgive, today, it is very likely that you will, yourself, need to be forgiven tomorrow, for it is "forgiving one another." It is turn and turn about, a mutual operation, a co-operative service! In fact, it is a joint-stock business of mutual forgiveness and members of Christian Churches should take large shares in this concern. "Forgiving one another." You forgive me and I forgive you—and we forgive them and they forgive us—and so a circle of unlimited forbearance and love goes round the world!

There is something wrong about me that needs to be forgiven by my Brother, but there is also something wrong about my Brother which needs to be forgiven by me and this is what the Apostle means—that we are all of us, mutually, to be exercising the sacred art and mystery of forgiving one another. If we always did this, we should not endure those who have a special faculty for spying out faults. There are some who, whatever Church they are in, always bring an ill report of it. I have heard this sort of thing from many—"There is no love among Christians at all." I will tell you the character of the gentleman who makes that observation—he is both unloving and unlovely and so he is out of the track of the pilgrims of love.

Another cries, "There is no sincerity in the world!" That man is a hypocrite—you can be quite sure of that! Judge a bird by its song and a man by his utterance. The censorious measure our corn, but they use their own bushels. You may know very well what a man is by what he says of others. It is a gauge of character which very seldom will deceive you—to judge other men by their own judgment of their fellow men. Their speech betrays their heart. Show me your tongue, Sir! Now I know whether you are sick or well. He that speaks with an ill tongue of his neighbor has an ill heart, rest assured of that. Let us begin our Christian career with the full assurance that we shall have a great deal to forgive in other people, but that there will be a great deal *more* to be forgiven in ourselves! And let us set our account upon having to exercise gentleness and needing its exercise from others, "Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you."

Note again. When we forgive, it is a poor and humble business compared with God's forgiving us, because we are only forgiving one another, that is, forgiving fellow servants—whereas when God forgives us it is the Judge of all the earth forgiving, not His fellows, but His rebel subjects, guilty of treason against His majesty! For God to forgive is something great—for *us* to forgive, though some think it great—should be regarded as a very small matter. Then reflect upon the matter to be forgiven. Our Lord in His parable tells us that the fellow servant owed a few pence, but the servant, himself, owed his master a fortune. What we owe to God is infinite—but what our fellow creature owes us is a very small sum.

What did he do which has so much offended you? “He said a very shameful thing about me.” It was very bad of him, no doubt. “Then he played me a very nasty trick and acted very ungracious! In fact, he behaved scandalously and if you hear the story you will be quite indignant.” Well, I *am* indignant. He is a bad fellow, there is no doubt about it—but so are you! So were you certainly when you first came to God—bad as your friend is to you, you have been much worse to the Lord. I will guarantee that his blacks towards you are whites compared with *your* blacks in the Presence of God! “Oh, but you would not believe how basely he acted.” No, and I dare say I should hardly believe it if I heard how base you have been to the Lord! At any rate, it should make our eyes fill with tears to think how we have grieved our God and vexed His Spirit.

Some of us have had so much manifest forgiveness, so much outward sin forgiven that for us to forgive ought to be as *natural* as to open our hands! After such forgiveness as the Lord has bestowed on some of us, we would be wicked servants, indeed, if we were to take our Brother by the throat and say, “Pay me what you owe.” We would deserve to be given over to the tormentors by our angry Master if we did not count it joy to pass by a Brother's fault! If anyone here who is a Christian finds a difficulty in forgiveness, I am going to give him three words which will help him wonderfully. I would put them into the good man's mouth. I gave them to you just now and prayed you to get the sweetness of them. Here they are again! “For Christ's sake.”

Cannot you forgive an offender on that ground? Ah, the girl has acted very shamefully and you, her father, have said some strong things, but I beg you to forgive her for Christ's sake. Cannot you do it with that motive? It is true your son has behaved very wrongly and nothing hurts a father's heart more than the wicked conduct of a son. You said, in a fit of anger, a very stern thing and deny him your house forever. I entreat you to eat your words for Christ's sake. Sometimes when I have been pleading a case like that, the person I have been persuading has kindly said, “I will do it for you, Sir.” I have said, “I will thank you if you will do it at all, but I would rather you have said you would do it for my Master, for what a blessed Master He has been to you! Do it for His sake.”

I may be speaking very plainly home to some of you. I hope I am. If there are any of you who have got into a bad state of heart and have said you will never forgive a rebellious son, do not say so again till you have looked at the matter for Christ's sake. Not for the boy's sake, not for your neighbor's sake who has offended you, not for any other reason do I urge

you to be merciful, but for Christ's sake! Come, you two brothers who have fallen out, love each other for Christ's sake! Come, you two sisters, come you two friends who have been alienated—get together directly and end all your ill feeling for Christ's sake! For Christ's sake you must not keep a drop of malice in your soul. Oh charming words! How they melt us and as they melt it seems to leave no trace of anger behind it—for Christ's sake our love suffers long and never fails!

I do not know how to put this next word I am going to say. It is a paradox. You must forgive or you cannot be saved, but at the same time you must not do it from compulsion—you must do it freely. There is a way of carrying this into practice, though I cannot explain it in words. You must forgive, not because you are forced to, but because you heartily do it. Remember, it is of no use for you to put your money into that offering box as you go out unless you remember, first, to forgive your brother! God will not accept the gifts, prayers, or praises of an unrelenting heart! Though you leave all your substance to His cause, He will not accept a penny of it if you die in an unforgiving temper! There is no Grace where there is no willingness to overlook faults.

John says, "He that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" The very prayer that teaches you to ask for mercy bids you say, "forgive us, as we forgive our debtors." Unless you have forgiven others, you read your own death warrant when you repeat the Lord's prayer! Finally, I want to say to you all, Brothers and Sisters, that as Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, if we are to forgive one another, there must be some other things which we ought to do. And the first is, do not let us provoke each other to offend. If I know that a man does not like a certain thing, I will not thrust it in his way.

Do not say, "Well, but if he is short-tempered, I cannot help it! He should not be so ready to take offense. I cannot be always paying deference to his absurd sensitiveness!" No. But, Brother, your friend is very ready to take offense and you know that he is—have respect, then, to his infirmity of temper such as you would have if he were afflicted in body. If you have rheumatism or gout, your friends do not go stamping across the room and saying, "He ought not to mind that! He ought not to feel it." Kind-hearted people step across the floor with a light step, for fear they should hurt the poor suffering limb. If a man has a diseased mind and is very irritable, treat him gently, pity his infirmity and do not irritate him.

A friend wrote me, a short while ago, a letter of serious complaint against a Brother who had been very angry with him and had spoken very sharply while excited to passion. I felt bound to hear the other side of the story and I was obliged to say, "Now, you two Brothers are both wrong. You, my Brother, lost your temper, but you, my other Brother, irritated him so that I do not wonder he lost his temper! And when you saw he had lost his temper, why did you not go away, or do something to quiet him? No, but you remained to increase the wrath and then wrote to expose him." I blame the wood for burning, but what shall I say of the bellows? It was wrong to blaze, but was it right to fan the flame? Very often when a man is angry he may not be the only one to blame. Therefore, Brothers

and Sisters, if we are to forgive each other, do not let us provoke each other to offend!

In the next place, do not make offenses. Oftentimes a man has been offended at another for no reason at all. One person has said of another as he passed him in the street, "He will not even nod to me. He is too proud to acknowledge me because I am a poor man." Now, that beloved Friend who was thus blamed could not see much further than his hand, for he was nearsighted! Another has been censured for not hearing, though he was deaf! And another for not shaking hands when his arm was crippled. Do not imagine offenses where they are not intended. Next, do not take offenses where they *are* intended. It is a splendid thing if you will not be offended. Nothing makes a man feel so small as when you accept what he intended for an insult as if it were a compliment and thank him for it! Can you master yourself to that point?

Remember, when you have conquered yourself, you have conquered the world. You have overcome everybody when you have so fully overcome your own spirit that you remain content with that which naturally would excite your wrath. Then, if you must be offended, dear Brother, do not exaggerate an offense. Some good women, I was about to say, and men also, when they come as tale-bearers with a charge, make a great many flourishes and additions! They go a long way round and they bring innumerable beliefs, suggestions, hints and hearsays into the business until a sparrow's egg becomes as huge as ever was laid by an ostrich!

I begin coolly to strip off the feathers and the paint and I say, "Now, I do not see what that point had to do with it, or what that remark has in it. All I can see when I come to look at the bare fact is such-and-such and that was not much, was it?" "Oh, but there was more intended." Do not believe that, dear Brother, dear Sister! If there must be something wrong, let it be as little as you can. If you have a telescope, look through the large hole and minify instead of magnifying, or, better still, do not look at it at all! A blind eye is often the best eye a man can have! And a deaf ear is better, by far, than one which hears too much.

"Also take no heed," says Solomon, "unto all words that are spoken, lest you hear your servant curse you." Something you have done may irritate a servant and he may make remarks which are unbecoming and impertinent. Don't hear what he is muttering! Keep out of hearing. He will be sorry, tomorrow, and if he thinks you did not hear him, he will continue in your service and be faithful to you. What would you do if your employer picked you up for every word and if he caught up every sentence that you uttered? How would you live at all if he reckoned sharply with you? No, dear Friends, as you have to forgive one another, do not take offense—and when offense is given do not exaggerate it—and, if you can, do not even observe it!

Then, again, do not publish offenses. There has been something very offensive said. What then? Do not repeat it! Do not go, first, to one and then to another, and say, "Now this is quite private and, mind you keep it a secret—So-and-So has spoken shamefully." Better that you should let your heart break than go up and down with a firebrand in this fashion! If a Brother has done wrong, why should *you* do wrong? You will be doing

wrong if you publish his fault. Remember how the curse came upon Noah's son for exposing his father? And how much better it is for us all when there is anything wrong to go backward and cover it, without even looking at it, ourselves, if we can help it! Cover it up! Cover it up! Charity covers a multitude of sins. Not only one, two, three sins will charity cover, but she carries a cloak which covers a whole host of faults.

Above all, my Brothers and Sisters, and with this I close, never in any way, directly or indirectly, avenge yourselves. For any fault that is ever done to you, the Master says unto you—resist not evil. In all things bend, bow, yield, submit.” “If you tread on a worm it will turn,” says somebody. And is a *worm* your example? Christ shall be mine! It is a shocking thing when a Christian man forgets his Lord to find an excuse for himself among the poor creatures under his feet! But if it must be so, what does a worm do when it turns? When you have stepped on a worm, does it bite? Does the worm hurt anyone? Ah, no. It has turned, but it has turned in its agony and writhed before you, that is all. *You* may do that, too, if you must.

Brother, the most splendid vengeance you can ever have is to do good to them that do you evil and to speak well of them that speak ill of you. They will be ashamed to look at you. They will never hurt you again if they see that you cannot be provoked unless it is to greater love and larger kindness. This ought to be the mark of Christians! Not, “I will have the law on you,” or, “I will avenge myself.” But, “I will bear and forbear even to the end.” “Vengeance is mine. I will repay it, says the Lord.” Do not take that into your hand which God says belongs to Him, but as He, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you, so also forgive all those who do you wrong. “How long am I to do that?” says one. “I would not mind doing it three or four times.” There was one of old who would go the length of six or seven, but Jesus Christ said, “unto 70 times seven.” That is a very considerable number. You may count whether you have yet reached that amount—and if you have, you will now be glad to *begin again*—still forgiving, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you!

God help us to be patient to the end! Though I have not, just now, been preaching Christ Jesus as the Object of the sinner's trust, yet remember that He must also be the Object of our imitation. This is the kind of doctrine which Christ Himself preached and, therefore, since He preached continually this love to our neighbor and forgiveness of our enemies, we ought both to preach and to practice it. Go and believe in Him and be imitators of Him, remembering that He forgave His murderers upon the Cross whereon He worked out our redemption! May His Spirit rest upon you always. Amen.

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“FOR CHRIST’S SAKE”

NO. 614

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 12, 1865,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

**“For Christ’s sake.”
Ephesians 4:32.**

THIS is the great argument of awakened sinners when they seek mercy at God’s hands. Once they could boast of their own righteousness. They could rest upon their feelings, their resolutions, their goodness of heart, or their prayers—but now that God the Holy Spirit has shown them what they are and revealed to them the desperate evil of their hearts, they dare not offer any other plea than this—“For Christ’s sake.” They look and there is no man to succor. They cast their eyes around and there is no helper and their heart knows neither peace nor hope till they behold the Person and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Then straightway their mouth is opened with arguments and they can plead with God with prevailing reasons, saying, “For Christ’s sake, for Christ’s sake, have mercy upon me.”

Indeed, Beloved, this is the *only* argument which can prevail with God in prayer, whether the prayer comes from saint or sinner. It is true that God did not originally love us for Christ’s sake, for His electing love was Sovereign and absolute—the Father loved us not *because* the Savior died—but the Savior *died* because the Father loved us from before the foundation of the world. Nevertheless the only channel of communication between a loving Father and His elect people is the meritorious and glorious Person of Christ. The Father gives us no privilege except through His Only-Begotten, nor are we looked upon as accepted or acceptable except as we stand in and through our Lord Jesus, accepted in the Beloved, perfect in Christ Jesus.

I must use no other argument when I plead with God but the name of His dear Son, for this is the sum of all heavenly logic. Whatever Covenant mercy I may wish for, this is the key which will unlock the storehouses of Heaven. No other name will prevail with God to scatter His mercies among undeserving sinners. He who knows how to plant his foot on the solid foothold of, “for Christ’s sake,” needs not fear, like Jacob, to wrestle with the Angel of God. But if we forget this in our prayers, we have lost the muscle and sinew from the arm of prayer—we have snapped the spinal column by which the manhood of prayer is sustained erect—we have pulled down about our own ears the whole temple of supplication as Samson did the house of the Philistines.

“For Christ’s sake,” this is the one unbuttressed pillar upon which all prayer must lean—take this away and it comes down with a crash! Let this stand and prayer stands like Heaven—reaching upward—holding communion with the skies. In two ways, as the Holy Spirit may enable us, we will read the words before us. It is God’s argument for mercy—“For Christ’s sake.” It is our reason for service—“For Christ’s sake.”

I. GOD'S ARGUMENT FOR MERCY. He forgives us "for Christ's sake." Here let us first look at the force of this motive. And then, secondly, let us notice some qualifications in it which may, through God's blessing, be the means of comforting seeking sinners who desire to find rest in and through Jesus Christ.

1. Let us consider the force of this motive by which God is moved to forgive sinners, "for Christ's sake." You know that if we do a thing for the sake of a person, several considerations may work together to make our motive powerful. We may be willing not only to do some things, but many things—no, *all* things—for the sake of the individual admired or beloved. The first thing which will move us to do anything for another's sake is his person, with its various additions of position and character. The excellence of a man's person has often moved others to high enthusiasm, to the spending of their lives—yes, to the endurance of cruel deaths for his sake.

In the day of battle, if the advancing column wavered for a single moment, Napoleon's presence made every man a hero. When Alexander led the van there was not a man in all the Macedonian ranks who would have hesitated to lose his life in following him. For David's sake the three mighties broke through the host, at imminent peril of their lives, to bring him water from the well of Bethlehem.

Some men have a charm about them which enthralls the souls of other men who are fascinated by them and count it their highest delight to do them honor. There have been, in different ages, leaders, both warlike and religious, who have so entirely possessed the hearts of their followers that no sacrifice was counted too great, no labor too severe. There is much to move the heart in the excellence of a person. How shall I, in a fitting manner, lead you to contemplate the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, seeing that His charms far exceed all human attractions as the sun outshines the stars?

Yet this much I will be bold to say, that He is so glorious that even the God of Heaven may well consent to do ten thousand things for His sake! Brothers and Sisters, we believe our Lord Jesus Christ to be very God of very God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, essential Deity. Jesus is no distinct God, separate from the Father, but, in a mysterious manner, He is One with the Father, so that the old Jewish watchword still stands true. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord." And yet Jesus is Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness.

Besides this, He, for us men and for our salvation, took upon Himself the form and nature of man—became Incarnate, as the virgin's son and, as such, lived a life of perfection, never sinning, always full of love and holy service, both to God and man. There He stands—by the eye of faith we may see Him—"God over all, blessed forever." And yet Man, of the substance of His mother, He stands to plead before the eternal Throne—Almighty God, all-perfect Man. He wears upon His head a crown, for he is a Prince of the house of David, and His dominion is an everlasting dominion.

Upon His bosom glitters the bejeweled breastplate, for He is a Priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec and over His shoulders hangs the mantle of prophecy, for He is a Prophet and more than a Prophet. Now, as

He stands there, adored of angels, worshipped by cherubim and seraphim, having the keys of Heaven and earth and Hell at His side—Master of winds and waves, Lord of Providence, the Wonderful, the Counselor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords—I wonder not that such a Person should prevail with the Father, and that God, for His sake, should bestow innumerable blessings upon the unworthy for whom He pleads!

He is the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely! His head is as much fine gold! His lips like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh! His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars! His mouth is most sweet—yes, He is altogether lovely. The whole creation can afford—

***"But some faint shadows of my Lord,
Nature, to make His beauties known,
Must mingle colors not her own.
Nor earth, nor seas, nor sun, nor stars,
Nor Heaven, His full resemblance bears.
His beauties we can never trace,
Till we behold Him face to face."***

In the surpassing majesty of His Person lies a part of the force of the plea. A far greater power lies in near and dear relationship. The mother, whose son had been many years at sea, pined for him with all a mother's fondness. She was a widow and her heart had but this one object left. One day there came to the cottage door a ragged sailor. He was limping on a crutch and seeking alms. He had been asking at several houses for a widow of such-and-such a name. He had now found her out.

She was glad to see a sailor, for *never* since her son had gone to sea had she turned one away from her door, for her son's sake. The present visitor told her that he had served in the same ship with her beloved boy—that they had been wrecked together and cast upon a barren shore—that her son had died in his arms and that he had charged him with his dying breath to take his Bible to his mother. She would know by that sign that it was her son—and to charge her to receive his comrade affectionately and kindly for her son's sake. You may well conceive how the best of the house was set before the stranger! He was but a common sailor. There was nothing in him to recommend him. His weather-beaten cheeks told of service, but it was not service rendered to *her*—he had no claim on her and yet there was bed and board and the widow's hearth for him.

Why? Because she seemed to see in his eyes the picture of her son—and that Book, the sure token of good faith, opened her heart and her house to the stranger. Relationship will frequently do far more than the mere excellence of the person. Think, Brothers and Sisters—Jesus Christ is the Only-Begotten Son of God! Our God had but one begotten Son and that Son the darling of His bosom. Oh, how the Father loves Him! It is not possible for us to measure Divine love, for we have no measuring line. Human love at best is only finite even when it reaches its very highest. When we plunge into the depths of human love, there is yet a bottom!

But Divine love has neither shore nor boundary. Little can we tell what unity of essence means. The Divine Persons are one in Essence—one God. We cannot, therefore, conceive what affection must spring from this closest of all known unities. Oh, how Jehovah loves Him! And yet that dear

Son of His, for our sakes left the starry throne of Heaven, became a Man, suffered—bled and died! And when we come to mercy's bar, bringing with us Christ's own promise, the Eternal Father sees Jesus in our eyes—bids us welcome to mercy's table and to mercy's house for the sake of Him who is His Only-Begotten Son.

Still I have only advanced to the border of my subject. The force of the words, "for Christ's sake," must be found deeper still, namely in the worthiness of the Person and of His acts. Many peerages have been created in this realm which descend from generation to generation—with large estates—the gift of a generous nation and why? Because this nation has received some signal benefits from one man and has been content to ennoble his heirs forever for his sake. I do not think there was any error committed when Marlborough or Wellington were lifted to the peerage—having saved their country in war it was right that they should be honored in peace. And when, for the sake of the parents, perpetual estates were entailed upon their descendants and honors in perpetuity conferred upon their sons, it was only acting according to the laws of gratitude.

Let us think of what Jesus Christ has done and let us understand how strong must be that plea—"for Jesus' sake." The Law of God was violated. Jesus Christ came into the world and kept it—kept it so that out of the whole Ten Commands there is not one whose clamorous tongue can lay anything to His charge. Here was a Divine dilemma—God must be just, yet He willed to save His people. How could these two things meet? Where was the man who could break down the mountain which separated Justice and Mercy, so that they could kiss each other? God must punish sin and yet He will be gracious to whom He will be gracious. How shall these two things agree?

Forth came the priests, with their various sacrifices. But the slaughter of bullocks and heifers and rams and he-goats, could not make God just. What comparison could there be between rivers of blood of fed beasts and the sin of man? But Jesus came—the great Solution of the Divine enigma—Jesus came—eternal God, but yet perfect Man and He bowed His head to the ignominious death of the Cross! His hands were pierced! His feet were nailed—His soul was sorrowful, even unto death—

***"Jesus, our Lord and God,
Bore sin's tremendous load.
Praise His name!
Tell what His arm has done,
What spoils from death He won!
Sing His great name alone.
Worthy the Lamb!"***

God was just—He punished human guilt in the Person of man's representative, Jesus of Nazareth. God is gracious—He accepts every believing sinner for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Think, then, of what Christ has done and you will see the force of the argument. He has honored the Law of God which man had dishonored and has opened a way for God's mercy which man's sin had fast closed up. Oh, God, Your Son has brought back what He took not away—He has taken the prey from the mighty and the lawful captive He has delivered. Like another David He has snatched the sheep from the jaws of the lion

and delivered the lamb from the paws of the bear. Like another Samson He has slain Your enemies and taken the gates of their strongholds upon His shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill. Every wound which He endured upon the Cross, every stroke which He felt in Pilate's hall, every drop of blood which He sweat in Gethsemane strengthens the plea, "for Christ's sake."

Still, still I think I have not yet arrived at the force of the words. If any stipulation has been made, then the term, "for His sake," become more forcible—because they are backed by engagements, promises, covenants. In Christ's case solemn promises have been exchanged. There was a distinct engagement made between the Judge of men and the Redeemer of our souls. The Prophet Isaiah has published the engagement, "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand."

Yet again, "I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong." And still further, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. By His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities." There was a distinct transaction, then, of ancient date between the Father and the Son in which the Son stipulated that He would bear the sin of His people. He was to be the Scapegoat for His people Israel. And then it was solemnly engaged on the part of the Divine Judge of all the earth that He would give Him the souls of the redeemed to be His portion forever.

Now, Brethren, there is a strength in the plea, "for Christ's sake." Oh God, with reverence would we speak of You, but how could You be just if You did not save those for whom Jesus shed His precious blood? Brethren, we speak as unto honest men—would you, being men, first of all accept a surety and a substitute and then expect the debtor to pay the debt himself? Look at human governments—if a man were drafted into the army and should find a substitute, does the law afterwards seize the man himself? And shall God be less just than man? Shall the supreme king of Heaven be less just than the kings of earth? If Christ has paid my debt, God's justice cannot demand payment of me! It cannot expect the same debt to be paid twice. Justice cannot demand payment—

***"First at my bleeding Surety's hands,
And then again at mine."***

If Christ served in that dread warfare for me as my Substitute, how can it be that after this I should myself be driven to the edge of the sword? Impossible! Beloved, see that scapegoat yonder? Israel's sins have been confessed upon it. The High Priest has laid his hand on the victim's head. It is led away by the hand of a fit man. He sets it free. He watches it—it is out of sight. He climbs a rock, looks far away to the east, the west, the north, the south—he cannot see it. He waits awhile—looks with anxious eyes—it is gone! He comes back and tells the people of Israel that the sin has been typically carried away upon the scapegoat's head.

Now, Christ is the fulfillment of the scapegoat. Our sins were laid on Him—He is gone—gone where? "You shall seek Me but you shall not find Me," He says. He is gone into the desolate regions of the dead. The Scapegoat, Christ, has carried away into His own tomb, the sins of all His people forever. Now, was that a farce, or was it a reality? Did Christ take

away sin, or not? If He did, then how can men be punished for sins which Jesus took away, for the sins for which Christ was punished? If He did not suffer for sin, then where is the deliverance for any soul born of Adam? Oh you that receive general redemption, you know not what you receive! You who talk of a universal atonement which does not make an atonement for all sin, know not what you affirm!

But we who speak of a special Atonement made for every soul that ever has believed or ever shall believe—we speak of something sure, certain, worthy of the soul’s resting itself upon—since it does save every soul for whom it was offered up! There remains only one other thought upon this point. It tends very much to strengthen the plea, “for Christ’s sake,” if it is well known that it is the desire of the person that the gift should be granted and if, especially, that desire has been and is earnestly expressed. Oh how glad we ought to be to think that Christ, when we plead His name, never tells us that we are going too far and taking liberties! No, Beloved, if I anxiously ask for mercy, Christ has asked for mercy for me long ago!

There is never a blessing for which a Believer pleads but Christ pleads for it, too! “He ever lives to make intercession for us.” Our supplications become His supplications and our desires, when excited of the Spirit, are His desires. In Heaven He points to His wounds, the mementoes of His grief, and He cries—“Father, for My sake grant this favor to these poor undeserving ones. Give them blessing as You would give Me blessings. Be kind and gracious to them, as You would be kind and tender towards Me.” This makes the plea omnipotent. It is not possible but that it should mightily prevail with God.

2. Pausing a minute let us enumerate some few other qualifications of this plea by way of comfort to trembling seekers. This motive, we may observe, is with God a standing motive. It cannot change. Suppose, poor Sinner, that God offered to forgive for your own sake. Then if at one time you were penitent and broken-hearted, there would be hope for you. But at another time you might be bemoaning the hardness of your heart and powerlessness to repent and then there would be no motive why God should bless you. But, you see, Christ is always as much worthy at one time as another and therefore God has the same reason for blessing you—a poor wandering soul today—as He can have had twenty years ago!

And if you have grown grey in sin—if you have become like a dry piece of wood ready for the fire—yet this motive does not wear out! It has the dew of its youth upon it. God, for Christ’s sake, forgives little children and for the same reason He can forgive the man who has passed his three-score years and ten. As long as you are in this world, this is a standing reason for mercy. Remember, again, that this is a mighty reason. It is not merely a reason why God should forgive little sins, or else it would be a slur upon Christ—as though He deserved but little.

Can you tell how great your sin is? “Oh,” you say, “it is high as Heaven, it is deep as Hell!” Now can you tell how great Christ’s worthiness is? I will tell you that His worthiness is deeper than Hell can be and higher than Heaven itself. What? If your sin could reach from east to west and from the highest star to the depth of the abyss, yet the worthiness of

Christ is a fullness which fills all in all and therefore it would cover all your sins! Your sins, like Egypt’s hosts, are many and mighty—Christ’s worthiness is like the flood of the Red Sea—able to drown the whole so that not one of their host shall be left. They shall sink into the bottom like a stone.

Your sins are like Noah’s flood which drowned all mankind. Christ’s worthiness is like Noah’s ark which swims above the tide and mounts higher as the flood grows deeper. The deeper your sin the more is Christ’s merit exalted above the heavens when Jehovah forgives you all your iniquities! Think not little of Christ! I would not have you think little of sin—but still think more of Christ. Sin is finite. It is the *creature’s* act. Christ is Infinite. He is Omnipotent. Whatever, then, your sin may be, Christ is greater than your sin and able to take it away.

Then, Brothers and Sisters, it is a most clear and satisfactory—I was about to say most *reasonable* reason—a motive which appeals to your own common sense! Can you not already see how God can be gracious to you for Christ’s sake? We have heard of persons who have given money to beggars, to the poor. Not because they deserved it, but because they would commemorate some deserving friend. On a certain day in the year our Horticultural Gardens are opened free to the public. Why, why should they be opened free? What has the public done? Nothing. They receive the gift in commemoration of the good Prince Albert.

Is not that a sensible reason? Yes. Every day in the year the gates of Heaven are opened free to sinners. Why? For Jesus Christ’s sake! Is it not a most fitting reason? If God would glorify His Son, how could He do better than by saying, “For the sake of My dear Son set the pearly gates of Heaven wide open and admit His chosen ones. See these myriads of spirits—they are all admitted to their throne of immortal glory for the sake of My dear Son. They are happy, but they are happy for His sake. They are holy, but they are holy for His sake.” Casting their crowns at His feet, they sing, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory, and blessing.”

You perceive at once that this reason appeals to common sense and therefore, I hope, dear Friends, you will lay hold of it. Let me say, poor Sinner, that it is a reason applicable to your case. If you can, think of any good and solid reason why God should forgive you! Turn them all over. You cannot see one! I know the time when I could not find a half a reason why God should save me, but I could find fifty thousand reasons why He should damn me! And when I see that, “for Christ’s sake,” O *that* is a reason! That is a *good* reason—it is a reason I can get hold of! Suppose me to be the blackest sinner out of Hell. How it will glorify Christ if, for Christ’s sake, the blackest sinner that ever lived should be snatched from Hell and taken to Heaven for His sake!

Suppose I have been a blasphemer, unchaste, an adulterer, a murderer—what then? “For Christ’s sake.” The more sin I have, the more glorious will the merit of Christ seem to be, when, in opposition to all my unworthiness, it brings me pardon and eternal life and takes me to the enjoyments of His right hand! Sinner, grasp this motive! I know where you have been—you have been raking about in that filthy dunghill of your own

heart. You have been turning the filth over to find a jewel in it. You will never find one! The jewels which once belonged to mankind were all lost by our father, Adam.

I know what you have been doing! You have been trying to be better in order to deserve well of God. Thus you thought you would manufacture a reason which should move the heart of God. Leave off this foolish work—come with nothing in your hands but Christ! When the Molossians were threatened by their king to be cut to pieces for their rebellion, they pleaded very hard, but no argument would touch his heart. Then, one day one of their ambassadors saw his son in the palace. Catching him up in his arms, he took and laid him down before his father's feet and said, "For your son's sake, have pity upon us."

Now, do this, Sinner—take Christ in your arms and say, "For Christ's sake." The whole heart of the Gospel lies here. All true theology is comprehended in this, "For Christ's sake." Substitution—saving the guilty through the innocent. Substitution blessing—the unworthy through the worthy. Try this precious plea, poor Soul, and I will warrant you that, before long, you shall find peace with God if you can understand the power of this argument! I may close these reflections by observing that this is the *only* motive, the *only* motive which can ever move the heart of God!

You may cry as long as you will, reform as much as you please, pray as earnestly as you like—but the gate of Heaven will never stir to your knockings till you plead, "For Jesus' sake!" There is the, "Open Sesame," which will make the gates of the city turn on their hinges. But if you have not this watchword all your *doings* and almsgivings and praying and what not will be but a heap of filth piled up against Heaven's gate. Remember, "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid." And that, "there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," save Jesus Christ, the Righteous. Use that! Plead that and you shall succeed with God!

II. "FOR CHRIST'S SAKE" IS THE BELIEVER'S GREAT MOTIVE FOR SERVICE. Two or three hints as to what kind of service may be expected of us. Then a little exhortation by way of stirring us up to do this service for Christ.

1. We begin with a few hints as to what service is expected of us. One of the first things which every Christian should feel bound to do, "for Christ's sake," is to avenge His death. "Avenge His death?" asks one. "Upon whom?" Upon His murderers. And who were they? Our sins! Our SINS!—

***"Each of our crimes became a nail,
And unbelief the spear."***

The very thought of *sin* having put Jesus to death should make the Christian hate it with a terrible hatred. I do not wonder that the Highlanders bit their lips and marched with awful determination and dread resolve of vengeance against the rebel Sepoys when they remembered how the murdered women filled up the well of Cawnpore.

Every man must have felt, then, that he was twenty men in one for retribution. And when his arm smote, he wished to concentrate all the might of justice into each stroke of his sword. When I remember that my sins tore my Savior's body on the tree, took the crown from His head and the

comfort from His heart—and sent Him down into the shades of death—I vow revenge against them. “O sin! Happy shall he be that takes your little ones and dashes them against a stone!” Yes, doubly blessed is he who, like Samuel, shall hew the Agag of his sins in pieces before the Lord and not spare so much as one single fault, or folly, or vice, because it slew the Savior. Be holy, be pure, be just—be you separate from sinners for Christ’s sake!

Then, next, the Christian is expected to exalt his Master’s name and to do much to honor His memory, for Christ’s sake. You remember that queen, who, when her husband died, thought she could never honor him too much and built a tomb so famous that though it was only named for him, it remains, to this day, the name of every splendid memorial—the mausoleum. Now let us feel that we cannot erect anything too famous for the honor of Christ—that our life will be well spent in making His name famous. Let us pile up the unhewn stones of goodness, self-denial, kindness, virtue, grace—let us lay these one upon another and build up a memorial for Jesus Christ so that whoever passes by may know that we have been with Jesus and have learned of Him!

Should we not, for His sake, care for the growth of His kingdom and the welfare of His subjects? Ought we not to minister to the wants of His servants and comfort the sorrows of His friends? If He has a poor brother anywhere, is it not at once an honor and a duty to aid him? As David cherished Mephibosheth, who was lame in his feet, for the sake of Jonathan, so should you and I look after every heavy-laden, faint-hearted Christian, for the sake of Jesus! Should we not be bearing one another’s burdens because Christ bore our burdens? Weeping with them that weep because Jesus wept? Helping those who ask our help because God has laid help upon One that is mighty, even our Redeemer? And above all, “for Jesus’ sake” should be a motive to fill us with intense sympathy with Him.

He has many sheep and some of them are wandering—let us go after them, my Brothers and Sisters, for the Shepherd’s sake. He has pieces of money which He has lost—let us sweep the house and light our candle and seek diligently till we find them, “for Jesus’ sake.” He has brethren who are playing the prodigal—let us seek to bring them back—“for Christ’s sake.” Let the soul of the poorest little street Arab—let the soul of the grossest scoundrel and the most abandoned harlot be very dear to us for Jesus’ sake—let us care even for the obstinate and rebellious for Jesus’ sake.

As you look at souls imagine you see Jesus weeping over them. As you look at perishing sinners imagine you see His blood bespattered on them and you will love them, “for Jesus’ sake.” Oh, Brethren, you who are doing nothing for Christ—you who come here and listen to me—and sit at His Table and take the bread and wine in remembrance of Him—what will you do when your Master comes and you have to confess that you did nothing for Him? That your love was of such a sort that you never showed it—you talked of it—but you never gave to His cause, you never worked for His name?

Away with such love as that! What do men think of it—a love that never shows itself in action? Why, they say, “Open rebuke is better than secret

love of that kind.” You had better have rebuked Christ than to have had a sneaking, miserable, untrue, unloving love to Him—a love so weak that it was never powerful enough to actuate you to a single deed of self-denial, of generosity, of heroism, or zeal! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let it not be so with us any longer, but let us seek, by God’s Grace, that “for Jesus’ sake” we may have a sympathy with Him in yearning over the souls of men and endeavoring to bring them to a knowledge of His salvation!

2. A few words, lastly, by way of exhortation on this point and I will not weary your attention by longer talk. Clear as the sound of a trumpet startling men from slumber and bewitching as the sound of martial music to the soldier when he marches to the conflict ought to be the matchless melody of this word, “for Christ’s sake.” It ought to make men perform deeds which should fit them to rank with angels. It ought to bring out of every regenerate man more than was ever forced from manhood by any other word—let it have what charm it might. It ought to make the least among us valiant as David and David as the servant of the Lord.

Think, my Brethren, what mighty wonders other words have worked. For *philosophy’s* sake what have men not suffered? They have wasted their health over unhealthy furnaces—breathing noxious gases. They have worn out their days and their nights burning the midnight oil. They have spent their last farthing to acquire the secrets of nature! They have beggared themselves and their families to unravel mysteries which have brought no more substantial reward than the honor of learned approbation and conscious power. The martyrs of *science* are innumerable. If someone would write their story it would make a bright page in human history!

Think again of what men have done for discovery’s sake by way of traveling. Take down the books of modern travelers and you will be astounded at their zeal, their courage and disinterestedness! They have mocked the fever, have laughed at death, have left friends and kindred and the comfort of home! They have gone to inhospitable climates among more inhospitable men, have wandered about in weariness, wet with the rain, frozen with the cold, or burnt up with the heat! They have gone hungry and thirsty, sick and weary—have journeyed on and on to find the source of a river or a passage through a frozen strait!

When I think of such expeditions as those of Ross and Franklin, I marvel at and reverence the endurance of humanity! How these bold men have braved old Boreas in his own ice-palace and faced grim desolation in its own domain! The text, “Quit you like men,” gets a new emphasis when we think of these conquerors of famine and cold and peril. And shall the inquisitiveness of mankind prove a stronger motive than *God-given* love to Jesus? If so, shame upon us! Think, again, of what men have done for false religion’s sake! In years gone by the scimitar flashed from the Arab’s sheath and the Arab’s eyes flashed fire at the very name of Mahomet! For the one dogma, “God is God and Mahomet is his Prophet,” blood flowed in rivers and fields were strewn with the slain rejoicing to be slain because they dreamed that Paradise was to be found under the shadow of swords.

Think how the heathen cast themselves before the car of Juggernaut to be crushed into a hideous mass of mangled flesh and broken bones and

oozing blood for their god’s sake! Their filthy, horrid god’s sake! How many have given themselves to die by Gunga’s stream? How many a woman has gone up to the funeral pile and thrown herself upon her husband’s dead body, giving herself an offering to her cruel gods? I know not what men have not suffered for the horrid deities which they have chosen for themselves.

Martyrs to fanaticism and deception are not a few and shall the Truth of God find us unready and unwilling to run risks for its sake? Review, my Brethren, the heroic struggles of the Lord’s people and here we turn to the brightest page of the world’s annals! Think of the suffering of God’s people through the Maccabean war! How marvelous was their courage when Antiochus Epiphanes took the feeblest among the Jews to constrain them to break the law and found himself weak as water before their dauntless resolve! Aged women and feeble children overcame the tyrant. Their tongues were torn out. They were sawn asunder. They were broiled on the fire. They were pierced with knives—but no kind of torture could subdue the indomitable spirit of God’s chosen people.

Think of the Christian heroism of the first centuries! Remember Blandina tossed upon the horns of bulls and set in a red-hot iron chair! Think of the martyrs given up to the lions in the amphitheatre amidst the reviling of the Roman mob—dragged to their death at the heels of wild horses, or, like Marcus Arethusa, smeared with honey and stung to death by bees. And yet in which case did the enemy triumph? In none! They were more than conquerors through Him that loved them! And why? Because they did it all, “for Christ’s sake,” and Christ’s sake alone.

Think of the cruelty which stained the snows of the Switzer’s Alps and the grass of Piedmont’s Valleys blood-red with the murdered Waldenses and Albigenses and honor the heroism of those who, in their deaths, counted not their lives dear to them “for Christ’s sake.” Walk this afternoon to your own Smithfield and stand upon the sacred spot where the martyrs leaped into their chariot of fire, leaving their ashes on the ground, “for Jesus’ sake!” In Edinburgh, stand on the well-known stones consecrated with covenanting gore where the axe and the hangman set free the spirits of men who rejoiced to suffer for Christ’s sake!

Remember those fugitives, for Christ’s sake, “meeting in the glens and crags of Scotia’s every hill.” They were daunted by nothing—they dared everything—“for Christ’s sake.” Think, too, of what missionaries have done, “for Christ’s sake.” With no weapon but the Bible they have landed among cannibals and have subdued them to the power of the Gospel! With no hope of gain except in the reward which the Lord has reserved for every faithful one, they have gone where the most enterprising trader dared not go! They have passed through barriers impenetrable to the courage of men who sought after gold—but to be pierced by men who sought after souls.

Think of the Moravians, first and choice warriors for God. Think of them selling themselves for slaves that they might teach other slaves the liberty of the Gospel—consenting to be confined in the lazar house for life—with the absolute certainty of rotting away piece-meal with leprosy and with diseases fouler still! Why? Only that they might save the leper’s

soul and have an opportunity of teaching the poor diseased one the way by which his spirit might be made whole through Jesus the great Physician!

And what have you and I ever done? Oh, pigmies, dwarfs, sons of nobodies! Our names will never be remembered. What have we done? Preached a few times, but with how little fire? Prayed at certain seasons, but with how little passion? Talked now and then to sinners. With what half-heartedness given to the cause of Christ, but seldom given till we denied ourselves and made a real sacrifice! Believed in God at times, but oh with what unbelief mixed with our faith! Loved Christ, but with what cold, stolid hearts. "For Christ's sake." Do you feel the power of it? Then let it be like a rushing mighty wind to your soul to sweep out the clouds of your worldliness and clear away the mists of sin!

"For Christ's sake!" Be this the tongue of fire that shall sit on every one of you! "For Christ's sake!" Be this the Divine rapture, the heavenly impulse to bear you aloft from earth! The Divine spirit that shall make us bold as lions and swift as eagles in our Lord's service! Fixed, fixed on God with a constancy that is not to be shaken, resolve to honor Him with a determination that is not to be turned aside and pressing on with an ardor never to be wearied.

I cannot preach as I would on such a theme as this, but I leave it with you. How much do you owe to my Lord? Has He ever done anything for you? Has He forgiven your sins? Has He covered you with a robe of righteousness? Has He set your feet upon a rock? Has He established your goings? Has He prepared Heaven for you? Has He prepared you for Heaven? Has He written your name in His Book of Life? Has He given you countless blessings? Has He a store of mercies which eyes have not seen nor ears heard?

Then do something for Christ worthy of His love. Wake up from natural sleepiness and this very day, before the sun goes down, do something in some way by which you shall prove that you feel the power of that Divine motive, "for Christ's sake." May God accept and bless you, dear friends, "for Jesus' sake." Amen.

***"See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did ever such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads over His body on the tree.
Then am I dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small!
Love so amazing, so Divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."***

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IMITATORS OF GOD

NO. 1725

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 10, 1883,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Be you therefore followers of God, as dear children.”
Ephesians 5:1.***

WE shall read the text as it should more properly be translated—“Be you therefore *imitators* of God, as *beloved* children.” Upon the word, “imitate,” our discourse will hinge. The division into chapters is often most unfortunate and, in this case, it causes a break in a passage which, in its sense, is one and indivisible. The Apostle had said, “Be you kind, one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven you. Be you therefore imitators of God, as dear children.” He has forgiven you, therefore imitate Him. It is a pity to have divided the argument from the conclusion.

Here, while your minds are fresh, let me remind you that this is Hospital Sunday. And let me add that my text is an argument, and a powerful one, for helping those houses of mercy. Your Lord would have you be kind, one to another, and tenderhearted—but how can we be kind and tenderhearted if the sick poor are not cared for? When all the machinery and all the medical skill are waiting to relieve the suffering poor, it is a crying shame that beds in hospitals should be unused because of lack of funds. Yet this is sadly the case and several of those grand institutions are running into debt. We may, ourselves, have no surgical skill, or nursing art, but we can each give of our substance to aid those whose lives are consecrated to the Christ-like work of healing.

We cannot be kind and tenderhearted unless we give according to our ability to such noble institutions as our hospitals. Preachers generally put the application at the end of a discourse, but on these warm days you are apt to grow tired and, therefore, I put the application at the beginning, that you may not give faintly and scantily when the sermon is over! All sorts of religionists are contributing to the common fund and we must not be lacking. When the box comes round, “be you imitators of God, as dear children,” in the largeness of your liberality and the freeness of your gifts! The Apostle urges us to give and forgive. If you are imitators of God, give, for He is always giving. Give, for if He were not to give, our lives would end! Give, for He gives unto all men liberally and upbraids not, and every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. Be you imitators of God, the constant, generous Giver, who spared not His own Son! Thanks be to His name for that unspeakable Gift!

Then comes that which, to most men, is a harder task, but which to a Christian man is a delight—I mean to *forgive*. God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven us. He has blotted out our transgressions like a cloud and cast our sins into the depth of the sea, plunging them into oblivion! Therefore,

let us forgive most freely all who have done us wrong, so that when we bow our knees, we may say without hypocrisy, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us." Let giving and forgiving be two prominent features of our lives as Christians—giving to the needy and forgiving the guilty. Giving to such as ask of us and forgiving such as offend us. By these two things let us show that we walk in love as Christ also has loved us. He has given Himself for us and through His precious blood we are forgiven our iniquities. Let us, therefore, blend giving and forgiving into one God-like life, imitating our God. This is our Father's Commandment—let it be our delight!

I. With this as a preface, let us now come closely to the text, and let us CONSIDER THE PRECEPT here laid down—"Be you imitators of God, as dear children." I note upon this precept, first, that it calls us to practical duty. Many precepts of the Word of God are thought by men of the world to be unpractical, but even in those instances, they are in error, for the result and outcome of such precepts produce the practical holiness which all profess to desire. In this instance there can be no argument at the too spiritual, sentimental, or speculative character of the text—there can be no question as to the eminently practical character of the exhortation—"Be you imitators of God, as dear children," for it points to *action*, continued action of the best kind.

"Be you imitators"—that is, do not only meditate upon God and think that you have done enough, but go on to copy what you study. Meditation is a happy, holy, profitable engagement. It will instruct you, strengthen you, comfort you, inspire your heart and make your soul steadfast. But you may not stop at meditation—you must go on to *imitation* of the Character of God! Let your spiritual life not only bud and blossom in devout thought, but let it bring forth fruit in holy action. Be not satisfied with feeding the soul by meditation, but rise up from the banquet and *use* the strength which you have gained! Sitting at the feet of Jesus must be succeeded by *following* in the footsteps of Jesus!

Neither does the text say to us, "Be you *admirers* of God." This we ought to be and shall be if we are true Christians. The pure in heart, who, alone, can truly see God, are filled with a reverent admiration of Him. With the angels, every gracious heart exclaims, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts." "There is none holy as the Lord" (Sam. 2:2). When the best of men are compared with the Lord, their holiness is not to be mentioned. "Who is like unto You, O God, glorious in holiness?" But we cannot rest satisfied with rendering such admiration—we must *prove* that we really admire by closely imitating. The world's proverb is that "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." I shall alter it and adapt it to a higher use. "Imitation of God is the sincerest form of admiring Him!" Neither can we believe that you know God and are at all charmed with His holiness unless you endeavor, as He shall help you, to imitate Him as dear children.

Neither does the text stop at adoration, though that is a sublime height. Adoration springs out of meditation and admiration and is a very high and noble exercise of the mind. Perhaps we rise to the highest pos-

sible service of God on earth when we are adoring Him—this is the engagement of saints and angels before His Throne and never are we nearer Heaven than when we follow the same occupation here below. Beloved, let your whole lives be adoration to God! Not only on Sundays and at certain hours, or in your assemblies, but *everywhere* adore, by good works—a manner of worship which is as real and acceptable as the most reverent public service! Remember, “to obey is better than sacrifice”—holy living outshines all other solemnities.

To love is to adore! To obey is to praise! To act is to worship! If you are imitators of God as dear children, your adoration will be proved to be sincere. Worship unattended by imitation is fake—true adoration dwells not in words only—as it comes from the heart, so it affects the entire nature and shows itself in the daily behavior. Let us spread our adoration over all the day till, from the moment when we open our eyes till we close them again at night, we shall be practically worshipping the Lord by reverencing His law, delighting in His Commandments and imitating His Character! It is clear that the precept before us is eminently practical. You who boast in being such practical men, give heed to this!

Next, this precept treats us as children—it treats us as what we are! And if we are lowly in heart, we shall be thankful that it is worded as it is. Some men are very high and mighty. Measured by their own rod, they are great men and, therefore, they must be original and strike out a path for themselves. You are not commanded to do anything of the kind—the path is laid down for you—“Be you imitators.” This is a similar doctrine to that which we teach the children at school. You, my boy, are not to invent a system of writing—yours is a much easier task, keep to your copy, *imitate* every letter—yes, every turn and twist of your master’s hand! Scholars can only learn by imitation and we are all scholars.

It may be something to aspire to be the head of a school of painting, but the first thing for the young artist to do is to copy. He who cannot copy cannot originate—depend upon that! I have heard great outcries about young preachers imitating, but I would suggest that, in their early efforts, this is not blameworthy. What more natural than that Timothy should, at first, be much influenced by Paul’s manner of speech? How could a man become an artist if he did not attach himself to some school of painting and sit under a certain master?

He may be of the French school, or the Italian school, or the Flemish school, but he must *begin* as a follower even if he grows up to be a leader. When he has been well trained and has done much work, he may outgrow his master and become an original, but he must *begin* as a careful copyist. Here you are invited to become imitators—but the Master is such that you will never be able to learn all that He can teach and so strike out a better path. Though you are immortal, yet throughout eternity you will never advance beyond your Model, for it is written, “Be you imitators of God.” Listen to me, you aspiring minds—if you must be original, the most wonderful originality in this world would be for a man’s character to be a precise copy of the Character of God! In you there

would be novelty, indeed, for you would be like He whose name is called, "Wonderful!"

When our Lord Jesus exhibited on earth the Character of God, His life was so original that the world knew Him not! They were puzzled and amazed at the sight of One who was so like unto the Father. His life struck men as being the most singular thing they had ever seen! And if we are close copyists of God, our characters will also stand out in relief and we shall, each one, be "a wonder unto many." You see it is a humbling exhortation which only men of childlike spirit are likely to regard. Wisely does the Scripture address it only to such—"Be you therefore imitators of God, as dear children"—if you are not His children you cannot imitate Him and you will not even desire to do so!

Observe, next, that while it thus humbles us, this precept ennoble us, for what a grand thing it is to be imitators of God! It is an honor to be the lowliest follower of such a Leader. Time has been when men gloried in studying Homer and their lives were trained to heroism by his martial verse. Alexander carried a great warrior's head about with him in a casket studded with jewels, and his military life greatly sprung out of his imitation of the warriors of Greece and Troy. Ours is a nobler ambition, by far, than that which delights in battles. We desire to imitate the God of Peace, whose name is Love. In later ages, when men began to be a less savage race and contests of thought were carried on by the more educated class of minds, thousands of men gloried in being disciples of the mighty Stagyrte, the renowned Aristotle.

He reigned supreme over the thoughts of men for centuries and students slavishly followed him till a greater arose and set free the human mind by a more true philosophy. To this day, however, our cultured men remain copyists and you can see a fashion in philosophy as well as in clothes. Some of these imitations are so childish as to be deplorable. It is no honor to imitate a poor example! But, oh, Beloved, he who seeks to imitate God has a noble enterprise before him—he shall rise as on eagle's wings! We are copying infinite goodness! We seek after moral perfection. We are to be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke!"

But as God is infinitely more than that, so are we to rise above mere innocence into actual holiness. To refrain from evil is not enough—we must be filled with all goodness by the Spirit of God. Is not this a mark worth aiming at? Judge you what that Grace must be which is to raise us to this height! O angels, what happier task could be laid before you? What higher ambition can you know? God's only-begotten Son, who is this day Lord of All, wears His Father's image in His Glory, even as on earth He was such a copy of God that He could truly say, "He that has seen Me has seen the Father." "I do always," said He, "the things that please Him." The perfect Son of God is as His Father in holiness. You see your calling, Brothers and Sisters, to a high place in the rank of intelligences. You are bid to ascend, by God Himself! In this respect take your seats in the highest room. Imitate, but note well that you do not select an imperfect example—"Be you imitators of God, as dear children."

While it ennobles us, this precept tests us—tests us in many points. “Be you imitators of God.” This tests our knowledge. A man cannot imitate that which he has never seen. He who does not know God cannot possibly imitate Him. Do you know God, my Hearer? Have you turned unto Him with repentance? Have you ever spoken with Him in prayer? Have you had fellowship with Him in Christ? Can you say, “I have set the Lord always before me”? You cannot possibly follow a copy unless you fix your eyes upon that copy and have some intelligent knowledge of what it is. We must have a *spiritual* idea of God or we cannot imitate Him—and, therefore, the need of the Holy Spirit! How can we know the Lord unless the Spirit reveals Him in us?

What is more, this precept tests our love. If we love God, love will impel us to imitate Him. But we shall not do so from any other force. We readily grow somewhat like that which we love. In married life, persons who have truly loved, though they may begin with great dissimilarity, will gradually be conformed to one another in the process of years. Likeness is the natural product of love and so, if we truly love God, we shall by very force of that love through His blessed Spirit grow more and more like He is. If we do not love the Lord, we shall not follow Him; but if we truly love Him, we shall say with David, “My soul follows hard after You; Your right hand upholds me.”

Our text does even more than this—it tests our sincerity. If a man is not really a Christian, he will take no care about his life. But in the matter of close copying, a man must be careful—a watchful care is implied in the idea of imitation. You cannot copy a document without being intent to read and mark each word. If I sit down to write an article out of my own mind, I have nothing to do but to make my own tracks and there is my work, such as it is. But if I have to copy from a book, then I must necessarily look to each line, and I must read it over attentively, for otherwise I may misrepresent the writer whose language I transcribe.

In copying from Nature, how careful the artist has to be at every touch, or he will fail in his picture. If a sculptor is producing a replica of an ancient statue, he must keep his eyes open and follow every line and mark. My Friend, you cannot imitate God if you are one of that sort of Christians who are habitually in a condition between sleeping and waking—with one eye a little open and the other closed! Such men live a slovenly life and attempt a sort of happy-go-lucky religion which may be right or which may be wrong—but its character they cannot tell—for they run with their neighbors and never examine for themselves! Such people live at random and never take a day’s life at night and examine it to see its faults. Thus sin grows upon them like weeds in a sluggard’s garden. Such persons, playing at hit or miss with holiness, are sure to come short of it! But he that is in earnest will give his prayerful thought and anxious desire to it, that he may become, in very deed, a successful imitator of God. He will also call in the aid of the Holy Spirit and thus be led into holiness.

Moreover, the precept tests us as to our spirit whether it is of the Law or of the Gospel. “Be you imitators of God, as dear children” not as

slaves might imitate their master—unwillingly, dreading the crack of his whip—but loving, willing imitators, such as children are. You do not urge your children to imitate you! They do this even in their games. See how the boy rides his wooden horse and the girl imitates her nurse. You see the minister's little boy trying to preach like his father—and you all remember the picture of the young girl with a Bible in front of her and an ancient pair of spectacles upon her nose, saying, “Now I'm Grand-mamma!” They copy us by force of nature—they cannot help it. Such will be the holiness of the genuine Christian! He is born from above and, therefore, he lives above! His imitation of God springs out of his relationship to God.

Holiness must be spontaneous, or it is spurious. We cannot be driven to holiness like a bullock to his plowing—we must delight in the Law of God after the inward man. “Be you imitators of God, as dear children,” because you do not wish for anything better than to be like your Father. You have no ambition in the world that approaches your aspiration to be holy even as God is holy, according to that Word of God, “Be you perfect even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.” Have you that filial spirit? Have you a burning love to holiness? Or is sin your delight and God's service a weariness? Where your pleasure is—there is your heart. If you love evil you are not the children of God at all and cannot imitate Him nor render to Him any acceptable service whatever! The Lord make us to be imitators of Him, even as children, from a natural bent, copy their parents.

While it tests us, this precept greatly aids us. It is a fine thing for a man to know what he has to do, for then he is led in a plain path because of his enemies. What a help it is to have a clear chart and a true compass! We have only to ask—“What would our heavenly Father do in such a case?”—and our course is clear. As far as we are capable of imitating the Lord, our pathway is plain. We cannot imitate God in His power, or Omnipresence, or Omniscience—certain of His attributes are incommunicable—and of them we may say they are high and we cannot attain to them. But these are not intended in the precept! Creatures cannot imitate their Creator in His Divine attributes, but children may copy their Father in His *moral* attributes.

By the aid of His Divine Spirit we can copy our God in His justice, righteousness, holiness, purity, truth and faithfulness. We can be tenderhearted, kind, forbearing, merciful, forgiving. In a word, we may walk in love as Christ, also, has loved us. To know what to do is a great aid to a holy life. This puts us into the light, while the poor heathen gropes in darkness, for his false gods are monsters of vice which he may not dream of imitating. Another blessing is that it backs us up in our position, for if we do a thing because we are imitating God. If any raise an objection, it does not trouble us, much less are we confounded. We did not expect, when we commenced a holy life, that everybody would applaud us, but we reckoned that they would criticize us. And so, when their censure comes, we are supported by the consideration that those who blame the imitation find fault with the copy—if, indeed, the imitation is well done.

He who follows God minds not what the godless think of his way of life. A clear conscience is our portion when we have, in all things, endeavored to please God.

I will leave my first head when I have made one more observation. This precept is greatly for our usefulness—"Be you imitators of God, as dear children." I do not know of anything which would make us so useful to our fellow men as this would do. What are we sent into the world for? Is it not that we may keep men in mind of God, whom they are most anxious to forget? If we are imitators of God, as dear children, they will be compelled to remember that there is a God, for they will see His Character reflected in ours. I have heard of an atheist who said he could get over every argument except the example of his godly mother—he could never answer that! A genuinely holy Christian is a beam of God's Glory and a testimony to the Being and the goodness of God. Men cannot forget that there is a God so long as they see His servants among them, dressed in the livery of holiness.

We ought not only to be reminders for the careless, but teachers of the ignorant by our walk and conversation. When they look us up and down, and see how we live, they ought to be learning something of God. Holy men are the world's Bibles—the world reads not the Testament, but they read our *testimony*. Brothers and Sisters, a close imitation of God would make our religion honorable. The ungodly might still hate it, but they could not sneer at it! No, the more candid among unbelievers, perceiving our holiness to be the result of our faith, could say nothing against it. The name of Christ would not be so evil spoken of if our lives were not so faulty. Holiness is true preaching and preaching of the most successful kind.

What a support it is to the preacher when he has a people around him who are daily witnessing for God at home and in business. If the pastor can turn to his Church and say, "See, here, what the doctrines of Grace can do! See in the lives of our Church members what the Spirit of God can produce"—then he will have an unanswerable argument with which to silence gainsayers. Does not the Lord say, "You are My witnesses?" Are we not detained in this world on purpose that we may bear testimony to our Lord? How can we bear forcible witness for Him unless our lives are pure? An unclean professor is a fountain of skepticism and a hindrance to the Gospel. To be useful we must be holy! If we would bless men as God blesses them, we must live as God lives! Therefore, "Be you imitators of God, as dear children."

Thus much upon the precept.

II. Secondly, I invite you, dear Friends, as we are helped of God's Spirit, to WEIGH THE ARGUMENT. The argument is this, "Be you imitators of God, as dear children." First, as *children*. It is the natural tendency of children to imitate their parents, yet there are exceptions, for some children are the opposite of their fathers, perhaps displaying the vices of a remote ancestor. Absalom did not imitate David, nor was Rehoboam a repetition of Solomon. In the case of God's children, it is a necessity that they should be like their Father, for it is a rule in spirituals that

like begets its like. Those who live wickedly are the children of the Wicked One—no proof is needed, you may take it for granted—life is the evidence of Nature.

Those who live godly and righteously in Christ Jesus, believing in Him, are God's children, and though they do not *love* sin, yet they do not remain without repenting of it. Holiness of life is the proof of regeneration, neither can we accept any other. "By their fruits you shall know them," is a rule of universal application. God's children must be like He. With all their faults and failings, there must be about their lives, as a whole, a likeness to God. The copy may be blurred, but it is a copy. I say to any man here who bears the name of Christian and professes to be a child of God, either be like your Father or give up your name!

You remember the old classic story of a soldier in Alexander's army whose name was Alexander, but when the battle was raging he trembled? Then Alexander said to him, "How can you bear the name of Alexander? Drop your cowardice, or drop your name." So I say to those who are unholy, unclean, impure, unkind, ungracious—be like God, or cease to bear the name of a child of God! What need is there that you should aggravate your sin by pretending to a character which you do not possess! Be like Christ, or be not called a Christian! Do not play the Judas unless you have a mind to be a second "son of perdition." The argument, then, is that if we are children we should imitate our Father.

But it is also said, "as *dear* children." Read it as, "children beloved." Is not this a tender but mighty argument? How greatly has God loved us in that He permits us to be His children! "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God." A, "behold," is placed there, as if it were a thing of wonder. Do you not wonder at it in your own case, that you should be called a child of God? Behold the love which chose you when you were dead in trespasses and sins and quickened you into the life of God! Do you not remember the text—"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name"? What love was that which revealed itself in your new birth and your adoption, giving you the nature and the status of a child of God!

Furthermore, since you have been a child, was there ever such kindness received by a child from a father as you have received? Behold, He deals with you as with children! You could not wish for God to improve upon His dealings with you, since He acts towards you as He use to do unto those that love His name. Behold how He has borne with you in manners! How He has put up with your mistakes and your forgetting! How He has cared for you in all your cares, helped you in all your difficulties and pardoned you in all your sins! I do not know what you have to say, my Brothers and Sisters, but this *I* can say—I am filled with admiration at the love of God for me! I have been a child greatly beloved of his Father. His love to me is wonderful! I am a deep debtor to His Grace. Are you not the same? Then imitate your Father, for the more the love of a child to his Father, the more his admiration of his Father and the stronger his desire to be like He in all things. Let it be so with you.

However, this word, “as dear children,” bears yet another meaning. Children differ. A father loves all his children, but he cannot be said, in all respects, to love them all alike, for some force him to love them beyond the rest. You have one dear son who lies nearest your heart. What a sweet child he is! You have got another boy—he is your child and you love him and do your best with him—but he is an awkward bit of stuff. He gives you little pleasure and you are not particularly anxious to have him around you all day long. The first child loves you with all his heart and strives to please you. How obedient he is! How content and happy! In all things he is a comfort in the house. Your heart binds its tendrils about your Joseph more closely than about the wayward boy—you do not make a favorite of *him*—and so excite the jealousy of the others.

You must admit to a nearer and dearer love than usual when you think of him. You cannot help your heart clinging to him—his behavior is such that he is the son of your right hand and he has a tender place in your soul—in a word, he is one of those whom the text calls, “dear children.” Just so, the Lord has certain dear children. Master Trapp says, “God has but a few such children.” I am afraid that the quaint old commentator is correct and that few imitate the Lord as they should. Yet some of the Lord’s children give themselves up wholly to Him, are watchful and tenderly obedient, and walk in such closeness with Him that they deserve the title of “dear children.” Brothers and Sisters, aim at this! Here happiness lies! Here Heaven lies this side of Heaven! To be not only children, but *dear* children, is to antedate eternal bliss!

Our Lord Jesus had disciples, but of some He said, “Then are you My disciples, indeed.” Be such! May the Holy Spirit make you such! Around us there are troops of third-rate Christians—oh, for more first-class Believers! We have many who appear to come into the Father’s House at mealtimes to get a bit of bread, and then they are off, again, into the world. I counsel you in one thing to be like the elder brother, to whom his father said, “Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.” “Blessed are they that dwell in Your house.”

Oh, to be of David’s mind—“I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Be you imitators of God, then, in so high a sense that you become dear children, whose one thought is how to please their father, whose sorrow it is to grieve Him, whose beauty it is to be like He!

III. In the third place, I desire, dear Friends, to SUGGEST ENCOURAGEMENTS. Did I hear one cry, “Oh, Sir, this imitation of God is beyond us! How are we to be copyists of *God*?” I will encourage you by giving hints which you can work out for yourselves. First, God has already made you His children! I speak to you that are Believers—you are God’s sons and daughters! The greater work is done! If you are to be imitators of God, as dear children, you must first be His children—that is already accomplished! You could not have made *yourselves* children of God, but He has done that for you. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” It must be a much easier thing to *imitate* the Father than to *become* a child.

You might adopt a child and call it your own, but you could not really make it your offspring, do what you might. But the Lord has “begotten

us, again, unto a lively hope.” We are “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” And by this new birth we are renewed in His image! Hence the greater part of the task, the insurmountable hill of difficulty, is over and that which remains is but our reasonable *service*. Should not the child imitate his father? Will he not do so naturally?

Next, remember that God has given you His Nature already. Does not Peter speak of our being “partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust”? It remains for you to let the new nature act after its own manner. A well of living water is within you, sing you unto it, “Spring up, O well.” Let the holy thing that has been born in you now occupy the throne and subdue the body of this death! Pray God it may. It seems to me a small thing to let the new nature have scope and freedom compared with the *giving* of that nature! A clean heart and a right spirit have been bestowed—let these show themselves in clean lives and right feelings. The living and incorruptible seed will produce a harvest of good works—water it with your prayer and watchfulness. If anything hinders it, repent and do your first works.

Next, the Lord has given you His blessed Spirit to help you. “Likewise, also, the Spirit helps our infirmity.” Never forget that! Things impossible with men are possible enough to the Spirit of God. We have the Spirit abiding in us, vitalizing our whole nature! The most beautiful harp you ever saw has no music in itself, but must be struck by the fingers of a musician—but the Holy Spirit makes us into *living* harps, which, from themselves, pour forth a natural and spontaneous melody. Is not this marvelous? We have not to look abroad for power to be holy, for the Spirit of God abides in us and works in us, creating in us “the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind.” Oh, to be filled with the Spirit of God! Meanwhile, it is no small help in the imitation of God to have the anointing of the Holy One and to be instructed by Him. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and, therefore, He can teach us to imitate God. He is also the Spirit of Holiness and none can better promote our holiness. Be of good cheer! With such a Helper you cannot be defeated!

Again, remember, dear Friend, that the Lord allows you to commune with Himself. If we had to imitate a man and yet could not see him, we should find it hard work. But in this case we can draw near to God—some of us can shut the closet door and be alone with God when we will—we can even walk with God all day. What better conditions could we be under for imitating our God? Nearness to God brings likeness to God. The more you see God, the more of God will be seen in you. You remember the Persian story of the scented clay? One said to it, “Clay, where did you get your delicious perfume?” It answered, “I was nothing but a piece of common clay, but I lay long in the sweet society of a rose till I drank in its fragrance and became perfumed, myself.”

Oh, if you dwell much with God in seasons of retirement and abide with Him in all the affairs of life, you will be changed into His image! As surely as the type will make its impression upon the paper and the seal will stamp itself upon the wax, so will the Lord impress Himself upon you

and stamp His image upon you if you dwell in Him! This ought, also, to inspire you with ardor to remember that you *have* to imitate God or you cannot go to Heaven, for this is one of the main delights of Heaven—to be like Christ because we shall see Him as He is. “They are without fault before the Throne of God.” His name shall be on their foreheads—that is to say, the Character of God shall be most conspicuous in them. Surely that which is to be our *eternal* destiny should be our desire today! We should strive after holiness according to His working who works in us mightily. We must become close copyists of God that we may enjoy everlasting communion with Him. May His Spirit work us to that end.

IV. Now, by turning our subject a little, we shall close WITH CERTAIN INFERENCES. I have, up to now, spoken only to saints, but here is an inference for seekers. “Be you imitators of God, as dear children.” What do I infer from this? I infer that God is ready to forgive those who you offended Him! O you that have never been pardoned, listen to this—the Lord must be ready to forgive! We are to make God our pattern, but if God were unwilling to forgive, He could not be a pattern to us! We are to be ready to pass by the offenses of others and, therefore, if God is set forth as our example, He must certainly be more ready to forgive than any of us can be!

O you that are covered with sin, I would urge you to catch at this fact! Suppose I were to bid you imitate your earthly father in frankly and freely forgiving all who vexed him? Then you might reply, “Do you know my father?” If I answered, “Yes,” you would say, “Is he really a good example of patience and forgiveness? I offended him some time ago and I have always been afraid to go to him, lest he should refuse to receive me.” If I could answer, “Yes, your father is an example that you may safely follow in that respect,” then you would reply, “I will go home to him and tell him that I desire his forgiveness and am sorry to have caused him pain.”

O poor Sinners, you do not know what a forgiving spirit the heavenly Father has! He gave His Son, Jesus, that He might be able to pass by our sins and yet be the righteous Judge of men. There have been good men in the world who have delighted to pass by offenses. Some here present have been taught of the Lord till it has become easy and pleasurable to overlook injuries and forget wrongs. But our heavenly Father is much more kind—and with far more delight blots out the sinner’s iniquities! They said of Cramer that he was more than ready to forgive, for he always returned good for evil. It was a common saying, “Do my lord of Canterbury an ill turn and he will be your friend as long as you live.” That was fine, but my lord of Canterbury was nothing in gentleness compared with the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

The holy Leighton, also, was of such a gentle spirit that one day when he went out for a walk and came back, he could not get into his own house, for it was locked up and his servant had gone away for a day’s fishing without leave or notice. All the good man said was, “John, next time you go fishing, please to let me know, or at least leave me the key, so that I may open the door.” That was all. If even *men* have come up to

such a degree of patience, much more will you find long-suffering in God! Oh, Trembler, believe that our Father in Heaven is willing to forgive you! You backsliders, you great sinners, have right thoughts of God and come to Him at once for reconciliation! There is forgiveness with Him! “He delights in mercy.” “The Lord is good and ready to forgive.”

Christian Friends, is there one among you who thinks God will not keep His promise to you? Now listen. God is an example to us, therefore He will surely keep His Word. He must be faithful and true, for you are bid to copy Him. If God could be false to His Word, we could not be exhorted to imitate Him and, therefore, we are sure that He is faithful and true because we are bid to imitate Him closely. You may be sure that every Word of His will stand fast, for He would have us righteous and upright in all our ways. “God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which you have showed towards His name.”

Another inference—only a hint at it—is, if you are told to be “imitators of God, as dear children,” then you may depend upon it, the Lord is a dear Father! The dear children of God have a dear Father! We may rest assured that He will be kind and tender to us, since He would have us loving towards Himself. I know you are heavy in spirit at this time. I know you are depressed and troubled, but your Father is kind and good. Believe it if you cannot see it. If reason says that He deals somewhat harshly with you, for He chastens you, remember that this is His way with His beloved. Has He not said, “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten”? Those stripes are seals of love! Chastisement is a high proof of wise affection! Your heavenly Father is much better to you than you are to Him. He is dearer, kinder and more loving as a Father than you have been as a child to Him. Rejoice in your Father though you cannot rejoice in yourself!

Lastly, when the text says, “Be you imitators of God,” it bids us keep on imitating Him as long as we live! Therefore I conclude that God will always be to us what He is. He will continue in His love since He makes that love the example of ours! God will persevere in bringing us home to Heaven, for He teaches us to persevere and make this a part of our likeness to Himself. The Lord will not turn His heart away from us. He will not fail nor be discouraged—having begun to make us meet for Heaven, He will never stay His hand till that work is done! Rest upon the immutable goodness of your Father and pray for Grace to always imitate Him until you come to see His face. May His Presence be with you and may He give you rest. Amen.

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THE CHILD OF LIGHT AND THE WORKS OF DARKNESS NO. 2401

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***“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works
of darkness, but rather reprove them.”
Ephesians 5:11.***

SINS, especially the grosser vices, are “works of darkness.” They delight in concealment. They are not fit to be seen. They flourish in the darkness of the unrenewed heart. They are most fully maintained in the ignorance of a soul that is without the knowledge of the ever-blessed God. They are also works of darkness because those who follow them have a sad life of it, after all—they are not only dark as to knowledge, but they are dark as to comfort as well! There is no true light, no real joy in sin. “The wages of sin is death.” And they are works of darkness, too, because they tend to further darkness—the man who pursues them goes from blackness to a deeper blackness—and in the end his portion will be darkness unbroken by a ray of hope, “the blackness of darkness forever.”

You know that darkness stands for the powers of evil, as light is the fit emblem of the holiness of God and of His Infinite goodness and purifying Grace. Well, now, whether we, who are the children of light, are busy or not, it is quite certain that children of darkness work! They are always working—there is no cessation in their activity. Master Latimer used to say that the most diligent bishop in England was the devil, for whoever did not visit his diocese, the devil was always visiting his people! His plow never rusts in the furrow, his sword never rests in its scabbard. The powers of darkness cannot be blamed for their slothfulness—is there ever a moment in which they are not busy and active? Luke warmth never steals over the powers of darkness! The work of the night goes on horribly, there is no pause to it and, therefore, let us who are of the day work, too! God help us to counteract the working of the silent, hidden leaven of sin by our own struggling to produce in the world a better tone of thought and feeling and, by spreading the knowledge of God's Grace and everything which will increase reverence to God and love to men!

The text speaks of the works of darkness and it calls them “unfruitful.” So they are, for sin is sterile. It produces its like and multiplies itself, but as for any fruit that is good, any fruit that can elevate and benefit men, any fruit which God can accept and which you and I ought to desire, sin is barren as the desert sand! Nothing good can come of it. Every now and then we hear it said, “Well, you know, on this occasion,

we must set aside the higher laws of equity, because just now it is imperatively necessary that such and such a policy should be pursued.” But it is never right, either for an individual, or for a nation to do wrong—and the most fruitful policy for men and for nations is to do that which will bear the Light of God! The works of the Light of God are fruitful works, rich and sweet, and fit to be gathered, pleasant to God and profitable to men! But the works of darkness are fruitless, they come to nothing, they produce no good result. They are like the apples of Sodom which may appear fair to the eyes, but he that plucks them shall find that he has nothing but ashes in his hand! O you who are performing works of darkness, know that no good fruit will come of all your work! You can have nothing that is worth having as the result of all your toil!

My text, which I have just introduced to you by these few remarks, demands our attention as a great practical lesson to Christians “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” Those works of darkness which are horrible and unmentionable, you cannot have fellowship with them! They produce a very potent evil to all mankind and, of course, you will avoid them. Pass not by them and flee from them! But you must also keep clear of those works of darkness which apparently seem to be colorless and to produce no particularly evil effect. You, as a Christian, have to live a solemn, earnest, serious life. To you—

“Life is real, life is earnest,”

and if there are works of darkness which do not seem to be as bad as others, but are simply frivolous, foolish and time-wasting, have no fellowship with them! These unfruitful works of darkness are to be avoided by you as much as those which are most defiling. Hear this, you Christians, and God help you to obey the command!

In coming to the consideration of our text, let us enquire, first, *What is forbidden?* Fellowship with “the unfruitful works of darkness.” Secondly, let us ask, *What is commanded?* “Reprove them.” And thirdly, let us consider, *Why are we to act thus?*

I. First, then, WHAT IS FORBIDDEN? “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.” We can have fellowship with them in a great number of ways.

Notice that the text does *not* say, “Have no fellowship with wicked men. Have no dealings with men who are not converted,” for then we must necessarily go out of the world. Many of us are obliged to earn our daily bread in the midst of men whom we certainly would not choose for our companions. Many of you, I know, are forced every day to hear language which is disgusting to you and you are brought into contact with modes of procedure which sadden your gracious spirits. Our Savior does not pray that you should be taken out of the world, but that you should be preserved from the evil of it! If you are what you profess to be, you are the salt of the earth, and salt is not meant to be kept in a box, but to be well rubbed into the meat to keep it from putrefaction. We are not to shut ourselves up as select companies of men seeking only our own edification and enjoyment! It is intended that we should mingle with the ungodly so far as our duties demand. We are forced to do so—it is the Lord’s intent

that we should, so that we may act as salt among them. God grant that the salt may never lose its savor and that the unsavory world may never destroy the pungency of the piety of God's people! With evil men, then, we must have some kind of fellowship—but with their *works* we are to have no fellowship. In order to avoid this evil, let us see what is here forbidden—“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.”

And first, dear Friends, we have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness *by personally committing the sins so described*. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked.” After all, a man must be judged by his life. If you do that which is holy and righteous and gracious, you have fellowship with the holy and the righteous and the gracious. But if you do that which is unclean and dishonest, you have fellowship with the unclean and the dishonest. The Lord will, at the last, put us among those whom we are most like—in that day when He shall separate the people gathered before Him, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats—the sheep will be put with the sheep and the goats with the goats. If you have lived like the wicked, you will die like the wicked and be damned like the wicked! It is only those who live the life of the righteous who can hope that they shall die the death of the righteous.

I, who preach to you with all my heart the Doctrines of the Grace of God, do, nevertheless, just as boldly remind you that the Grace of God brings forth fruit in the life and, where it is really in the heart, there will be in the life that which tokens its presence. If you and I are drunks, if we can do a dishonest action, if we are guilty of falsehood, if we are covetous, (I need not go over the list of all those evil things), then we belong to the class of men who delight in such practices—and with them we must go forever! We are having fellowship with them by doing *as they do* and we shall have an awful fellowship with them at the last by suffering *as they shall suffer*!

God make us holy, then! The very name of Jesus signifies that He will save His people from their sins and He saves them from their sins by their ceasing to commit those sins that others do. His own Word is, “Be you holy, for I am holy.” “Be you clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.” Nothing more dishonors Him than to have a following of unclean men—men who refuse to be washed and resolve not to quit their old sins! Great sinners, yes—the biggest sinners out of Hell—are welcome to come to Christ in order to be cleansed from their sin and set free from it! He keeps a hospital wherein He receives the most sick of all the sick, but it is that He may heal them! And if men do not wish to be healed but count the marks of their disease to be beauty-spots—if they love their sins and hug them to their bosoms—then thus says the Lord to them, “You shall die in your sins.” God save all His professing people from this form of fellowship with the works of darkness!

Next, we can have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness *by teaching wrongdoing, either by plain words or by just inference*. Any man whose teaching tends towards unholiness, who directly or indirectly, either by overt phrase or by natural inference, leads another man into sin, is *particeps criminis*, a partaker of the crime! If you teach your children what they ought never to learn. If you teach your fellow workmen what

they had better never know and if they improve upon your lessons, and go much farther than you ever meant that they should—if they proceed from folly to crime—you are a partaker of their sins and you have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. And, believe me, there is nothing more awful than for any minister of Christ to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness by keeping back any part of the Truth of God—by withholding any of the precepts of God’s Word, or by denying the terrible and eternal consequences of sin! There is nothing more dreadful than the end of such a man must be! I think that I would sooner die and be judged of God as a murderer of men’s bodies, than have to go before the Judgment Seat charged with being the murderer of their souls through having kept back helpful Truths of God, or insinuated destructive and erroneous doctrines! Yes, we can easily have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness in that way.

Further, there are some who will have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness *by constraining, commanding, or tempting others to sin*. How much harm is often done in this respect by lack of thought! What you do by another, you do yourself. If you command another to do for you what you know to be wrong—I will not say that the other is right in the compliance—but I will say that *you are wrong in having given the command*. Let fathers, let masters, let mistresses see to it that they never command *others* to do what God has not commanded *them* to do!

Sometimes it is not actually a command that you give, but you put the person into such a position of temptation and trial that the probabilities are that that person will do wrong—and if it is so—in the sight of God you will have to share the guilt of that wrong! When a master pays his servant less wages than he ought to have—if that servant commits a theft, I condemn the theft, but I cannot *clear the master* who put the man into a position in which he must have been sorely tempted to take something more to make up for that of which he had been defrauded! I do not excuse the theft by him who committed it, but, still, I cannot screen the one who put the other where, in all probability, he would be driven to commit a dishonest act. If I place a man in a position where it is most probable, seeing that human nature is what it is, that he will commit a sin. If I have wantonly put him there, or put him there for my own profit and gain, I shall be a partaker of the sin if he falls!

If you are a nurse girl and you take those little children and set them on the edge of the cliff, letting them go to the very brink of it—and they fall over, you cannot clear yourself of blame in the matter! It may be that you told the children not to go too close to the edge, but then you put them where you might be morally certain that, as children, they would go—and you are responsible for all that happens to them. So, if I set another in a place where I might be able to stand, myself, but might be pretty sure that he could not, I shall be a partaker of his sin. “Well, I drink my glass of wine,” says one. Yes, and apparently it does you no harm, whatever—you have never been excited by it, and you feel grateful for it—but there is another man who could not do as you have done without becoming a drunk and, by your example he is made a drunk and helped to remain so. The practice may be safe enough for you, but if it is

ruinous to him, take heed lest you be a partaker of his unfruitful works of darkness!

It will require great care and some self-denial, so to act towards others that we can say when we go to bed at night, "If any man has done a wrong thing, today, it is not because I have set him the example." Oh, that we might all repent of other people's sins! Did you ever repent of them? "I have had enough to do to repent of my own sins," says one. But these sins of which I am speaking *are your own*, as well as other people's, if you have led others into the way of committing the sin, or have put any pressure upon them to lead them to commit the sin! You are having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness!

Sometimes men get to be partakers of others' sins *by provoking them*. When fathers provoke their children to anger, who has the chief blame of that sin? Surely the father has! And when, sometimes, persons purposely play upon the infirmities of others to provoke them, are they not more to blame than the offenders? I am sure that it is so. I have known some try to draw others out when they have known their propensity to go beyond the truth—they have, for mirth's sake, led them on and tempted them to lie! Who is the greater sinner of the two in such a case as that? I am no casuist and shall not attempt to weigh actions, but I am able to say this most assuredly, that, if you provoke another to anger, that anger is, in part, your sin! If you wantonly incite another to sin by daring him to do it, or by any other method of tempting him to do wrong, you, yourself, shall share the accusation at the Last Great Day.

Further, Friends, we can be partakers of the unfruitful works of darkness *by counseling them*. There are some men who will not do the wrong things, themselves, but they will give evil advice to others and so lead them into iniquity. We have known persons act the part of the cat with the monkey—they have used some other hand to draw the chestnuts from the fire. They were not themselves burned, but, then, they really did the deed by their agents. Theirs was the advice, theirs the wit, theirs the shrewd hard-headedness by which the evil was done! And though they did not appear in the transaction, yet God saw them and He will reckon with them in the Day of Account.

I feel very jealous of myself when I have to give advice—and that experience often falls to my lot. A person will plead, "Well, if I do right in such a case as this, I shall remain in poverty, or I shall lose my job. If I follow out my conscientious convictions to the fullest, who is to provide for me?" And, you know, the temptation is to feel, "Well, now, really, we must not be too severe in our judgment upon this poor soul. Can we not agree with the evident wish of the person asking the advice, moderate the Law of God, or, in some way make a loophole, and say, Well, it will not be *right*, but, still, you see, *under the circumstances*___."

Now, I never dare do that, because, if wrong is done and I have counseled it, I shall be a partaker in the wrong! You who are called to give advice to others—as many of you may be by reason of your age and experience—always give straight advice. Never let any man learn policy from you. Of all things in this world, that which often commends itself to certain "prudent" men, but which, nevertheless, never ought to commend

itself to Christians, is the idea of doing a little evil in order to obtain a great good! In fact, what we are doing is believing ourselves to be wiser than the commands of God and imagining that strict truth, honesty and integrity would, after all, not be the best thing for men, even though God has so ordained! Let us so guide others that we shall have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness!

But we may have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness *by consenting to them and tolerating them*. For instance, you live in a house where there is a great deal of evil going on and you, yourself, stay clear of it. So far so good. But you *never* protest against it—you have been altogether silent about it. “Mum,” has been the word with you and, sometimes, when they come home from a place of evil resort and they tell you about the “fun” they have had, you laugh with the rest! Or if you do not laugh, at any rate you have not decidedly expressed your disapproval. You do disapprove of the evil in secret—you even pray against it—but nobody knows that! The wrongdoers, especially, are not aware that it is so. In fact, they fancy that, as they treat leniently *your* pursuit of *religion*, though they think it cant, so you treat leniently *their* pursuit of *sin*—though in your heart of hearts you believe that pursuit to be evil!

Our Lord commands us to clear ourselves of all toleration of sin—not with harshness, not with denunciation and in an unkind spirit—but with a mild, gentle, but still powerful, honest rebuke. We must say, especially if we are parents, or masters, or persons having much influence with others, “Oh, do not this abominable thing! I cannot have any share in this evil, even by silently tolerating it. How I wish that you would give it up! I entreat you, come out of this Sodom—escape for your lives!” A few more loving home testimonies for God and who can tell but that the husband may be converted, and the son may be led to the Savior? But for lack of this personal witness among Christians, I am afraid that the Church of God comes to be paralyzed and much of her power and usefulness is taken from her. Do not let us tolerate or wink at sin in any instance, whatever!

Far be it from us, also, to ever have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness *by commending or applauding sin, or seeming to agree with it*. We must let all men know that whatever they may do which has about it an ill savor, it has an ill savor to us and we cannot endure it. We must always protest against it, lest we be partakers of the sins of others. O dear Friends, I believe that the great lack of the Church just now is holiness! The great need of the Church is nonconformity! I mean nonconformity to the world! We must endeavor to bring back the strictness of the Puritan times and somewhat more. Everybody is so liberal and takes such latitude, nowadays, that in some quarters it is impossible to tell which is the Church and which is the world! I have even heard some ministers propose that there should be no Church distinct from the congregation, but that everybody would be a Church-member, without the slightest examination, or even a profession of conversion!

It is supposed that people are now so generally good that we may take them indiscriminately and that they will make a Church quite good enough for the Lord Jesus Christ! Ah, me, that is not according to

Christ's mind, and that is not Christ's teaching! God's call to this age, as to all that went before, is, "Come out from among them and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." Bear your protest, my Brothers and Sisters, against everything that is unrighteous and unholy—everything that is not God-like and Christ-like—and let your lives be such that men shall not need to ask to whom you belong, whether to God or to the devil, but they shall see at once that you are the people of the ever-living and blessed God!

This, then, is what is forbidden—"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness."

II. The time flies so fast that I can only very briefly answer the second question, WHAT IS COMMANDED? "Reprove them." Our life's business in the world comprehends this among our other Christian duties—the reproof of the unfruitful works of darkness.

First, *we are to rebuke sin*. I find that the word which is here rendered, "reprove," is that which is used concerning the Holy Spirit—"When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." We are, therefore, so to live as to let the Light of God in upon men's consciences that we may rebuke them for their sin!

But we are also to try to let the sinners, themselves, see the sinfulness of their sin, to let the Light in upon the sin and, by God's Grace, so to reprove them as *to convict them of sin*—to make them feel, from the testimony of God's people, that sin is an evil and a bitter thing—and that their course of conduct is that evil thing. The Light of God has come into the world on purpose that the darkness may know that it is darkness and that God's Light may overcome and disperse it. We are not to quench our Light and mingle with others who are in the dark, but to unveil our lamps and let the Light that is in them so shine that the darkness shall thereby be reproved! I do not say, Brothers and Sisters, that we are to go through the world wearing surly faces, looking grim as death, perpetually promulgating the Law of God and saying, "You shall not do this and you shall not do that." But, cheerful as we must be with the Love of God in our hearts, we shall prove to men that the freest and the happiest life is a life of holiness, a life of consecration to God and *that*, together with the faithful testimony of our lips, shall be a reproof of the sin that is in the world. The very existence of a true Believer is the reproof of unbelief! The existence of an honest man is the reproof of knavery! The existence of a godly man is the best reproof of ungodliness! But when that existence is backed up by verbal testimony and by a consistent example, then the command in the text is fulfilled, for we are reproofing the unfruitful works of darkness.

III. Thirdly, let us ask, WHY ARE WE TO ACT THUS? Why are we sent into the world, dear Friends, to reprove sin and not to follow in its track? The reasons are given in this very chapter.

First, *because we are God's dear children and, therefore, we must be imitators of Him*. You, a child of God, and having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness? You, a child of God, imitating the lost and

fallen world? You, a child of God, submitting to the influences of the devil and his filthy crew? Far be it from you! Ask your Father to make you holy as He is holy. To that end were you born and sent into the world—entreat your Father to help you to fulfill the very purpose of your being!

Next, remember that *we who are Believers have an inheritance in the Kingdom of God*. We are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Well, then, shall we have fellowship with those who have no inheritance in this Kingdom? Remember what we read just now—“For this you know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.” And will you, who have a part in this inheritance, make common lot with such people? Oh, be it far from you! Heir of Glory, will you be a companion of the heirs of wrath? Joint-heir with Christ, will you sit on the drunk’s bench, or sing an unclean song with the profane? Are their places of amusement fit for you to frequent? Are their dens of iniquity haunts for you? Up and away from the dwellings of these wicked men and women lest you are destroyed in their destruction!

A little further down in the chapter, in the seventh and eighth verses, we read—“Be not you, therefore, partakers with them. For *you were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord*.” What? Has a marvelous conversion happened to you? Have you been turned from darkness to light? Are you really new creatures in Christ Jesus, or is it all a lie? For if, indeed, you have been twice-born, if you have had a resurrection from among the dead, if a second creation has been worked in you, how can you go and live with these dead men and mingle with these who know not the life of God? Unless your profession is nothing but a farce or a fraud, Grace will so constrain you that you must come out and refuse to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness!

The text describes these works as being unfruitful and you read, in the ninth verse, “*The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth*.” Now, if you are to bear the fruits of the Spirit, what fellowship can you have with the unfruitful works of darkness? The two things are opposed to one another! You fruit-bearing trees, are you going to join in affinity with these cumber-grounds that soon must be cut down and cast into the fire? What? Will you interlace your vine branches with these fig trees that have leaves upon them, but no fruit, and upon which no fruit will ever grow, for they are under the curse of God? No, it must not be so! People of God, serve Him and come away from those who render Him no service, but who rather seek to pull down His holy Temple, and to destroy His name and influence from among the sons of men!

The Apostle gives us one more reason why we should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness—“*for it is a shame, even, to speak of those things which are done by them in secret*.” What? Shall we have fellowship with things of which we are ashamed, even, to speak? Yet I have to say it and to say it to my own sorrow and horror—I have known professors to have fellowship with things that I dare not even think of now! They have been found out at last—some of them were never found out till after they were dead. What a life to lead—to sit with God’s people at the Communion Table! To talk, even, to others about the way of salva-

tion, yet all the while living in the practice of secret sin! Why, surely, it were better to get into prison at once than to be always afraid of being caught! To go up and down the world making a profession of religion and yet to be acting a lie all the while, and living in constant fear of being found out! Whatever sin we may fall into, God save us from hypocrisy and make us honest and straightforward in all things! Shall we, then, go and have fellowship with things of which we should be ashamed, even, to speak? God forbid!

I am afraid that I am speaking many Truths of God that you will regard as having nothing in them that is comfortable to you, but, Brothers and Sisters, can I help it? Can it be avoided? If we are to make full proof of our ministry and preach *all* the Truth to you, must we not take every passage of God's Word, whether it is of rebuke or of comfort, in its due season? To myself, the effect of thinking over this subject is this—I have cried, "Lord, have mercy upon me." I have fled, again, to the Cross of Christ. I have sought anew for an anointing of the Holy Spirit that I might not, in *anything*, have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. And if my discourse has that effect upon you, it will do you great service! Oh, ask the Lord to make our outward lives more thoroughly pure and true! Give me a little Church of really gracious, devoted, upright, godly men, and I will be glad to minister to them and I shall expect God to bless them!

But give me a large Church consisting of thousands, if there are in it many whose lives, if they were known, would disgust a man of God, and whose lives, being known to the Spirit of God, are a grief to Him, why, then the blessing must be withheld! We may preach our hearts out and wear ourselves to death in all kinds of holy service, but, with an Achan in the camp, Israel cannot win the victory! I beseech you, therefore, search and look! One pair of eyes, two pairs of eyes in the pastorate, and the eyes of the elders and deacons of the Church can never suffice to watch over such a company as this is! The Lord watch over you, and may you have a mutual oversight of one another! And, above all, may each one exercise daily watchfulness over his own heart and life! Thus, beloved Brothers and Sisters Christ, I leave the text with you, praying God to bless it—"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

Now, if any here are living in fellowship with those unfruitful works of darkness, I pray them to escape for their lives from them! May they fly to Christ, who alone can save them! And when they have once found healing through His wounds and life through His death, then let them pray to be kept from all sin that they may lead a holy and gracious life to the glory of Him who has washed them in His own most precious blood! The Lord send a blessing, for His dear Son's sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
EPHESIANS 5.**

Verse 1. *Be you, therefore, followers of God. Or, imitators of God—*

1. *As dear children.* Children are naturally imitators. They are usually inclined to imitate their father. This is, therefore, a most comely and appropriate precept—

“Be you, therefore, imitators of God, as dear children.”

2. *And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given Himself for us, an offering and a Sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.* What a path to walk in! “Walk in love.” What a well-paved way it is! “As Christ also has loved us.” What a blessed Person for us to follow in that divinely royal road! It would have been hard for us to tread this way of love if it had not been that His blessed feet marked out the trail for us. We are to love as Christ has loved us and the question which will often solve difficulties is this, “What would Jesus Christ do in my case? What He would have done, that we may do—“Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us.” And if we want to know how far that love may be carried, we need not be afraid of going too far in self-denial. We may even make a sacrifice of ourselves for love of God and men, for here is our model—“As Christ also has loved us, and has given Himself for us, an offering and a Sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.”

3. *But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becomes saints.* So far from ever falling under the power of these evils, do not even *name* them—count them sins unmentionable to holy ears! In what a position do we find, “covetousness,” placed—side by side with, “fornication and all uncleanness”! In the Epistle to the Colossians, covetousness is called, “idolatry,” as if the Holy Spirit thought so ill of this sin that He could never put it in worse company than it deserved to be in! Yet I fear it is a very common sin even among some who call themselves saints. God deliver us altogether from its sway and help us to hate the very name of it!

4. *Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, but rather, giving of thanks.* All sorts of evil, frivolous, fruitless talk should be condemned by the Christian. He should feel that he lives at a nobler rate, he lives to purpose—he lives to bear fruit—and that which has no fruit about it and out of which no good can come is not for him. “But rather, giving of thanks.” Oh, for more of this giving of thanks! It should perfume the labors of the day! It should sweeten the rest of the night, this giving of thanks! We are always receiving blessings—let us never cease to give God thanks for them. If we never leave off thanking until we are beyond the need of blessing, we shall go on praising the Lord as long as we live, here, and continue to do so throughout eternity!

5. *For this you know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.* What a sweeping sentence! This is, indeed, a sword with two edges! Many will flinch before it and yet, though they flinch, they will not escape, for Paul speaks neither more nor less than the Truth when he declares that “no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.”

6. *Let no man deceive you with vain words for because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.* These are the

very things God hates! If, therefore, they are in you, God cannot look upon you with the love that He feels towards His children. "These things" He cannot endure and, "because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

7, 8. *Be not you, therefore, partakers with them. For you were sometimes darkness.* Then, "these things" suited you.

8. *But now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of light.* Get clean away from these dark things! Travel no more in the thick gloom of these abominations! God help you to walk in the Light as He is in the Light!

9, 10. *(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.* We ought to pray that our whole life may be "acceptable unto the Lord." We are, ourselves, "accepted in the Beloved." And, that being the case, it should be our great desire that every thought and word and deed, yes, every breath of our life should be "acceptable unto the Lord."

11, 12. *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame, even, to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.* It was so with the old heathen world in which Paul lived—he could not write or speak of those abominable vices which defiled the age. But is London any better than Ephesus? Surely, old Corinth, which became a sink of sin, was not a worse Sodom than this great modern Babylon! There is great cause to say of the wicked, even to this day, "It is a shame, even, to speak of those things which are done by them in secret."

13. *But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light.* Then drag them to the Light of God! There will be a great howling when these dogs of darkness have the Light let in upon them, but it has to be done.

13-15. *For whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says, Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. See, then, that you walk circumspectly.* Not carelessly, not thinking that it is of no importance how you live, but looking all around you, "walk circumspectly," watching lest, even in seeking one good thing, you spoil another. Never present to God one duty stained with the blood of another duty! "See then that you walk circumspectly."

15, 16. *Not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time.* Buying up the hours—they are of such value that you cannot pay too high a price for them!

16-18. *Because the days are evil. Therefore be you not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.* If you want excitement, seek this highest, holiest, happiest form of exhilaration—the Divine exhilaration which only the Holy Spirit can give you—"Be filled with the Spirit."

19. *Speaking to yourselves in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.* We would have thought that Paul would have said, "singing and making melody with your voices to the Lord," but the Apostle, guided by the Holy Spirit, overlooks the sound, which is the mere body of the praise, and looks to the

heart, which is the living soul of the praise—“Making melody in your heart to the Lord,” for the Lord cares not merely for sounds, though they are the sweetest that ever came from the lips of man or angel—He looks at the heart. God is a Spirit and He looks spiritually at our spiritual praises—therefore let us make melody in our heart to the Lord.

20, 21. *Giving thanks, always, for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves, one to another, in the fear of God.* That principle of maintaining your rights, standing up for your dignity and so on, is not according to the mind of the Spirit! It is His will that you should, rather, yield your rights and, for the sake of peace, and the profit of your Brothers and Sisters, give up what you might naturally claim as properly belonging to you—“Submitting yourselves, one to another, in the fear of God.”

22-30. *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ’s is the Head of the Church and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands, in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord, the Church; for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.* What a wonderful expression! To think that we, poor creatures that we are, should be thus joined to Christ by a marriage union, no, by a *vital union*—is, indeed, amazing! Oh, the depths of the love of Christ, that such an expression as this should be possible!

31, 32. *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. There is the mystery, that He should leave His Father, and quit the home above, and become one flesh with His elect, going with them and for their sakes, through poverty, pain, shame and death! This is a marvel and a mystery, indeed!*

33. *Nevertheless, let everyone of you in particular so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband.* Thus the Spirit of God follows us to our homes and teaches us how to live to the Glory of God! May He help us to do so, for 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.

THE CHURCH AWAKENED

NO. 716

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 7, 1866,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Therefore He says: Awake, you who sleep,
Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.”
Ephesians 5:14.*

WE have not time this evening to enter into the question as to where this quotation came from. There does not appear to be one exactly like it in the compass of the Old Testament—but we must remember that the Apostle very frequently quotes the *spirit* of texts rather than the words of them. In the eighth and in the tenth chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews we find him quoting the same passage, but not in the same words, showing us that he, as an inspired man, felt himself able to deal rather with the spirit of a passage than with the precise words of it. There may, therefore, be no such passage in the Old Testament verbally, but as there are several which have the spirit of the exhortation, Paul was justified in saying, “God has said so-and-so.”

Besides, the passage may not be a quotation at all. The Apostle may mean to say that Christ said that *to* him, or that Christ said that *by* him—that Christ intended, even then, while he was handling the pen and writing, to say the words which he then wrote—“He said so-and-so.” We have no time, however, to go into that matter. It is a more important question, perhaps—To whom is this text addressed? Nine times out of ten when it is preached, it is taken as though it were addressed to the *ungodly*. It is a very proper text to address to the ungodly, but I do not see that the connection permits it.

There are some who would think it altogether unscriptural and unsound to address these words to those who have no spiritual life. We are not of their number. If we see a man ever so deadly asleep we believe we are commissioned by God to preach the Gospel to him, and to say, “Awake, you who sleeps,” and though more and more persuaded of the need of moral sensibility in man and the desperate character of his depravity, we are not among those who fear to preach to dead sinners, but dare to say, even to the dead, “Thus says the Lord, You dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord, You dry bones, live!” We can, therefore, very well take this text and address it to the ungodly.

But this is not intended to be a sermon to the unconverted. It appears to me to have been addressed to the Church of God at Ephesus—to have been the language of Paul to God’s own people—warning them not to fall into the same habits as did the children of darkness, but to come out and show themselves to be God’s people. I know the objection will be raised

that they are told to come forth from the *dead*. But I do not see that that is any obstacle at all, for albeit that the people of God may not be *spiritually* dead in the sense in which the ungodly are, yet how often do we speak of ourselves as feeling as if we were dead? How often do we speak of our graces and of our piety as though they were come into a cold and dead state?

It is *comparative* death that the Apostle here means. We may use the words employed here as we would use them in common conversation and say that though there are some quivers of spiritual life in the breast of every Believer, yet there are multitudes who are outwardly dead as to their usefulness! And there are Christians and Churches, too, of whom we may say, without at all libeling them, "You are dead, awake you that sleep." Whatever objection there may be to addressing the text to the converted, there will be far more difficulty in addressing it to the unconverted, and I think there ought to be no hesitation in directing it to either.

To raise difficulties is very easy, but meekly to try to learn what the Savior would say is far better. I intend tonight, then, to use the text to you Christians, you Church members, you professors. The first thing we shall discuss is the state of mind into which many Christians get. Secondly, what Christ has to say to them about this state, namely, "Awake, and arise from the dead." And then, thirdly, the gracious promise with which we are encouraged to make the effort. "Christ shall give you light."

I. First, then, let us notice THE STATE OF MIND INTO WHICH A CHRISTIAN MAY SOMETIMES GET. The state of mind into which a genuine Christian may fall, and, if a genuine Christian, much more a spurious one—he may be asleep, and, in a modified sense, even dead. Let me begin describing this state of mind by mentioning the insidious character of it. A Christian may be asleep and not know it! Indeed, if he did know it he would not be asleep! It is a part of sleep for men to be in an unconscious state, and when a Christian begins to slumber, perhaps he dreams that he is rich and increased in goods. But he is not at all likely to take up a lamentation to himself, and say, "I am asleep," for if a man could say, "I am asleep," I think it would be pretty tolerable evidence that he was *awake*—and the fear of being asleep, the very dread of being asleep—would be proof, at any rate, of some degree of wakefulness.

Often, very often, when young people come to me and say, "Oh, Sir, I am afraid I am a hypocrite," my answer generally is, "Then *I* am not afraid of it, for when you are afraid of such a sin as that it is not at all likely that you are guilty of it." Some of you, then, tonight, may be in a very sleepy state, and for this very reason you will not think so. And, Brethren, a man who is asleep may be kept in very good countenance by his neighbors. His fellow Christians may not be likely to accuse him of it, for probably they are in the same state. If you put number of sleeping people together they are not likely to be very active in rebuking one another—so that this state of mind is very dangerous and very insidious.

A man may be in a Church where nearly all the members are asleep and they may say that the other Churches in the neighborhood are fanati-

cal, enthusiastic, and a great deal too earnest. And thus all these people are sleeping to the same tune, and comforting one another in it. Oh, then, may God help them, for they are in a very perilous state! A person, too, who is asleep, may have taken care, before he went to sleep, to prevent anybody coming in to wake him. There is a way of bolting the door of your heart against anybody. If you get into certain views of doctrine you can very easily go to sleep and your doctrines will stand as sentinels at the doors to prevent anybody from awakening you.

Beware of Antinomianism! If you once drink a draught of that it will send you into such a sleep as you may never awaken! If you fall into certain hyper-Calvinistic views you will have a reply ready to the rebuke of the most earnest of God's servants. You will begin to judge *them* instead of judging *yourselves*, and accuse them of being unorthodox while you believe yourselves to be sound—and so you are—but only in the sense of being sound *asleep*. This sleepiness in the Christian is exceedingly dangerous, too, because he can do a great deal while he is asleep that will make him look as if he were quite awake.

For instance, some people talk in their sleep, and many professors will talk just as if they were the most active, the most earnest, the most gracious, the most warm-hearted people anywhere! I say to you what I mean when I declare that I have heard people in this very house pray in their sleep. I do not mean in their *natural* sleep, but in their *spiritual* sleep. I could tell by the droning way in which they prayed, and by their repeating some phrases that I had heard them use before that they were not awake to the duty—that they were not really praying, throwing their souls into it—but praying because they were asked to do so, and so just went through the motions, their souls being asleep all the time.

And many a man has sung a hymn in this house asleep, too. His heart has never been awakened to the true melody of praise, yet he has got through the hymn somehow, his lips making a sound, but his heart never singing at all. He himself is awake enough to catch the notes, but his heart not awake enough to drink into the true spirit of thanksgiving. So, you see, it is hard for a man to know he is in this state, since he can talk when asleep even as others do! What is more amazing, some people can *walk* in their sleep! Yes, and walk in dangerous places where waking men would be unsafe. They, by some strange influence, seem to walk steadily and calmly along the eddies and turn by the dangers beneath. Even the howling of winds abroad seems to be inoperative upon their senses, and they, therefore, have a kind of security which more wakefulness would remove from them.

And, oh, the fatal security of some professors, and the way in which they will dally with the world and yet keep up an outwardly consistent character! Oh, the manner in which some Christians will go as near to the fire of sin as well may be, and be scorched by it and yet not burned! Oh, some of you are good, excellent, moral people in the judgment of men, but nevertheless, as Christians you do not seem to be awake to the interest of Christ's kingdom! And as a man can thus talk in his sleep, and walk in

his sleep, there is another thing he can do better than other people, namely, *dream* in his sleep! He is the man to concoct plans and discover new inventions. He can sketch out methods for building chapels, oh, so rapidly! He can find ways of bringing out ministers, and doing all sorts of things, and yet he is asleep all the while!

The waking man does it, and proves that he is awake by doing it—but the slumbering man only calculates—so many pence a week, so many subscriptions, and the thing will be done! But there is never a brick to show for all his dreams! He dreams deliciously, but as for activity, it is not there. He could always manage a Sunday school, or build a Christian interest better than anybody else—but no Sunday school or Christian interest ever springs up under his hand because the man's whole activity shows itself in inventions which are never executed, and in plans which are never carried out.

I say, then, that it becomes very dangerous, because sometimes these dreaming people do dream good things, and they get carried out by some practical person, while they, themselves, are asleep all the while. As we have often seen a sleeping drayman with his horses going on with their load, so they can make others work while they themselves sleep! And the worst of it is that when these sleeping people get into a nice comfortable position in the Christian Church they can fill it very well—and they are the last people in the world to get out—because, sleepy as they are, they know when the bed is soft and warm. And oh, when sleeping *ministers* get into the pulpit, what a curse they are to us! And when sleepy church officers once get into their places there is no moving them! There they are and they seem to fill the place quite well—while all the while it is as though the sentinel's box were filled with a slumbering man—and consequently the army is not guarded, and an attack may be made all of a sudden.

Oh, Sirs, I fear that half of Christian people nowadays are in this sleepy state, and yet if they were told so to their face they would be very angry with the men who had the honesty to tell the truth! Perhaps some here are not awake, and if so they will be the ones offended. And I shall, therefore, be like Swift, who said, "No doubt this is a capital sermon in Church to those who are awake. But it is of no use to those who have been asleep while I have been preaching it." It is just that. The Brother to whom this applies most will be just the person to fold his arms and say, "We are well, and let us leave well enough alone." It is insidious in the last degree! I have thus endeavored to show the deceptive character of this evil.

But, in the next place, what is the evil, itself? I do not know that I can describe it. But perhaps you have felt it, and certainly you must have *seen* it. It is an unconsciousness of one's own slate, and a carelessness of such a kind as not to want to be conscious of it. The man takes everything for granted in religion. Whether he is a Christian or not does not awaken in him any questions. He *believes* he is, *thinks* he is, and that is enough for him! He does not want to come to close dealings. He does not like the preacher who makes him try the foundations. He would rather not have

such unpleasant points put to him. He says, like the man who sleeps on the mast, "A little more rest, and I will awake." I fear that many of us get into such a state as this.

Then he also becomes indifferent to the state of other men. The man who is asleep does not care what becomes of his neighbors—how can he while he is asleep? And oh, some of you Christians do not care whether souls are saved or damned! It little concerns some Christians what becomes of St. Giles, or Bethnal Green, or Golden Lane. It is enough for them if they are comfortable! If they can attend a respectable place of worship and go with others to Heaven, they are indifferent about everything else. And whether there shall be an increase of darkness or of light in England does not seem to concern some Christians, nor even some *ministers*!

I know some very good and eminent professors in their way, who seem to me, at least in my poor judgment, as if it did not matter to them whether half of England went to Hell, or whether all went to Heaven. No doubt they would be very pleased if the thing did happen that many were saved, but as to waking themselves up to the value of souls, and to engage in earnest effort and humble prayer, they are too much asleep for that and are insensible to the state of others. And they seem, too, to be perfectly immoveable by all appeals. The best argument is lost on a sleeping man! You might convince him if he were *awake*, but what can you do with him while he still slumbers?

Therefore it is that many a Christian enterprise has no assistance from professed Believers because, and only because they are asleep. They might help it—they ought to help it—but they do not! They profess to be the servants of Jesus Christ, but they do not serve Him because they are indifferent, and because they are much given to slumber. And then this slumbering spirit spreads itself over everything else. The sleeping Christian does not enjoy the Word. If he reads it, the text seems meaningless. If he hears it, he thinks the preacher does not preach as he used to do. If he goes to sing with others, he throws no heart into it. If he joins in the Prayer Meeting he goes in and out, but he does not wrestle with the Angel of Mercy.

As to his own closet, it is full of cobwebs! As to his own heart, he has not had an inspection of it for many a day because the man is got into a slumbering state. You can often detect Churches slumbering by the way in which they drawl out hymns, and their protracted prayers, which, after all, are no prayers at all! There is a heartlessness in the manner in which everything is done. Then these Brethren get unhappy, and afterwards they get to be quarrelsome. Do not let that be the case with any of us here!

Then there are some who get their Christianity into such a state that they are so nearly dead that they are always looking after *evidences*. We get into a low and miserable state because we are in a sleepy state. Where this continues long, a Christian Church comes to be a positive nuisance. These are strong words to use of any Church, but it is so. I know villages where it would be easy to establish a Baptist church if it were not unhap-

pily the case that there is one already there which does no good and which prevents anybody else from doing anything! A pulpit may sometimes be the emblem of a curse! It may stand there. The Chapel may stand there and earnest ministers in the neighborhood may say, "We cannot go there because good Brother So-and-So is there," and good Brother So-and-So may simply be a naughty one who occupies the place without bringing any return to his Master.

You ask me how I can describe this state so well. I answer, because *I have been in it myself*, and have to mourn that I cannot thoroughly wake myself up even *now*! And oh, I am quite sure there are some of you who might well join with me in that mourning. Brethren, let us think of that word, ETERNITY, and how is it that we do not feel its power more? Think of the Judgment—think of the terrors of that tremendous day when Christ shall appear upon the Great White Throne! Remember the wrath of God! Remember the pit, which He has dug. Think of the Glory of Christ—of the robes of whiteness, and the tearless eyes of the blood-washed! Can we think of these things, and yet be cold, callous, and indifferent? Shall we always be at this poor dying rate? May God grant that these weighty themes may have such an effect upon us as they must have if we are *awake* and no longer seem to be indifferent matters because we ourselves are so nearly asleep, so nearly dead!

Now, two or three words upon what makes this evil of Christians being asleep a great deal worse. It is this—they are Christ's *servants* and they ought not to be asleep! If a servant is set to do a certain duty, you do not continue him in your service if he drops off asleep. Remember the virgins who went out to meet the bridegroom? It was not wrong for them to be asleep at midnight. It was the proper time for sleep. But it *was* wrong for them to sleep seeing that the bridegroom was come, and that they had gone out to meet him. It *was* wrong for them to sleep!

As I thought this matter over I thought that you and I, and every Christian who is asleep—we are very much like the Apostles at the gate of Gethsemane. There was their Master sweating great drops of blood in awful agonizing prayer, and where were they? Helping Him? Casting their prayers into the treasury? Oh, no, not they! Watching against His adversaries and guarding Him against surprise? No, not they! There is the bold Peter who said he never would forsake his Master, but his head is on his bosom. There is John, who has sincere affection for his Lord, but his eyes are fast closed! And James, also, is fast locked in the arms of Sleep.

It is very much the same with us. Christ is up yonder interceding and we are down here sleeping, the most of us! Christ is up there showing His wounds and pleading before the Father's Throne that He would visit the sons of men, and give Him to see of the travail of His soul! And here are we, not watching against His enemies nor helping Him by our prayers! No, we are busy here and there wasting precious time, while immortal souls are being lost! We are sleeping like men in the midst of harvest when the grain is waiting for the sickle! Our sickles are laid low and we stretch ourselves beneath the shadow of some spreading tree and sleep!

Though black clouds are gathering, and the rain which will spoil the corn is certainly coming on, we, hired to do the day's work, still sleep on! It is not so with you all, but it is so with many of us. It is so bad for us to be asleep, too, because it is quite certain that the enemy is awake. You remember old Hugh Latimer's sermon in which he says that the devil is the busiest bishop in the kingdom? "Other bishops," he said, "may not visit their dioceses, but he does. He is always at it, day and night." There is no waste of time with Satan! If we could send the devil to sleep we might take a nap ourselves, but we never can, and therefore we ought to be awake.

Christian, while you are sleeping, remember time is running out! If you could stop the hands of time you might afford yourselves a little leisure. If you could, as we say, take Time by the forelock, you might pause awhile. But you must not rest, for the tremendous wheels of the chariot of Time are driven at such a fearful rate that the axles are red-hot with speed, and there is no pause in that tremendous rush! On, on, on it goes, and a century has fled like a watch in the night! Time stops not—how can you loiter, Christians? And, meanwhile, souls are being lost!

Have you ever seen some of those marvelous pictures which illustrate Dante's "Inferno"? You may have seen one picture in which the artist represents souls as being driven about by wandering winds. I would change the picture and represent souls going along as in a mighty river—millions of them passing by the banks of Time every hour—many of them snatched out of the current by angelic hands and landed safely upon the shore. But oh, how many of them go onward to an awful waterfall? A waterfall of souls plunging over into eternal woe! As men stand to listen to the roar of Niagara and to see the flowing foam generated, so I would ask you to look at the waterfall of Death, and to see the multitudes of souls passing down it! A million a month in China alone, and how many millions in other parts of the world are passing into eternity, unforgiven, unwashed in the Savior's blood?

Oh, Brothers and Sisters! And yet we sit down and sleep! God forgive us! God forgive us! I think that the very devil, if he were saved, would not sleep. If the fiends of Hell could be washed in blood and made new creatures, I think their restless activity which makes them go about like roaring lions seeking whom they may devour would turn into another channel, and they would go about to win souls! Are we to go like snails in the course of *good*, while swifter than the roe or the hart men fly in the road of *evil*? Shall it always be so?

The Christian pastor may forget the villager, but the parish *priest* will not! The Christian minister may not proclaim the Gospel, but from the oratory of the *monks* there will be no uncertain sound! Christian women may forget to visit the sick, but the so-called "sisters of mercy" will be there! You may turn aside, Christian, if you please, from your position in the ranks of Christ, but you will not find the servants of Satan so unfaithful! Oh that such restlessness might come upon us that we might have an insatiable hungering to do good, and an awful passion to bless our fellow

men! Oh that we might yearn and sigh because others will not repent and turn to God! May the Lord send us such an awakening! If not, our sin of sleeping is terrible, indeed.

Now, what is it that causes us to sleep? I have heard some say that it is having too much business. I do not believe it! I do not find that you London Christians, as a body, are more asleep than country Christians. In fact, if I had my choice I might select my country Brothers and Sisters for a great many virtues, but certainly not for the virtue of being wide awake! Alas, in many of our country Churches nothing can be conducted in a more slumbering manner. I think that of the two I would rather have you business men with your pulses quickened by having so much to do than I would have you go into the obscurity of the country where there is so little to stir the blood. I believe those who have the most worldly business can often serve God better than those who have but little.

But still, we must never throw our sins upon the Providence of God! What is it, then? I will tell you. First, we are inclined to slumber from the *evil* of our *nature*. This invests our sin with a double guilt. Master, deliver us from the guilt and then from the power of sin! All the while we are thus asleep about Divine things, we are wide awake like the rest of the world about other things. I have sometimes remarked the way in which men will speak out in the shop most distinctly but only mumble in the Prayer Meeting. I have sometimes thought I have seen persons who, at the sound of a shilling, seemed to open their ears and start up be just as much the opposite way when it came to doing things for Christ—first and foremost for this *world*, and last for the world to come—toiling like the ants to gain this world's dross, but as idle as a butterfly in regard to Divine things. This is so sad, because it proves that it is not lack of power to be active, but lack of *will*.

Next, it is very easy to send a man to sleep if you give him the chloroform of bad doctrine. That has sent half our Baptist churches to sleep. They have been taught that man is not responsible to God. They have been taught clear *fate* and nothing better—and they have gone to sleep. And who, indeed, can take a dose of that without slumbering? Then, the sultry sun of prosperity sends many to sleep. You are prospering too much! God seems to be too favorable to you in Providence and then the soul begins to sleep. Fullness of bread is a strong temptation to a Christian. It has been asserted in high church papers that our youth—our young men and women—are dissatisfied with our services and system, and they are going to *ritualism*. I do not believe it!

My observation goes to show it is not the case. There are some attendees of our places of worship who were with us when they were poor, who, having amassed a fortune, have retired to suburban villas and turned to places where they hear a Gospel alien to that which they heard when times were different with them. But it is not the case with the young men and women of our churches! I do not believe the blame rests with *them*. It is the power of wealth which comes to them. I admire that prayer of Mr. Whitfield's for a young man who had come into possession of a large

property, that God would give him Divine Grace to persevere under such a trial.

Then in some people it is the intoxication of *pride*. Get proud of your spiritual condition and that will soon send you to sleep. In others it is the lack of heart which is at the bottom of everything they do. They never were intense. They never were earnest, and consequently they have such little zeal that that zeal soon goes to sleep. This is the age of the Enchanted Ground. He that can go through this age and not sleep must have something more than mortal about him—God must be with him keeping him awake! You cannot be long in the soporific air of this particular period of time without feeling that in spiritual things you grow lax, for it is a lax age—lax in doctrine, lax in principle, lax in morals, lax in everything—and only God can come in and help the Pilgrim to keep awake in this Enchanted Ground!

These, then, are some of the things to guard against. My time, unfortunately, is almost gone, and therefore I can only say a few words upon the second point.

II. What did Christ say to His people who were asleep? He said, “AWAKE YOU WHO SLEEP, ARISE FROM THE DEAD.” Let me have a little quiet talk with you, then, in the Master’s name. Remember that Jesus speaks this in *love*. You never knew him do or say anything that was not in love. Has there ever been anything which has come either from His hands or His lips which has not been in love? Oh, then, believe that He would not have said, “Awake!” if it were not the kindest thing He could possibly say to you!

He loves you, then, though you love Him so little and go to sleep in His very Presence! And it is His love which shows itself to you in the best possible way by that startling word, “Awake! Awake! Awake!” Sometimes a mother’s love lulls her child to sleep, but if there is a house on fire the mother’s love would take another expression and startle it from its slumber. And Christ’s love takes that turn when He says to you, “Awake! Awake! Awake!” Again, since Jesus says this to you, be assured that it is His wisdom as well as His love that makes Him say it. He knows that you are losing much by sleeping. The thief is pilfering while you are resting. The sower of the bad seed is scattering it in the field, while you, who ought to have watched, are going away to those unhallowed sleeps.

He would not have you be a loser. He would have you be rich and increased in goods spiritually, and thus it is His wisdom that bids Him wake you. It is a wise voice and a tender voice, which says to the Christian—“Awake!” It is a voice, too, which you ought to listen to, for it is backed up by the authority of the Person from whom it comes. It is your *Lord* who says, “Awake!” What has He done for you? Shall I ask you what He has NOT done for you? You owe everything to Him! That robe that is now washed would have been black but for Him. Ah, some of you who are here today, oh, how much do you owe! I know, as I look around at you, what God’s Grace has done for you. Oh, Brother, your voice was the loudest in

the tavern! Many a time have you reeled home from the gin palace! Your mouth could once curse and swear, but you are washed!

And as for myself, how much do I owe to the Grace of God! The most stubborn and self-willed of mortals cowed down before the feet of Christ to take and accept Him on His own terms! And ah, there are some of you who, like the Magdalene, would sit and wash His feet with tears, and would be glad to wipe them with the hairs of your head! Some of you mothers here owe all your children's souls to Him as well as your own. He saved your darlings! He has brought them to put their trust in Christ. Oh, we are over our head and ears in debt to Christ! We are what good Rutherford used to call, "drowned debtors to Christ!"

Oh the depths of our obligation! Oh, how high should be the heights of our gratitude since He has done so much for us! If He says, "Awake!"—oh, Master, we would not only awake, but we would crave Your pardon a thousand times that ever we should have fallen into this sinful sleep! It is your Lord that speaks! It is your Master that cries, "Awake! Awake!" Oh, loyal hearts and virgin souls, by the lilies of your love, and by the roses of His blood with which He bought you, awake! Awake! Awake, and ask for an earnestness which you may never lose again.

Further, this is a voice which has been very often repeated. Christ has been saying, "Awake! Awake!" to some of us hundreds of times. You were sick, were you, a few months ago? That was Christ, as it were, shaking you in your sleep, and saying, "Awake, My Beloved, awake out of your unhealthy slumber!" You had a loss in business the other day and you be-moaned it very much. Perhaps that, too, was the Master saying, "Awake!" A dear child was taken from you and borne to Heaven—it was Christ saying to you, "Awake!"

And we have had many awakenings in this House of Prayer. I am sure our Monday evening Prayer Meetings have often been a voice to us—"Awake! Awake!" Sometimes a sermon, too, has come home from God to our hearts with—"Awake! Awake! Awake!" Oh, shall we never awake? Shall Christ stand always at yonder door with its rusty hinges and shall He always say, "Open unto Me, My Love, My Dove, for My head is wet with dew, and My locks with the drops of the night"? Shall He always be shut out? Will we never open the door to Him and say, "We wake, Lord, we wake! Come in and sup with us that we may sup with You"?

Now it seems to me as if it were a personal cry in the text. Did you notice the singular pronoun—"Awake, you who sleep"? It does not say, "Awake *all* of you," but "Awake, you!" Shall I pick you out one by one? There are too many of you for that. But I might say, my dear venerable, gray-headed Friend, if there is any tendency in you to slumber, Jesus says, "Awake, *you*." And you, Maiden, you who have given your heart to your Savior in your young days, He says, "Awake, you that sleep!" And you, young Man with many talents which you do not lay out for Christ as you ought—He says, "Awake, you that sleep." And to the most slumbering of us, He seems to say it most loudly and most lovingly, "Awake, you that sleep." May such a warning come home very personally!

And to close this point I may add that He puts it very pressingly in the present tense: "Awake," He said, "awake now." Oh, it is very easy to say, "I hope I shall awake one day." But He says, "Awake now!" It is not what you will do in a few years, but now, now, NOW! I do not say that the word, "now," is in the text, but it is there truly, in spirit. "Awake." If I say to a man, "Awake!" I do not mean that he is to awake in an hour's time—that would be absurd! I mean him to awake NOW. And Jesus says this to us—friends who know His love and who have been visited by His Divine Grace—He says to us—"Awake now, My Beloved, and come forth to serve Me."

III. But I must close, and the last point is THE PROMISE WITH WHICH CHRIST ENCOURAGES US TO AWAKE. The promise is, "Christ shall give you light." What does that mean? Why, *light* may mean sometimes instruction. We are often in the dark and puzzled about difficulties. But do you know half the difficulties in the Bible spring from a cold state of mind? When the heart gets right, the head seems to get right, too, in a great measure. I remember a person puzzling himself fearfully with that passage in Scripture about Jesus weeping over Jerusalem. He went and looked at Dr. Gill about it. He went to Thomas Scott about it, and he went to Matthew Henry about it—and these good Divines all puzzled him as much as they could—they did not seem to clear up the matter.

The good man could not understand how Jesus Christ could say, as He did, "How often would I have gathered you, but you would not!" One day he received more Divine Grace and developed a love for souls. And then the old skin of narrow-mindedness which had been once large enough for him, began to crack and break, and he went to the passage and said, "I can understand it now! I do not know how it is consistent with such-and-such a doctrine, but it is very consistent with what I feel in my heart."

And I feel just the same. I used to be puzzled by that passage where Paul says that he could wish himself accursed from God for his Brethren's sake. Why, I have often felt the same, and now I understand how a man can say in the exuberance of his love to others that he would be willing to perish himself if he might save them! Of course it never could be done—but such is the extravagance of a holy love for souls that it breaks through reason and knows no bounds! Get the *heart* right and you get right upon many difficult points.

Again, I think the light here meant is a further kind of light—not merely the light of direction, guidance, and knowledge—but chiefly the light of *joy*. Oh, there are some of you who are generally in the dark! You do not know whether you are Christians or not, half the time. You are spelling out your evidences, and so on. I compare you to a man who is almost drowned. He is alive, but how do they know it? Why, they have to hold a glass up to his month, and if there is a little steam, then they say, "Yes, he breathes." Well, there are some of you who need such an experiment as that tried upon you—for nobody would know that you are alive except by some very delicate test. The Christian existence is within you, but the

manifestation is so feeble that it is not seen. *You* do not know whether you are alive or not!

Why, nobody ever doubts whether he is alive! A man in health never says, "I do not know whether I am alive or not." He goes to work—he takes his plow and drives it across the field, or goes to his business and works all day long—and he knows he is alive by what he *does*. And if some of you Christian people would only wake up from your sleepy state and begin to labor for God, and to love souls, you would get such joy flooding through your spirits as you never knew before! It would be as though Heaven had opened up its floodgates and let the river of the Water of Life come bursting into your soul! And instead of being like a dry, howling wilderness, there would be a standing pool of water—no, a place in which the *ships* of your joy, and the galley with oars of your delight, might sail for many a day!

More Divine Grace and more peace, more light and more joy—I pray God that you may have these. I have often prayed to God that I might not be the pastor of an army of invalids. I would be glad enough to comfort them and do my best to make this a hospital for them. But I want to be the captain of an army of *soldiers* and to turn this place into a barracks for them! I want you to go out every day from Monday till Saturday, and on Sunday, too, fighting for Christ, contending for the faith, seeking to gather in outcasts, looking after the poor and needy, helping the weak and feeble, comforting the disconsolate, and putting out all your strength in your Master's cause!

We have enough Churches in London where they sleep. Oh, may God deliver us from having this place to be a huge cemetery, and make us to be a great House, a great City from which shall go forth the hosts and armies of the Lord to do battle for Him! May God send His Holy Spirit to abide among us in all His plenitude, and He shall have the glory!

Now you all see this sermon is to the Christian. I tried to preach to seekers this morning [#714—*a Savior Such As You Need*] and gave them their turn, then. But if there is one here who has not found the Savior, I must add this word to him. The way of salvation is this—Trust Christ and you are saved! Christ suffered in the place of His people. God laid their sin on Him and punished Him as if He were they. And whoever trusts Christ is forgiven. He is saved! And when he is saved then I invite him to exert his strength for his Master. But till then look at home and then look at Jesus, and God grant that this look at yourselves and at your Savior may be the means of your salvation—to the praise of the glory of His Divine Grace.

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FILLING WITH THE SPIRIT AND DRUNKENNESS WITH WINE NO. 2111

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY EVENING, MAY 26, 1889,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess. But be filled with the Spirit.”
Ephesians 5:18.***

WHILE I was reading to you just now, in the fourth and fifth chapters of Paul's letter to the Ephesian Believers, I could not help feeling that you could little understand the elevation and the purity of the precepts of the Apostle, as they must have appeared to the inhabitants of such a wicked city as Ephesus. When first read, these precepts must have seemed like an unearthly light.

We have now a public sentiment which condemns drunkenness, lying, and many other vices which were scarcely considered worthy of censure by that degraded people. Christianity had not affected public sentiment at the time—that sentiment was distinctly immoral. The sin of fornication was scarcely judged to be sinful. Theft was most common, as, indeed, it is in the East to this day. Lying was universal and only blamed if committed so clumsily as to be found out.

I may say of drunkenness, that, although it was not regarded as a commendable thing, yet it was looked upon as a failing of great minds, not to be too much condemned. Alexander the Great, as you know, died through drink. He offered a prize on one occasion to those who could drink the most and in that famous drinking-bout, large numbers of his chieftains and nobility died in the attempt to rival others. Even of such a man as Socrates it is said (though I know not with what truth) that he was famous for the quantity that he could drink.

The stories of the feasts of that age I would be ashamed to repeat. And you certainly would not have the patience to hear them. Drunkenness, and gluttony, and such like were the common faults both of the great and of the small. For while some had no opportunity for gluttony—for they did not get enough to eat—they only failed to be gluttons for that reason and not from principle. The Apostle sets before his new converts, not a modified system of right and wrong, but the purest virtues and the most heavenly graces.

As the ages have rolled on, we have seen the wisdom of holding up from the first an elevated standard, both of doctrine and practice. We must not bring the standard down to the men but the men up to the standard. We may not, with the design of making converts more rapidly, alter the pure Word with which our Lord has entrusted us.

Brethren, I am not going to speak to you tonight about the sin of drunkenness. Many of you feel an intense aversion to that degrading vice.

If there are any here who require a homily upon drunkenness, they have only to let conscience speak and it will tell them how base a sin it is. If they do not know the shamefulness of their wicked habit, there are plenty round about them who will let them know in indignant language. Perhaps of all the sins that are rife in our country today, drunkenness brings the most present misery upon mankind.

A very large proportion of the want from which people suffer is due to wasteful excess in drink. You know it is so, if you are intelligent observers. Other sins may seem to go deeper into the soul, and are more subject to punishment by our laws. But for creating widespread suffering, suffering brought upon the innocent, upon the wife, and upon the child—this vice raises its head above all others. This throngs our workhouses, fills our jails, and crowds our lunatic asylums—yes—and fattens our cemeteries with carcasses of men and women who die before their time.

This is the Moloch of the nineteenth century. I am not going to preach about that one particular vice tonight, as though I would saw off a big limb from the tree of evil. It is my custom to lay the axe at the *root* of the tree, aiming my blows at the very nature which bears this evil branch. Still, this is a very far spreading limb. And, as I have seen the woodmen lopping the tree before they cut it down, there will be no waste of time if I aim a blow or two at this huge branch of the tree of evil, this bough of drunkenness.

It is far too common to this day. But, thank God, through the efforts of temperance friends and, I hope, through the power of the Spirit of God upon many, it is not as it used to be. And it is regarded now in a very different light from that in which it was viewed even by Christian people years ago.

The Apostle has been pleased, in this passage, guided by the Holy Spirit, to put in apposition and, in some respects, in opposition, a prohibition and a command—“Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess. But be filled with the Spirit.” He had a reason for putting these two things together. There is a very, very, very wide and deep abyss between being drunk with wine and being filled with the Spirit. Drunkenness is down, down, down to the depths of the brute, and far lower still—fullness with the Spirit is up, up, up, to the very heights of God.

How did it happen that in the same verse, without a break, Paul should put the two together—the prohibition and the command? There was a reason and a very good reason, for this conjunction of things so far apart in character. I think that I see two reasons. The first is because there is a parallel between them—a degree of similarity amid their infinite difference. Secondly, he so placed them because there is a contrast between them of a very striking kind. The contrast is as instructive as the parallel. “Be not drunk with wine.” But hasten to the very opposite extreme and, “Be filled with the Spirit.”

I. First, LET ME DRAW THE PARALLEL. Why do men become drunk with wine, or other alcoholic liquors? There are several reasons. I shall not

mention them all, for they are innumerable and many of them too ridiculous to be mentioned in a sermon.

One motive is to find in wine an exhilaration. It is a feast day. Let us have wine, that we may warm our hearts and laugh and sing and make merry. It is a marriage day. It is a birthday. It is a royal holiday. It is something out of the common—bring forth the wine cup! So say the sons of men. When the man has drunk what he ought to think enough, feeling already a little elevated, he must drink yet more, with the same view. He would rise higher and higher and higher and be filled with glee and jollity and make uproarious laughter and be lord of misrule for the day.

Strong drink is taken to exhilarate. And for a while it has that effect. How some men are carried away when intoxicated! How lifted up they are! What a great man the least becomes! What a Divine the man who never looked into his Bible! What a philosopher the boor that does not know his letters! What a lord of creation the loon who has not two shirts! What a hero, every way, the coward who is afraid of his shadow! He is exhilarated when he has taken wine.

I grant you, that it is natural that we should all wish to be somewhat exhilarated. We like to have stirring times in which we do not lie still and stagnant—we would have our whole nature stirred with pleasure. We like to have our high-days and holidays, even as others. “Now,” says the Apostle, “that you may enjoy the most exquisite exhilaration, be filled with the Spirit.” When the Spirit of God comes into a man, with extraordinary power, so as to fill his soul, He brings to his soul a joy, a delight, an elevation of mind, a delightful and healthful excitement which lifts him up above the dull dead level of ordinary life and causes him to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

This is safe delight and therefore I commend it to you. It is safe delight, because it is holy delight—holy because it is the Holy Spirit that works it in you—and He makes you to delight in everything that is pleasing to the Holy God. Seek no longer the excitement which comes from the flowing bowl. Here is something more safe, more suitable, more sacred, more ennobling—“Be filled with the Spirit.”

I know there are some Christians who never have much joy. You remember one, an old acquaintance of yours, the elder brother. His experience was expressed to his father in grumbling tones—“Lo, these many years do I serve you, neither transgressed I at any time your commandment: and yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends.” Far too many Christians are of that order. Hear what they say—“I have always been regular in my attendance on the means of Divine Grace, have read my Bible, have acted consistently with my profession. Yet I know nothing of delight in God.”

Now, my dear Friend, take this advice, “Be filled with the Spirit.” You have, as yet, received only a few drops from the Divine shower of His sacred influences. Ask for the rivers, the floods, the torrents of His sacred power. Let the heavenly floods come in and fill you up to the brim—then will you have a joy which shall rival the bliss of those who are before the Throne of God.

Furthermore, I have known people take wine with the idea of being strengthened by it. There are such individuals still alive in the light of this advanced century. Many of the best physicians tell us that there is no strength whatever in strong drink. At any rate, whatever strength there is in the drink, it does not give any strength to the man. I am not going into physical or metaphysical discussions tonight. There is no doubt that many indulge in wine to an extreme, with the object of getting strength from it. I believe their action to be founded on a very grave mistake.

But to you Christian people, instruction comes in here, “Be not drunk with wine,” with the view of gaining strength from it—“but be filled with the Spirit,” for the Spirit of God can give you strength to the highest degree. He can gird you with spiritual strength—the strength of faith. And there is no strength like it—for all things are possible to him that believes. He can give you the strength that wrestles in prayer, that lays hold upon the angel of the Covenant and will not let him go, except he grant a blessing.

The Spirit of God gives the strength to suffer and the strength to labor. The strength to receive and the strength to give out again. The strength to hope, the strength to love, the strength to conquer temptation, the strength to perform holy action. When you are filled with the Spirit, how strong you are! There is no influence about us for good when the Holy Spirit has departed. But when a man gets the Spirit of God to fill him to the full, His presence has a mystic power about it. Though such a man tarries but for a short time in a place, he leaves a savor behind him that will not be forgotten.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, whether you are preachers, or teachers, or parents, or persons engaged in the service of God in your ordinary labor—if you want strength with which to bring glory to the Most High—be filled with the Spirit. Oh, that we had in our midst many that were strong because of this!

In the next place, wine has been taken by a great many and taken to excess, to embolden them. And it does embolden them to a very high degree. A man under the influence of liquor will do what he would never think of doing at any other time—he will be rash, foolhardy, and daring to the last degree. We have heard of foreign nations whose troops have been so afraid of the fight that they have dosed them with strong drink to induce them to march into the battle.

We used to hear the expression, “Dutch courage,” which meant the boldness which came of ardent spirits—though I do not suppose the Dutch had more of it than the English. No doubt many a man under the influence of drink has risked his life and performed what looked like feats of valor, when, indeed, he was simply beyond himself and out of his right mind, or he would not have been so foolhardy. Wine does embolden many men in a wrong way.

Beloved Friends, we are not to make ourselves ridiculous with fanaticism—but bold with the Spirit of Truth. “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is riot,” in order to be emboldened to do anything. But be filled with the Spirit of the living God, wherein is quietness, and comes a courage which

is to be admired and not derided. Oh, how brave a man is when he is filled with the Spirit of God!

Then, knowing a thing to be right, he resolves to do it, and he never counts the cost. He has counted that cost long ago and reckoned that the light suffering that would come by doing right was no longer worthy to be compared with the glory of being found a faithful servant of God. When a man has little of the Spirit of God he begins calculating the pence. "Will it pay? The thing is right enough," he says, "but then, I cannot afford it. I know that what I am doing is wrong. But, still, I could not give it up. It would involve too much sacrifice."

That man has little, if any, of the Spirit of God. For the Spirit destroys selfishness and all that love of gain which eats as does a canker. A man in whom the Spirit of God dwells abundantly says, "I shall never think, from this day forth, what may be to me the consequences of any course of action which the Lord, my God, commands me to follow. If it is right in the sight of God, I will do it. If God approves it, so shall it be. But if it is wrong, not a world made of gold, if it could all be mine, should tempt me to parley for a moment."

Be filled with the Spirit. It will make you bold in the cause of the Lord Jesus. How bold the martyrs were! How bravely humble women were likely to speak up for Christ! How slaves, peasants, persons of no education, faced the Roman governors—yes, stood before the Roman Emperor, himself, and were not in the least afraid! When they cried, "To the lions with them!" they flinched not from so cruel an end. They were a brave people, those early Christians, for they were filled with the Spirit.

And our men and women in England, in the days of Mary—how bold they were when filled with the Spirit! The Holy Spirit is the creator of heroes. If the Spirit of God is gone, we are a cowardly set. But if the Spirit of God shall come down upon us, as I hope He may, then every man and woman here, however timid by nature, will be able to bear witness for Christ, according as Christ shall call him to that work. O my Beloved, for whom I long and pray that you may be an army for the Lord, "Be filled with the Spirit."

Wine has been also taken in large quantities for the destruction of pain, for the drowning of misery, for support in the agony of a cruel death. Solomon says, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish and wine unto those that are of heavy hearts. Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his misery no more." It was an old custom, that when a man was doomed and about to die, they gave him some narcotic cup that he might be somewhat stupefied and suffer less.

There was some mercy in this, though truly, "the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." No doubt many persons have most foolishly taken to drink in order to forget their grief and assuage their sorrow. We must earnestly condemn such wicked conduct, but still, so it is. And the Apostle puts it, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess. But be filled with the Spirit." For that will remove depression and sustain under anguish in a most wonderful way. Indeed, in a *holy* and *perfect* way.

If you want to forget your misery, remember to apply for a sweet visitation of the Comforter. If there has lately happened some great calamity to you and you are saying, "How shall I bear it?" the answer is, "Be filled with the Spirit of God." Here shall you drink oblivion of the heavy trial. Or, better still, you shall forget the sharpness of the trial, in your knowledge that it works patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, which makes us not ashamed. O beloved Friend, do not kick at the trial, be willing to bear it. Get more of the indwelling of the sacred Comforter. "Be filled with the Spirit."

Perhaps this may be a direction to some dear Friend here who has lately been called to tread a more trying path than usual. "How shall I bear it, Sir? How shall I bear it? I never was so tried before." Seek earnestly for more of the Spirit of God than you ever had before. He will give you in proportion to your necessity. He is fully equal to every emergency. His consolations can balance your tribulations. Wait upon Him for the comfort of the Spirit. The day may come when you will glory in your infirmities and afflictions, because God used them to make room for more of His Spirit to dwell in you.

I am certain that if you have to go home tonight to lie for the next twenty years upon a sick bed—and certain of God's saints have not been off the sick bed for all that time. Or if all your property is gone and you are called to endure poverty during the rest of your pilgrimage. Or if you shall hear of the death of the dearest one you have—if the Holy Spirit is but given in a larger measure to you—you will have more happiness and more content and be a better man by reason of all this affliction that has come upon you.

God grant that you may find it to be true that you may forget your poverty and misery and discover no gall in your most bitter cup! May you drink deep draughts of the joy of the Lord till you are filled with the Spirit of God! Touch not the wine cup, lest in this you dishonor the Holy Spirit, who by His own power is able to cheer your heavy heart.

Again, I think a fifth reason why some have been drinking is to arouse themselves. They feel flat, they say. Ah, ah! If I were lecturing tonight, I could give you some of those abundant excuses for drinking which tipplers so readily invent. You can always find reasons, such as they are, when you want to pursue a career of self-indulgence. You may find them of every color—black, white, red, blue and gray, at every time, every day. The most unreasonable reasons will come cropping up if you want to do what your flesh desires.

But there are some who feel, "I want a pick-me-up. I am rather down, seedy, dull. I want something that will brace me, so that I may be up to the mark." By the time the man has had enough of his stimulant he is worse than before. Many have most effectually knocked themselves down in their desire to set themselves up. But, Christian man, if ever you feel dull, "be filled with the Spirit." "If ever I feel dull!" cries one, "Why, I often do, even at this time I have come into the House of Prayer, and do not feel as if I could worship."

Well, then, go where life and strength are to be had. One of our Brethren observed to me the other day (I do not think he meant to flatter me), "I often go into the Tabernacle feeling that I cannot worship as I should. But," said he, "you always seem to be lively and all right." I thought—Ah, dear Brother! You do not know much about me, or you would not praise me. For I often feel the reverse of lively—but I cannot bear to have it so, lest others should be injured by it.

There is not a more dull or stupid head than mine in this place. But I have a remedy and I fly to it—I wish you would all do so. I go to Him—you know His glorious name—He is the Resurrection and the Life. I look to Him for quickening and it comes. May that be an example to some of you whenever you feel dull! Do not say, "I cannot pray today. I cannot sing today." No—go to the Lord to help you to present acceptable worship.

It would be a great relief to me if I could be excused from preaching to you when I do not feel like preaching. Yet, it would not be a *blessing* to me, for it would encourage me in dullness and that would be a curse. If you do not pray except when you feel like praying, you will not pray much, nor pray when you most need it. My Brothers and Sisters, when you do not feel like praying, you ought to pray all the more and go to the Lord to help you to pray.

When one does not feel like doing the Lord's work, he must say, "Out with you, Mr. Sluggard! You must get to your work. Stir yourself up." And here is the hallowed power which will effectually help you—"Be filled with the Spirit." Oh, that the Spirit of God would make us feel what poor creatures we are, and what a great Savior we have! If He would make us feel the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, we would burn with love to the souls of men! If He would make us rejoice in pardon bought with blood, see our justification and realize it—if we could feel the Spirit of God melting us to tenderness or bracing us to holy bravery—then it would be that we are refreshed and stimulated after the best manner.

We, then, would have found the true arousing—and there would be no reaction after it, no falling back into a deeper depression. I wish that those who feel dull tonight may be so filled with the Spirit that they will not be content to go to sleep till they have spoken to a poor sinner about salvation and eternal life.

Once more, many men, no doubt, become drunkards from love of what is called good fellowship. "Look," said a wife to her husband, "how can you drink at the rate you do? Why, a hog would not do so." The wretched man replied, "No, I do not suppose that it would. It would be more sensible than I am, no doubt. But," he said, "if there was another hog at the other side of the trough that said, 'I drink to your health,' this hog would be obliged to do the same. And if there were half-a-dozen of them together and they kept on toasting one another, I expect the hog would get as drunk as I am."

Sad are the effects of evil fellowship. The fellowship in which people indulge, and which they think it necessary to stimulate themselves by drink, has led many into drunkenness. Now see the beauty of this expression, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess. But be filled with the

Spirit.” When the Spirit of God comes upon Christian men, what fellowship they have with one another, what delight they take in holy conversation, what joy there is in meeting together for solemn worship!

I do not wonder that it is added immediately after, “Speaking to yourselves in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” See the effect of being filled with the Spirit? It brings a fellowship of holy music, sacred gratitude and heavenly thanksgiving. It makes us feel concerning the House of Prayer—

***“I have been there and still would go,
It is like a little Heaven below.”***

It makes us sing with rapture—

***“Hail, you days of solemn meeting!
Hail, you days of praise and prayer!
Far from earthly scenes retreating,
In your blessings we would share.
Sacred seasons,
In your blessings we would share.”***

The Lord grant us Divine Grace to seek our fellowship where He finds it, with holy men and holy women. That among them in joyous fellowship we may rejoice and praise His name.

II. I cannot stay longer on this parallel, I have already been too long—now, LET ME POINT OUT THE CONTRAST. I do not think that Paul was running the parallel only, for it would dishonor the work of the Holy Spirit to think that His operations could be in all things likened to the influence of alcohol. No, the Divine inspiration far excels anything that earthly excitements can produce.

“Be not drunk with wine, wherein is riot. But be filled with the Spirit.” The contrast is at the very beginning. For it is written, “Be filled with the Spirit.” Wine does not fill. No man is satisfied with all that he drinks. He is still thirsty. His thirst is often increased by that which was supposed to quench it. The Spirit of God has a satisfying, satiating, never nauseating influence upon the heart. It fills it to the very brim, until the man delights himself in God and cries, “My cup runs over.”

Then the saint becomes like the tribe of which we read, “O Naphtali, satisfied with favor and full with the blessing of the Lord.” Wine ministers to lust and lust is a burning sense of want. But the Spirit of the Lord brings fullness with it and a perfect rest of heart.

“Wine creates riot,” says the Apostle. And that is the second point of contrast. When men are drunken, what a noise they will make! They are ready for any disturbance. But the Holy Spirit, when you are full of Him, makes you quiet with a deep, unutterable peace. I do not say that you will not sing and rejoice, but there will be a deep calm within your spirit. I wish that some Christian people were filled with the Spirit, if there were no other effect produced upon them but that of peace, self-possession, restfulness and freedom from passion.

Our friends, the members of the Society of Friends, who speak much of the Spirit of God, whatever virtues they may not have, certainly have this

one—that they are, usually, a very quiet, unexcitable, peaceable people. We want more Christians of this sort. We can put up with all the uproar of the Salvation Army, if it comes in very deed from warm hearts and genuine zeal. I will not find any fault with them for a little noise, though the less of it the better. If your genius goes that way, sing unto the Lord and blow your trumpet.

But at the same time, the solid people in the Church are those who possess their souls, who go about their business, suffer and labor with an inward peace which is not disturbed. They have a holy calm which is not ruffled. Do not create riot, but abide in holy peace by being filled with the Spirit. May the Lord keep you in perfect peace with your minds stayed on Him.

The next point of contrast is that wine causes contention. When men are drunken with it, how ready they are to quarrel! They make a harmless word to be an insult. Many a man, when full of wine, will bear nothing at all—he is ready to fight anybody and everybody—he cannot have his fill of fighting. But when you are filled with the Spirit, what is the result? Why, peaceful submission. Listen to this—“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.”

Human nature likes rule. But the Spirit of God works submissiveness of mind. Instead of wanting to be first, the truly spiritual man will be satisfied to be last, if he can thus glorify God. That man who must be always king of the castle is not filled with the Spirit of God. But he that is willing to be a doormat, on which the saints may wipe their feet, is great in the kingdom of Heaven. Be filled with the Spirit and you will soon submit to inconvenience, misapprehension, and even exaction for the sake of doing good to those who are out of the way and in the hope of edifying the people of God. Wine causes riot. The Spirit causes peace. Drunkenness causes contention. The Spirit of God causes submission.

Furthermore, drunkenness makes men foolish. But the Spirit of God makes them wise. I am keeping to the connection of my text. Read the fifteenth verse, “See, then, that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise.” The drunken man cannot walk at all, because he has not made up his mind as to which way he will go. He attempts to go two ways and ends up staggering till he falls. The man filled with the Spirit has a very definite idea of which way he is going. He knows the right way and he deliberately chooses it. He perceives the strait and narrow way and he steadfastly follows it—for God has made him wise. Folly clings to the wine cup. But wisdom comes with the Holy Spirit.

Drunkenness wastes time. But the Spirit of God, when we are filled with Him, makes us save it. Read the sixteenth verse—“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore be you not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is riot.” How much of time is wasted over the unholy cup! But the child of God, when the Spirit of God enters into him, makes a conscience of his odd moments and leisure minutes. As goldsmiths sweep up the very dust of their shops, that no filings of the precious metal may be lost, so does

the Christian man, when filled with the Spirit, use his brief intervals. It is wonderful what may be done in odd minutes. Little spaces of time may be made to yield a great harvest of usefulness and a rich revenue of glory to God. May we be filled with the Spirit in that respect!

In the next place, drunkenness makes men forget their relationships, but the Holy Spirit makes us remember them. The rest of the chapter goes on to mention our domestic conditions as wives, husbands, children, fathers, servants, masters. The drunken man is bad in every relation and the drunken woman is, if possible, worse. The drunken man ought never to be a husband, but he sometimes wears that name, and then he has a power to inflict misery which he is sure to use to the utmost. The drunken man will often do towards his wife what I will not trust my lips to speak of—it would be a libel on the brutes of the stall, or the beasts of the jungle, to liken him to them.

A drunken father! Is he worth calling “father”? And it is even worse, if worse can be, when it is a drunken wife or a drunken mother. A special infamy hovers around womanhood soaked in liquor—relationships, in such instances, are quite forgotten under the influence of the accursed drink. Selfishness eats up the very heart of those who otherwise might have been the objects of reverence and love. The contrast to this is the fact that when filled with the Spirit, the husband is the most tender of husbands, the wife the best of wives.

No master is so just as the man that is mastered by the Spirit of God! No servant so diligent as he that serves the Lord. By the Holy Spirit, our relationships become ennobled. And what was but a commonplace position wears a glory of holiness about it. We are transfigured by the Spirit of God, and we transfigure everything we touch. Dear Friends, you see that the contrast is a very vivid one. Look into it very narrowly, and it will repay the inspection.

Lastly, excess of drink leaves a man weak and exposed to peril. But to be filled with the Spirit!—listen to what comes of it according to the tenth verse of the next chapter—“Finally, my Brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

“Therefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth.” When filled with the Spirit the man is no longer naked, like the drunkard. He no longer lies upon the ground in danger as one overcome with wine. He is no longer open to the attack of adversaries, as one who sleeps through strong drink. God has made him strong and armed him—and now he goes forth to fight in the service of his Master. I think that you will see the contrast. It is as evident as the parallel.

I shall keep you no longer except to say this. My beloved Christian Friends, our heart’s desire is that the members of this Church and, in-

deed, all the members of Christ's mystical body, should be filled with the Spirit. Oh, that you may come absolutely under the sway of the Holy Spirit and may abide under His most powerful inspirations! Do you ask how this is to be? First, reverently regard Him. Worship Him. Speak not of the Holy Spirit as "it." Talk not of the Third Person of the adorable Trinity as an *influence*. He is very God of very God. God has guarded the sanctity of the Holy Spirit by causing a certain sin to be especially condemned and unpardonable—the sin against the Holy Spirit. Honor Him much, then—worship Him and adore Him and look to Him for help.

Next, do not grieve Him. If there is anything that would grieve the Holy Spirit, let it grieve you, so that you may keep clear of it. Put away every thought, idea, principle and act that is not agreeable to His mind. Neither live in sin, nor trifle with evil, nor fall into error, nor neglect the reading of the Word of God, nor fail to obey the commands of the Lord. Do not grieve the Comforter but welcome Him as your best Friend. Open your heart to His influences. Watch each day to hear His monitions. Pray every morning, "Holy Spirit, speak with me, bedew me, enlighten me, set me on fire, dwell in me." And during the day lament to yourself if you do not feel the Spirit of God moving in you and ask why it is. "Has He left me? Is He grieved with me?" Say—

***"Return, O holy Dove! return,
Sweet Messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made You mourn,
And drove You from my breast."***

As you welcome Him when He comes, so be fit for Him to come to you and dwell in you. Be clean, for He is pure. Do not expect the Holy Spirit to dwell in a foul chamber. You cannot make that chamber like Solomon's temple, wherein the cedar wood was overlaid with pure gold. But you can take care that it is well cleansed. Only the pure in heart shall see God. Oh, for a clean life, a clean tongue, a clean hand, a clean ear, a clean eye, a clean heart! God give you these and then you shall be ready for the Spirit of God to dwell in you.

And when He does come, learn this thing. If you would have Him fill you, obey Him. If you believe that an impulse is from the Spirit of God, follow it out. Never trifle with conscience—especially you that are beginning life. Mind you set the tune for the whole of your life by the tenderness of your consciences at the first. When I was a lad I learned a certain Truth of God, which my friends and relatives did not know—but I had to follow my conscience. It looked very egotistical and wayward for a lad to set up his opinion against older people. But I could not help it.

I saw Believer's Baptism in the Bible and therefore the highest Law compelled me to be obedient to that ordinance. I looked over the matter again and again, to see if it was not so—and I became more and more assured as to the mind of the Lord. Therefore I was not disobedient. It is true that it was suggested to me that if I did follow out my views, I should have to cut out quite another career for myself from the one anticipated. But I could not help that. I must do the Lord's will, whatever might be the consequences.

From that day to this I have never had cause to regret my youthful decision. The trial was severe at the time, but it was beneficial to my whole character. It taught me to follow the Truth of God wherever it might lead me and to expect the Spirit of God to abide with me in so doing. Since then I have often come to a place where interest has gone one way and principle has gone another. But it has not cost me half-a-minute's thought which way should be my way. I must follow what I believe to be right and true, and preach what I believe to be God's Word. And I will, by God's Grace, do so, whether men hear or whether they ignore.

Young Men, young Women, mind you begin straight. Do not begin with truckling and making compromises. If you take your hats off to the devil today, you will have to take your shoes off to him soon. And by-and-by you will become utterly his slaves. Be strong for the Truth of God. Quit yourselves like men. Stand fast for God and holiness. You will be filled with the Spirit if you are obedient to Him.

If you are filled with the Spirit of God and wish to retain His gracious Presence, speak about Him. Note this, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is riot. But be filled with the Spirit; speaking." That is a curious word to follow so soon. The Holy Spirit is not a dumb Spirit. He sets us speaking. "Speaking to yourselves." It is a poor audience. But still it is a choice audience if you speak to your Brethren. "Speaking to yourselves in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

Beloved, when the Spirit of God fills you, you will not only speak, but sing. Let the holy power have free course—do not quench the Spirit. If you feel like singing all the while, sing all the while and let others know that there is a joy in the possession of the Spirit of God which the world does not understand but which you are feeling and to which you wish to bear witness.

Oh, that the Spirit of God would come upon this entire Church and fill you all to overflowing! May the members of other Churches that are here tonight take home fire with them and set their Churches on flame! The Lord bless you, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

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ALWAYS AND FOR ALL THINGS

NO. 1094

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 2, 1873,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
Ephesians 5:20.*

THE position of our text in the Epistle is worthy of observation. It follows the precept with regard to sacred song in which Believers are bid to speak to themselves and one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord. If they cannot be always singing they are always to maintain the spirit of song. If they must, of necessity, desist at intervals from outward expressions of praise, they ought never to refrain from *inwardly* giving thanks. The Apostle, having touched upon the act of singing in public worship, here points out the essential part of it which lies not in classic music and thrilling harmonies, but in the melody of the *heart*. Thanksgiving is the soul of all acceptable singing.

Note, also, that this verse immediately precedes the Apostle's exhortations to Believers concerning the common duties of ordinary life. The saints are to give thanks to God always and then to fulfill their duties to their fellow men. The Apostle writes, “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God,” and then he adds the various branches of holy walking which belong to wives and to husbands, to children and to parents, to servants and to masters—so that it would seem that thanksgiving is the preface to a holy life, the foundation of obedience and the vestibule of sanctity. He who would *serve* God must begin by *praising* God, for a grateful heart is the mainspring of obedience. We must offer the salt of gratitude with the sacrifice of obedience—our lives should be anointed with the precious oil of thankfulness. As soldiers march to music, so while we walk in the paths of righteousness we should keep step to the notes of thanksgiving. Larks sing as they mount, so should we magnify the Lord for His mercies while we are ringing our way to Heaven.

My text is a very appropriate one for this cold morning when wind and snow conspire against our comfort. Let it peep up like the golden cup of the crocus out of the wintry waste. When the weather is unusually dull and dreary we should resolve to set a stout heart against the pelting storm and determine that if we shiver in body we will at least be warm in heart. Our thanksgiving is not a swallow which is gone with the summer. The birds within our bosom sing all year round and on such a morning as this their song is doubly welcome. The fire of gratitude will help to warm us—heap on the big logs of loving memories! No cold shall freeze the genial current of soul—our praise shall flow on when brooks and rivers are bound in chains of ice.

Let us see which among us can best rejoice in the Lord in ill weather! This morning I shall ask you to think over the pleasant duty prescribed. Then I shall lead you to think of its spiritual prerequisites, or what is necessary to help a man to give thanks always for all things. And we will close by dwelling upon the eminent excellencies of the duty, or rather of the privilege which is here described.

I. First, let us think of the PLEASANT DUTY which is here both prescribed and described. Think what it is—giving thanks. By this is meant the emotion of gratitude and the expression of it either by song, by grateful speech, by the thankful look—which means far more than words can express—or by any other method. We have, sometimes, been so overcome by the devout emotion of gratitude to God for His mercy that we could not help but weep. And strange it is that the same sluices which furnish vent for our sorrows also supply a channel for the overflow of our joys. We may weep to God's praise if we feel it to be most natural. We are to give thanks in our *spirit*, feeling not only resigned, acquiescent, and content, but *grateful* for all that God does to us and for us.

We are bound to show this gratitude by our actions, for obedience is at once the most sincere and the most acceptable method of giving thanks. To go about irksome and laborious duty cheerfully is to thank God. To bear sickness and pain patiently, because it is according to His will, is to thank God. To sympathize with suffering saints for love of Jesus is to bless God. And to love the cause of God and to defend it for Christ's sake, is to thank God. The angels, when they praise God, not only sing, "Hallelujah, hallelujah," but they obey, "doing His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His Word." We must give thanks to God in every shape that shall be expressive of our hearts and suitable to the occasion. And although changing the mode, we may thus continue without cessation to give thanks unto God, even the Father.

Beloved, after all it is but a light thing to render to our heavenly Father our poor thanks, after He has given us our lives, maintained us in being, saved our souls through the precious redemption of Jesus Christ, given us to be His children and made us heirs of eternal Glory! What are our thanks in the presence of all these priceless favors? Why, if we gave our God a thousand lives and could spend each one of these in a perpetual martyrdom, it were a small return for what He has bestowed upon us! But to give Him thanks is the least we can do and shall we be slack in that? He gives us breath, shall we not breathe out His praise? He fills our mouth with good things, shall we not speak well of His name?—

***"Words are but air and tongues but clay,
And His compassions are Divine."***

Shall we fail even with words and tongues? God forbid! We will praise the name of the Lord, for His mercy endures forever. None of us will say, "I pray You have me excused." The poorest, weakest and least-gifted person can give thanks! The work of thanksgiving does not belong to the man of large utterance, for he who can hardly put two words together can give thanks. Nor is it confined to the man of large possessions, for the woman who had but two mites—which make a farthing—gave substantial thanks.

The smoking flax may give thanks that it is not quenched and the bruised reed may give thanks that it is not broken. Even the dumb may give thanks—their countenance can smile a Psalm! And the dying can give thanks—their placid brow beaming forth a hymn. No Christian, therefore, can honestly say, “I am unable to exercise the delightful privilege of giving thanks.” We may one and all at this moment give thanks unto God our Father. Brothers and Sisters, let us do so!

Now, as we have considered what it is we are to do, let us notice *when* we are to do it, for the pith of the precept lies very much in the two “alls” which are in the text—“always for all things.” We are to give thanks *always*. To give thanks, sometimes, is easy enough. Any mill will grind when the wind blows. Brethren, we scarcely need exhorting to do this when the wine and oil increase, for we cannot help it. There are glad days when, if we did not thank God, we should be something worse than fallen men and should be only fit to be compared with devils. Anyone can give God thanks when the harvests are plentiful, the stalls full of fat cattle and the meadows covered with increasing herds. When the fig tree blossoms and the fruit is in the vines, when the labor of the olive fails not and the fields yield abundance of meat, then it is but *natural* to give thanks. When health enjoys life and wealth adorns it, who will not say, “I thank God”? When the wind blows soft on the merchant’s cheek and wafts home his fleets of treasure, how can he do other than say that God is good?

But, to give thanks to God *always* is another matter. To bless the Lord in all winds and weathers and praise Him for losses and pains—this is a work of quite another character. “O,” you say, “we cannot be always praising God with our lips.” I have already said that and explained that *vocal* thanksgiving is not essential. Perhaps the most doubtful form of praising God is that which is performed by the tongue and the most sure and truthful way of giving thanks is that which is found in the *actions* of common life. But we are to be always praising God under some shape or other—the heart is always to be full of gratitude. At all times of the day we should be grateful—our first waking thought should be, “Bless the Lord.” Our last, before we drop to sleep, should be, “Praise be the God of love, who gives a pillow for my weary head.”

At all times of life we should give thanks. In youth we should praise God for godly parents and for early Grace. In our mid-life we should give thanks for strength, for household joys and for the experience of the Divine loving kindness. And, certainly, in those mature days, when the head, like the golden grain, bows down with ripeness, the aged saint should commence the employment of Heaven and should be always giving thanks. We should give God thanks when our wealth increases and also when it melts away—when it flows in and when it ebbs out. We must bless Him in success and also in disaster. We must give Him thanks when health departs. We must give Him thanks when, by gradual decay, the tabernacle falls about our ears. We must give Him thanks in those expiring moments when the sigh of earth is hushed by the song of Heaven.

It is easy to stand here and tell you this, but I have not always found it easy to practice the duty. I confess this to my shame. When I was suffer-

ing extreme pain some time ago, a Brother in Christ said to me, "Have you thanked God for this?" I replied that I desired to be patient and would be thankful to recover. "Ah, but," he said, " 'in everything give thanks,' not after it is over, but while you are still in it and, perhaps, when you are enabled to give thanks for the severe pain, it will cease." I believe that there was much force in that good advice. It may have sounded rather strange at the time, yet if there is Grace in our hearts, we acknowledge the correctness of it. We struggle after the holy joy of heart which it depicts and at last, by God's Grace, are able to attain to it, so as to give thanks unto God unceasingly.

We shall never come to a time in which we shall say, "I will thank God no more." No. No! A thousand times No! We could sooner cease to live than cease to give thanks. This solemn determination enables Believers to play the man right gloriously. Was not it grand on Job's part to say—"The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord," even when he had torn his mantle and shaved his head for grief? Was not it noble on the part of Paul and Silas, when they were thrust into the inner dungeon, to sing praises there? None of us knows how foul the air was in an inner Roman dungeon—how full of fever the dismal vault, how dank the dripping walls—how foul the stony floor.

Yet, here were two poor creatures who had been beaten till their backs were bleeding. They were fastened in the stocks, probably made to lie upon their backs upon the floor! But, at midnight they sang praises unto God so loudly that the prisoners heard them. This, it is, to praise God aright—to bless Him in the dead of night! To bless Him with bleeding backs! To bless Him with feet in the stocks! Oh, to feel that nothing in this life and nothing in death shall make us cease to bless the Lord while thought and being last! This is Divine Grace, indeed!

The text next tells us the *why* of our gratitude—"Giving thanks always for all things unto God." "For all things"—for whatever may happen to us. For the things which are of greatest moment we should always be grateful—for the new birth, for pardon of sin, for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, for all Covenant mercies, for all the blessings of the Cross and of the Crown. Dear Friends, a Christian has infinite cause for gratitude! When I first looked to Christ and was lightened, I thought that if I never received another mercy except that one of being delivered from my load of guilt, I would praise God if He would but let me, forever and ever! To have the feet taken out of the miry clay and to feel them set on the Rock of Ages is a subject for eternal gratitude! But you have not received one spiritual mercy only, beloved Brothers and Sisters—nor two, nor twenty—you have had them strewn along your path in richest profusion! The stars above are not more numerous, nor the sands beneath more innumerable.

Every hour, yes, every *moment* has brought a favor upon its wings. Look downward and give thanks, for you are saved from Hell! Look on the right hand and give thanks, for you are enriched with gracious gifts! Look on the left hand and give thanks, for you are shielded from deadly ills! Look above you and give thanks, for Heaven awaits you! Nor is it alone for great and eternal benefits, but even for minor and temporary benefits we

ought to give thanks. There ought not to be brought into the house a loaf of bread without thanksgiving. Nor should we cast a coal upon the fire without gratitude. We eat like dogs if we sit down to our meals without devoutly blessing God! We live like serpents if we never rise to devout recognition of the Lord's kindness! We ought not to put on our garments without adoring God, or take them off to rest in our beds without praising Him! Each breath of air should inspire us with thanks and the blood in our veins should circulate gratitude throughout our system.

O, how sacred would our temporal mercies be to us if we were always thanking God for them! Instead of that, we too often complain because we have not somewhat more. We have a position which, in God's sight, is the best for us. We could not have been better off than we are now, all things being considered—eternal things as well as present things—and yet we murmur and groan as though God had dealt harshly with us. The worst of all is that sometimes the poorest are the most thankful—those dear souls that are always sick and never have a waking moment free from pain are often the happiest and most grateful—while persons with wealth, health, strength and surrounded by every comfort are often of such a crooked disposition that they complain, they know not why, and are most disagreeable companions. God save you, who are His saints, from ever falling into a murmuring spirit! It is clean contrary to what God can approve of. Give thanks always for all things. Whenever the salt is put on the table let us see in it a lesson to us to season our conversation with thanks, of which salt we cannot use too much.

We ought, also, to thank God for the mercies which we do *not* see, as well as for those which are evident. We receive, perhaps, 10 times as many mercies which escape our notice as those which we observe—mercies which fly by night on soft wings and bless us while we sleep. You have heard, perhaps, of a Puritan who met his son, each one of them traveling some 10 or 12 miles to meet the other? And the son said to his father, "Father, I am thankful to God for a very remarkable Providence which I have had on my journey here. My horse has stumbled three times with me and yet I am unhurt." The Puritan replied, "My dear Son, I have to thank God for an equally remarkable Providence on my way to you, for my horse did not *once* stumble all the way."

If we happen to be in an accident by railway we feel so grateful that our limbs are not broken. But should we not be thankful when there is no accident? Is not that the better thing of the two? If you were to fall into poverty and someone were to restore you to your former position in trade, you would be very grateful. Should you not be grateful that you have *not* fallen into poverty? Bless God for His unknown benefits! Extol Him for favors which you do not see—always giving thanks to God for all things. Still, this is easy—the difficult point is to give thanks to Him for the bitter things, for the disguised blessings, for the love tokens which come to us from Him in black envelopes—for those benefits which travel to us *via crucis*, by the way of the cross, which are generally the most heavily laden wagons that ever come from our Father's country.

We are to give thanks for the dark things, the cutting things, the things which plague and vex us and disquiet our spirits—for these are among the “all things” for which we ought to praise and bless God. Doubtless, if our eyes were opened, like those of Elijah’s servant, we should see our trials to be among our choicest treasures! If we exercise the farseeing eyes of faith and not the dim eyes of sense, we shall discover that nothing can be more fatal to us than to be without affliction and that nothing is more beneficial to us than to be tried as with fire. Therefore we will glory in tribulations! We will bless and magnify the name of the Lord that He leads us through the wilderness that He may prove us and that He may fit us for dwelling by-and-by in the Promised Land. “Giving thanks always for all things.”

I should like to be towards God of the mind that John Bradford was towards Queen Mary. When reviled as a rebel, that saint and martyr said, “I have no quarrel with the queen. If she releases me I will thank her. If she imprison me I will thank her. If she burns me I will thank her.” We should say of the Lord, “Let Him do what seems good to Him. If He will give us health we will thank Him. If He will send us sickness we will thank Him. If He indulges us with prosperity or if He tries us with affliction, if the Holy Spirit will but enable us, we will never cease to praise the Lord as long as we live.”

Augustine tells us that the early saints, when they met each other would never separate without saying, “Deo gratias! Thanks be to God.” Frequently their conversation would be about the persecutions which raged against them, but they finished their conversation with, “Deo gratias!” Sometimes they had to tell of dear Brothers and Sisters devoured by the beasts in the amphitheatre, but even then they said, “Deo gratias!” Frequently they mourned the uprise of heresy, but this did not make them rob the Lord of His, “Deo gratias.” So should it be with us all the day long. The motto of the Christian should be, “Deo gratias!” “Giving thanks always for all things.”

But the text has another word which is important—to whom is this gratitude to be rendered? “Giving thanks for all things to God the Father.” To God. To man we are bound to render thanks in proportion as he benefits us. God does not require that in order to be grateful to Him we should be ungrateful to our fellow men. To keep the first table it is never necessary to break the second. Gratitude to parents and friends is but gratitude to God if it is properly rendered with a view to the highest Benefactor. To neglect the lower would be to spoil the higher gratitude. Yet we should never end with gratitude to men—that were to thank the clouds for rain instead of blessing the Lord who sends both clouds and showers. Remember, if you have benefactors, God inclined their hearts towards you. Give thanks to God for He is good and does good. Give thanks to *God*. Let not your gratitude stop short of the Source from which the streams of mercy come.

Think of the Lord, also, under the relation which the text sets before you—namely as the Father—as *your* Father. Remember that God is the Creator. It is He that made us and not we, ourselves. As the Father, He is

the Sustainer and Preserver of men. As the Father He has elected His people, for it is the Father who has chosen His people in Christ Jesus. And, as the Father, He is the Progenitor of the spiritual seed, for He has begotten us, again, unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Think of God the Father in those various capacities and you will have so many reasons for giving thanks always unto Him. Never give thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ in such a way as to dishonor the Father. You owe much to Jesus, but Jesus did not make the Father gracious to you since, "the Father Himself loves you," Jesus is the gift of His Father's love and not the cause of it. Bless the Father, then, and, give honor and praise unto Him who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

There is an old Jewish tradition that when God had made this world and the six days' work was over, He called the angels to behold it and it was so very beautiful that they sang for joy. Then the Lord asked them what they thought of this work of His hands. One of them replied that it was so vast and so perfect that there should be created a clear, loud, melodious voice which should fill all the quarters of the world with its sweet sound and, both by day and night, offer thanksgiving to the Creator for His incomparable blessings. We ought to be of the same mind as the angel—not that there is a defect in creation—but that everywhere in creation intelligent beings should be that voice of ceaseless song which the angel desired.

Once more, in describing this duty the text tells us how to give thanks, namely, "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now here we have directions to present our praises always through the Mediator, Jesus, our great High Priest, who stands between us and God. We are to put our thanks into His sacred hands, that He may present them before the Father with something of His own, "not to our loss," even with His precious merit which shall sweeten all. But the text means more than that. We are to give thanks to the Father in the name of Jesus, that is, because Jesus bids us to do so and we are commanded and commissioned by Christ. We have His example as well as His precept for blessing God for all things.

I think the text means more than this—we are to give thanks to God in the name of Jesus as though we did it in Jesus' stead—as though we stood where Jesus once stood when He said on earth—"I thank You, O Father." You Christian people are sent into the world as Christ was sent into the world. Christ's office was to glorify God and such is your office for His sake and in His name. Think—how would Jesus have given thanks? How would He have praised God? In what sort of spirit would the ever adorable Son, whose meat and drink it was to serve His Father, have praised God? After *that* fashion and in that same way you are to give thanks unto God and the Father. It is a high position for a poor son of man to occupy, but if the Lord has called you to it—by His Grace be not slack in the performance of the heavenly service! The day will come when we shall fulfill our text in the widest sense—then we shall give thanks to God at the winding up of the drama of human history, for everything that has happened—from the Fall even to the destruction of the wicked.

We may not be able to do so now. Our eyes see the gigantic evil and do not see the overruling good which, like a boundless sea, rolls over all. The dreadful mysteries of evil make us tremble as we think of them. But the day will come when, with the Lord Jesus, we will not only bless God for electing love, but will even say, "I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that You have hid these things from the wise and prudent." The day will come when even the darkest side of the Divine decrees and the most profound depths of the Divine action shall cause us to adore with gratitude. And then that which can least be understood in Providence shall no longer be the subject of awe-struck wonder, but of unspeakable delight.

We shall trace the line of perfection along the course of the Divine decrees and workings and though the way of the Lord may have seemed to us to be inscrutable, we shall then adore Him for that wondrous display of all His attributes—Justice, Love, Truth, Faithfulness, Omnipotence—which shall blaze forth with tenfold splendor! In Heaven we shall give thanks unto God always for all things, without exception—and throughout eternity we shall magnify His holy name through Jesus Christ our Lord! Let us do it as best we can *today*, God's Spirit helping us. Thus I have expounded the duty itself.

II. Now, briefly, let me speak to you upon THE SPIRITUAL PREREQUISITES which are necessary for the performance of this very pleasant work. And let it be solemnly remembered that no man can give thanks always to God through Jesus Christ till he has a new heart. The old heart is an ungrateful one and even if a man should try with an unrenewed nature to give thanks to God, it would be like the impossible supposition of the dead struggling to make themselves alive, which cannot be. The old heart is a putrid fountain. It cannot send forth sweet streams. It is opposed to God and it cannot bless Him in a way that He can accept. Looking at this fair and lovely duty, I would say to all who wish to practice it, "you must be born-again." Unless you are made new creatures in Christ Jesus, you can never give thanks to God always for all things.

And next I would remind you that in order to perform this duty aright a man must have a sense of God. To give thanks to God aright a man must believe that there *is* a God. He must go further than that—he must feel that God is the Author of the good things which he receives and, to give thanks always, he must advance yet further and believe that even in seeming evil love is at work. He must also come to believe in God as present to hear his thanks, or he will soon tire of presenting them. "You God see me" must be printed on the new-born heart, or else there will be no constant giving of thanks to God. Let me ask you, dear Friend, you believe in God and you do well, but have you done better than the devils who also believe in God? They tremble—have you gone as far as that?

There are some who have not. Devils cannot, however, love God and give Him thanks—have you gone beyond the trembling of a devil up to the giving thanks and the adoration of a truly loving heir of Heaven? Answer that question—is God as real to you as your wife or child? As real as yourself? He must be so and you must know Him to be always present

with you or else you will never continue praising Him. A man who gives thanks to God always, for all things, must have a sense of complete reconciliation to God. You cannot bless God till you have heard Him say, "I have blotted out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your transgressions." Lean and false are the thanks which come from an unforgiven heart. A soul condemned for its unbelief is not a soul that can be accepted for its gratitude—it cannot be condemned for one thing and accepted for another.

As I came here, this morning, I was thinking very joyfully of another morning many years ago, which was, as to snow and cold, precisely like it. I remember when the family to which I belonged felt unable to go up to the House of God, for the snow was deep and falling heavily as it is now. I, also, was unable to go up to the place of worship where our household usually attended and, by reason of the snow, was drifted into the little Methodist Chapel where I heard of Jesus and found peace with God! I have learned to bless His name since then—but before that, though I could have sung as others sing—there was no giving thanks unto God by Jesus Christ in my *heart*. I wondered, as I came along, whether God might not lead to this House someone whom He would bring to Himself this morning—to whom this cold day should become as memorable as that day of snow was to me!

That morning in that Methodist Chapel there was a good work done, for though there were but few of us, *one* at least was called, and that one God has made the spiritual parent of many thousands of His children. I am surprised to find this House so full today, it is clear proof that you love to hear the Gospel and it encourages me to hope that there may be one here whom God shall make eminently useful when He has saved him. This we shall be sure of—whoever it may be, if he is reconciled to God by the death of God's dear Son—he will give thanks to God, indeed, and of a truth! If nobody else does so, he will, from this day forward, sing—

***"I will praise You every day
Now Your anger's turned away.
Comfortable thoughts arise
From the bleeding Sacrifice."***

We cannot give thanks to God through Jesus Christ unless we have accepted the Mediator! All the thanks commanded in the text are to come up to God through Jesus Christ. If we reject Him, or if we associate Him as a Mediator with somebody else, we have gone contrary to God's way and we cannot praise God.

Virgins and saints and martyrs must never be made rivals to Jesus. To praise God, even the Father, does it not strike you that we must feel the spirit of adoption? Who could praise a person as father whom he does not recognize as father? But he who feels—"Yes, I am the Lord's child, erring though I am, and my heart says, 'Abba,' " he can praise God, indeed! To the fullest performance of this duty there must be a subordination of ourselves to the will of God. We must not desire to have our own way. We must be content to say, "Not my will, but Yours be done." I cannot give thanks to God always for all things till my old self is put down. While self rules, the hungry horseleech is in the heart and that is fatal to gratitude.

Self and discontent are mother and child. But when you say in your heart, "I am perfectly resigned to the will of God, my will consents to His will," then shall your praise be as the continual sacrifice and your thanksgiving shall rise before Him as incense.

III. I only want your attention a few minutes more while I speak upon THE EMINENT EXCELLENCIES of continually giving thanks to God, even the Father. And the first excellency is, it honors God. A thankful spirit glorifies the Most High. "Whoever offers praise glorifies Me," says the Lord. We might have imagined that whether we grumbled or complained it would make no difference to God. It would be of no consequence to any one of us what might be the opinion of a little community of ants about us. But God is infinitely more superior to us than we are to ants! He considers that our praising and blessing Him renders glory to His name. Let us render it to Him, then, without stint.

There is no higher commendation for any course of action or for any virtue to a Christian man than to tell him that it will honor God. Will it dishonor God? He will shrink from it though mines of gold should tempt him. Will it honor God? The Believer rushes forward to it though floods and flames lie in his way. A grateful spirit is a blessed and yet a cheap way of honoring God, for it brings to us its own return. Like mercy, it is "twice blessed." It blesses us in the giving and honors God in the receiving. Let the Christian see to it that he abounds in it. Obedience to our text will tend to check us from sin—"Giving thanks always for all things."

Very well, then, there are some places that we must not enter, for it would be blasphemous to be giving thanks there. There are some things which I must not do, for I could not give God thanks for them. Suppose I have ground down the poor—how can I give God thanks for the miserable shillings which are the blood of these men? Suppose I have gained my living by an evil trade—how can I give thanks to God for the gold as I hear it chink in my bag? Suppose every day my prosperity brings misery to others—how can I give thanks for it? To give thanks for the fruit of sin were practically to blaspheme the thrice holy God! O, no! If the Christian is always to give thanks, he must always be where he can give thanks—and if he is to give God thanks for all things, he must not touch that which he cannot give God thanks for. I must never grasp the fruit of covetousness, the gain of dishonesty, the profit of Sabbath-breaking, the result of oppression—for if I do, I have that for which I may weep and howl before God—but certainly not that for which I can give Him thanks.

Brothers and Sisters, I say that if we looked well to our text, it would, by the power of God's Holy Spirit, restrain us from sin. But one of the truest excellencies of a spirit of perpetual thanksgiving is this, that it calms us when we are glad and it cheers us when we are sorrowful—a double benefit! It allays the feverish heat at the same time that it mitigates the rigorous cold. If a man is rich and God has given him a thankful spirit, he cannot be too rich. If he will give thanks to God, he may be worth millions and they will never hurt him. On the other hand, if a man has learned to give thanks to God and he becomes poor, he cannot be too poor—he will be able to bear up under the severest penury. The rich man should learn

to find God in all things. The poor man should learn to find all things in God and there is not much difference when you come to the bottom of these two causes!

One child of God will be as grateful and as happy, as blessed and as rejoicing as another, if he is but satisfied, still, to give God thanks. There is no overcoming a man who has climbed into this spirit. "I will banish you," said a persecutor of the saints. "But you cannot do that," the saint said, "for I am at home everywhere where Christ is." "I shall take away all your property," he said. "But I have none," said the other, "and if I had any you could not take away Christ from me, and as long as He is left I shall be rich." "I will take away your good name," cried the persecutor. "That is gone already," said the Christian, "and I count it joy to be counted the off-scouring of all things for Christ's sake." "But I will put you in prison." "You may do as you please, but I shall be always free, for where Christ is there is liberty." "But I shall take away your life," said he. "Yes, well," said the other, "then I shall be in Heaven which is the truest life, so that you cannot hurt me."

This was a brave defiance to throw down at the feet of the foe! It is not in the power of the enemy to injure the men of God when once self is dethroned and the heart has learned to be resigned to the will of God! O, you are great, you are strong, you are rich, you are mighty when you have bowed yourselves to the will of the Most High! Stoop that you may conquer! Bow that you may triumph! Yield that you may get the mastery! It is when we are nothing that we are everything—when we are weak that we are strong! It is when we have utterly become annihilated as to self—and God is All in All—it is *then* that we are filled with all the fullness of God! May the Holy Spirit conduct us into this spirit of perpetual thankfulness.

One thing I am sure of, that the more we have of this, the more useful we shall assuredly become. Nothing has had a greater effect upon the minds of thoughtless men than the continued thankfulness of true Christians. There are sick beds which have been more fruitful in conversions than pulpits. I have known women confined to their chambers by the space of 20 years whose remarkable cheerfulness of spirit has been the talk of the entire district! And many there have been who have called to see poor Sarah in her cottage—knowing that she has scarcely been a single day without distressing pain—and have heard her voice and looked into that dear smiling face and have learned the reality of godliness. The bedridden saint has been a power throughout all the district and many have turned to God, saying, "What is this which enables the Christian to give thanks, always, to God?"

Beloved, our crusty tempers and sour faces will never be evangelists! They may become messengers of Satan but they will never become helpers of the Gospel. To labor to make other people happy is one of the grand things a Christian should always try to do. In little things we ought not to be forever worrying, fidgeting, finding little difficulties and spying out faults in others. I believe that to a faulty man everybody is faulty. But there are better people in the world than you have dreamed of, Sir, and when you are better you will find them out! If you were always grateful to

God, you would thank Him that people are as good as they are. If you would be thankful when you meet, even, with bad people—thankful that they are not worse than they are—and try to get hold of the best points in them and not their worst points, you would be much more likely to gain your purpose, if your purpose is to glorify God by doing them good.

If you want to catch flies, try honey—they will be more readily caught with that than with vinegar—at least if they are *human* flies. Put into your speech, love, rather than bitterness and you will prevail. There are times when you must speak with all the sternness of an Elijah. There are proper seasons when there must be no holding back of the most terrible Truths of God. But, for all that, let the general current of your life, the natural outflow of your entire being, be a thankfulness to God which makes you loving towards men. I am sure in this way, when you come to speak of Jesus, you will get a more attentive ear. And when you tell your experience you will recommend the Gospel by your own conversation.

Beloved, I pray the Lord will give us a thankful spirit always and when we talk to each other, let it not be our habit as it is ordinarily with Englishmen—to complain of this and of that—but let us thank God and testify of His goodness. I have heard that farmers are greatly given to grumbling. Well, if they are more apt at complaining than trades people are, they are very far gone in it, for generally wherever I go I hear that trade is bad—it always has been ever since I have been in London and commerce has been constantly going to ruin! I have known some who have lost money every month and yet are richer every year! How is this? Had not we better change our way of talking and dwell not upon our miseries but our mercies? Let us speak much of what God has *given* rather than of that which He has in love withheld from us. Let us bless *Him* rather than speak ill of our neighbors, or complain of our circumstances.

But alas, there are some to whom I speak who will never undertake this duty, till, as I have already said, they have new hearts and right spirits and have become reconciled to God by Jesus Christ. Now, to you, this one word—You are guilty and must be punished unless you find forgiveness! There is before you, this morning, an Altar of Sacrifice in the Person of Jesus Christ! There are four horns on the altar, looking either way, and whoever touches the horns of this altar shall live and live forever! Jesus Christ is the great Altar of Sacrifice, a touch of Him at this moment will save you! It is the whole Gospel—believe, trust and live, for “whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God”—whoever trusts in Christ shall be saved!

Come to the Altar, where His blood was spilt! Come, *now*, and lay your hands upon its horn—you can but perish there. No, I must correct myself—you *cannot* perish there—you must perish anywhere else! Come, then, and rest in Jesus and the Lord bless you for His dear name’s sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Ephesians 5:1-21.

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CHRIST'S LOVE TO HIS SPOUSE

NO. 2488

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY,
OCTOBER 25, 1896.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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“Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.”
Ephesians 5:25.

THE love of Jesus—what a theme it is! The Apostle said that it passes knowledge and if it passes knowledge, much more does it excel any description that can be given of it! The heart may feel it better than the tongue may speak it. If there is one subject more than another upon which I wish always to speak, it is the love of Christ. But if there is one which quite baffles me and makes me go back from this platform utterly ashamed of my poor feeble words, and of the tongue which has uttered them, it is this subject. This love of Christ is the most amazing thing under Heaven, if not in Heaven itself. How often have I said to you that if I had heard that Christ pitied us, I could understand it. If I had heard that Christ had mercy upon us, I could comprehend it. But when it is written that he actually *loves* us, that is quite another and a much more extraordinary thing! Love between mortal and mortal is quite natural and comprehensible, but love between the Infinite God and us poor sinful finite creatures, though conceivable in one sense, is utterly inconceivable in another. Who can grasp such an idea? Who can fully understand it? Especially when it comes in this form—“HE” (read it in large capitals) “loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*”—this is the miracle of miracles!

I feel the more embarrassed with my subject, at the very onset, because this love of Christ is here positively likened to the love of a husband to his wife, and is so likened to it as to be made the model of what the husband's love to his wife should be! “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.” I should never have dared to draw the comparison, nor should any man have drawn it, but that the Holy Spirit, Himself, moved the pen of Paul to write it, and this being the case, we shall not be intruding into the secret places of the Most High if we now enter upon the consideration of this wondrous theme! Verily, I may well say, as the Apostle does in the 32nd verse, “This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.” It is a mystery, a subject far too deep for the mere intellect to dive into its depths—and too sacred for us to think or speak of except with utmost solemnity of heart. How shall I order my speech in the presence of such a subject as this? How shall I be free and yet be guarded?

How shall I take you to the edge of this great sea of the Truth of God and even venture into it without getting, at once, over my head?

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church”—a parallel is drawn between poor mortals like ourselves who occupy the position of husbands and our glorious Lord who is God Over All, blessed forever! In boundless condescension He deigns to occupy the same kind of place in reference to His Church, which He calls His bride, He Himself, being the Bridegroom who is soon to come! Again I say that I should never have thought of such a comparison had not the Holy Spirit, Himself, put it before us and invited us to consider it.

So, dear Friends, with great reverence, let us think, first, of *how Christ loves the Church*. Then, secondly, *how He has proved His love by giving Himself for the Church*. And then, thirdly, let us make the practical enquiry, *how shall we think of this wondrous love of Christ?*

I. First, then, HOW DOES CHRIST LOVE HIS CHURCH?

I cannot help beginning by saying that *Christ loves His church specially*. There would be no parallel whatever between the husband's love to the wife and Christ's love to the Church if there were not a specialty about it. Christ is Love itself—He is full of kindness and benevolence. In that sense, He loves *all* mankind, but that *cannot* be the meaning of the text, for it would be a very strange kind of exhortation to the husband if that were the case. No, the husband's love to his spouse is something special and particular—and it stands quite alone and all by itself. He will be kind and benevolent and generous towards all others, but that love which he lavishes upon his wife he must give to nobody else in the world. It is certainly so with our blessed Lord. Free and rich and overflowing in loving kindness, yet He made a special choice of His people before the earth was. And having chosen because of His love, He loves because of His choice, and that love is a peculiar, special, remarkable, pre-eminent love such as He bestows upon no one else of all the human race! It must be so, or else the passage would be all but immoral! Certainly it would be manifestly incorrect.

There is, then, a special love which Christ has towards His own Church, towards all Believers, towards His chosen people, towards those whom His Father gave Him, of whom He says, “They are Mine.” I may invite each of you who are included in either of these descriptions to drink in the sweetness of that gracious text, “I have loved you with an everlasting love.” That means, “I have loved you with a special and peculiar and distinguishing love.” As many of us as believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are distinguished by the enjoyment of a love which is all our own! Dear fellow Christians, let us never forget this amazing love and, as Christ loves us so specially, let us feel that we are bound to love Him specially. Let us give to Him all our heart's selection, for He is a jealous Savior and He will have all our love. So let us render it to Him, not of compulsion, but with a joyous willingness! Love dies in the presence of compulsion—it will wear no chains except its own silken fetters. But it flies, oh, how swiftly, on its own strong wings when once it perceives its beloved objective. Christ loves His church, then, specially, as good John Kent sings—

“He loved the world of His elect,

***With love surpassing thought.
Nor will His mercy ever neglect
The souls so dearly bought."***

And, next, I ask you to notice what is not always the case with regard to the husband and the wife, that *the Lord Jesus loves His church unselfishly*. That is to say, He never loved her for what she has, but what she is. No, I must go further than that and say that He loved her, not so much for what she is, but what He *makes her as the object of His love*. He loves her not for what comes to Him from her, or with her, but for what He is able to bestow upon her! His is the strongest love that ever was, for He has loved unseemliness till He has changed it into beauty! He has loved the sinner till He has made him a saint. He has loved the foul and filthy till He has washed them with water by the Word of God and presented them to Himself without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. We love because of loveliness apprehended and perceived, but Christ loved because He would impart His own loveliness to the object of His choice. Even the best of men, doubtless, love in some measure from selfish motives. There is some mixture of self-interest in all human love, but Christ had nothing to gain by loving His Church. He was very God of very God, the adored of angels and the Beloved of the Father, yet He fixed the eyes of His love—mark you, not of His *pity*, merely, but of His *love*—upon those whom He had chosen out of the race of men! He loved them, not for anything that He could ever gain from them, for He had all things in Himself, but because of what He would impart to them! They had nothing of good in themselves and were only fit to be loved by Christ because, like empty vessels, their very emptiness fits them to be receivers of His fullness. In no other sense are we ever fit to be loved by Christ. As the sun chased the darkness away from the world and still prevents it from going back into the darkness, so did Christ love a poor, fallen, darkened company of mortals, and loved them into light, and love, and joy, and still loves and enlightens them and keeps them where they are. Oh, what a wondrous love is this! Let our souls rejoice and be glad therein.

Further, Brothers and Sisters, as Christ's love to His Church is a love of choice, and of specialty, and of marvelous unselfishness, so I believe—although I do not understand how it can be so—that *it is a love of complacency*. The husband's love to his wife is not the love of a parent to a child. It is not the love of the philanthropist to the object of distress that he relieves. It is something very different from either of these forms of love. It may be that the husband confers benefits upon his wife as the result of his love, and he should do so. But still, the love of the husband to the wife puts them somehow on a level with one another. She has complacency in him and he has complacent delight in her. If a husband only loved his wife with a feeling of pity towards her, with the notion of relieving her, and so forth, that would be a very poor kind of relationship!

And though I speak with bated breath as I say it, I believe that the blessed Lord Christ takes complacency in His people. That we should delight ourselves in Him, is very easy to understand, but that He should delight Himself in us, oh, the very thought of it is ravishing to my heart! Even in the Old Testament Scripture, our Lord said to His chosen, "You

shall be called Hephzibah," that is, "My delight is in her." Is it really so, that the infinite God takes delight in His chosen people? Here is another passage to confirm it—"My delights were with the sons of men." Does Jesus find delight in men? Yes, that He does, and you know how He said to those who were the representatives of His church in His lifetime on earth, "I have called you friends," and He did seem to find a solace in their company. Even when He had risen from the dead and had no more work to do for their redemption, yet He came to them that He might enjoy their society. Poor, fallible, half-instructed men they were, yet He found His pleasure in them! He used to speak of them in this way, "I will declare your name to My brethren." He is not ashamed to call us brethren and in that rapturous Song of Songs, which is the very Holy of Holies of our blessed Bible, He does not hesitate to speak of His beloved as His *spouse* and to use to her all those endearing terms which prove that He takes great delight in her.

Think of it, my Soul, that Jesus takes great delight in you! He became a Man and it was not good even for such a Man to be alone. He could not rest till He had found you out and had wooed and won you! Will you ever deny Him your company? Will you refuse Him your heart of hearts? Will you hide from Him the secret of your soul? If so, you do a grievous wrong to Him who has deigned to stoop from the Throne of His eternal Glory to take delight in the company of His creature, man! I have looked abroad upon creation and have seen all kinds of beautiful birds and intelligent beasts, yet have I never seen any towards which I would stoop to make them my intimate acquaintances—and marry them in the heart of my love! No, we would not stoop even that little distance! But we were infinitely below the Son of God, yet has He chosen us! He felt that He could link His destiny with ours—I put it not too strongly, for that is what He has really done! He has become the Head of His body, the Church. He has become the Husband of His chosen bride. He has, as it were, entered into the same boat with His people. He has made a household whereof we two are the companion parts—He the Husband and His Church the spouse. Oh, who shall tell it all out? I do but touch the surface of this boundless sea as with a swallow's wing—happy are you if you dare to plunge into its depths.

There is, then, between Christ and His Church, to make a parallel between the love of the husband to his wife, a love of complacency.

And being a love of complacency, in such a case as this, there is *an intense love of sympathy*. The true husband and wife are so united that they share each other's joys and sorrows without making any effort to do so. It comes naturally to them, they cannot avoid it. And oh, let us tell out this great Truth of God—the sympathy between Christ and His people is absolutely perfect! If He sees us in sorrow, He feels it in His heart. He was Himself encompassed with infirmity, when He was here, and tempted in all points like as we are, that He might know all the trials of the Church He loved. And now in Heaven, as He has shared our sorrows, He decrees that we shall share His joys! He wishes us, even now, to let our hearts beat in sympathy with His triumph and His victory. I wish we

would do so, why should we not? Our Husband is on the Throne—then let us begin to reign with Him! He has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies—then let us have faith enough to claim what is really ours in Him! Remember that quaint couplet of which good old Rowland Hill was so fond, and sing it yourself—

***“But this I do find, we two are so joined,
He’ll not be in Glory and leave me behind.”***

Still better, remember that Word of Power which fell from our Lord’s blessed lips while here below, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory.” He has a perfect sympathy with us and we should have a like sympathy with Him. Blessed be His dear name that He should ever have entered into such bonds of love as those with such poor creatures as we are!

Nor is that all. While it is very blessed to know that Christ has this love of sympathy, He has, further, *a love of communion*. Without this, there could be no parallel with domestic life which includes much of happy communion and loving conversation. A brother minister said to me, the other day, when we were talking to one another about what the Gospel has done for men, “Did you ever think what a wonderful thing the Gospel is, that it has made possible such happiness as you and I enjoy in our domestic relationships?” And of course I heartily responded to that remark, for if there is anything that is a miniature picture of Heaven upon earth, it is a pair of Christians happily united, whose children grow up in the fear of the Lord and render to them increased comfort and joy every day! Oh, how much some of us owe to the Gospel for the happiness of our homes! There could, however, be no such happiness in married life if there were no conversation, no communion—and our Lord Jesus Christ so loves His Church that He often converses with her. He so loves each one of His people that if we are only willing to have it so, we may walk with Him, we may talk with Him and He will speak with us as a man speaks with his friend. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, if you do not, *every day*, commune with Christ, whose fault is it? Not His, but yours, for He loves you so that He would never let you be away from Him if you were not so wayward, and so easily turned aside by little things. Yes, He manifests Himself to us as He does not to the world. I am not going to tell out, here, all that He says—all the ways in which He manifests Himself to His people, we could not tell. But there are times of such real delight in fellowship with the Lord Jesus that we can only say with Dr. Watts—

***“My willing soul would stay
In such a frame as this,
And sit and sing herself away
To everlasting bliss.”***

The pith of all that I have said—and I have much more to say than time will permit—is this—it is an extraordinarily thing that *Christ has entered into positive unity with His people*. Unity, mark you for that is the essence of the marriage bond. We are one with Christ, who made Himself one with His people. Have you ever realized this, even you who are the best-tutored of the children of God? Have you ever taken a firm hold of this great Truth of God and gripped it so that you will not let it go? Come

back to what I said a little while ago, that Christ has linked His destiny with yours, His honor with yours, His life with yours, His happiness with yours! You must be in Heaven, or else He will be bereaved! You must be in Heaven, or else He will be imperfect! You are a member of His body and if He should lose one of His members, then His body would not be perfect, nor the Head either! You are joined to the Lord and you are “one spirit” with Him, and you may bravely say, “Who shall separate us?” for such is this eternal union that there is no separation between Christ and the soul that is joined to Him.

“The Lord, the God of Israel, says that He hates putting away.” In the olden times, the husband might give his wife a letter of divorce and put her away. But God says that He hates putting away and He will never divorce those who are joined to Him. What a marriage this is! Do you know, dear Friend, what I am talking about? I cannot speak of it as I would, but it is true, and that is the wonder of it! It is no fiction, no myth, no mere figure of speech, but it is *really* so in deed and in truth. For this cause Christ left His Father and became one with His Church, that henceforth they should no more be two, but one. And now we who have believed in Christ Jesus are one with Him in time and to eternity! His love has made it so and we may paraphrase the words we read, just now, and say, “Behold, what manner of love the Bridegroom has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the spouse of Christ!”

I have but very imperfectly spoken upon this part of my subject, but I must not linger longer on this most delightful theme.

II. I now ask you briefly to notice HOW THE LORD JESUS PROVED HIS LOVE TO HIS CHURCH—“Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it.”

I will not at first restrict the meaning of this text to what is the real essence of it, but I will just observe that Christ *gave Himself for His church when He was born into the world*, when He did not disdain the virgin's womb, but was born of Mary, wrapped in swaddling bands and laid in a manger. The angels have never ceased to wonder at this great mystery of godliness! The God who made the heavens and the earth, the God who upholds all things by the word of His power, lay as an Infant in the manger of Bethlehem because there could be no manifestation of His love to His people unless it could be said that they two were one flesh! So He became bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, most surely and truly Man, with all the sinless infirmities of our nature, and liable even to death in order to be fully one with us. Oh, how really He gave Himself for us when He thus became a Babe, a Child, a Man!

That being done, *He gave all His life here on earth for us*. He did nothing for Himself—it was all for us, for His Church. His whole life was for her righteousness, for her example, for her teaching and for her quickening. He loved her with no view but the Glory of the Father by the salvation of His chosen.

Nor was that all. It was, indeed, but the beginning! Having given His Godhead by the assumption of our humanity, having given His life by spending it all for us, *Christ gave Himself up to death for our sins*. He

went up to the felon's gallows—the Cross of Calvary—and there He gave His hands and feet to the nails, and His heart to the spear. Laying down His body for us, but at the same time laying down His soul and spirit, He suffered that dread doom of being forsaken of His God, so that He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” There, when you see His pale body, like a withered lily broken at the stalk—when you see the holy men and women wrapping Him in spices and laying Him in Joseph's tomb—you understand how He loved us and gave Himself for us, dying in our place, a Propitiation and Atonement for our sins! He loved us so as to die for us! He could not have died had He not become Man, but being found in fashion as a Man, and partaking of our human nature, it was possible for Him to prove the utmost extent of His love by laying down His life for us. Oh, could you not kiss those dear cold feet? Do you not half wish that you could have been there to wrap Him in the spices and fine linen and to lay Him in the grave? But remember that He now lives! Our heavenly Lover lives! He has proved His love by giving up His life, but now He has His life back and He has gone Home to His Father—He has gone back to the royalties He left and put on, again, all the splendor which for a while He laid aside.

Yet He does not love us any the less, *for He still gives Himself for us*. He acts the part of Intercessor for His Church. For Zion's sake He does not hold His peace. And for Jerusalem's sake He does not rest. Nor will He—He is crowned that His Church may be crowned. He is enthroned that she, too, may come to the Throne and He will further prove His love, by-and-by, for He has so given Himself for us that He is bound to come again—to fetch Home His affianced when she is prepared for Him and Heaven above is prepared for her! Then shall He come in all His Glory and she shall be brought to Him in raiment of needlework, in all the splendor of His righteousness and forever and ever shall there be nothing but joy and blessedness!

What I am driving at, and what I want every Christian here to get at, is this thought. Whatever Jesus Christ is—and you do not know half of what He is, even you who know most of Him—whatever Christ is in any relationship, or from any point of view, He has given Himself to us! Not merely has He given His thoughts, His actions, His wisdom, His power and His wealth but *He has given Himself to us*. Oh, I like to think of this! All that I can imagine Christ to be must still fall far short of Himself! It is Himself that we love and I would sooner have Christ than have Heaven! It is Himself we love and I would sooner have Christ than His crown! It is Himself we love and I would sooner have Christ than all the golden streets! It is Himself that we love and it is Himself that belongs to us—not merely the sight of His eyes, but His eyes themselves! Not only the love of His heart, but His heart itself! Himself, His Godhead and His Manhood, the complex Person of the Christ of God is given to His Church!

I feel as if I do not know how to talk at all about this great Truth of God. Some Brother cried out this morning when I was speaking, and I noticed that somebody else immediately followed him. But oh, if ever

there is a time for crying out—and yet, on the other hand, if ever there is a time for being struck with silence—it is when we get on this topic of Christ's love to His people! I feel as if I need to run from this platform and go home—and shut the door and sit down—and weep to the praise of this mighty love! And then I should want to get up and run back, again, and say, “What a fool I was not to tell you all I could about it!” May God the Holy Spirit help you to realize it! That you are loved by anyone is a joy, for love is a precious thing, whoever gives it. But you, Believer, are loved by Christ! You are so loved by Christ as not merely to be espoused to Him, but united to Him in eternal wedlock! You are joined to Him in such a way that you must, by-and-by, be with Him in all the Glory of His royal estate, for the King will bring His queen home and He will bring you home to dwell with Him forever and ever! I am very sorry for those who do not know anything about this great love! I am truly sorry for you outsiders—

**“His worth, if all the nations knew,
Surely the whole world would love Him too!”**

If they did but imagine the sweetness of the love of Christ, they would never give rest to their eyes until they had looked to Him by faith and so had learned it, and known it for themselves!

III. Now, lastly, dear Friends, if such is the love of Jesus, and the way in which He has proved it, HOW OUGHT WE TO THINK OF IT? I hardly need suggest to God's people anything about this, for you know it already, your own hearts have outrun my words.

How should we think of the love of Christ? Why, *with deepest gratitude*. Oh, how could You love *me*, my Lord, You whose eyes outshine the light of the morning? How could You love *me*, You who can make the fairest of all things with a wish of Your heart? How could You love *me* in whom there was nothing fair, nothing worthy of Your love? Yet I do bless You for it. Do not all of you who love Him say in your hearts, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name, that ever He should love *me*”? It is not His benefits that you have to think of just now, though they are innumerable. It is not His mercies that you have to think of at this moment, though they are immeasurable. But it is that He has loved *you* and that He still loves *you*, and that He has given Himself to *you* and for *you*! That is the point. Do you not bless Him? Do you not feel as if you could lie at His feet, ah, and love the very dust He trod upon, when you think that ever He should love *you*? Very well, then, return to Him your gratitude.

But that is not half enough. The next thing is, *render to Him your obedience*. Does not the Scripture say that the wife is to be obedient to her husband? Well, in this case, shall we not prove our gratitude to Christ by a complete obedience to Him? Is there anything that He commands you to do? Can you neglect it after such love as this? The least of His ordinances, will you not observe them? The smallest of His precepts, will you not regard them? Is there a word of His lips that you dare despise? Is there a wish that He has expressed in the Scriptures that you would fail to carry out? I hope not! Such love as Christ has given to us ought to receive from us, without any exhortation, a complete and perfect obedience

even to every jot and tittle as far as we can render it. I do not understand that love to Christ which makes men pick and choose and say, "I shall not attend to that, for that is non-essential. I shall do *this*—I believe that it is wrong, but still, I daresay it does not matter much." No, no, no! True wives act not so to their husbands! There is no wish of a loving husband which a loving wife would not regard. No, more—she *anticipates* his wishes, she delights to make him happy—and so should it be with my heart towards my Lord. I should be looking out for what I can do for Him. I should be hunting high and low to find something that would give Him pleasure and, above all, since He says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments," my heart should answer, "Your commandments are not grievous. It is my delight to do Your will, O my God and my Savior." That is the spirit in which to act towards Christ.

Once more. There is a text which says, "Let the wife see that she reverence her husband." I have sometimes thought that must be somewhat difficult for some wives to do. There has not been very much to reverence in their husbands. Still, they are bound to do it as far as it is possible. In this case, there is *everything* to reverence in our Beloved! There is *nothing* about Him but deserves our most profound homage. Such an One as He, whose very name has music in it, whose very Person is the delight of seraphim and cherubim—He, the Christ whom none can conceive of in all His fullness but the Father—we must reverence Him and bow before Him and extol Him!

I grow angry, I confess it, when I hear some men speak of Christ. They talk of my Lord in these days as if He were some common person and they have "comparative religions" in which they compare Him with I know not whom! I love my Lord so well that I must boil over with indignation when His name is disparaged. Our hymn says—

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus."

It is almost too commonplace an expression in reference to Him! Still, what it means let us do. Let us be ready, like the armed men who were about the bed of Solomon, to defend our King against all comers, for, if He loved us so much, we must love Him in return.

And what else shall we say? If such is the love of Christ, how shall we think of it but in a way of holiness? *Let us seek to be like He is.* Let us try to fulfill His will that He may purify us and sanctify us by the washing of water by the Word, that we may be holy as He who has called us is holy. Let us think of this love by striving after sanctification and let us think of this love, above all, by rendering to Him, now, and as long as we live, the full love of our heart. We cannot love Him without being moved to love Him more. We can love the more by thinking much of the Person towards whom our hearts are drawn, so think much of my Lord, think of Him every day! Get to be familiar with Him. Read frequently the story of His life and death. Get alone as often as you can and picture Him before your eyes until you find your heart exclaiming, "I love You, dearest Lord. You know all things. You know that I love You." I find it a profitable form of devotion, sometimes, to sit quite still and not say a word, but just *think* of Him. My heart has burned within me while doing that and I believe that it is not lost or wasted time, but time most profitably spent, for I

come forth from my chamber and feel, "Now I am ready for the service of life—or for its suffering—for I have seen the Well-Beloved and the glances of His countenance have charmed away my grief and prepared me to take up my cross and follow Him wherever He goes." Oh, love the Lord, you His saints and, as long as you live, love Him more and more, love Him to the very utmost, till you die of love! Blessed, forever blessed be His holy name! Amen and Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

1 JOHN 3.

I have read this chapter many times in your hearing, but we cannot read it too often, for it is full of the deepest and most important instruction. God grant that fresh light from above may shine upon it as we listen once more to the familiar words!

Verse 1. *Behold*—If you never used your eyes to good purpose before, use them so now!

1. *What manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.* Let the truth of our adoption amaze us—the adoption of such unworthy ones as we were to so high a relationship—"that we should be called the sons of God."

1. *Therefore the world us knows not, because it knew Him not.* There is no need to say to whom this last sentence refers. The pronoun, "Him," is quite sufficient to indicate our Lord Jesus whom the world knew not. Every living, loving heart must at once have thought of, "Him," who is the chief, the First-Born, the only-begotten Son of God!

2. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God.*—It is enough to make the lame man leap as a hart to hear that blessed statement and to know it to be true!

2. *And it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He; for we shall see Him as He is.* In proportion to our view of Christ is our likeness to Him. Those who never saw Him are not like He is at all. Those who have, in a measure, seen Him, are in a measure like He is, they who see Him as He is are like He is. There is a transforming power about the image of Christ when it is seen by the soul—"We shall be like He; for we shall see Him as He is."

3. *And every man that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure.* Discouragement and despair will not purify you. Doubt and darkness will only make you worse than you were before. But the indulgence of this blessed hope that you are to be like Christ will help you to purify yourself, "even as He is pure." Therefore, Beloved, have hope in God! Remember that it is one of Satan's tricks and snares to try to discourage you, but it is God's will to increase your hope, for thereby you increase in purity.

4. *Whoever commits sin, transgresses, also, the Law: for sin is the transgression of the Law.* This is the best definition of sin that can be given—let none of us ever tolerate any other idea of sin but that it is "the transgression of the Law of God."

5, 6. *And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whoever abides in Him sins not: whoever sins has not seen Him, neither known Him.* That is to say, if sin is the habitual course of our life, we do not truly know the Lord. He who walks with God endeavors with all his might to be free from sin and he is sanctified by abiding in Christ.

7. *Little children, let no man deceive you.* Because you are little, you are apt to be deceived. There is a great blessedness in being little children, but there is also some danger connected with such a condition, so we must beware of those who would deceive us.

7. *He that does righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.* The test of a man's real character must be what he *does*, not what he professes! Not what he boasts of, but what is really the manner of his life.

8, 9. *He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever is born of God does not commit sin; for His seed remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.* He sins not with any pleasure, it is not the course of his life. There are, alas, in the best of men, infirmities and imperfections and failures! Would God these were all removed! Still, the man is not what he used to be, Though he is not what he *shall* be, he is not what he once was.

10. *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother.* Holiness and love are the marks of the true child of God. And where these are not to be found, a man must not bolster himself up with any notion that salvation is his, for he is no child of God.

11, 12. *For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that Wicked One, and slew his brother. And why did he slay him? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous.* So that, when you see a man filled with hate and envy and malice, it is because his own life is not holy. There is no exception to this rule—true holiness and love always go together—where love is absent, holiness must be absent, too.

13. *Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hates you.* See, Cain hated Abel and the world hates the saints. It is the very nature and spirit of the world to hate those who are not of the world.

14. *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.* Love becomes the distinguishing mark of the new life.

14. *He that loves not his brother abides in death.* No matter though he may be outwardly religious, and may think that by doing certain external actions he will save himself, there is no truth at all in his religion, for the very essence of true religion is that a man lives not to himself, but to God and for the good of his fellow men.

15. *Whoever hates his brother is a murderer.* He would get rid of that brother if he could and he is, therefore, a murderer in spirit, for the essence of murder is not the dagger or the poison, but the *desire* to put out of existence or to do the utmost harm to the one who is hated. The essential element of murder lurks within the bosom of all hatred.

15. *And you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. His action is Cain-like. He is not of the chosen seed. He has not the life of God abiding in him.*

16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God.—The master love, the chief love that was ever in this world—*

16-19. *Because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's good, and sees his brother has need, and shuts up his heart of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before Him. That is still the test—truthful love proves that “we are of the truth.” Children of the God of Truth and so assures and tranquillizes our hearts before Him. Our hearts shall be calm, confident and happy before God when we know that true love flows within them.*

20-23. *For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatever we ask, we receive of Him because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment. Faith works by love. We believe on the name of the Lord Jesus, God's well-beloved and only-begotten Son and that faith leads us to love all who bear His holy name.*

24. *And He that keeps His commandments dwells in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us. If He has given us the Spirit of Christ, then Christ Himself is in us! If He has given us the Spirit of love, that also is the evidence that Christ, Himself, abides in us. Oh, for more of that blessed Spirit in every one of us!*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—423, 371.

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NO. 628

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 7, 1835
BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”
Ephesians 5:25-27.***

WHAT a golden example Christ gives to His disciples! There are few masters who could venture to say, “If YOU would practice my teaching, imitate my life.” But the life of Jesus is the exact transcript of perfect virtue and therefore He can point to Himself as the paragon of holiness, as well as the teacher of it. The Christian should take nothing short of Christ for his model. Under no circumstances ought we to be content unless we reflect the Grace which was in Christ Jesus. Even as a husband, which is a relationship that the Christian sustains in common with the rest of men, he is to look upon Christ Jesus as being set before him as the picture and he is to paint according to that copy.

Christ himself being the Bridegroom of the Church, the true Christian is to seek to be such a husband as Christ was to His spouse. I fear, Brethren, that we often stop short of the Master’s example—we compare ourselves among ourselves and are therefore far from being wise. We think if we avoid the egregious faults of some and can attain to the moderate virtues of others, we have done well. Let it be so no longer. He would never excel in statuary who should take the works of some mere amateur to be his copy.

No. The sculptor knows that he cannot rival Praxiteles or Phidias and yet he takes some Greek torso or bust from the antique to be his model—he must have perfection there—even if there is none in his own workmanship. The painter would never attain to eminence if he went to an exhibition and devoted himself to the study of some work of moderate worth and said, “I will attempt to reach this and there I will stop contented.” No. He goes to the galleries of the great masters and though his timid pencil may not dare to hope that he shall strike out thoughts so clearly and make life stand out upon the canvas as they have done, yet he seeks to drink in their inspiration, hoping that he may rise to some proud eminence in art by imitating them.

Let the Christian, then, aspire to be like his Lord who is the Author and Finisher of his faith. And let him, as he runs the heavenly race, look to Jesus and make “the Apostle and High Priest of his profession” his continual study and aim to be changed into His image from glory unto glory. You must be struck, in reading the passage before us, on what high ground the Apostle takes the Christian. It is possible that some husbands

might say, "How can I love such a wife as I have?" It might be a supposable case that some Christian was unequally yoked together with an unbeliever and found himself forever bound with a fetter to one possessed of a morose disposition, or a obstinate temper, or a bitter spirit.

He might therefore say, "Surely I am excused from loving in such a case as this! It cannot be expected that I should love that which is in itself so unlovely." But mark, Beloved, the wisdom of the Apostle. He silences that excuse, which may possibly have occurred to his mind while writing the passage, by taking the example of the Savior, who loved, not because there was loveliness in His Church, but in order to *make* her lovely.

You perceive "He loved His Church and gave Himself for her, that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." He did not admire her because there was no spot in her. He did not choose her because she had no wrinkles. He fixed His affections where there were multitudinous spots and wrinkles—where everything was deformity. He still set His heart and would not withdraw till He had loved the spots away and loved every wrinkle out of her who was the object of His choice. And now He seems to say to every Christian man, however unhappily he may have fared:

"If perhaps, in the lot of Providence, you have been yoked to one who deserves but little of your affection, yet if you cannot love because of esteem, love because of pity. If you cannot love because of present merit, then love because of future hope, for possibly, even there, in that bad soil, some sweet flower may grow. Be not weary of holy tillage and of heavenly plowing and sowing, because at the last there may spring up some fair harvest that shall make your soul glad." He loved His Church and gave Himself for her that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church.

I do not intend, however, this morning, to enter into the duty of husbands. That is not the reason for which I selected the text, but to set forth the love of Jesus towards His people. And first, let us consider the object of the Savior's love. "He loved the Church." Then let us observe the work which love has carried on in pursuance of its gracious design. "He gave himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her through the washing of water by the Word." Then, thirdly, let us look at the beloved object when the design is accomplished—"without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." And then let us pause awhile to behold this beloved object presented by our Lord to Himself in the day of His triumphant espousals.

I. First, then, may the Spirit of God help us while we look at THE CHOSEN CHURCH, THE OBJECT OF THE SAVIOR'S LOVE. Some of our Brethren are very fond of what is called the general or universal view of God's benevolence. I trust we are not afraid to deal with that whenever we come across it in Holy Scripture. We believe, "God is good to all and that His tender mercies are over all His works." We believe Him to have the love of benevolence towards all His creatures and we can preach without bated breath upon such a text as this—"He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

But some of these Brethren are very much afraid of the peculiar and special sign of the Savior's love and they seem to shrink from a text which has anything particular and discriminating in it. They shake it off from

their hand into the fire as Paul did the viper of old. Now we thank God we have learned to love the distinguishing Doctrines of Grace, and that predestination and discrimination are not hard words for us to pronounce and neither do they grate upon our ears! But we love to read this text and put the emphasis upon the *accusative* case. Christ loved the *Church* and gave Himself for *her*.

We perceive that Christ did not love the *world* in the sense in which the term “loved” is *here* meant. We see here that Christ gave Himself not for the *world*, but for *her*, that is the Church. In the sense in which He is said here to give Himself, He did so for none except His *chosen* people, the Church—His one, special, and particular object of affection. It is not thus that Christ has loved universal creatureship—and all mankind alike without exception or difference—but He loved the Church and gave Himself for *her*.

Now what is this Church which Jesus Christ loved if it is not the entire company of the elect? As many as the Father gave Him from before the foundation of the world, whose names were written in the Lamb’s Book of Life before the stars began to shine. As many as were taken by Him to be the sheep of His pasture, the jewels of His crown, the children of His love, the subjects of His kingdom, the members of His body—each one of them being particularly known to Him and chosen in Him before the mountains lifted their heads into the clouds—so many compose the Church of Christ which was the object of His redeeming love.

We have to search for these chosen ones in what is called the Church visible. We know that they are not all Israel who are of Israel and that the visible Church is not identical with that Church which Christ loved and for which He gave Himself. There is a Church *invisible* and this is the center and life of the Church visible! What the wheat is to the chaff and heap upon the threshing floor, such are these living Christians among the mass of professors in the world. There is a distinction which we cannot see—which it is not for us to try and make manifest—lest, in endeavoring to root up the tares, we root up the wheat also. There is an unseen Church which becomes visible in Heaven, which will be apparent and manifest at the coming of the Son of Man. This it is which Christ loved and for which He gave Himself.

Now observe what this Church was by nature, for that is the subject of our discourse just now upon this first head. The Church which Christ loved was in her origin as sinful as the rest of the human race. Have the damned in Hell fallen through Adam’s transgression? So, once, had the saved in Glory. The sin which was imputed to lost spirits was equally and with as fatal consequences imputed to them—and had it not been for the incoming of the Covenant Head, the second Adam—they had forever suffered with the rest. They, too, were alike depraved in nature.

Is the heart deceitful above all things in the unregenerate? So it is in the elect before regeneration. Was the will perverse? Was the understanding darkened? Was the whole head sick and the whole heart faint in the case of those who continued in sin? It was just the same, at first, with those who have been, by Sovereign Grace, taken into the heart of Christ. “We were,” says the Apostle, “by nature the children of wrath even as oth-

ers.” Remember that between the brightest saint in Heaven and the blackest sinner in Hell there is no difference except that which *Christ* has made! Had those glorified ones been left to continue in their natural state they would have sinned as foully and as constantly as the worst of sinners have done.

To begin with, there is no difference between the election and the non-election. They are all alike fallen. “They are all gone out of the way—they are altogether become unprofitable. There is none that does good, no, not one.” No, more! This Church of Christ is made up of persons who are actually defiled by their own transgressions. Are you and I members of that Church? Ah, then we are compelled to confess that in us by nature dwelt all manner of concupiscence, vileness, and an evil heart of unbelief ever prone to depart from the living God and to rebel against the Most High. And what have we done since? Or rather, what have we *not* done?—

**“We wandered each a different way,
But all the downward road.”**

We did not all fall into the same vices, but still when the black catalog of sin is read, we have to weep over it and to say, “Such were some of us.” And why we should be made a part of Christ’s Church is a question that never can be answered except with this one reply, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.” Do the wicked sink to Hell with their sins like millstones about their necks? We would have sunk there, too, and as rapidly and as fatally, unless Eternal Love had said, “Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom.” Look at Christ’s Church as you see her visibly in the world and I ask you, Brothers and Sisters, though she has much about her that is admirable, whether there is not much that might cause her Lord to cast her away?

Even in her regenerate state she speaks truly when she says, “she is black as the tents of Kedar.” Mark the hypocrites that come into the Christian Church and that mar her purity. Observe the formalists that crowd her courts—that sit as God’s people sit, and sing as God’s people sing—but have hearts full of rottenness and villainy! Observe even the true saints—how unbelieving, how often carnally-minded, how childish—how ready to murmur against God! How few of them are fathers in Israel. When they ought to be teachers they have need to be instructed in the first elements of the faith.

What heresies come into the Church and how many unstable minds are carried away with them. What divisions there are! How one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” and a third, “I am of Christ.” What envy there is, what backbiting of those that are eminent for usefulness. What suspicions against those who are a little more zealous than their fellows! My Brethren, what a need of *affection* we can see in the Church of Christ! How little brotherly kindness, how little sympathy!

On the other hand, how much of pride is discovered—how much caste creeps in and prevails even among those who profess to be Brethren! How we find some claiming to be lords in God’s heritage and taking to themselves names and titles to which they have no right, seeing that, “One is our Master,” and we are not to be called, “Rabbi,” among men. When I look at the Church even with a blinded eye, having no power to see her as God’s Omniscient eye must see, yet is she covered with spots! Well may

she wear her veil and say, "Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun has looked upon me."

O Church of God, how is it that Jesus Christ could love *you*? Even in your Church capacity and Church estate, there is so much that could make Him say, "You are reprobate silver. You shall be cast into the fire." Lo, how much there is that must make Him say of you, "Salt is good, but this salt has lost its savor and how shall it be seasoned? It is therefore good for nothing but to be trod under foot of men." And yet you see, dear Friends, it is written that Christ loved His Church and gave Himself for her.

I think I see it—a piece of ground untilled—neither hedged, nor walled, nor covered with vines, nor redolent with the perfume of sweet flowers. It is a spot in the wilderness filled with thorns and thistles. Her hedges are broken down. The stones of her walls are scattered. The wild boar out of the wood wastes her. All kinds of unclean creatures lurk among her weeds and brambles. Oh, how is it, Lord of Glory, that You could buy, at the price of Your heart's blood, such a waste piece of ground as that? What could You see in that garden that You should determine to make it the fairest spot of all the earth and that it should yield You the richest of all fruit?

I think, again, I see the Church of God—not as a fair maid decorated for her marriage day with jewels and carrying herself right gloriously both in her person and her apparel. But I see her as a helpless child, neglected by her parents, cast out, unwashed, unclothed, left uncared for and covered with her filth and blood. No eyes pity her. No arms come to bring her salvation. But the eyes of the Lord Jesus looks upon that infant and straightway love beams forth from those eyes and speak from those lips and act through those hands. He says, "Live!" And the helpless infant is cared for—she is nurtured—she is decked with dainty apparel. She is fed and clothed, and sustained and made lovely through the loveliness of Him who chose Her. Thus it is that strong love moved the Grace of God and the Church found that Christ gave Himself for her.

I must not, however, leave this point without reminding you of what kind of love it is which Jesus Christ gives to His Church—you perceive it is the love of a husband. Now the love of a husband is special. Those gentlemen who think that Christ did not love the Church more than He loved the rest of the world must have a very strange idea of how a husband ought to love his wife, for it says, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church." And surely a husband ought to love his wife more than he loves other people! Therefore Christ cherishes for the Church a special, particular affection which is set upon *her* rather than upon the rest of mankind.

The Lord has set His Church as much above the rest of the world as He has fixed His own Throne above the kings and princes of this lower earth. And the day shall come when she, "fair as the moon and clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners," shall be recognized as being the favorite of Heaven, the peculiar treasure of Christ—His regalia, the crown of His head, the bracelet of His arm, the breastplate of His heart—the very center and core of His own love. Let us not quibble at this Truth of God for

it is exceedingly precious. Let us seek the honey out of it and believe that Christ loves the Church with a *special* love.

Again, a husband loves his wife with a *constant* love and so does Christ His Church. He will not cast her away tomorrow having loved her today. He does not vary in His affection. He may change in His *display* of affection, but the affection itself is still the same. A husband loves his wife with an *enduring* love. It will never die out—he says, “Till death us do part will I cherish you.” But Christ will not even let death part His love to His people. “Nothing shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

A husband loves his wife with a *hearty* love, with a love that is true and intense. It is not mere lip service. He does not merely speak, but he acts! He is ready to provide for her needs. He will defend her character. He will vindicate her honor because his heart is set upon her. It is not merely with the eyes that he delights, now and then, to glance upon her, but his soul has her continually in his remembrance. She has a mansion in his heart from where she can never be cast away. She has become a portion of himself—she is a member of his body—she is part of his flesh and of his bones. And so is the Church to Christ forever an eternal spouse. He says—

***“Forget you, I will not,
I cannot! Your name
Engraved on My heart does forever remain.
The palms of My hands while
I look on, I see
The wounds I received when suffering for you.”***

Now let us leave this point, only reminding you, again, that this Church is only the Church of Christ because He has made her so. She had no right or title to His affection. He loved her because He *chose* to do so and having once loved her, He never will divorce her—she shall be His world without end.

II. And now I shall want your patience a few minutes on the second point, and that is THE WORK WHICH LOVE SEEKS TO ACCOMPLISH IN ITS GRACIOUS DESIGNS. Since the Church is not fit for Christ by nature, He resolved to make her so by Divine Grace. He could not be in communion with sin. Therefore it must be purged away. Perfect holiness was absolutely necessary in one who was to be the bride of Christ. He purposes to work that in her and to make her qualified to be His spouse eternally.

The great means by which He attempts to do this, is, “He gave Himself for her.” Beloved, I wish I had the power of speech this morning as one sometimes has it, or rather, I wish that another had to handle such a weighty theme as this—for how can I set forth to you the preciousness of this gift? He gave Himself for His Church! Had He given His crown and royalty and come down to earth for awhile, that were mercy! Had He given up, for a time, the happiness and pleasure of His Father’s house, this were something—and this He did. But it was not enough. He would not merely leave His Glory and part with His crown—He must give Himself!

Here He is on earth, born of the Virgin. A helpless Infant. He slumbers at her breast. Throughout His life foxes had holes and birds of the air nests, but, “He had not where to lay His head.” He has given you much in

this. "He is despised and rejected of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief." The crown of thorns is on His brow! The lash of the scourge is on His back! The spear is at His chest! The nails are in His hands and feet. He has given you much, but now He is about to give you all He has.

He is stripped naked to His shame. He gives His last garment that He may cover the nakedness of man, but when He cries, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me!" When having drank the last drop of the bitter cup of woe, He bows His head and says, "It is finished!" And He gives up the ghost—He has given you all that He can give—for He has given you Himself. He gives you His Godhead that comes on earth, but is veiled in clay. He gives you His entire Manhood, for His body is given to the scourge and tomb—and His soul to agony and death—He gives Himself.

Perhaps you will say, "But how does His giving Himself tend to cleanse His Church?" You know, Beloved, how the precious blood of His heart takes away sin. How the righteousness of His life covers His Church and makes her beautiful in the sight of God. You know how the water which flowed with the blood purifies and sanctifies His people. But, perhaps you will never realize better how Christ gives Himself to you than you do at the sacramental table. There in type and symbol you see in that bread His broken body. You see set forth in shadow in that wine, His blood.

And what do you do with that bread? Do you look at it? Yes, with tears in your eyes! What do you do with the cup? Do you regard it? Yes, with loving eyes. But this is not all. "Take, eat!" says the Savior. "Drink, drink all of it," He says. And as you eat and drink, you are thereby reminded of the great Truth of God that He has given you His flesh to eat and His blood to drink—and that these, like some healing medicine, will purge you of all diseases, cleanse you of every lingering cancer, go through and through the secret parts of your soul and expel with their sanctifying influence the very roots and seeds of corruption and make you perfect in every good work to do His will.

I admit that you may not feel this at present, but you have that within you in having received Christ which will be the death of all sin. He has given Himself to dwell in you, to kill every lust, to slay every corruption, to expel the Canaanites out of the Canaan of your heart till King David shall reign in Jerusalem and the Jebusite shall be put away forever. Beloved, this is the way in which He sanctifies and cleanses His Church—by giving Himself for her—first upon the tree and afterwards in the Church, by the work of the Holy Spirit as a quickening and cleansing power, dwelling there forevermore.

When the text says, "He gave Himself for her that He might sanctify and cleanse her," is there not allusion here to the double cure of sin? Here is Christ sanctifying by the Spirit, that is to say, taking away the propensity to sin—killing the power of sin in us—helping us to reign over our corruptions that we may in heart and life be pure, even as our Father which is in Heaven is pure. And as to the cleansing, may not that allude to justification and pardon? Of that we spoke particularly last Sunday to our own joy if not to yours. We are complete in Him. We are perfect in Christ Jesus and the design of Christ is that sanctification shall be as perfect as justifi-

cation—that the power of sin shall be as thoroughly slain as the guilt of it—that altogether sin shall cease to be in the Christian.

But what is the outward instrumentality which Christ uses? The text says, “With the washing of water by the Word.” We Baptists are generally thought to lay great stress upon Baptism. There can be no greater mistake made than to suppose that we exaggerate its importance. I sometimes think we do not value it enough! Those who practice infant Baptism might be much more fairly charged with exaggerating the importance of Baptism than those of us who scrupulously require a profession of faith from all persons before we think of baptizing them into the name of the Lord. I do not believe that Baptism is intended here, nor even referred to.

I know that the most of commentators say it is. I do not think it. It strikes me that one word explains the whole. Christ sanctifies and cleanses us by the washing of water, but what sort of water? By the Word. The water which washes away sin, which cleanses and purifies the soul is the Word. The Word of God has a cleansing influence. It comes and convicts the man of sin. It makes him see his impurity so as to hate it. When applied with power by the Holy Spirit, it works repentance. It leads the man to weep and bewail himself before God. That same Word leads to faith in Christ Jesus and faith works by love and purifies the soul.

The Word is preached, the Word is believed. And as soon as ever that Word is believed, it begins to act like water in the heart of man. You cannot receive the Gospel and yet be as filthy as you were before. My Brothers and Sisters, if you really welcome the Truth of God, those grosser sins will be washed away at once. Next, as you discover them, your besetting sins will be cleansed away and constantly—as you understand the Word better, believe it more firmly and feel its effect more powerfully—you will by it, as by water, be washed and cleansed from all indwelling sin till you are sanctified and cleansed and made fit to enter into Heaven!

This one thing let me say solemnly—I go not into this world to preach the efficacy of baptismal water in cleansing souls from sin. Let those who care to do it, and think it their office, magnify their office exceedingly. Let those who think that *sacraments* have necessarily efficacy in them stand out and boldly declare it. But as for us, we believe that the water which cleanses is none other than the Word of God which is preached by man and applied by the Holy Spirit! We rest upon the uplifted Cross of Christ, upon the doctrine of His Atonement, on the great Truth of His abiding Presence in the Church of God and ever pray, “Sanctify us by Your Truth. Your Word is Truth.”

And, mark you, the world has had a fair trial of both plans. Throughout the dark ages the world tried the efficacy of Baptisms and sacraments—century after century Popery and priest-craft gutted the world with the idea that Baptism and the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper were a prescription for cleansing away sin. What was the result? Were not the cities filled with harlots? Were not the dungeons crowded with prisoners? Had not the earth become an Aceldama and was not the whole land, like Sodom, reeking with filth?

Then came Luther and Calvin and though these men held not all the Truth of God in its fullness, yet, at least they held, “the washing of water

by the Word,” and Luther and Zwingli and Calvin declared, “The world’s great purgative is faith in Jesus Christ, not sacraments. The priesthood lies with Christ and not with men. Priest-craft is to be put away. Justification is by faith in Jesus Christ and that faith comes by hearing and that hearing by the preaching of the Word.”

And what happened? Why, the world woke as from a long slumber! She found herself in chains—she snapped the chains as Samson snapped the green withes. Progress came—knowledge, light, truth—and if the world is not holy, yet what strides has she made since the day when Tetzels “Indulgence for Sin” defiled the world through and through to its very center with blasphemy! We have but to keep on using this washing of water by the continual preaching of the Word and the day shall come when our poor planet shall be cleansed from blood and filth and shall come out from the mists in which she is now enveloped and shine like her sister stars, bright in the light of her God!

And the only sounds that shall be heard from her shall be songs of joy and peace, because the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. This, then, is Christ’s way of cleansing and sanctifying His Church—by the washing of water, that is to say, by the Word of God.

III. And now let us pass on, again troubling your patience, to the third point—THE LOVED ONE AS SHE IS PERFECTED. One is inclined to draw a veil over the face of beauty which never can be painted. She is to be a glorious Church. We love our own highly-favored Church. I am sure there is not a member of it—at least I do not know one—that does not feel his heart leap every time he thinks of this Church which God has so prospered and blessed and honored.

For all that, we are nothing but a militant Church and a very imperfect one—a Church that has cause to mourn and humble herself before God for many sins. And I, as pastor, looking upon you all, cannot help while I bless God for all I see that is excellent, bowing my own head in the dust because of the sins of a people favored with the Gospel who, nevertheless, have much to confess before God. We are not a glorious Church. You can cast your eyes upon such churches as the Moravians who gave themselves up, men and women, to Christ’s cause and scattered themselves all over the world, preaching the Gospel.

Greenland was not too cold. The Sahara was not too hot—they sacrificed everything for Christ—but yet the Moravian Church with all its excellence has much of which it may well repent. It is not a glorious Church. You may look where you like and you shall see that the dust of travel is still upon the wilderness Church. She has the Presence of God—she has her Shekinah—but alas, she is troubled within by a mixed multitude. Korab, Dathan and Abiram sometimes vex her. Her Master has to send her fiery serpents sometimes and she still needs to keep the bronze serpent lifted up every day. Even in her ranks there are some that still need to look and live.

We have *no* glorious Church on earth, nor do I think we can get much idea of what a glorious Church is. I tried yesterday, last Sunday rather, (and all the days since then seem to have gone so rapidly that I thought it yesterday). I tried last Sunday to show what a glorious *person* was. But

what must a glorious *Church* be? There is one lamp. Well, that is very bright, very pleasing. You like to have it in your room—but think of all London illuminated to the very top of the cross of St. Paul’s—and what an idea you then have of brightness!

Now, one glorified Christian is a lamp. Think, then, of all Heaven with its domes of Glory lit up with ten thousands times ten thousands companies of blood-bought spirits whom Jesus Christ has taken up—a glorious Church! One flower is very sweet. I smell its perfume. But I walk into some vast conservatories, into some gentleman’s garden, acres in size, and there are beds of flowers—blue and scarlet, and yellow. I see the ver-bena, the calceolaria and the geranium and many others, all in order and in ranks. Oh, how glorious is this!

Those undulating lawns, those well-trimmed hedges, those trees so daintily kept—all growing in such luxuriance. One flower is sweet, but a garden! A garden! Who can tell how sweet this is? So, one glorified saint is one of God’s flowers, but a glorious Church is Christ’s garden! A drop of water may be very precious to a thirsty tongue, but a river full of it! Children are pleased, when for the first time in their lives they sail across some little lake. But how surprised they are when they come to the deep and rolling sea which seems without shore or bottom!

Well, so pleased am I at the very thought of the glorious Church. As yet I have never seen anything but one little lake—this Church—the Church of God in England. The Church of God in the world—what is it, after all, but “a drop in a bucket”? But the glorious Church—the whole of the people of God gathered together in one, all perfectly free from sin, all made like unto Christ and all bright with the Glory which excels even that which Moses and Elijah had when they were with Christ in the holy mountain! Or such as Moses had when he came down from the top of Horeb, when he had been forty days with God—a glorious Church, a mighty company of glorified beings!

But do observe what is said of her. She is to be, “Without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” “Without spot”—that is much. But, you see, spots can be taken off. The face is washed and the spot comes out. The garment is thoroughly cleansed and there are some chemicals and acids applied and the spots can be removed. Though, truly, some of us have scarlet spots of a crimson-like dye, yet the blood of Jesus is a wonderful detergent and it can get out spots of any color. Though we may have been lying in the lye-tub of sin even for seventy years, yet Christ will get all the spots out of us if we are a part of His Church.

Though His Church is double dyed, yet Christ will make her white as snow. But that is not the wonder of the text. The marvel is, “without spot or *wrinkle*.” You may get a spot out of your face, but you cannot smooth out a wrinkle! You may make what efforts you please, but you cannot get rid of your wrinkles. You that are getting old, if time has come and driven his plow across your brow, why there the furrows will remain—they will not come out. Yes, but the Church of Christ is to be without wrinkle as well as without spot! How will He get the wrinkles out? There is no chemical that I know of that can get rid of them.

But Jesus Christ has a sacred art, having in Himself, by the washing of water, even the Word, the power to get wrinkles out! Lightfoot says there is an allusion here to the carefulness of the Jew in his ablutions. The Jew not only washes very carefully when he is purifying himself for worship, but lest any dust or impurity should remain in any crack of the skin, or in any wrinkle, he seeks by washing again and again with the severest care to get out the least filth that would be in the wrinkle.

Very good, Dr. Lightfoot, but the Jew cannot wash wrinkles out. He can wash away the dirt, but he cannot get rid of the wrinkle. But Christ can banish away both. Another good writer says that perhaps there is an allusion here to the fuller's trade. The fuller gets out the spots first and then as the cloth may have been so folded up that there are creases and wrinkles in it, he uses different stretching and milling till at last he manages to get out the creases and wrinkles from the cloth as well as the spot. I do not know whether there is an allusion to that, but this I know—there shall not be a spot of sin on any of God's people, nor yet a wrinkle of infirmity!

They shall lose the effect of old age and weakness in their bodies and they shall lose the defects and infirmities in their souls. The outward spot shall be removed and the inward deformity, which was like a wrinkle ingrained into their very nature, shall also be taken away. But do observe the next word. The Holy Spirit seems to exhaust language to describe this purity. He says, "Without spot, or wrinkle, or *any such thing!*" She shall have nothing like a spot, nothing that can be construed as a wrinkle—she shall be fair and the world shall be compelled to acknowledge that she is. The eyes of God shall look upon her. And though He sees in darkness and discovers the hidden things of night, even He shall discern neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing in any one single part of the body or the soul of any one of the members of the mystical body of Christ!

Oh what perfection, Beloved, is this! I cannot speak of it, but I can delight in thinking of it! I was trying to think last night what I should be like when I was freed from my spots and wrinkles. Ah, you can all see them now—I wonder you put up with them sometimes! But what shall I be when I have parted with them forever? And I shall get rid of them. Death is stamped on every infirmity—the Lord has put the poison into the heart of my inbred sins and bless His name for it. But what will you and I be like when we are perfect?

No hasty temper, no sloth, no wrong thoughts, no cold hearts, no dilatoriness in prayer, no sluggishness in praise. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, there will be some of you so different we shall scarcely know you! When some Brethren die I believe they will go to Heaven, but they will be strangely altered by the time they get there. They are good people, but they have such crotchety ways, such strange sense of humor, such hot tempers that surely we shall have to be very wise people to know them in Heaven! We shall need to be informed who they are, they will be so greatly changed!

But this will be the happy state of all—whether altered much or little—we shall be, "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." I must not dwell longer, though the theme invites it. Hypocrisies, heresies, declensions, divisions—all these will be put away from the Church. Infirmity, doubt, sin,

fear of every kind will be put away from every Believer and we shall be presented blameless, holy and unreprouable in the sight of God!

IV. And lastly, THE LOVED ONE IS TO BE PRESENTED. It is said, He is “to present her to Himself.” Every day Christ presents His people to His Father in His intercession. The Holy Spirit presents poor sinners every day in conversion to Christ, but there is to be a day when Christ will present His glorious Church “to Himself.” When He shall come, then shall be the wedding day. There shall be heard the cry, “Behold, the Bridegroom comes!”

Then the virgins with their lamps trimmed shall go forth to meet Him and His Church shall enter into the supper feast, to sit down and sup with Him and He with her. Today the Church is like Esther bathing herself in spices, making herself ready for Ahasuerus, her lord and master. Today we are engaged—at the coming we shall be married. We are waiting now impatiently for Him—then we shall be in His embrace. Today we wear not the crown, today we wave not the palm—but tomorrow when He comes we shall be crowned with Him and triumph with Him.

Let us long for His appearing. Let this bright hope sustain you in the dreary months of waiting and the weary hours of fighting, “He comes! He comes!” And when He comes He will be glorified in all His saints and admired in those that have believed on Him. I would to God we were all members of His Church! There is only one token of membership which is infallible and that is saving *faith* in Christ. If you believe in Jesus you shall be without spot or wrinkle. But if you believe not, you are not of His Church, and neither shall you be a partaker of His cleansing power nor of His glorious advent.

God give you a new heart and a right spirit and wash you with water this day by the Word, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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THE MATCHLESS MYSTERY

NO. 1153

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

***“For we are members of His body,
of His flesh, and of His bones”
Ephesians 5:30.***

I DO not hesitate to say that this is one of the most wonderful texts in the whole compass of Revelation. It sets forth the mystery of mysteries, the very pith and marrow of the loftiest divinity. It is fitted rather to be the theme for a hundred elaborate discourses than for one brief homily. Most assuredly it is a deep that knows no sounding, an abyss where thought plunges into never-ending contemplations. He who handles it had need, first of all, to be filled with all the fullness of God. Therefore we feel incapable of dealing with it as it should be dealt with—it is all too great and vast for us—we can no more hope to compass it than a child can hold an ocean in his hand.

Beloved, it is a text that must not be looked upon with the eyes of cold, theological orthodoxy which might make us content to say, “Yes, that is a great and important Truth,” and there leave it. It is a text to be treated as the manna was that fell from Heaven, namely, to be tasted, to be eaten, to be digested and to be lived upon from day to day! It is a text for the quietude of your meditation, when you can sit still and turn it over and, like Mary, ponder it in your hearts. Long and loving should be your gaze upon the facets of this diamond of Truth, this diamond of Revelation.

It is a golden sentence fitted for those choice hours when the King brings us into His banqueting house and His banner over us is love. When the distance between earth and Heaven has become less and less, till it scarcely exists—those undisturbed times when all is rest round about us, because He who is our Rest enables us to lean upon His bosom and to feel His heart of love beating true to us. I ask you, O my Brothers and Sisters, therefore, as though you were quite alone in your own chamber, to pray for that frame of mind which is suitable to the subject, and to pray for me that I may be placed in that condition of heart which shall best enable me to speak upon it. We need our thoughts to be focused before they can reveal to us the great sight before us. Get to the place where Mary sat at Jesus’ feet and then will this text sound like music in your ears.

Without any accompaniment of exposition from me, it will have all Heaven’s music in it—“We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” Sevenfold will be the happiness of the spirit which knows how to sit down and to taste of the marrow and the fatness, to drink of the “wine on the less well-refined,” which are to be found in this Inspired declaration. Before I preach upon it, there is one thing which it is

necessary for us to do. They have a way in Scotland, before the communion, of “fencing the table,” that is to say, warning all those who have no right to come to the table to avoid the sin of unlawful intrusion, and so of eating and drinking condemnation unto themselves. They help the hearers to self-examination, lest they should come thoughtlessly and participate in that which does not belong to them.

Now, my text is like a table of communion richly loaded, and far from you to whom it does not belong, unless you learn the sacred way of coming in by the Door, into this sheepfold, where the pasture is so rich and green. If you come by Christ, the Way, come and welcome! If you rest in Him, if His dear wounds are the fountains of your life, and if His atoning Sacrifice is your soul’s only peace, come and welcome—for of you, and such as you, and all of us who are trusting in Jesus, it may be truly said—“We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.”

But if not Believers in Him, this heavenly verse has nothing to do with you. It is “the children’s bread.” It belongs only to the children. It is Israel’s manna—it falls for Israel. It is the stream which leaps from Israel’s smitten rock and comes neither for Edom, nor for Amalek—but only for the chosen seed, alone. Look back, then, to the beginning of the Epistle, and see of whom the Apostle was speaking when he said, “*we*.” This little word, “*we*,” is like the door of Noah’s ark—it shuts out and shuts in. Does it shut us out or in?

Now, the Apostle wrote his Epistle to those of whom he said, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” Answer this question, you who would enjoy this text—Have you made your calling and election sure? Has that matter ever been decided in your spirit after honest search and inquiry into the grounds of your confidence? Have you been led to choose your God, for if so, your God had long ago chosen you! That matter is ascertained beyond all question and out of it springs the undoubted assurance that you are one with Him, since of all whom He has chosen it is true—“We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.”

The Apostolic description is before you, I pray you read on—“Having predestinated us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” Do you know anything about *adoption*? Have you been taken out of the family of Satan and enrolled in the family of God? Have you the Spirit of adoption in you? Does your soul cry, “Abba, Father,” at the very thought of God? Are you an imitator of God as a dear child? Do you feel that your nature has been renewed, so that, whereas you were a child of wrath, even as others, you have now become a child of God? Judge, I pray you, and discern concerning these things, for on your answer to this question depends your condition before God, your union with Christ, or your separateness from Him.

Note, still, the Apostle's words as you read on, "To the praise of the glory of His Grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved." Dear Hearer, do you know the meaning of those last words, "Accepted in the Beloved"? You can never be accepted in yourself—you are sinful, and undone, and unworthy—but have you come and cast yourself upon the work, the blood and the righteousness of Jesus? Are you, therefore, accepted, "Accepted in the Beloved"? Have you ever enjoyed a sense of acceptance so that you could draw near to God, as no longer a servant beneath the curse, but a son beneath the blessing? If so, come and welcome to the text! It is all your own!

But note the next verse—"In whom we have redemption through His blood." Oh, dear Brothers and Sisters, do you know *the blood*? I do not care what else you know if you do not know the blood. Nor do I much mind what else you do *not* know. You may differ very widely in doctrine from some of the Truths of God which I think I have learned from the Word of God, but do you know the *blood*? Were you ever washed in it? Have you seen it sprinkled overhead and on the side posts of the house where you dwell, so that the destroying angel passes you by? Is the blood of Christ the lifeblood of your hope? God save me from preaching, and you from believing in a bloodless theology! It is a dead theology! Take Christ away, take the Atonement by a substitutionary Sacrifice away—and what is there left? But, oh, if we in very deed have redemption through His blood, then we are "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."

The Apostle adds, "The forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace." And here, again, I press home the question upon the consciences of the members of this Church, and upon the members of every professing Church of Christ—Have you tasted forgiveness? Have you felt the burden of sin? Have you gone with that burden to the foot of the Cross? Has the Heavenly Father ever said to you, "Your sins are forgiven you"? Do you believe in the forgiveness of sins, and that in reference to *yourselves*? Oh, do not be satisfied unless you do! Do not be put off with a bare hope that perhaps your sin is forgiven you, but struggle after that blessed full assurance which is able to say—

***"Oh, how sweet to view the flowing
Of my Savior's precious blood,
With Divine assurance knowing
He has made my peace with God!"***

And if you do know, possess and enjoy the forgiveness of sins, then are you "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."

Oh, how this last sentence concerning pardon and rich Grace seems to cheer my soul! If none might come but those who never sinned, my guilty soul could never venture near the Lord! If none might come but those who have committed little sin, then I must be debarred. But it is "the forgiveness of sins" on a grand scale! Let me read the words—"The forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace." So it is great *forgiveness*, the forgiveness of great sin, because of great love. O beloved Hearer, great sinner as you have been, yet if you are "accepted in the

Beloved,” and have “redemption through His blood,” then all that is in the text belongs to you!

So I will keep you waiting in the vestibule no longer, but set the door wide open, saying, “Come in, you blessed of the Lord. Why do you stand outside?” I pray the Holy Spirit to help you come in to this high festival, give you a sacred appetite and enable you, now, to appreciate the extraordinary sweetness of the words before us! First, I shall try and expound—and it must be but feebly *what the text means* and, secondly, *what the text secures*.

I. First, WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN? “We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” Read it in the light of the second chapter of the book of Genesis, for it is evident that there is a distinct allusion to the creation of before. The very words of Adam are quoted and we are mentally conducted to that scene in the Garden of Eden when the first man gazed upon the first woman, created to be his dear companion and helpmeet. What did Adam mean when he used these words? The great Husband of our souls must mean the same, only in a more *spiritual* and emphatic sense.

First, there was meant here *similarity of nature*. Adam looked at Eve and he did not regard her as a stranger, as some creature of a different genus and nature, but he said, “She is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.” He meant that she was of the same race, a participant in the same nature. He recognized her as a being of the same order as himself. Now, that is a low meaning of the text, but it is one meaning.

Beloved Brethren, think of this Truth for a moment. Jesus, the Son of God, counted it not robbery to be equal with God. “Without Him was not anything made that was made.” He is “very God of very God.” Yet He deigned, for love of us, to take upon Himself our nature, and He did it completely, so that He assumed the whole of human nature, apart from its sin. And in that respect we may say of ourselves—that we are “bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh.” The very nature which we wear on earth, Christ Jesus once carried about among us, and at last carried aloft to Heaven. You believe in His Godhead—take heed never to commingle His Godhead and His humanity. Remember, Christ was *not* a deified man, neither was He a humanized God.

He was perfectly God, and at the same time perfectly Man, made like unto His brethren in all things. Dwell for a moment upon this Truth of God, for the text sets it forth. Born of a human mother and swaddled like any other child, He was, from His birth, as perfectly human even as you are. In nothing did He differ from you except in this, that He never wandered from God and broke His Commandments, and He was not defiled with that hereditary taint of Original Sin which dwells in you by nature. The like depressions—those which sadden your spirit—He knew. The temptations of our nature assailed Him. Men and devils both sought to influence Him. He was amenable to all the external physical arrangements of the globe.

On Him the shower pelted down and wet His garments. And on Him the burning sun poured forth its undiminished heat. Upon His sacred Person on the lone mountainside, the dews descended till His head was wet with them, and His locks with the drops of the night. For Him there were poverty, hunger, thirst, reproach, slanders and treachery. For Him the sea tossed the boat as it will for you. And for Him the land yielded thorn and thistle, as it does to you. He suffered, He ate, He toiled, He rested, He wept and He rejoiced, even as you do, sin, alone, excepted. A real kinsman was He, not in fiction, but in substantial reality. Are you man? Jesus was a Man! Do not doubt it. Do not look at your Lord as standing up there on a pinnacle of superior nature where you cannot come near Him, but view Him as your own flesh and blood, “a Brother born for adversity.”

For so he is. He comes to you and says, “Handle Me and see. A spirit has not flesh and bones as you see I have.” He invites your faith to look at the prints of the nails and the scar of the spear. Did He not, after He had risen from the dead, prove His true humanity by eating a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb? And that same humanity has gone to Heaven! The clouds received it out of our sight, but it is there—

**“A Man there was, a real Man,
Who once on Calvary died;
And streams of blood and water ran
Down from His wounded side.”**

That same blest Man exalted sits high on His Father’s throne. Believe this, and you will see how He is bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh. And then remember that, as His Nature is as yours, so, in another sense, He has made *your* nature as His, for you are born-again and gifted with a higher life. You were carnal—He has now made you spiritual. You could not drink of His cup, or be baptized with His baptism till His Spirit had come upon you.

But now you are made “partakers of the Divine Nature”—strong words, but Scriptural—“partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” “For as you have borne the image of the earthy Adam, you shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” Now, you, as spiritual men, cry out to God in prayer, and so did He when He was here. Now you are in an agony as you strive with God and so was He, but the bloody sweat is a part of His substitutionary work in which He trod the winepress alone. His meat and drink was to do the will of Him that sent Him, and it is yours, I trust—at any rate, it should be if you are your Lord’s. He lived for God. He lived and died for love of men. And that same love of God and man, though in a feebler measure, burns within your heart.

You are, therefore, now made, by His Grace, to participate in His moral and spiritual Nature, and you will never be satisfied till you awake in His likeness. And you *will* awake in His likeness, so that when He sees you and you see Him, then it shall be abundantly manifest to you that you are a member “of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones”—

**“Such was Your Grace, that for our sake
 You did from Heaven come down.
 You did of flesh and blood partake,
 In all our sorrows one.
 Ascended now, in glory bright,
 Still ours with us You are.
 Nor life, nor death, nor depth, nor height.
 Your saints and You can part.
 Oh, teach us, Lord, to know and own
 This wondrous mystery,
 That You with us are truly one,
 And we are one with Thee!
 Soon, soon shall come that glorious day,
 When, seated on Your Throne,
 You shall to wondering worlds display,
 That you with us are one!”**

Similarity of Nature, then, is the first meaning of the text.

Regard, I pray you, Brothers and Sisters, with much solemn attention, a higher step of the ladder. It signifies *intimate relationship*, for I hardly think that Adam would have said quite so strongly, “She is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,” if he had thought that the woman would disappear, or would become the wife of another. It was because she was to be his helpmeet and they were to be joined together in bonds of the most intimate communion, that, therefore, he said, “Not only is she of the same bone and flesh as I am, but she is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She is related to me.” What a near and dear and loving relationship marriage has bestowed upon us! It is a blessing for which good men dwelling with affectionate wives praise God every day they live.

Marriage and the Sabbath are the two choice gifts of primeval love that have come down to us from Paradise—the one to bless our outer and the other our inner life. Oh, the joy, the true, pure, elevated peace and joy which many of us have received through that divinely ordained relationship! We cannot but bless God every time we repeat the dear names of those who are now parts of ourselves. Marriage creates a relationship which ends only when death parts us. Only then may it may be dissolved. Alas, sin enters even here! A dark crime may be committed, but, with the exception of that, it is for life—for better, for worse—only the mortal stroke can part.

Now think of it. As is your relation, O woman, to your husband, and as is *your* relation, O man, to your wife, such is the relation which exists between you, as a believer in Jesus, and Christ Jesus your Lord! It is the nearest, dearest, closest, most intense and most enduring relationship that can be imagined. I love and bless God, forever declaring that His relationship to us may be likened to that of a father or a mother to a child. Did you ever hear those words without tears—(I think I never did)—“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you.”

And yet there is a closer intimacy, somehow, in the relationship which is declared in the text, because there is a kind of equality between the married ones, tempered by that headship of which the Apostle speaks and which we delight to recognize in our beloved Lord towards ourselves. The child cannot, while it is yet a babe, at any rate, enter into its mother's *feelings*. It is far below the mother. But the wife communes with her husband—she is lifted up to his level! She is made a partaker of his cares and sorrows, of his joys and his successes, and the intimacy arising out of their conjugal union is of the closest kind.

Now—again I say it, and I cannot open it up further than to say it—such is the relationship between the Believer's soul and the Lord Jesus. Well did the spouse break out with the rapturous language, which forms the first word of the song—"Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for His love is better than wine," as if she did not need to describe her relationship, but longed to enjoy the sweets of it. My Brothers and Sisters, I pray you may so enjoy it, that now, if you are poor in this world, if you are an orphan, if you are almost alone in this great city, you may feel, "No longer am I an orphan, no longer am I alone. My Maker is my Husband. The Lord of Hosts is His name, and my Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel. And from this day forth will I rejoice that I am bone of His bones, and flesh of His flesh." Similarity of Nature and closeness of relationship are evidently in the text.

But I clearly see another and deeper meaning. It meant, from Adam's lips, *mysterious extraction*. I will not make bold to say that he knew what had occurred to him in his sleep. He might not have known all, but he seems to have had a mystic enlightenment which made him guess what had occurred—at least the words seem to me to have that ring in them. "She is bone of my bones"—for a bone had been taken from him, "and flesh of my flesh," for out of him had she been taken. He seems to have known that somehow or other she sprang from him. Whether he knew it or not, Christ knows right well the origin of His spouse! He knows where His Church came from. There is still the mark in His side—there is the memorial in the palms of His hands and on His feet.

From where came this new Eve, this new mother of all living? From where came this spouse of the second Adam? She came of the second Adam. She was taken from His side, right near His heart. Have you never read, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit"? Had Jesus never died, He would have been made to abide alone as to any who could be helpmeets for Him, and could enter into fellowship with Him. But, inasmuch as He *has* died, He has brought forth much fruit and His Church has sprung from Him. And in that sense she is bone of His bones, and flesh of His flesh.

"What do I mean by the Church?" asks one. I mean by the Church all the people of God, all the redeemed, all Believers, as I explained at the commencement. Do you think I mean by the Church the harlot of the seven hills? God forbid that Christ should have fellowship with her! How

can He so much as look upon her except with horror? Do you think He means, by the Church, the politically supported corporation that men call a Church nowadays? No, but the *spiritual*, the quickened, the living, the believing, the holy people—wherever they may be—or by whatever name they may be called. These are they that sprang of Christ, even as Levi from the loins of Abraham. They live because they receive life from Him and at this day they are dead in themselves—and their life is hid with Christ in God. So the text leads us to a deep meditation as to mysterious extraction.

But I find the time goes too swiftly for me and I must observe, next, that I am sure that in the text there is more than this. There is, in the fourth place, *loving possession*. He said, “She is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.” He felt she was his own and belonged solely to him. Of anything there might be in the Garden, Adam was but owner in the second degree. But when he saw her, he felt she was all his own. By bonds and ties which did not admit of dispute, his bone and his flesh was she. Now, Beloved, at this moment let this thought dance through your soul—you belong to Jesus—altogether you belong to Jesus! Let not your love go forth to earthly things, so soiled and dim, but send it all away, up to Him to whom you belong—yes, send it all to Him.

“Set not your affection upon things on the earth,” but set it all upon things above, for you belong wholly to your Lord. All that there is of your spirit, soul and body—the treble kingdom of your nature—Christ has purchased by His blood. It were a dark thought to cross a man’s mind, that his spouse belonged in part to some other. It could not be! And will you provoke your Lord to jealousy? Will you suffer it to seem so by your actions or your words? No, rather say tonight, anew—

**“Tis, done, the great transaction’s, done!
I am my Lord’s and He is mine!
He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice Divine.
High Heaven, that heard the solemn vow,
That vow renewed shall daily hear,
Till in life’s latest hour I bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear.”**

“For you are not your own, you are bought with a price.” “We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” We belong entirely to Him.

And to close this exposition—this skimming of the surface, rather—there is one more matter and this is the very essence of the meaning. A *vital union* exists between us and Christ. When the Apostle wrote, showing that we were one with Christ, as the wife is with the husband, he felt that the metaphor, though it set forth much, did not set forth all. He would have us know that we are more closely knit to Jesus than is a woman to her husband, for they are, after all, separate individualities, and they may act and too often do so, far too distinctly for themselves. But here he puts it, “We are members of His body.” Now, here is a vital union, the closest

imaginable! It is not unity—it is identity! It is more than being joined *to*—it is being made a part *of*—and an essential part of the whole!

Do you think I strain the text and go beyond the fact? Listen to this word. The Apostle, in speaking of the Church, said, concerning Christ, that the Church was His body, “the fullness of Him that fills all in all.” And note the majesty of that speech—that the Church should be the fullness of Christ! Now, Christ, without His fullness, is evidently not full—He must have His people—they are essential to Him. The idea of a Savior is lost, apart from the saved. He is a head without a body if there are no members. Without His people Jesus is but a king without subjects, and a shepherd without a flock. It is essential to any true thought of Christ that you think of His people! They must come in. They are one with Him in every true view of Jesus Christ our Lord.

How are we one with Him? Ah, Brothers and Sisters, much might be said, but I fear little would be explained by words. I want you to *feel* it and to be comforted by the fact of the vital union of Jesus and His people. Have you never heard Him say to you—

***“I feel in My heart all your sighs and your groans,
For you are most near Me, My flesh and My bones.
In all your distresses, your Head feels the pain,
They all are most necessary, not one is in vain”?***

Oh, do get to know this, you tried and tempted ones, you poor poverty-stricken people of God! Get to know this, you who could not help coming here tonight, wet as it was, because you must have spiritual meat, you were so hungry after your Lord! Oh, do get this morsel now, and feed on it! You are *one* with *Him*! You were “buried in Him in baptism unto death,” wherein also you have risen with Him! You were crucified with Him upon the Cross! You have gone up into Heaven with Him, for He has raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And surely you shall be actually in your very person with Him where He is, that you may behold His Glory! You are one with Him!

Now, tie up these five Truths of God like five choice flowers in a nosegay. Band them, like sweet spices, and let them be a bundle of camphire and a cluster of myrrh to lie all night upon your bosom to give you rest and to sweeten your repose. There is between you and your Lord a similarity of Nature and an intimate relationship! You have a mysterious extraction from Him and He has a loving possession of you—and a vital union with you. Come, now, we must only have a few minutes to catch some of the juice that will flow out of these clusters of Eshcol while we tread them for a moment, just to show what the wines of the kingdom are like.

II. WHAT DOES THE TEXT SECURE? First, it seems to me, that the text secures the eternal safety of everyone who is one with Christ. You know the figure we often use, that when a man’s head is above water you cannot drown his feet—and as long as my Head is in Glory, though I am but the sole of His foot—and only worthy to be trod in the mire, how can He drown me? Is it not written, “Because I live you shall live also”—all of

you who are one with Him? The idea of Christ losing members of His body is to me grotesque and at the same time ghastly. Does He change His members like some aquatic creatures which lose their limbs and get fresh joints? I know it is not so with Christ, the second Adam! Will He lose His members? Can He lose *one* member? NO! Then can He lose *all*?—

***“If ever it should come to pass
That sheep of Christ could fall away,
My fickle, feeble soul, alas,
Would fall a thousand times a day.”***

But herein lies our safety—“I give unto My sheep *eternal* life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” I know that some have perverted this blessed Truth of God into the wicked lie that the Christian man may live as he likes and yet be safe. No such doctrine is to be found between the covers of this Book! The doctrine of the safety of the saints is far other than that! It is that the renewed man shall live as God likes, shall persevere in *holiness* and hold on his way until he arrives at the blessed perfection of his Lord, changing from glory to glory into that image which he shall reach and possess forever. I see—I pity those who do not see it, but I will not blame—I see, I think, strong reason for believing in the security of every soul which is one with Christ.

But, next, I see here a very sweet thought. If I am one with Christ, then I certainly enjoy, above all things, His love. Last Saturday week, in the evening, I was trying to turn over this text to preach to you from it in the morning, but I was wrung with bitter pains which made me feel that I should not preach, and kept me wearily waiting through the night watches. But do you know what comforted me very much about the text? It was that sentence which is a near neighbor of it—“No man ever yet hated his own flesh.” I seized upon that and my sad heart cried out, “Surely the Man Christ Jesus never yet hated His own flesh.” If we are members of His body, of His *flesh*, and of His bones, He may chasten, He may correct and lay on heavy strokes, and give sharp twinges, and make us cry out—He may even thrust us in the fire, and heat the furnace seven times hotter—but He never can neglect and abhor His own flesh!

There is still love in His heart. I hate no part of *my* body, not even when it aches. I hate it not, but love it still—it is a part of myself—and so does Jesus love His people. And you, poor Sinners, who feel that you are not worthy to be called His people, nevertheless His love goes out to you, despite your imperfections. Having loved His own, which were in the world, He loved them to the end and He has left it on record—“As My Father has loved Me, even so have I loved you. Continue you in My love.”

Another most enchanting thought also arises from our subject. The Apostle goes on to say, “No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord of the Church.” Oh, those two words, “nourishes it.” Are you living in a district where you do not get the Gospel? Well, then, go to the Gospel’s Lord and say to Him, “Lord, hate not Your own flesh, but nourish me.” Have you been for a while without visits from Christ? Have you lost the light of His countenance? Do

not be satisfied with nourishing—go further and plead for cherishing! Ask for those love tokens, for those gentle words, for those secret blandishments known to saints, and to none but saints, for, “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him and He will show them His Covenant.” Go and ask for both these forms of love and you shall be nourished *and* cherished!

The good husband does not merely bring so much bread and meat into the house and fling it down, saying, “There, that will nourish you.” Oh, not so—there are tender words and kind acts by which he cherishes as well as nourishes. And your Lord will not only give you bread to eat which the world knows not of, but He will give it to you according to His lovingkindness and the multitude of His tender mercies, for He makes us to lie down in green pastures, He leads us beside the still waters, gently guiding as a shepherd conducts his flock. Rejoice, then, that your nourishing and your cherishing are secure!

I will not keep you longer when I have said this much. If we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, then He will one day present us to Himself, “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,” for the whole body must be so presented. Alas, our spots are many, and sadly mar our beauty! Brothers and Sisters, I love not to think little of my spots. I wish I had not even a speck. Alas, our wrinkles! Let us not talk lightly of them. It is most sad that on the Beloved’s darling there should be a solitary blot. It is the worst wrinkle of all when a man does not see his own wrinkles, or when he does not mourn over them. But there are spots and wrinkles. I hope we do not say, “Yes, they are there,” and then add, “And they must be there.” No, Beloved, they ought *not* to be there—there ought to be no sin in us.

If there is a sin which *ought* to be upon us, why it is clear it is no sin! A thing that ought to be is not a sin. If we served our Master as He deserves to be served, we should never sin, but our lives would be perfect. Therefore it is our daily burden that the spots and wrinkles still will show—but this is our consolation—that He will one day present us to Himself, holy and without blemish, “not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.”—

***“Oh, glorious hour, oh, blest abode;
I shall be near, and like my God.
Nor spot nor wrinkle shall remain,
His perfect image to profane.”***

It will be a blessed thing, indeed, to have attained to this, to wear the image of the heavenly and be perfect even as our Bridegroom is perfect.

Then, remember, all the glory Christ has we shall share in. You cannot honor a warrior who returns from the wars, and say to him, “Great general, we honor your head.” Oh, no, he who fought his country’s battles and won the victory, when he was honored was altogether honored as a man. And when the Master, at the last, shall have finished all His work and the whole battle that He undertook is finished and the victory gained. When He enters perfectly into His joy, we, too, shall enter into the joy of

our Lord! Does He sit upon a throne? He has said we shall sit upon His Throne. Has He triumphed? We shall bear the palm branch, too. Whatever He has, we shall share. Are we not heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ? My soul feels ready to leap right away from this body at the thought of the glory that shall be revealed in us—not in Paul and Peter only, but *in us!*

Poor things, poor things, that struggle hard each day with infirmities and trials, you shall be with Him where He is, and shall behold His Glory forever! So shall we ever be with the Lord. Comfort one another with these words.”—

***“Since Christ and we are one,
Why should we doubt or fear?
If He in Heaven has fixed His Throne,
He’ll fix His members there.”***

In this spirit come to the Communion Table and find your Master there! But oh, if you are not resting in Him. If the blood was never upon you, you are condemned already because you have not believed on the Son of God! I pray that your bed may be cold and hard as a stone to you tonight and your eyes may forget to sleep—and your heart may know no rest till you have said—“I will arise, and go to my Father, and will say unto Him, Father, I have sinned.” Then take with you Jesus as a Mediator and draw near to the Throne of Grace! Plead His blood and merits, and you shall live! And then you, too, shall be able to join with the saints who say, “We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” Amen. Amen.

***PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Genesis 2:18;
Ephesians 5:22-33.***

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—761, 762.

A MESSAGE:

I have revised this sermon at Cannes, to which place I have come for health. I am happy to inform all friends that I am already much better. The influences of a warm, sunny climate and rest from great labor are being blessed by Infinite Mercy to my restoration. I commend the work I am obliged to leave to the prayers of God’s people and I desire, also, to thank numerous friends for their substantial help to the College and Orphanage, so that I am not tempted to be anxious about funds for these at a time when ease of mind is especially desirable. With this I send most loving salutations to all my readers. May the Lord send to our beloved land a great revival of true religion.

C. H. SPURGEON.

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MEMBERS OF CHRIST

NO. 2244

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1892.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 23, 1890.

“For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.”
Ephesians 5:30.

YESTERDAY, when I had the painful task of speaking at the funeral of our dear friend, Mr. William Olney, I took the text which I am going to take again, now. I am using it again because I did not, then, really *preach* from it at all, but simply reminded you of a favorite expression of his, which I heard from his lips many times in prayer. He very frequently spoke of our being one with Christ in “living, loving, lasting union”—three words which, in addition to being alliterative, are very comprehensive as to the nature of our union with Christ. Those three words, you will remember, were the heads of my discourse in the presence of that remarkable gathering which crowded this place to do honor to the memory of our Brother whose highest ambition was always to honor his Lord, whom he so faithfully served.

Paul here speaks only of true Believers. Men who are quickened by Divine Grace and made alive unto God. Of them, he says, not by way of romance, nor of poetical exaggeration, but as an undisputed matter of fact, “We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” That there is a true union between Christ and His people is no fiction or dream of a heated imagination. Sin separated us from God and in undoing what sin has done, Christ joins us to Himself in a union more real than any other in the whole world!

This union is very near, and very dear, and very complete. We are so near to Christ that we cannot be nearer, for we are one with Him. We are so dear to Christ that we cannot be dearer. Consider how close and tender is the tie when it is true that Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. It is a union more intimate than any other which exists among men, for “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” We were His enemies when Christ died for us, that He might save us, and make us so one with Himself that *from* Him our life should be drawn, and that *in* Him our life should be hid. It is, then, a very near and dear union which Christ has established between Himself and His redeemed—and this union could not be more complete than it is.

It is, also, a most wonderful union. The more you think of it, the more you will be astonished and stand in sacred awe before such a marvel of Grace. Well did Kent say—

**“O sacred union, firm and strong,
How great the Grace, how sweet the song,
That worms of earth should ever be
One with Incarnate Deity!”**

But so it is. Even the Incarnation of Christ is not more amazing than His living union with His people! It is a thing to be considered often—it is the wonder of the skies and is chief among those things which “the angels desire to look into.” On the surface of this Truth of God you may not see much, but the longer you gaze and the more the Holy Spirit assists you in your meditation, the more you will see in this wonderful sea of glass mingled with fire. My soul exults in the doctrine that Christ and His people are everlastingly one!

This is a very cheering doctrine. He that understands it has an ocean of music in his soul. He that can really grasp and feed upon it will often sit in the heavenly places with his Lord and anticipate the day when he shall be with Him, and shall be like He is. Even now, since we are one with Him, there is no distance between us—we are nearer to Him than anything else can ever be. The very idea of union makes us forget all distance. Indeed, distance is altogether annihilated! Love joins us so closely with Christ that He becomes more to us than our very selves—and though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

In passing, I may say that this doctrine is very practical. It is not merely a piece of sugar for your mouth—it is a light for your path, for, “he that says he abides in Him ought, himself, also, to walk even as He walked.” We must take care that the love that was round about Christ’s feet is always shining on our path. We must go about doing good, following in the steps of our Lord. It would be giving the lie to this doctrine if we *lived in sin*, for, if we are one with Him, then we must be, in this world, even as He was—and being filled with His Spirit—must seek to reproduce His life before the world.

These thoughts may serve as an introduction to a fuller consideration of this great subject and I shall begin by saying that, in Holy Scripture, *the union between Christ and His people is set forth under various forms*. Then I will try to show you that *the metaphor in our text is full of meaning*. And, in the third place, I will prove to you that *the doctrine of our union with Christ has its practical lessons*. As we delight our hearts in the glorious Truth of God that “we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones,” may we determine to live as those who are this closely joined to the Lord of life!

I. Our first thought is that THIS UNION IS SET FORTH UNDER SEVERAL FORMS. The blessed fact is almost beyond our highest thought! What wonder, then, that language fails adequately to describe it! Simile after simile is used. I am only going to mention four of them.

The union between Christ and the Believer is described as the union of *the foundation and the stone*. “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed, indeed, of men, but chosen of God, and precious, you, also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house.” We are built on Christ and built up into Him! We lie upon Him just as the stone rests on the foundation. Well may we sing—

***“All my hope on You is stayed,
All my help from You I bring!”***

The stone is one with the foundation in its dependence. In the time of our need, we press closer to Christ. The heavier our hearts, the more we bear our weight upon Him. It is the heavy stone that clings to the foundation—the light stone, perhaps, might be blown away. But we cling at all times, depending wholly upon Him, even as the stone rests upon the rock beneath. The stone does not bear up its own weight, it just rests where it is put. So do we rest on Christ. He is the Foundation and we repose on Him!

Again, the stone is one with the foundation in its adhesion. In the course of time, the stone becomes more and more knit to it. When first the mortar is placed there and is wet, you might also move the stone. But, by-and-by, the mortar dries and the stone seems to bite into the foundation and holds fast to it. In old Roman walls you cannot break a stone away—for the cement, which joins the stone to its fellows is as strong as the stone itself—and, truly, that which joins us to Christ is stronger than we are! We might be broken, but the bond of love which holds us, like a mighty cement to Christ, who is our Foundation, can never be broken away! We have actually become one with Him, as I have often seen stones in the walls of an old castle become one with each other. You could not break them away—they are part and parcel of the wall and it would have been necessary to blow the wall to pieces before you could separate the stones from one another. So have we, by God’s Grace, become one with Christ, experimentally and indissolubly! The course of years has bound us still faster to Him.

The stone is one with the foundation, moreover, in its design. The architect, in placing the stone, was following out his plan. He planned the foundation and thought of every course—and the stone is essential to the wall, even as the foundation is essential to the stone. Thus we are one with Christ in the design of God. Reverently we say it, that God’s purpose comprehends not only Christ, but the whole company of His elect and, without His chosen people, the design of Jehovah can never be accomplished. He is building a Temple to His praise, but a Temple cannot be all foundation. There is a necessity for every stone in the wall—in the Divine purpose there is a necessity that such a one should be a living stone, and such a one should be another living stone. The weakest and the meanest of the Lord’s people are as necessary as the noblest and the most beautiful, though, indeed, all are without any praise until they are built into the wall.

He that chose Christ, chose all His people. He arranged that they should be built up together and in Him, "all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord." Oh, I like to think of each one of us, however insignificant we may appear to be, as being bricks or stones in that great Temple of almighty Grace! Perhaps some of us may stand where everybody can see us, but what does it matter? If we are in the wall at all, it is well! Wherever you are placed, we are joined to Christ and, therefore, no one has a pre-eminence over any other, because we are all alike built upon the one Foundation, even Jesus Christ our Lord, into whom we daily grow, pressing closer and closer to Him in experience and holding tighter and tighter to Him by faith.

The second aspect in which our union with Christ is represented in the Scripture, is that of *the vine and the branches*. "I am the vine, you are the branches," is the word of Christ to His disciples. The former simile of the foundation and the stone does not suggest any idea of *life*. Therefore, the Apostle, in using it, had to speak of Christ as a living stone and of us as living stones! It is a somewhat odd figure and yet it is strictly true, for you and I have no more spiritual life in us than stones, except as a miracle makes us live! And then, though we are living, yet like stones we are apparently inert and lifeless, albeit we are really quickened by a supernatural work and made living stones. But the figure is not congruous.

This second simile, however, conveys to us the idea of life, for a vine is no vine if it is dead—and its branches are no true branches unless they are alive. There is a living union between Christ and His people and I hope that I can appeal to the experience of many here present who know that there is a living union between them and Christ. Happy is the man who can say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

The union is even more than a union of life—it is a union of derived life. The branch is in such union with the stem that it receives all its sap from it—it could not live unless the living juices flowed from the stem into it. And such is our life. Christ pours His lifeblood into us. Perpetually, as long as He exists, He seems to be oozing out into His people. In fact, when His wounds were open, He bled life into us—and when His heart was burst, He changed our hearts and gave them life, though they once were hearts of stone. We are so one with Christ that we, at first, received our life from Him—and we continue to receive it from Him every moment!

In consequence of the life of Christ in us, we grow. The growing of the branch is really the growing of the vine. It is because the stem grows that it sends its growth into the branch and manifests it there. As Christ pours His life-force into us, He makes us grow, to the praise of the glory of His Grace.

Fruit-bearing is the ultimate end of our union to Christ. We are one with Him that we may bring forth fruit unto His praise. Dear Friends, are we really doing this? Are we not satisfied with a nominal union to Christ, even though we bear no fruit to His honor? We ought to be very distressed

when we are barren and unfruitful, remembering that the great Husbandman has a sharp knife and that it is written, "Every branch in Me that bears not fruit He takes away." Oh, that none of my hearers may ever be in Christ in that false way, but may we all be in Him in a union so true and vital as shall cause us to bear fruit to His praise—for then, though we shall be pruned, we shall never be cut from the vine!

The third metaphor which the Savior deigns to give of this union is that of *the husband and the wife*. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church." Here you have a union, not only of life, but also of love. It is worthy of notice that the two words, "live," and, "love," should be so like each other. In spiritual things, the two things are not only similar, they are *exactly* alike! Love is the life and life is always first sent—and chiefly sent in the form of love.

With the true husband, his wife is himself. The Scripture says, "He that loves his wife loves himself," and I believe that Christ considers that when He loves His Church, He loves Himself. His care for us is now His care for Himself. Since He has taken us to be in eternal wedded union with Himself, He regards us as Himself and He cares for us as He cares for Himself—"For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." No sane man will injure his own flesh. "No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the Church." So Christ takes care of His people because He regards them as being bound to Himself by those bonds which make them to be as Himself. Hence we are kept as the apple of His eye.

Remember that in every family, the wife is the mother of the children, and so it is in the Church of Christ. He would have us all bear unto Him a holy spiritual seed. If we abide in Him, we shall be able to propagate our faith and bring others into the Church. Every Believer should have this objective before him as the joy of his life, for thus shall Christ "see His seed, He shall prolong His days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands."

The wife, too, is the keeper of the house. She takes care of the household concerns of her husband. And so would the Lord Christ have His people care for His interests and for all that belongs to Him, for He has committed these things unto us as the husband commits his treasures to his wife. He has left us in custody of all that He has. In one sense we are the stewards of His household, but in another and a clearer sense, we are united to Him by marriage bonds which can never be broken. It is a sweet subject, but I cannot linger upon it. You must let your own thoughts be fragrant with its aroma. However close may be the union of husband and wife, the union between the Believer and Christ is still closer. Oh, to realize more and more of it each day!—

***"O Jesus! Make yourself to me
A living, bright reality,
More present to faith's vision keen
More than any outward object seen!
More dear, more intimately nigh,***

Than even the sweetest earthly tie!

All human imagery fails to set forth the union between Christ and His people, but the figure in our text is that of *the head and the member*. The Apostle says of Christ that “we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” Christ is the Head and we are members of His body. Wonderful union, this! In the first metaphor, the foundation and the stone, we had the idea of *rest*. In the second, the vine and the branches, the idea of *life*. The union of the husband and wife gave us the thought of *love*. Now, here, we have the suggestion of *identity*. There are two lives in the husband and the wife, but there is only one life in the head and the body—and in *this* respect this metaphor brings out the true relation of Christ to His people more clearly than any other!

There is a wonderful union between the head and the members of the body. It is a union of life and a union of the body which always continues. The husband may have to travel miles away from the wife, but it can never be that the head can travel away from the body. If I were to hear of any man whose head was six inches, or even an *inch* away from his body, I would say that he was dead! There must be perpetual union between the head and the members, or else death follows—and the death, mark you, not only of the body, but of the head as well. They are dead when they are divided. How glorious is this thought when we apply it to the Lord and His redeemed people! Their union is everlasting! They would die if separated from Him and even He would cease to be did He lose them, for, somehow or other, they are so joined that He will not be without them—He cannot be without them, for that were for the Head of the Church to be divided from the members of His mystical body! Thus is we are able to sing—

***“And this I do find, were two so joined,
He’ll not be in Glory, and leave me behind.”***

II. Having thus shown you these four figures—and there are others, but I have not time to speak upon them—I now come to the one before us in the text and remark that THIS METAPHOR IS FULL OF MEANING—“We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” There are seven points to which I would ask your attention.

There is here *union of life, union of relationship and union of service*. See what I mean. Your hand never studies what it can do for the head, but when the head wishes the hand uplifted, immediately up goes the hand. And when the head wishes that the hand should go down, down it goes in an instant! There is no deliberation or discussion about the matter. The head and the members, in a healthy body, are practically one. If you happen to be ill, it may be different. I have sometimes seen, in a person semi-paralyzed, the leg throw itself out without any guidance from the head and, sometimes—how often has it happened to me!—the head has willed that the hand should turn the pages of a book and the hand has been unable to do it.

Did you ever notice when you are falling, how, without thought, your hands always try to save your head? If any person were about to strike you, you would not deliberate, but up would go your arm to protect your

head! This law is also true in *spiritual* life. All true Christians will do anything to save their Head. He saved us and now our desire is to save Him! We cannot bear that He should be insulted, that His Gospel should be despised, or that anything would be done against His sacred dignity. We are so one with our glorious Head that the moment anyone strikes at Him, up goes our hands immediately in His defense. Oh, I trust that you know what this means—if you are ever put up to the pain of hearing Christ's Gospel falsely preached, or seeing professedly Christian men bringing disgrace upon His dear name, you feel at once that you would rather bear any pain, or any reproach, than that Christ should be injured! The hand is so one with the Head, that it endeavors to screen it.

Between the head and the members there is also *union of feeling*. If the head aches, you feel it all over, you are altogether ill. And if your finger aches, your head does not feel well. There is such a sympathy between all parts of the body that, "whether one member suffers, all members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now, you are the body of Christ and members in particular." Christ is our Head and the Head specially suffers with the members. I do not know whether it is always so clear that one hand suffers with another hand as it is clear that the head suffers with either hand. So is it with the Church. It may not always be clear that all the *members* sympathize with each *other*, but it is always clear that Christ sympathizes with each one of His people! There is a quicker way, somehow, from the head to the hand, than there is from one hand to the other, and there is a keener sympathy between Christ and His people than there often is between one of His servants and another. It is written concerning His people that, "In all their affliction He was afflicted." In all your sorrows, child of God, your heavenly Head feels the pain!

There is, moreover, *a union of mutual necessity* between the members and the head. The head *needs* the body. Now, I must speak very guardedly here, when I refer the thought to Christ, but it is still true. What would my head be without my body? It would be a ghastly sight. And Christ without His people would be incomplete! A dying Christ redeeming nobody! A living Christ with no one to live by His life, would be a grim failure! Christ on Calvary and souls going down to Hell, with none saved by His precious blood? Christ Incarnate on the Cross without a single man saved by His Incarnation and His death? It would be a fearful sight! The Church is said to be Christ's fullness—"The Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all." This is a wonderful expression. Now, the fullness of the head is the body—take the body away from the head, what is it? As to the body, what could it be without the head? If your head were gone, you could not have swiftness of foot, or deftness of hand, or strength of heart. No, there remains *nothing* for the head if it is severed from the body and nothing for the body if it is separated from the head! There is between them a union of mutual *necessity*.

There is, farther, between the head and the members *a union of nature*. I will not attempt to describe the chemical composition of human flesh,

but it is quite clear that my head is made of the same flesh as my members. There is no difference between the flesh of one and the flesh of the other. So, though our Covenant Head is now in Heaven and His feet are on earth, yet Christ is still so one by nature with His people, that He is very Man of very Man, as much as He is very God of very God! If you deny His Humanity, I do not think you will long hold His Divinity. And if you deny His Deity, you have sadly destroyed the perfection of His Humanity—for He is a *perfect* Man—He could not be if He so acted as to make men think that He was God, when He was not! To us He is God-Man in one Person, whom we love and adore! His Nature is the same as our nature and we are joined to Him forever—

**“Lord Jesus, are we ONE with Thee?
Oh, height! Oh depth of love!
With You we died upon the tree,
In You we live above.
Oh, teach us, Lord, to know and own
This wondrous mystery,
That You with us are truly ONE,
And we are ONE with Thee!”**

Between Christ and His people there is also a *union of possession*. Nothing belongs to my head that does not belong to my hand. Whatever my head can claim as its own, my hand may claim as its own. Whatever belongs to Christ belongs to you, poor Believer! Christ is rich, can you be poor? Even His Father is your Father and His Heaven is your Heaven, for you are so one with Him that all the broad possessions of His infinite wealth are given freely to you! He bestows upon you His bounty, not only “to the half of the kingdom,” but the *whole* of it. Joined to Him—all that He has is yours!

Between the Lord and His Church there is also a *union of present condition*. Christ is very dear to His Father’s heart. “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” was the word which came from the opened Heaven concerning Christ and, as God delights in Christ, so is He also well-pleased with you who are in Christ. Yes, He is as pleased with you as He is with Christ, for He sees you in Christ and Christ in you! God makes no division between you and Him to whom He has joined you. “What, therefore, God has joined together, let no man put asunder.” Certainly God will never separate that which He has united in Christ! Do not put yourself asunder from Christ, even in your thoughts, by supposing that you are not well-beloved of God even as His own Covenant Head.

Last of all, there is a *union of future destiny*. Whatever Christ is to be, you are to be a sharer of it all. How can you die while Jesus lives? How can the body die while the head lives? If we go through the waters, they cannot overflow us until they overflow our head. While a man’s head is above water, he cannot be drowned. And Christ, up yonder in the eternities of Glory, can never be conquered—neither can those be vanquished who are one with Him! Forever and forever, till the Christ shall die, till the immortal Son of God expires, you who are united to Him in the purpose of God and in faith which now lays hold of Him, shall live and reign! “Be-

cause I live, you shall live, also.” Is not that a quietus to every fear of destruction? You are so one with Him that when the sun becomes a burnt-out coal and the moon is turned into a clot of blood—when the stars fall as the leaves of autumn and the Heaven and earth shall melt away, going back into nothingness from which Omnipotence has called them—you shall live, for He shall live who is your Head! “We believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more; death shall have no dominion over Him.” Where He goes we shall follow!

I have heard it said that when a thief is able to get his head through the bars of the window, his body can easily follow. I am not sure of that, but I know that where my Lord has gone, His members shall surely be! “I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore,” is a word that is meant for your consolation! Take it home. “We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones,” and, as Doddridge sings—

**“Since Christ and we are one,
Why should I doubt or fear?
If He in Heaven has fixed His Throne,
He’ll fix His members there.”**

III. Lastly, and briefly, THIS DOCTRINE HAS ITS PRACTICAL LESSONS, which I will try to set forth plainly so that those of us who are members of Christ may bring greater joy and glory to our Head than we have brought before.

To begin with, I would say, if we are, indeed, one with Christ, *we should have no doubt about it*. It used to be a fashion and, I fear, still is in some quarters, to think that mistrust of our own condition and doubt concerning our own salvation, is a kind of virtue. I have met with good people who would not say that they were saved—they “hoped” that they were. And I have met with others who were not sure that they were cleansed by the precious blood of Christ—they “trusted” that they were. This state of mind is not a credit, either to Christ, or to ourselves!

If I told my son something, and he were to say to me, “I hope you will keep your word, Father,” I should not feel that he treated me as he ought. Surely, to believe Christ up to the hilt is the way to honor Him! If we are one with Him, we lose the comfort of it if we do not know, for sure, the fact of our blessed union—we miss much of the confidence that comes of it if we do not clearly apprehend the reality—and we are robbed of much of the joy which it brings. And how little of the meaning of that Word of God, “the joy of the Lord is your strength,” unless we believe simply, like children, and take the Word of God to mean what it says—and are certain about it!

This is an age of doubt, but, as for me, I will have none of it! I have doubted enough and more than enough! I have done with it long ago and I can say with Paul, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep which I have committed unto Him against that day.” Salvation is by faith. *Damnation* comes by doubt! Doubt is the death of all comfort, the destruction of all force, the enemy of God and man!

If we are one with Christ, *we should go through the world like princes*. We should be like Abraham among his fellows, who claimed no principedom, and wore no crown, yet who could say to the King of Sodom what he had already vowed to God, “I will not take from you a thread unto a shoe lace, and I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, I have made Abram rich.” If you are one with Christ, treat the world in that way! O World, *you* cannot bless me! God has blessed me! You can not curse me! God has blessed me! Do you laugh? Laugh if it pleases you. Do you frown? What difference does it make to me? If God has smiled upon me, you may spurn me! If I am one with Christ, I *expect* that you should think little of me, for you did spurn my Head. Should the body of Christ expect better treatment than the Head received?

If we are one with Christ, we shall remember that *to dishonor ourselves is to implicate our Lord*. If I dishonor any part of my body, my head feels the shame of it. And since we are the members of Christ, we should be very careful how to behave, lest we should cause Him pain. Men will judge Christ by His people. If I caught sight of a pair of legs very unsteadily walking along the street, I would be inclined to say that they belong to a drunk head! If our walk among men is not such “as becomes the Gospel,” what harsh thoughts those around us may have of our Savior! Of course we know that any ill estimate of Him will be false, for He is all fair and there is no spot in Him—but still, His name and His cause will suffer dishonor. Let us not, then, injure or defile ourselves, lest we should bring reproach upon Him whom we love!

In the next place, if we are one with Him, *to think of Him should be very natural*. There are many of us who could say, without any exaggeration, that though we do not think so much of our Lord as we should, and are not so much with Him in contemplation as we desire, yet we have spent more time with Him than we have spent with anybody else. Little as we know compared with what we hope to know, yet His love has become to us *now* the brightest, the most conspicuous fact in all our history! We know but few things, but we know that we are one with Christ in a union never to be broken. We know Him, too, by our communion with Him. We saw Him this morning—we have seen Him during the day—we shall see Him, again, tonight. I should not like to go to bed with any other thought upon my mind than this—

**“Sprinkled afresh with pardoning blood,
I lay me down to rest,
As in the embraces of my God,
Or on my Savior’s breast.”**

If we are one with Him, *to live with Him should be the most natural thing in our lives*. Have I not heard, however, of some professors who have not had communion with Christ for many a day? I talked, once, with a Brother who said a great deal about many things. And when he had complained of this and of that, I leaned forward to him and said, “Brother, how long is it since you have had close fellowship with Christ?” He answered, “Oh, there you have got me!” When I asked him, “What do you

mean by that?" he answered, "I am afraid that I have not had fellowship with Christ for months." I had suspected that it must have been so, or else his conversation would not have been of the kind it was. What a sad thing it must be for a wife to live in her husband's house and not speak to him for weeks! But how much worse it is for us to profess to be one with Christ and yet have no sort of communication with Him by the month together! This is something perfectly horrible! God save us all from such a thing! May we think continually of our Lord and always live with Him because we are one with Him!

Again, being one with Christ, *to serve Him should be very natural*. Indeed, we exist but to do His will and to glorify His name! Of what use are my hands and feet unless they move at the impulse of my head? They are but encumbrances unless they are ready to obey the bidding of my mind. If your arms hang helpless, you do not know what to do with them—whichever way you turn, they are in the way! To be paralyzed is most unnatural, yet I fear there are many of us who are of little use to our Master. We hear His Word, but do not obey it. He calls for helpers, but we run not at His bidding! Come, come, this will not do! We are members of Christ and the one purpose of our life should be to serve our Head! God help us all to do it!

I will not continue longer. I leave you to draw the many inferences which naturally spring from our being one with Christ. Our Heaven lies in our union with Him. Yes, and sometimes, when we realize our oneness with Christ, we can hardly think that we should be happier in Heaven than we are now! May you all have this enjoyment! Oh, you would think that we raved if we told you the unspeakable delight, the immeasurable bliss which communion with Christ has brought into our souls! I desire that all of you should know the same rapture! I never enjoy a thing without wishing everybody to enjoy it and, therefore, when I come to this point of being one with Christ and the delight it brings, I would to God that you all knew it, too!

But alas! You do not—some of you do not even *desire* it. I have been talking something like Dutch to some of you tonight—you have not comprehended my language at all! May the very fact that you have not understood it, or cared about it, lead you to suspect that there is a joy which you have not known and a life which you have not found! And when you know that it is so, "Seek you the Lord while He may be found, call you upon Him while He is near." If you seek Him with all your heart, you will surely find Him—and very soon you will also be brought into "living, loving, lasting union" with Christ.

Remember that the least touch of faith is sufficient to save the soul! That poor woman who came behind Christ in the throng only touched the hem of His garment—yet that timid touch brought healing and health to her! Virtue went out of Him into her and she was made whole of her plague! If you can only touch the Lord by the finger of your faith, yes, though it is your *little* finger, it shall be well with you! Though your hand is quivering with the palsy of unbelief, yet, still, if you have faith enough

to *touch* Him, to come into contact with Him, you have set the whole machinery of salvation in motion! God give you faith to find eternal life even now! Why not? If my dear friend were here, of whom this drapery is a memorial, he would say unto me, "Oh, tell them to taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed are all they that trust in Him!" You know how fond he was of that verse we sang yesterday—

**"Oh make but a trial of His love;
Experience will decide
How blest are they, and only they,
Who in His truth confide!"**

God bless you all, for Christ's sake! Amen.

**Portion of Scripture Read before Sermon—Ephesians 5.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—760, 761, 762.**

Readers of the Sermons have probably all seen the very full reports published in the daily and weekly newspapers of the memorial and funeral service relating to their now glorified preacher. Those who took part in the impressive meetings at the Tabernacle, or gazed upon the almost countless multitude that thronged the road from Newington to Norwood, or formed part of the privileged company that gathered around the grave, must have felt that they were spectators of a scene without parallel in the history of this generation, at least. Comparatively few were able to hear all the tributes of love to the dear departed one, the Gospel he so faithfully preached, and the Savior he so fondly loved. Many will be glad to know, therefore, that a *Memorial Volume* will be issued, as soon as possible, containing a complete report of all the public services of the past week. Full particulars will be announced in due course.

Mrs. Spurgeon and all the members of the bereaved family, as well as the officers and members of Tabernacle Church, are deeply grateful for the almost innumerable expressions of sympathy which they have received from all parts of the world and all sections of the Church. They cannot attempt to acknowledge these communications, personally, but through various channels they have sought to convey the assurance of their heartfelt gratitude. And Mrs. Spurgeon has written a special, "Message of Thanks," for the March issue of *The Sword and the Trowel*, which will be a Memorial number, containing all that can be recorded at present concerning its late beloved Editor. Mrs. Spurgeon continues to be very graciously upheld under her sore bereavement, but she is not yet strong enough to return home.

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

“LIVING, LOVING, LASTING UNION”

NO. 2245

FUNERAL ADDRESS

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, FEBRUARY 28 1892.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE FUNERAL OF MR. WILLIAM OLNEY, OCTOBER 22, 1890.**

*“For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.”
Ephesians 5:30.*

BEFORE the funeral, at Norwood Cemetery, of the late Mr. William Olney, senior deacon of the Church at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, a service was held in the Tabernacle. The building was crowded with sympathizing friends who came to testify the affection they bore to the beloved deacon who had been so suddenly called from their midst. The senior Pastor presided. The hymn, “They are gathering homeward one by one,” was sung, and Pastor James A. Spurgeon offered prayer.

The hymn “Why do we mourn departing friends?” followed, and C.H. Spurgeon then read and expounded 1 Corinthians 15. The Reverend Burman Cassin, Rector of St. George’s, Southwark, briefly engaged in prayer, and the assembly sang the 34th Psalm, in the version beginning—

*“Through all the changing scenes of life,
In trouble and in joy,
The praises of my God shall still
My heart and tongue employ.”*

The hymn commencing, “Forever with the Lord!” was sung, and a concluding prayer was offered by Mr. James Spurgeon.

Pastor C.H. Spurgeon then rose and said—As I am in a very unfit condition to speak to you this morning, I shall try for once to keep away from my subject, for if I dwell upon it, it will master me, and I shall not be able to speak to you at all. I am trying to suppress my feelings, that I may be able to find words.

I am going to speak about the favorite expression of my Brother, William Olney, which he frequently used in prayer. I wonder whether you will agree with me as to what it was? As my memory serves me, I have heard him a score of times, at least, use the following sentence when he drew very near to the Lord, his God, in prayer. He said, “*Lord Jesus, we are one with You. We feel that we have a living, loving, lasting union with You.*” I think that you must remember that gem of his. Those three words have stuck by me and ever since he has gone, I have found myself repeating them to myself quite involuntarily—“a living, loving, lasting union.” He owed everything to that. He consciously enjoyed a living, loving, lasting union with the Lord Jesus Christ, and if you and I have that, we have all that we need for time and for eternity! If we have it not, we have nothing.

Take anyone of us by himself, alone, he is lost, ruined, and undone. Take that same person linked with Christ by a living, loving, lasting union and he is a saint—saved, sanctified and sure to be glorified!

I have taken for my text the words which occur in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, the 13th verse. Concerning our Lord Jesus, the Apostle Paul says, We are members of His body, of His faith, and of His bones.”

“We,” that is, His believing people, “are members of His body, and of His flesh, and of His bones.” He is our Head and we are the members of the body—and so we are joined to Him by a living, loving, lasting union.

I am not going beyond those three words—they shall be my three points, but, at the same time, I will keep to my text.

I. BETWEEN THE BELIEVER AND CHRIST THERE IS A LIVING UNION. There was just that between my Brother, William Olney and his Lord. A living union! When he joined the Church of Christ, he did not offer it the distinguished honor of his name and then slip away and give his life to politics, or to business, or to amusement. But when the Church has his name on its roll, it receive the whole of the man—body, soul, and spirit—and this because there was life in him!

His union to Christ was not nominal, but actual. He was not merely covered with the Christian name, but he had the Christian spirit and the Christian life within him. Yes, his union to Christ was a living union—not merely that of reliance, by which the stone leans upon the foundation—though he had that, for never man understood more clearly the doctrine of faith in Christ. Christ was his only trust and confidence and he came to Him as the stones come home to the foundation stone. But it was a living union in his case, for the fruits of life were produced. It was the union of the branch to the stem in that blessed Vine which is Christ, Himself, even as He says, “I am the Vine, you are the branches.”

Now what does this living union to Christ mean?

It means, first of all, *Christ’s life laying hold of us*. “For as the Father has life in Himself; so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself.” He is full of life and when He takes hold of us and raises our life into His, there is truly a living union between Him and us.

But, further, this living union is *Christ’s life in us*. It is given to Him, not only to take us in our feebleness, but it is His Divine prerogative to impart life to us and to call dead men—and to make them live. “For as the Father raises up the dead, and quickens them; even so the Son quickens whom He wills.” This is how we come to have life in connection with Him. His life flows into us, as out of the tree into the branches, so that we can truly say, with the Apostle, “I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith to the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” The living union begins with our Lord’s life and then that life flows into us and we, also, begin to live.

It was so with our friend, whom we so sadly miss from our midst today. A new life, a life of holiness, a life of service, a life of communion with God began in him by oneness with Christ—and it was continued in him by the same means. There was a living union—the life of Christ had begotten life

in him—and this was seen continually in the fruit that he bore. I should not know, if I had to describe my departed Brother, which word to associate more fully with him—“life,” or, “love.” He was as full of life as ever he could be. He used to amaze me by his energy—I mean not merely physical or even mental energy, but his never-ceasing, overflowing *spiritual* energy! If any of us were dull, *he* never was, and he would not let us be dull for long. He would often tell us, when we were not well, that he thought we looked amazingly well and he would try to cheer us up somehow or other, for he, himself, never seemed to lack for life, or fire, or force. I might almost say that, up to the last moment, he was energetic—he died full of life! He was intense in the very highest degree until struck down—and he was thus intense, not because of mere mental activity, but because of the burning zeal for God that was in his soul—and this zeal was the result of his living union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because of this life of Christ which was in him, he bore suffering without flinching. If there was anything that could equal the industry of his work, it was the heroism of his patience. He has often amazed us by his fortitude. We have admired the way in which he has triumphed in Christ in spite of his sufferings, but we have felt that we could scarcely hope to imitate him to the letter. He went as far in the way of bearing pain with patience as he went in the direction of serving Christ with enthusiasm—and this is saying a very great deal for any man. Therefore I do not say it for the man, but in praise of the Grace of God which helped him, whether he was active or passive, to still be buoyant and bright because of the living union which subsisted between him and Christ! A verse of the Psalms we have just sung, which was a great favorite of his, truly describes the resolution of his life—

***“Of His deliverance I will boast,
Till all that are distressed,
From my example comfort take,
And charm their griefs to rest.”***

Christ dwelling in him in fullness could both work and suffer. The fact that Christ lives in the Believer is as real as that He once lived on earth in a human body. He came, then, with a double-handed blessing. He came both to do His Father’s will and to bear the burden of the souls of men. He was active in doing good and, when the appointed time came, He as willingly bore the burden of the sins of men and suffered to the death without complaint. In like manner Christ lived in our dear friend, making him strong both to do and to suffer. God grant to you and to me, also, to have such a living union to Christ!

Do you know anything of this experience, my dear Friends? Many of you do—it is your life to be one with Christ. But to some of you I must be talking an unmeaning jargon. O Souls, if the life of Christ is not in you, you are dead while you live, and you will die forever when you die! Unless you get linked to Christ, you will be driven from the Presence of God and away from all that makes true life and joy. Lay hold on Christ, and you will “lay hold on eternal life,” for He is “that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” Living contact with Him is our only hope, either for the present or for the future. If you are vitally joined to

Christ, it is well with your soul—but if you are divided from Immanuel and have no living union to Christ, there is no eternal life for you! “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.”—

***“Living or dying, Lord,
I ask but to be Thine,
My life in You, Your life in me,
Makes Heaven forever mine.”***

II. The next word to, “living,” in my dear Brother’s frequent use, was, “loving.” BETWEEN THE TRUE BELIEVER AND CHRIST THERE IS A LOVING UNION. And oh, the union of a soul to Christ is made so sweet because it is as loving as it is living! My Brother-in-Christ, William Olney, truly loved! He seemed to have a love to everybody. He was never so pleased as when he was pleasing other people and he would go a long way, sometimes, to try and please people who would not be pleased. But still, his great ambition in life was to love others and to make others love Christ. Love ruled supreme in his actions. His union to Christ was not cold and formal, stiff and narrow—he had a union to Christ that was warm, human, intense, fervent, loving! There was fire in that man and the fire was the ardent flame of great affection to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I would like to have a talk about this loving union to Christ on some other occasion, when I could trust myself more than I can do now at this very solemn service. [On the following evening, Thursday, October 23, 1890, Mr. Spurgeon preached on this subject. The discourse, entitled “Members of Christ” (No. 2244), delivered on that occasion, was published last week. (Footnote).—EOD] Still, there are a few things that may be said upon this subject even now.

Christ’s love to us begins this loving union. Its source is not in *ourselves*, but in love eternal, love immeasurable, love which caused itself—Free-Grace love, love to the unworthy, love to enemies, love to those who had no life, no strength, and no hope apart from Him. Christ loved us so that He deigned to join Himself to us in eternal union. The great Artesian well from which we drink and which has tapped the Divine fountains is the Love of Christ! This is where all our hope, our joy and our love begin. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.” In connection with this same Truth of God of union with Christ and fruit-bearing as the result of it, our Lord, Himself, says, “You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” When this Love thus made choice of us, He entered into Covenant with His Father concerning His people—and before we were born He identified Himself with us, so that in the purpose of God from all eternity we were accepted in Him!

But union with us meant union with our sins, and though the Son of God could never be overcome of evil, or become a sharer in human guilt, yet by the blessed mystery of His unity with His people, He could take their sin upon Himself and bear it in His own body on the Cross. Thus, as there is no past or future to the eyes of Him before whom all events are spread out in one eternal, “now,” the Son of God was able to atone for the iniquities of those who, through all the ages, would be truly joined to Him. His love that chose us did not shrink back from the awful payment which

our debt rendered necessary—it was stronger than death, and mightier than the grave. Many waters could not quench it! Many floods could not drown it, nor will it cease to exert its blessed influence over us until it shall bring us Home to the mansions above! But not even then, for Christ’s love is everlasting! By this loving union Christ brings us safely through all the temptations of life. The ransomed spirits of such as are joined to Him are taken to be with Christ the instant they are absent from the body. And, at last, out of the tomb that same Love shall call the body and on the glad day of Resurrection it shall be clearly seen how wonderful is the love which made our Lord so one with us!

This, then, is the way in which we came to a loving union with Christ—He began to love us with a love that had no beginning, which has no measure and which shall know no change nor end—and, therefore He united Himself to us forever. Well might Kent praise the name of the Lord for the wonders worked by such love as this as he sang—

***“Heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus,
Long ere time its race begun!
To His name eternal praises!
Oh! What wonders love has done!
One with Jesus
By eternal union one.”***

Our love to Christ completes this loving union. We first learn of His love to us and then, as the result of that, we are brought to love Him. Ours is a poor little love, not worthy of His acceptance, but, such as it is, we give it all to Him and He will not refuse it, or despise it! Oh, that we all might now be joined to Christ in love! I am sure that my Brother, who has gone from us, knew this union more than most of us. When we once got upon this glorious theme in private conversation, or when he touched upon it, himself, in his own public prayers, how His spirit seemed to burn and glow! He was always at home when speaking of the love of Christ, or of the love of Christ’s people to their Lord. He could truly say, as I trust many of us will truly say now—

***“I give my heart to You,
O Jesus, most desired!
And heart for heart the gift shall be,
For You my soul has fired.
You, hearts alone would move,
You, only, hearts do love;
I would love You as You love me,
O Jesus most desired!”***

In this loving union, *Christ’s love to us and our love to Christ flow in the same channel.* Together they make a stream of love of a glorious kind. We love one another for Christ’s sake! We love sinners for Christ’s sake! We love the Truth of God as Christ loves the Truth of God! We love the Father in the same manner that Christ loves the Father, though not to the same degree. There is, in fact, but one love in the Head and in all the members. What the Head loves, all the body loves! As one man we go with Christ. Being united to Him, His desires and longings become our desires and longings—we grow into His likeness and, “are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Do you know anything about loving union to Christ? I feel sure that the great mass of those assembled here both know it and rejoice in it. Oh, to know it more! Oh, that His love were shed abroad more richly in our hearts! Now, by the Holy Spirit that is given to us, may we experience not only the tiny rivulets of love that some of us have had in the past days, but may we get to the torrents of love! May we be swept away by it, till, like a mighty ocean, it covers all our nature and becomes to us a very Heaven begun below!

III. Our third point is that BETWEEN THE TRUE BELIEVERS AND CHRIST THERE IS A LASTING UNION. The whole phrase which our dear departed friend used so frequently was, “living, loving, lasting union.” O Friends, what a sad thing it would be for anyone to have only a *temporary* union with Christ! If I am speaking to any who were members of this Church years ago, but who are not even professors now—if I am addressing some who seemed to be earnest Christians once, but who have gone back from following Christ—I would earnestly remind you that no union with Christ is living and loving unless it is also *lasting*!

The man who is truly united to Christ does not become apostate. It is all in vain to seem to put on Christ for a time and then, after a little while, to put Him off again. That is the religion of the hypocrite, or of the merely temporary professor. But not so was it with our dear Brother who is sleeping yonder. When he joined the Church—I think that it is rather more than 54 years ago—he gave himself to the Lord and he has been kept and sustained and upheld until now. Why, there are some of you who have been members of four or five denominations during that time! You have changed your views with the varying seasons and have altered more often than we care to remember—while here he was—staying steadfast and immovable all the time, remaining a member of the same Church and going on steadily with his work.

It seems to me that some of you build for a year and pull down, then build again, and pull down once more. Why, you are not building at all unless your building stands! And you are not truly in union with Christ unless the union is a lasting union! And it will not be unless it is a *living* union! Your profession of Christ will be a lie and will help to sink you lower than the lowest Hell unless you endure to the end! Make sure work with what you do in religion. Do not play at being a Christian. If you are converted, be converted with your whole heart. If you have faith in Christ, have vital faith, or do not pretend to have any. Be real—be true to the core! Be satisfied with nothing short of that union which the Spirit of God works in the hearts of those who, without reserve, yield to His power. Otherwise that which you seem to have will not be a lasting thing with you and, at the end, you will be utterly cast off.

Now think of the joy of this fact. *Our union with Christ is not only lasting, it is everlasting.* With great boldness we utter the challenge, “Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?” It is true that we hold Christ and that we will hold Him still tighter, but the greater mercy is that He holds us and He will never let us go! Does He not say, concerning His sheep, “I give unto them eternal life; and they

shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand”? And will He not be true to His word? You may take Christ from our hand, but you cannot take us from Christ’s hand! He holds us fast. He is married to us and He, Himself, declares, “The Lord, the God of Israel, says that He hates putting away.” He will have no divorce between our soul and Himself. This living, loving, lasting union, which we have already found to be such a glorious reality, is to last forever and ever, blessed be the name of the Lord!

I want you, beloved Friends, to draw much comfort from this Truth of God and then I will be finished. *Christ will not lose His members.* My head would not willingly lose a little finger and Christ our Head will not lose one of us if “we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” Do you think that Christ can be mutilated? Do you think that He will lose even the least joint of the least finger? Never shall that be true! The word written of His body of flesh is equally true concerning His mystical body, which is His Church. “A bone of Him shall not be broken.” Not even the smallest and most insignificant Believer in Christ shall be lost, otherwise would His body be incomplete. He is a perfect Christ and you that are members of His body shall never be cut away from His by the wounds of Satan’s sword, the surgery of infidelity, or any earthly accident or diabolical temptation. If you are one with Him, you will be one with Him forever, for the union between you and your Lord is an eternal union—to break it would be to disfigure and mutilate the Christ of God!

Furthermore, in that we are one with Christ, *He will raise our bodies.* “We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones” and, though I do not insist upon it, this verse has, to me, a kind of ring about it which would lead us to believe that if we are members of His body, He will take even our bodies to be members of Himself. Christ will not leave our Brother in the grave. His body will see corruption, but the tomb shall only be like a refining pot to separate the precious from the vile. When Moses brought Israel out of Egypt, he said, “There shall not a hoof be left behind,” and when that One who is greater than Moses shall bring forth His people from their graves, there shall not a bone or a piece of a bone of His redeemed be left in the region of death! When the angel brought Peter out of prison, he told him to put his shoes on. “Bind on your sandals,” was the angelic direction. He would not leave even an old pair of slippers in the prison when he brought Peter out! The deliverance was to be absolutely complete. Thus, too, when Christ shall bid us put on our garments which He shall prepare for us in the Resurrection, no integral part of the man shall be left behind. O Grave, you must give up your prey! O Death, you must yield up your spoils! Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, they, as well as our souls, must be set free from the power of the last enemy. “Therefore comfort one another with these words,” whether it is concerning your own death, or the death of this dear Friend on whose coffin we look just now.

Beloved, we are parting with our Brother, William Olney, for a while, but *we shall meet again.* We are so one with each other in truth and experience that we cannot be separated! He was a member of Christ’s body

and of His flesh and of His bones—so am I and so are you, my fellow Believer! The members of one body must be one. And we shall meet our departed friend, again, before long. Perhaps in another week some of us may see his face. I wonder what he has been doing already in that land of light and liberty! Mr. Fullerton writes me saying that he would not wonder if he spent last Sunday telling the spirits above how he had spent the previous Sunday and making them all wonder at what the Grace of God had done among poor sinners down here on earth. He could tell the tale of Haddon Hall and of this Tabernacle, recounting the story of what the Lord has done in saving men and women—and I do not think the angels and the redeemed could be better occupied than in hearing what the Lord has been doing in His new creation here below!

Very probably the conjecture is right, for the Grace of God reaches us “to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.” When they hear the story yonder, they will take down their harps and raise new hallelujahs to God and to the Lamb! Think not that I talk strangely. The angels rejoice over one sinner that repents and they will yet more rejoice when one messenger, newly come from the midst to God’s salvation work, shall tell them of scores that have been brought to the Savior’s feet!

Beloved Friends, *eternity is ours*, and a joyous eternity it will be to those who are one with Jesus Christ, in “living, loving, lasting union.” We shall soon ascend to “the realms of the blest.” There is a ladder waiting for us to climb and when we mount it, we shall have no reason to mourn. It is but for a little time that we shall have to keep the night-watches. The watchman of the night cries, “The morning comes!” The night of weeping will soon be past. “Until the day beaks, and the shadows flee away,” be of good courage. Patiently hope, “and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.” He will surely come again and even the tears of today shall abundantly be recompensed to you.

I pray that every blessing may rest upon every mourner this day. Indeed, dear Friends, while we mourn with you, we cannot but congratulate you that you have had such a husband, such a father, such a brother as our friend who is now taken home. I will not say that you have lost him, for that would not be true. God lent him to you for a long time and now He has taken him back!

I think that it is about 15 years ago since, in the ordinary course of things, he might have been expected to have died. At least so it seemed at the time he was so sick—yet with many tears and intercessions we prayed him back and God gave him something like Hezekiah’s extra portion of life. We ought to be very thankful for that. In those 15 years, how much has he done? Rather, how much has God done by him for us all? Therefore we will not sorrow so as to *complain*, but we will sorrow only so as to *submit*. The Lord be with you evermore! Amen.

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

OUR MOTTO

NO. 1484

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 20, 1879,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“With goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.”
Ephesians 6:7.***

THIS sentence was expressly addressed, in the first place, to “servants,” which term includes and, first of all intends, those who unhappily were slaves. There were many slaves in the Roman Empire and the form of bondage which then existed was of the bitterest kind. I can imagine a slave becoming a Christian and so finding peace as to his former guilt and obtaining renewal of heart—and then, although rejoicing in the Lord, I can well conceive that he would often be downcast in view of his sad condition as a slave. I see him sitting down and moaning to himself, “I am a bondsman under a tyrant master. I have already endured many cruelties and may expect many more. I would be free, but there is no hope of escape, since there is no place to which I can flee, for Caesar’s arm is long and would reach me at the very ends of the earth. I cannot purchase my liberty, nor earn it by long years of faithful servitude.

“Neither can my fellow slaves and I effect our deliverance by rebellion, for this has been tried and has ended in terrible bloodshed. I am hopelessly a slave. What shall I do? How shall I sustain my fate? My life is well-near intolerable—would to God it were at an end.” I can imagine the poor slave going to his cramped bed under the stairs—for in any hole or corner, the Roman slave might find such little rest as was allowed him—and there he would almost wish to sleep himself into another world. Being a Christian, as I have supposed, he pours out his heart before God in prayer and, in answer to his cry, the Lord Jesus sets before him the rich consolation which He has provided for all that mourn—consolation strong enough to enable him to endure to the end and glorify the name of Jesus even under such hard conditions!

While yet troubled in mind, this freeman of the Lord, who is yet in bonds to man, is met by the Savior Himself. He appears to him—I will not say in such form as could be perceived by the *eyes*, but in clear enough vision to be exceedingly influential over his spirit. Jesus stands before him. The five wounds adorning Him like precious rubies are infallible tokens! The face lit up with an unearthly splendor is still marked with the old lines of sorrow and the head bears the crown of thorns still about its brow. The poor slave casts himself at his Redeemer’s feet with astonishment, with awe and with intense delight! And then I think I hear those dear lips which are as lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh saying to His poor servant, “Fulfill your service bravely. Do it unto Me. Forget your tyrant master and remember only Me. Bear on, work on, suffer on and do all as unto Me and not unto men.”

Then I think I see the broken-hearted captive rising up refreshed with inward strength and I hear him say, “I will even bear the yoke until my

Lord shall call me away! Unless His Providence shall open for me a door of liberty, I will patiently abide where I am and suffer all His will, hopefully and joyfully serving because He bids me do it for His sake." A vision which would so greatly comfort the poor Roman slave in his extremity may well stand before each one of us. Let us each hear our Savior say, "Live unto Me and do all for My sake." Our service is so much more pleasant and easy than that of slaves—let us perform it "with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not to men." Our princely motto is, "I serve"—be this sentence emblazoned on our banner and used as the battle cry of life's campaign!

Notice well that the Holy Spirit does not bid us leave our stations in order to serve the Lord. He does not bid us forego the domestic relations which make us husbands or wives; parents or children; masters or servants! He does not suggest to us to put on a peculiar garb and seek the seclusion of a monastery, or the retirement of monastic or conventual life. Nothing of the kind is hinted at! But rather He bids the servant continue in his or her service—"with goodwill doing service." Our great Captain would not have you hope to win the victory by leaving your post! He would have you abide in your trade, calling, profession and all the while serve the Lord in it, doing the will of God from the heart in common things.

This is the practical beauty of our holy faith—that when it casts the devil out of a man it sends him home to bless his friends by telling them what great things the Lord has done for him. Grace does not transplant the tree, but bids it overshadow the old house at home, as before, and bring forth good fruit where it is! Grace does not make us unearthly, though it makes us unworldly. True religion distinguishes us from others, even as our Lord Jesus was separate from sinners, but it does not shut us up or hedge us round about as if we were too good or too tender for the rough usage of everyday life! It does not put us in the salt box and shut the lid, but it casts us in among our fellow men for *their* good!

Grace makes us the servants of God while we are the still servants of men—it enables us to do the business of Heaven while we are attending to the business of earth—it sanctifies the common duties of life by showing us how to perform them in the light of Heaven. The love of Christ makes the lowliest acts sublime. As the sunlight brightens a landscape and sheds beauty over the most common scene, so does the Presence of the Lord Jesus! The spirit of consecration renders the offices of domestic servitude as sublime as the worship which is presented upon the sea of glass before the Eternal Throne by spirits to whom the courts of Heaven are their familiar name.

I suggest my text to all Believers as the motto of their lives! Whether we are servants or masters, whether we are poor or rich, let us take this as our watchword, "*As to the Lord, and not to men.*" From now on may this be the engraving of our seal and the motto of our coat of arms! May it be the constant rule of our life and the sum of our motives. In advocating this gracious aim of our being, let me say that if we are enabled to adopt this motto it will, first of all, *influence our work itself*. And, secondly, it will elevate our spirit concerning that work. Yet let me add, thirdly, that if the Lord shall really be the All in All of our lives, *it is, after all, only what He*

has a right to expect and what we are under a thousand obligations to give to Him!

I. Our subject opens with this reflection, that if from now on whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord, **THIS CONSECRATION WILL GREATLY INFLUENCE OUR ENTIRE WORK.** Do you say, my Brothers and Sisters, that from now on your whole life shall be a service of the Lord? Then it will follow, first, that you will have to live *with a single eye to His Glory*. See how in verse 5 we are told, “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ”? If we do, indeed, live “as to the Lord,” we must necessarily live *wholly* to the Lord.

The Lord Jesus is a most engrossing Master. He has said, “No man can serve two masters,” and we shall find it so. He will have everything or nothing! If, indeed, He is our Lord, He must be our only Sovereign, for He will not tolerate a rival. It comes to pass then, O Christian, that you are bound to live for Jesus and for Him alone. You must have no co-ordinate or even secondary objective or divided aim—if you divide your heart, your life will be a failure. As no dog can follow two hares at one time, or he will lose both, certainly no man can follow two contrary objectives and hope to secure either of them. No, it behooves a servant of Christ to be a concentrated man—his affections should be bound up into one affection—and that affection should not be set on things on the earth, but on things above.

His heart must not be divided, or it will be said of him as of those in Hosea, “Their heart is divided; now shall they be found wanting.” The chamber of the heart is far too narrow to accommodate the King of kings *and* the world, or the flesh, or the devil at the same time. We have no wish, desire, ambition, or exertion to spare for a rival lord—the service of Jesus demands and deserves all. Such is the eminence of this objective, that all a man has or can have by reason or strength must be spent this way if he is to win. Nor is this too much for our great Lord to expect from those for whom He has done so much.

To whom should I give a part of myself, my Master? You have redeemed me wholly and I am altogether Yours—take full possession of me! Who else can be worthy of my heart? Who else can have a right to set foot within the province where You are King? No, rule alone, blessed and only Potentate! As You, alone, have redeemed me, alone treading the winepress of wrath for me, so shall You be sole Monarch of my soul! You are all my salvation and all my desire and, therefore, You shall have all my homage and service. With such a Lord to be served, the current of our life must run in only one channel—that He may have it all and none may run to waste.

Next, to do service to the Lord, we must live with holy carefulness, for what says the context? We are to serve, “with fear and trembling.” In the service of God we should use great care to accomplish our very best and we should feel a deep anxiety to please Him in all things. There is a trade called paper staining, in which a man flings colors upon paper to make common wall decorations. And by rapid processes *acres* of paper can be speedily finished. Suppose that the paper stainer should laugh at an emi-

ment artist because he had covered such a little space, having been stippling and shading a little tiny piece of his picture by the hour together? Such ridicule would, itself, be ridiculous! Now the *world's* way of religion is the paper stainer's way, the daubing way—there is plenty of it and it is quickly done.

But *God's* way, the narrow way, is a careful matter. There is but little of it and it costs thought, effort, watchfulness and care. Yet see how precious is the work of art when it is done and how long it lasts—and you will not wonder that a man spends his time upon it. Even so, true godliness is acceptable with God and it endures forever and, therefore, it well repays the earnest effort of the man of God. The miniature painter has to be very careful of every touch and tint, for a very little may spoil his work. Let our life be a miniature painting—“with fear and trembling” let it be worked out. We are serving the thrice Holy God who will be held in reverence of them that come near to Him. Let us mind what we do.

Our blessed Master never made a faulty stroke when He was serving His Father. He never lived a careless hour, nor let drop an idle word. Oh, it was a careful life He lived—even the night watches were not without the deep anxieties which poured themselves forth in prayer unto God! And if you and I think that the first thing which comes to hand will do with which to serve our God, we make a great mistake and grossly insult His name! We must have a very low idea of His infinite majesty if we think that we can honor Him by doing His service half-heartedly, or in a slovenly style. No, if you will, indeed, live “as to the Lord, and not unto man,” you must watch each motion of your heart and life, or you will fail in your design. Living as to the Lord means living with a concentrated spirit and living with earnest care that our one service may be the best of which we are capable when at our best estate. Alas, how poor is that best when we reach it! Truly, when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants, but even then, that all is seldom reached.

Further, if from now on our desire is to live “as to the Lord, and not unto men,” then *what we do must be done with all our heart*. “In singleness of your heart,” says the context. And again, in the sixth verse, “As the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.” Our work for Jesus must be the outgrowth of the soil of the *heart*. Our service must not be performed as a matter of routine—there must be vigor, power, freshness, reality, eagerness and warmth about it—or it will be good for nothing. No fish ever came upon God's altar because it could not come there alive—the Lord needs none of your dead, heartless worship! You know what is meant by putting all our heart into all that we do—explain it by your lives! A work which is to be accepted of the Lord must be heart-work throughout—not a few thoughts of Christ, occasionally, and a few chill words and a few chance gifts and a little done by way of by-play—but as the heart beats so must we serve God! It must be our very life!

We are not to treat our religion as though it were a sort of weekend farm which we were willing to keep going but not to make much of, our chief thoughts being engrossed with the home farm of self and the world with its gains and pleasures. Our Lord will be *aut Caesar aut nullus*, either ruler or nothing! My Master is a jealous Husband—He will not tolerate a stray thought of love elsewhere and He thinks it scorn that they who

call themselves His beloved should love others better than Himself! Such unchastity of heart can never be permitted—let us not dream of it! We may not claim to be His if we give Him only lip service, brain service or hand service—He must have the *heart!*

Oh, our beloved Lord, You did not spare Your heart from agony for us! The lance opened it with all its costly double flood for our unworthy sakes! Therefore You cannot be content to receive, in return, lifeless forms and cold pretences! You did live, indeed—there was no sham about Your life. In all You did You were intense. The zeal of Your Father's house had eaten You up. You were clad with zeal as with a cloak which covered You from head to foot. Let us live somewhat after this glorious fashion, for a servant only truly lives when he lives as his master. "He that is perfect shall be as His Master." If we are to live to the Lord, the fountains of our soul must flow with boiling floods and our life must be like a great Icelandic geyser casting up its columns of water which seethe and boil as they rise.

As great earthquakes shake the very center, so must there be movements of life within us which stir our soul with vehement longings for Jesus and with intense yearnings for His Glory. All our light and life must turn to love and that love must be all on flame for Jesus. If we truly live unto Christ it must be so! What else says the passage before us? If we say—from now on I will do the will of God as to the Lord and not unto men, then we must do it *under subjection*, for note well the words, "doing the will of God." Some people's religion is only another way of doing their *own* will. They pick and choose what precepts they will keep and what they will neglect. They choose what doctrines they shall hold and what they shall refuse—their spirit is not bowed into sacred servitude, but takes license to act according to its own pleasure. The freedom of a Christian lies in what I will venture to call an absolute slavery to Christ! And we never become truly free till every thought is brought into subjection to the will of the Most High.

Now, if from now on I live to God, I have no longer any right to say, "I will do this or that," but I must inquire, "My Master, what would You have me do?" As the eyes of the maidens are to their mistress, so are our eyes up to You, O Lord. Believer, your Master is to will for you from now on! It is idle to say, "I shall live as to the Lord and not unto men," when all the while we intend to live in our own fashion! Which is to be master, now, *self* or Christ? On every point this question must be settled, for if on *any* point we assume the personal mastery, the rule of Jesus is wholly refused! To go or to stand still, to suffer or to be in pleasure, to be in honor or to be in disgrace is no more to be our option, or if we have a momentary choice it is to be cheerfully resigned before the Sovereignty of Him whom we have now taken to be our All in All. There is no being a Christian if Christ does not have the throne in the heart and life. It is but the mockery of Christianity to call Jesus Master and Lord while we do not do the things which He commands!

Again, *we must do all this under a sense of the Divine oversight*. Notice in verse 6 it is said of servants, "Not with eye service, as men-pleasers." What a mean and beggarly thing it is for a man only to do his work well when he is watched! Such oversight is for boys at school and mere hirelings. You never think of watching noble-spirited men. Here is a young

apprentice set to copy a picture—his master stands over him and looks over each line, for the young rascal will grow careless and spoil his work, or take to his games if he is not well looked after. Did anybody thus dream of supervising Raphael and Michelangelo to keep them to their work? No, the master artist requires no eyes to urge him on.

Popes and emperors came to visit the great painters in their studios, but did they paint better because these grandees gazed upon them? Certainly not! Perhaps they did all the worse in the excitement or the worry of the visit. They had regard to something better than the eyes of pompous people. So the true Christian needs no eyes of man to watch him. There may be pastors and preachers who are better off for being looked after by bishops and presbyters, but fancy a bishop overseeing the work of Martin Luther and trying to quicken his zeal! Or imagine a presbyter looking after Calvin to keep him sound in the faith! Oh, no! Gracious minds outgrow the governance and stimulus which comes of the oversight of mortal man. God's own Spirit dwells within us and we serve the Lord from an inward principle which is not fed from without.

There is about a real Christian a prevailing sense that God sees him and he does not care who else may set his eyes upon him—it is enough for him that God is there. He has little respect for the eyes of man. He neither courts nor dreads them! Let the good deed remain in the dark, for God sees it and that is enough! Or let it be blazoned in the light of day to be pecked at by the censorious, for it little matters who censures, since God approves! This is to be a true servant of Christ—to escape from being an eye-servant to men by becoming, in the most sublime sense, an eye-servant of God—always working beneath the eyes of God. If we did but realize this, how well we should live! If now I remember, as I try to do, that God hears each word I speak to you from this pulpit—that He reads my soul as I address you in His name—how ought I to preach?

And if you go to your Sunday school class this afternoon and picture Jesus sitting among the boys and girls and hearing how you teach them—how earnestly you will teach! At home when you are about to scold a servant, or in the shop, when you think to do a rather sharp thing, if you think your Master stands there and sees it all, what a power it will have over you! Our lives should all be spent under the spell of, “You see me, God,” and we should each be able to declare, “I have set the Lord always before me.” One more thought, and it is this. If from now on we are to serve the Lord, and not men, then *we must look to the Lord for our reward and not to men*. “Knowing,” says the eighth verse, “that whatever good thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he is bond or free.”

Wages! Is that the motive of a Christian? Yes, in the highest sense, for the greatest of the saints, such as Moses, have “had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” And it were like despising the reward which God promises to His people if we had no respect whatever unto it. Respect unto the reward which comes of God kills the selfishness which is always expecting a reward from *men*. We can postpone our reward and we can be content, instead of receiving present praise, to be misunderstood and misrepresented. We can postpone our reward and we can endure, instead of

it, to be disappointed in our work and to labor on without success—for when the reward *does* come how glorious it will be!

An hour with Jesus will make up for a lifetime of persecution! One smile from Him will repay us a thousand times over for all disappointments and discouragements. Thus you see, Brothers and Sisters, that if we do, in very deed, make this our rule and maxim—“As to the Lord, and not to men”—our work will be shaped and fashioned most wonderfully. May God grant that the influence of this motive may manifestly sway our whole life from now on until we close it for this world and commence it anew where we shall not need to shift our course, but shall continue eternally to live to the Lord alone!

II. May the Holy Spirit guide us while we reflect, secondly, that should this text become the inspiration of our life IT WOULD GREATLY ELEVATE OUR SPIRITS. What would it do for us? First, *it would lift us above all complaining* about the hardness of our lot, or the difficulty of our service. “Alas,” says one, “I am worn out! I cannot keep on at this rate. My position is so terribly trying that I cannot hold on much longer—it strains not only muscle and sinew, but nerve and heart. Nobody could bear my burden long! My husband is cruel, my friends are unkind, my children are ungrateful.” Ah, poor heart, there are many others who wear the weeping-willow as well as yourself!

But be of good courage and look at your case in another light. If the burden is to be borne for Jesus’ sake, who loved you and gave Himself for you—by whose precious blood you are redeemed from the pains of Hell—can you not bear it? Can you not bear it? “That is quite another thing,” you say. “I could not bear it for a sneering master. I could not bear it for a passionate, obstinate mistress. But I could do anything and I could bear anything for Jesus.” This makes all the difference—

***“For Him I count as gain each loss,
Disgrace for Him, renown.
Well may I glory in His Cross,
While He prepares my crown!”***

We are satisfied to bear any cross so long as it is *His Cross*! What wonders men can do when they are influenced by enthusiastic love for a leader!

Alexander’s troops marched thousands of miles on foot and they would have been utterly wearied had it not been for their zeal for Alexander. He led them forth conquering and to conquer. Alexander’s presence was the life of their valor, the glory of their strength. If there was a very long day’s march over burning sands, one thing they knew—that Alexander marched with them! If they were thirsty, they knew that he thirsted, too, for when one brought a cup of water to the king, he put it aside, thirsty as he was, and said, “Give it to a sick soldier.” Once it so happened that they were loaded with the spoil which they had taken and each man had become rich with goodly garments and wedges of gold. Then they began to travel very slowly with so much to carry and the king feared that he should not overtake his foe. Having a large quantity of spoil which fell to his own share, he burned it all before the eyes of his soldiers and bade them do the same that they might pursue the enemy and win even more!

“Alexander’s portion lies beyond,” he cried! And seeing the king’s own spoils on fire, his warriors were content to give up their gains, also, and

share with their king. He did, himself, what he commanded others to do—in self-denial and hardship he was a full partaker with his followers. After this fashion our Lord and Master acts towards us. He says, “Renounce pleasure for the good of others. Deny yourself and take up your cross. Suffer, though you might avoid it. Labor, though you might rest, when God’s Glory demands suffering or labor of you. Have not I set you an example?” “Who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we, through His poverty, might be rich.” He stripped Himself of all things that He might clothe us with His Glory! O, Brothers and Sisters, when we heartily serve such a Leader as this, and are fired by His Spirit, then murmuring, complaining, weariness and fainting of heart are altogether gone! A Divine passion carries us beyond ourselves—

***“I can do all things, or can bear
All suffering if my Lord is there.”***

Next, *this lifts the Christian above the spirit of laziness.* I believe great numbers of working men—I am not going to judge them for it—always consider how little they can possibly do to earn their wages. The question with them is not, “How much can we give for the wage?” That used to be. But now, it is, “How little can we give? How little work can we do in the day without being discharged for idleness?” Many men say, “We must not do all the work today, for we shall need something to do tomorrow—our masters will not give us more than they can help and, therefore, we will not give them more than we are obliged to.” This is the general spirit on both sides and as a nation we are going to the dogs because that spirit is among us—and we shall be more and more beaten by foreign competition if this spirit is cultivated.

Among Christians such a notion cannot be tolerated in the service of our Lord Jesus. It never does for a minister to say, “If I preach three times a week it is quite as much as anybody will expect of me, therefore I shall do no more.” It will never be right for you to say, “I am a Sunday school teacher. As long as I get to class on time—some of you do not do that—and as long as I teach until the class time is over, I need not look after the boys and girls through the week. I cannot be bothered with them—I will do just as much as I am bound to do, but no more.” In a certain country town it was reported that the grocer’s wife cut a plum in two, for fear there should be a grain more than weight in the parcel. The folks called her Mrs. Split-Plum. Ah, there are many Split-Plums in religion! They do not want to do more for Jesus than may be absolutely necessary. They would like to give good weight, but they would be sorry to be convicted of doing too much.

Ah, when we get to feel we are doing service for our Lord Jesus Christ, we adopt a far more liberal scale! Then we do not calculate how much ointment will suffice for His feet, but we give Him all that our box contains. Is this your talk, “Bring the scales, this ointment cost a great deal of money and we must be economical. Watch every drachma, yes, every scruple and grain, for the nard is costly”? If this is your cool manner of calculation, your offering is not worth a fig! Not so spoke that daughter of love of whom we read in the Gospels, for she broke the box and poured out *all* the contents upon her Lord. “To what purpose is this waste?” cried Judas. It was Judas who thus spoke and you know, therefore, the worth

of that observation! Christ's servants delight to give so much as to be thought wasteful, for they feel that when they have, in the judgment of others, done extravagantly for Christ, they have but begun to show their hearts' love for His dear name. Thus the elevating power of the spirit of consecration lifts us up above the wretched stinginess of mere formality.

Again, *this raises us up above all boasting of our work.* "Is the work good enough?" asked one of his servant. The man replied, "Sir, it is good enough for the price and it is good enough for the man who is going to have it." Just so, and when we "serve" men we may, perhaps, rightly judge in that fashion. But when we come to serve *Christ*, is *anything* good enough for *Him*? If our zeal knew no respite. If our prayers knew no pause. If our efforts knew no relaxation. If we gave all we have of time, wealth, talent and opportunity. If we should die a martyr's death a thousand times, wouldn't He, the Best Beloved of our souls, deserve far more? Ah, that He would! Therefore is self-congratulation banished forever! When you have done all, you will feel that it is not worthy of the matchless merit of Jesus and you will be humbled at the thought! Thus, while doing all for Jesus stimulates zeal, it fosters humility—a happy blending of useful effects.

The resolve to do all as unto the Lord will elevate you above *that craving for recognition which is a disease with many.* It is a sad fault in many Christians that they cannot do anything unless all the world is told of it. The hen in the farm-yard has laid an egg and feels so proud of the achievement that she must cackle about it—everybody must know of that one poor egg till all the country round resounds with the news! It is so with some professors—their work must be published or they can do no more! "Here have I," said one, "been teaching in the school for years and nobody ever thanked me for it! I believe that some of us who do the most are the least noticed and what a shame it is."

But if you have done your service unto the *Lord* you would not talk so, or we shall suspect you of having other aims! The servant of Jesus will say, "I do not need human notice. I did it for my Master. *He* noticed me and I am content. I tried to please Him and, by His Grace, I did please Him and, therefore, I ask no more, for I have gained my end. I seek no praise of men, for I fear lest the breath of human praise should tarnish the pure silver of my service." This would *lift you above the discouragement which sometimes comes of human censure.* If you seek the praise of men you will, in all probability, fail in the present and certainly you will lose it in the future, sooner or later. Many men are more ready to censure than to commend—and to hope for their praise is to seek for sugar in a root of wormwood.

Man's way of judging is unjust and seems fashioned on purpose to blame all of us, one way or another. Here is a Brother who sings bass and the critics say, "Oh yes, a very fine *bass* voice, but he could not sing treble." Here is another who excels in treble and they say, "Yes, yes, but we prefer a tenor." When they find a tenor they blame him because he cannot sing bass. No one can be candidly praised, but all must be savagely censured! What will the great Master say about it? Will He not judge thus—"I have given this man a bass voice and he sings bass and that is what I meant him to do. I gave that man a tenor voice and he sings tenor

and that is what I meant him to do. I gave that man a treble voice and he sings treble and so takes the part I meant him to take. All the parts blended together make up sweet music for My ears”?

Wisdom is justified of her children, but Folly blames them all round. How little we ought to care about the opinions and criticisms of our fellow men when we remember that He who made us what we are and helps us, by His Grace, to act our part, will not judge us after the mode in which men carp or flatter, but will accept us according to the sincerity of our *hearts*. If we feel, “I was not working for you; I was working for God,” we shall not be much wounded by our neighbors’ remarks. The nightingale charms the ear of night. A fool passes by and declares that he hates such distracting noises! The nightingale sings on, for it never entered the little minstrel’s head or heart that it was singing for critics—it sings because He who created it gave it this sweet faculty! So may we reply to those who condemn us—“We live not unto you, O men! We live unto our Lord.” Thus do we escape the discouragements which come of ungenerous misapprehension and jealous censure.

This, too, will elevate you above the disappointments of failures, yes, even of the saddest kind. If those you seek to bless are not saved, yet you have not altogether failed, for you did not teach or preach having the winning of souls as the absolute ultimatum of your work—you did it with the view of pleasing Jesus—and He is pleased with faithfulness even where it is not accompanied with success. Sincere *obedience* is His delight even if it leads to no apparent results. If the Lord should set His servant to plow the sea or sow the sand, He would accept his service. If we should have to witness for Christ’s name in the stocks and by stones—and if our hearers should be even worse than blocks of marble and should turn and tear us apart—we may still be filled with contentment, for we shall have done our Lord’s will and what more do we need? To plod on under apparent failure is one of the most acceptable of all works of faith and he who can do it, year after year, is assuredly well-pleasing unto God.

This lifts us above disappointment in the prospect of death. We shall have to go away from our work soon, so men tell us, and we are apt to fret about it. The truth is we shall go on with our work *forever* if our service is pleasing to the Lord! We shall please Him up yonder even better than we do here! And what if our enterprise here should seem to end as far as man is concerned? We have done it unto the Lord and our record is on high and, therefore, it is not lost. Nothing that is done for Jesus will be destroyed—the flower may fade, but its essence remains! The tree may fall, but its fruit is stored! The cluster may be crushed, but the wine is preserved! The work and its place may pass away, but the glory which it brought to Jesus shines as the stars forever and ever!

Yes, and *this lifts us above the deadening influence of age* and the infirmities which come with multiplied years. What little we can do, we do it all the more thoroughly for Jesus as our experience ripens! If we must contract the sphere, we condense and intensify the motive. If we are living unto Christ, we love Him even when our heart grows cold to other things. When the eyes grow dim earthwards, they brighten towards Heaven! When the ears can hardly hear the voice of singing men and singing women, it still knows the music of Jesus’ name! And when the hands can do little in

human business, they begin feeling for the strings of the celestial harp that it may make melody for the Well-Beloved! I know of nothing which can possibly elevate our spirit, as workers for Christ, like the sense of doing all unto the Lord and not unto men! May the Spirit of God help us to rise into this perfect consecration!

I have not time to say more than just this word. A due sense of serving the Lord would ennoble all our service beyond conception. Think of working *for Him*—for HIM, the best of masters—before whom angels count it glory to bow! Work done for Him is, in itself, the best work that can be, for all that pleases Him must be pure and lovely, honest and of good report. Work for the eternal Father and work for Jesus are works which are good and only good! To live for Jesus is to be swayed by the noblest of motives. To live for the Incarnate God is to blend the love of God and the love of men in one passion. To live for the ever-living Christ is elevating to the soul, for its results will be most enduring. When all other work is dissolved this shall abide.

Men spoke of painting for eternity, but we, in very deed, *serve* for eternity. Soon shall all worlds behold the nobility of the service of Christ, for it will bring with it the most blessed of all rewards. When men look back on what they have done for their fellows, how small is the recompense of a patriotic life! The world soon forgets its benefactors. Many and many a man has been borne aloft in youth amidst the applause of men and then, in his old age, he has been left to starve into his grave. He who scattered gold at first, begs for pennies at last—the world called him generous while he had something to give, but when he had bestowed all, it blamed his imprudence! He who lives for Jesus will never have ground of complaint concerning his Lord, for He forsakes not His saints.

No man has ever regretted what he did for Jesus, except that he may regret that he has not done 10 times more! The Lord will not leave His old servants. “O God, You have taught me from my youth and up to now have I declared Your wondrous works. Now, also, when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not.” Such was the prayer of David and he was confident of being heard. Such may be the confidence of *every* servant of Christ. He may go down to his grave untroubled! He may rise and enter the dread solemnities of the eternal world without a fear, for service for Christ creates heroes to whom fear is unknown!

III. I close by saying that if we enter into the very spirit of this discourse, or even go beyond it—if from now on we live only for Jesus, so as never to know pleasure apart from Him, nor to have treasure out of Him, nor honor but in His honor, nor success but in the progress of His Kingdom—WE SHALL EVEN THEN HAVE DONE NO MORE THAN HE DESERVES AT OUR HANDS. For, first, we are *God’s creatures*. For whom should a creature live but for his Creator? Secondly, we are His *new creatures*, we are the twice-born of Heaven—should we not live for Him by whom we have been begotten for Glory? As many as have believed in Jesus are the produce of that Divine power which raised the Son of God from the dead—shall they not live in newness of life? God has taken this pains with us, that He has made us twice over and He has made a new Heaven and a new earth for us to dwell in—whom should we serve with all our mind but Him by whom we have been made anew?

Then comes in *redemption*. We are not our own, for we are bought with a price. We dare not be selfish! We may not put self in opposition to God. But I must go further—we may not allow self to be at all considered apart from God. Even when it seems that self and God might both be served at the same time, it must not be—self in any degree will spoil it all. We are never to be masters, but always servants—and to serve *ourselves* is to make ourselves masters. Turn your eyes, O my heart, to the Cross and see *Him* bleeding there whom Heaven adored! He is the Light of Glory, the joy and bliss of perfect spirits—and yet He dies there in pangs unutterable—dies for me! O bleeding heart, my name was engraved upon You! O tortured brain, Your thoughts were all of me!

O Christ, you loved me and love me still! And that I should serve You seems but natural! That I should pray to serve with intense white-hot enthusiasm is an impulse of my life. Do you not confess it so, my Brothers and Sisters? Besides, remember you are *one with Christ*. Whom should the spouse serve but her Husband? Whom should the hand serve but the Head? It scarcely is service. Christ is your *alter ego*, your other self—no, your *very* self—should you not live for Him? You are bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh and, therefore, you must love Him. Let a Divine selfishness impel you to love your Lord.

No hand, I think, counts it hard to be serving his own head. Surely, it can be no hardness to do service to Him with whom we are joined by bonds and bands of vital union! He is our Head and we are His body and His fullness. Let us fill up His Glory! Let us spread abroad the praises of His name! God help us to never finish this sermon, but to begin it now and go on preaching it in our lives, world without end! For Heaven shall be in this—“Not unto us, not unto us, but to Your name be praise!” And the beginnings of Heaven are with us now—the youth, the dawn of Glory, in proportion while we say from our very souls—“Whether we live, we live unto the Lord. And whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.”

And so shall it be from now on and forever! As to those that know nothing of this, seeing they know not Christ, may the Lord bring them to believe in Jesus Christ this day, that they may, through His Grace, become His servants. Amen and amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Luke 6*.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—145, 660, 661.**

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SHOES FOR PILGRIMS AND WARRIORS

NO. 3143

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 6, 1909.

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

*“And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace.”
Ephesians 6:15.*

THE Christian was evidently intended to be in motion, for here are shoes for his feet. His head is provided with a helmet, for he is to be thoughtful. His heart is covered with a breastplate, for he is to be a man of feeling. His whole nature is protected by a shield, for he is called to endurance and caution. And that he is to be active is certain, for a sword is provided for his hand to use and sandals with which his feet are to be shod. To suppose that a Christian is to be motionless as a post and inanimate as a stone, or merely pensive as a weeping willow and passive as a reed shaken by the wind, is altogether a mistake! God works in us and His Grace is the great motive power which secures our salvation, but He does not so work in us as to chloroform us into unconscious submission, or engineer us into mechanical motion—He orchestrates all our activities by working in us “to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Grace imparts healthy life and life rejoices in activity! The Lord never intended His people to be automatons worked by clockwork, or cold and dead statues—He meant them to have life, to have it abundantly—and in the power of that life to be full of energy! It is true He makes us lie down in green pastures, but equally certain is it that He leads us onward beside the still waters! A true Believer is an active person—he has feet and uses them.

Now, he who marches meets with stones, or if as a warrior he dashes into the thick of the conflict he is assailed with weapons and, therefore, he needs to be suitably shod to meet his perils. The active and energetic Christian meets with temptations which do not happen to others. Idle persons can scarcely be said to be in danger—they are a stage beyond that and are already overcome! Satan scarcely needs to tempt them—they rather tempt him and are a fermenting mass in which sin exceedingly multiplies—a decaying body around which the vultures of vice are sure to gather. But earnest laborious Believers are sure to be assailed, even as fruit bearing trees are certain to be visited by the birds. Satan cannot stand a man who earnestly serves God—he does damage to the arch-enemy’s dominions and, therefore, he must be incessantly assailed. The Prince of Darkness will try, if he can, to injure the good man’s character, to break his communion with God, to spoil the simplicity of his faith, to make him proud of what he is doing, or to make him despair of success. In some way or other he will, if possible, bruise the worker’s heel or trip him up, or lame him altogether. Because of all these dangers,

Infinite Mercy has provided Gospel shoes for the Believer's feet—shoes of the best kind—such as only those warriors wear who serve the Lord of Hosts!

We shall at this time first *examine the shoes* and then *try them on*.

I. Our first duty is to EXAMINE THE SHOES which are provided for us by our Captain. And in doing so we are delighted to find that *they come from a blessed Maker*, for the feet of the Believer are to be shod with a Divine preparation. Many preparations and inventions are used for protecting feet, but this is a preparation in which infinite skill has been displayed and the same wisdom put forth as in the Gospel, which is the masterpiece of God! Every portion of the Gospel is from God and all the influence which makes it a Gospel of Peace is His—and we are therefore thankful to find that we are to wear “the preparation of the Gospel of Peace.” It would not be meet that he who is helmeted with Divine Salvation should be shod with a mere human production! Having begun in the Spirit, it would be strange to be made perfect in the flesh. We would not be like the image of the monarch's dream whose head was of fine gold and whose feet were part of iron and part of clay. We rejoice that all the pieces of armor which compose our panoply come forth from the celestial Armorer whose productions are without a flaw!

We are glad to find that *the shoes are made of excellent material*, for they are composed of “the preparation of the Gospel of Peace”—and what better material can there be than the Gospel—the Gospel of Peace and that peace which grows out of the Gospel? This is what is meant. We believe in a Gospel which was formed in the purpose of God from all eternity, designed with Infinite Wisdom, worked out at an enormous expense, costing nothing less than the blood of Jesus, brought home by Infinite Power, even by the might of the Holy Spirit! It is a Gospel full of blessings, any one of which would outweigh a world in price—a Gospel as free as it is full, a Gospel everlasting and immutable, a Gospel of which we can never think too much, whose praises we can never exaggerate! It is from this choice Gospel that its choicest essence is taken, namely, its peace. And from this peace those sandals are prepared with which a man may tread on the lion and the adder, yes, and on the fierce burning coals of malice, slander and persecution! What better shoes can our souls require?

What matchless material for girding the pilgrim's feet is that which is here mentioned, namely the peace which comes from the Gospel, the preparation of heart and life which springs of a full knowledge, reception and experience of the Gospel in our souls! What does it mean? It means, first, that *a sense of perfect peace with God* is the grandest thing in all the world with which to travel through life. Let a man know that his sins are forgiven him for Christ's name's sake, that he is reconciled to God by the death of His Son and that between him and God there is no ground of difference—and what a joyful pilgrim he becomes! When we know that as the Lord looks on us, His glance is full of infinite, undivided affection, that He sees us in Jesus Christ as cleansed from every speck of sin and as, “accepted in the Beloved,” and that by virtue of a complete Atonement we are forever reconciled to God, then do we march through life without

fear, booted for all the exigencies of the way, yes, ready to plunge through fire and water, thorn and thistle, bush and briar without fear! A man at peace with God dreads neither the ills of life nor the terrors of death! Poverty, sickness, persecution and pain have lost their sting when sin is pardoned! What is there that a man needs to fear when he knows that in no affliction will there be any trace of the judicial anger of God, but all will come from a Father's hand and work his lasting good! Goliath had armor of brass upon his legs, but he is better armed who wears a full assurance of peace with God through the Gospel! He shall tread down his enemies and crush them as grapes in the winepress! His shoes shall be iron and brass and, shod with them he shall stand upon the high places of the earth and his feet shall not slip. Achilles received a deadly wound in the heel, but no arrow can pierce the heel of the man whose foot is sandaled with reconciliation by atoning blood! Many a warrior has fainted on the march and dropped from the ranks exhausted, but no weariness of the way can happen to the man who is upheld by the eternal God, for his strength shall be renewed daily.

The preparation of the Gospel of Peace here mentioned must be understood to comprehend more than the legal peace of justification by faith. If we would enjoy the fullest comfort of the well-shod pilgrim, we must have the exceeding peace which springs from intimate, undisturbed communion with God. We should pray not only to feel that we have been brought out of our natural enmity into peace with God, so as to be no more culprits but children, but also to dwell in the full joy of our new relationship. It is a sweet thing for a child of God to feel that he is so acting that his heavenly Father has no reason for walking contrary to him. You know right well that as a child of God, you will not be condemned and cast away as an alien—but you also know that as a child, you may greatly displease your Father and render it necessary for Him to frown upon you, and visit you with stripes—and this you should, with the utmost diligence and prayerfulness, labor to prevent. There are times when the Lord of pilgrims hides His face from them in sore displeasure, and then it is very hard travelling. Life is “a great and terrible wilderness” when the Lord's Presence is withdrawn. The more a man loves the Lord, the more does he suffer when there is a temporary suspension of happy communion between his soul and Heaven—he cannot be happy again till he knows that he is fully restored to the paternal favor. O child of God, you will very soon have your feet torn with the briars of the way if you do not abide in fellowship with God! When Adam had lost his oneness with God, he found out that he was naked, and so will you if you lose your communion with Jesus. Where before you dashed onward as with a charmed life, treading the world and all its cares beneath your feet, you will find yourself pierced with many sorrows, bleeding with acute griefs, scratched, torn, lacerated with trials, losses, crosses and endless annoyances. If we continue in the love of Jesus, pleasing Him in all things, jealously watching and carefully observing His will, our mind will be kept by the peace of God which passes all understanding—and our road to Heaven will be a pleasant one! It may indeed be very rough in itself and

in the judgment of others, but it will be so smoothed to us by the peace which reigns within that we shall glory in infirmity, exult in suffering and triumph in distress, knowing that the Lord is with us and no harm can come to us. Thus you see that the peace which comes of justification—and the fuller peace which arises from enjoying the love of God are a grand preparation for our life's journey—shoes for the feet unrivalled in excellence!

It is also a grand sandal for a pilgrim's feet when the Gospel of Peace has fully conformed his mind to the Lord's will. Some children of God are not at peace with God because they do not fully acquiesce in the Divine purposes. To them the pilgrim path must be a painful one, for nothing can please them—their self-will creates swarms of vexations for them. But to hearts which have crucified self and yielded all to the will of God, the most thorny paths are pleasant. He who can say concerning all things, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight," is shod for all ways and weathers, and may march on undismayed. Fully conformed to the Divine will, saints are invulnerable and invincible, "none shall be weary nor stumble among them, neither shall the laces of their shoes be broken"—

***"They hold by nothing here below.
Appoint their journey, and they go
Through joy or grief they march the same,
Triumphant still in Jesus' name."***

Surely it is when the heart is completely at one with God that the true beauty of the Christian character is seen! Then it is that the heavenly Bridegroom cries out, "How beautiful are your feet with shoes, O prince's daughter!" Then, too, the Church in her tribulation becomes bright and glorious, like her Lord, of whom we read, "His feet are like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." Shod with perfect delight in the will of the Lord, we are able to surmount all the difficulties and trials of the way, for it becomes sweet to suffer when we see that it is the will of God. Resignation is good, but perfect acquiescence is better, and happy—thrice happy is the man who feels it! No silver sandals were ever so precious, no covering of golden mail adorned with precious stones were so glorious to look upon as a mind molded to the Divine Will, perfectly in tune with the mind of the Lord Most High!

The preparation of the Gospel of Peace, you thus see, is, in many aspects, the fittest help for our journey to the promised land. And he who has his feet shod with it need not fear the flinty ways, the craggy rocks, or the thorny passes.

But the Gospel of Peace has another side to it, for it not only brings us peace with God, but it inspires us with *peace towards ourselves*. Civil war is the worst of wars and for a man to be at discord with himself is the worst of strife. The worst peril of Christian pilgrimage is that which arises from the pilgrim's own self—and if he is ill at ease within himself, his course cannot be a happy one. The prayer of the evening hymn is very suggestive—

***"That with the world, myself and Thee,
I, ever I sleep, at peace may be."***

It is a most necessary matter to have peace at home. It is a cruel case for a man when his own heart condemns him. To whom shall he look for a defense when his own conscience indicts him and all his faculties turn king's evidence against him? It is to be feared that many Believers habitually do that which they would not like to be questioned upon by the rule of the Word of God—they have to close their eyes to many passages of Scripture, or else they would be uneasy in their consciences. Brothers and Sisters, this makes wretched travelling! It is like walking through a wood with bare feet. If you cannot satisfy your own heart that you are right, you are in a sad case, indeed, and the sooner matters are altered the better. But if a man can say before the living God, "I know that what I am about to do is right and whatever comes of it, I have a pure motive and the Lord's sanction to sustain me in it," then he proceeds to action with a nimble tread. Such a pilgrim is girt for the roughest of ways and will hold on his way joyfully to the end. Rest of conscience shoes us right well, but a question as to the rightness of our procedure makes us bare-footed.

Come what may, if we order our ways with reverent regard to the Lord's commands, we shall be able to confront the future with serenity, for we shall not have to accuse ourselves of bringing ourselves into trouble by sin, or losing our joys by indulging in forbidden things. When the Believer falls into any trouble through having been zealous for God, then may he spread his complaint before God with the full expectation that He will bring him out of all his difficulties, for is it not written, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord...none of his steps shall slide"? Oh, to walk in such a way that your conscience is void of offense both towards God and towards man—then integrity and uprightness will preserve you and your goings will be established. "He will keep the feet of His saints." "He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. They shall bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone."

While travelling through the mazes of life, another form of the preparation of the Gospel of Peace will be of essential service to us, namely, *peace with our fellow men*. The Gospel of Peace leads us into the closest bonds of amity with our fellow Believers, although, alas, it is not always possible to prevent offenses arising, even with the best of them! If we cannot make all our Brothers and Sisters amiable, we are at least to be at peace on our side—and if we succeed in this, no great disagreement can arise, for it always needs two to make a quarrel. It is well to go to bed every night feeling, "I have no difference in my soul with any of the members of Christ's body. I wish well to everyone and love them all in my heart." This would enable us to travel in right royal style over fields which now are often stony with controversy and thorny with prejudice. Theological conflicts and ecclesiastical squabbles would utterly disappear if we were shod with the true spirit of the Gospel of Peace. An unwillingness to think harshly of any Christian is a sandal most easy to the feet, protecting it from many a thorn. Wear it in the Church, wear it in all holy service, wear it in all fellowship with Christians and you will find your

way among the brethren greatly smoothed! You will win their love and esteem before long, and avoid a world of jealousy and opposition which would otherwise have impeded your course.

It is well to travel girt with this shoe of *peace with all mankind*. "If it is possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men." It is barely possible, but aim at it—and if you do not perfectly succeed, try again. Unconverted men will not love your religion, for they are carnal. That you cannot help, but you must love them, carnal as they are, and by degrees you may win them to love both you and your Lord. If they will not live peaceably with you, yet give them your love and live peaceably with them. Be not easily provoked. Bear and forbear, forgive and love on, return good for evil, seek to benefit even the most unthankful and you will travel to Heaven in the most pleasant possible manner. Hatred, envy and persecution may come, but a loving spirit materially blunts their edge and oftentimes inherits the promise, "When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." If you have to feel, "Now, I am going this part of the journey with the view of avenging a wrong," you will not journey pleasantly or safely! But if from the depth of your soul you can say, "When Christ made peace with God for me, He made peace between me and my bitterest foe," you will march on like a hero! Travel through the world as a sincere philanthropist, with your feet shod with love to all born of woman and your course will be happy and honorable. God grant us that loving spirit which comes of free Grace and is the work of the Holy Spirit, for that is a mystic sandal which gives wings to the feet and lightens a weary road.

Having thus described these Gospel shoes, I should like to say that the feet of our Lord and Master were sandaled in this manner. He was the King of Pilgrims and to Him, the way was even rougher than it can be to us. But these were the shoes He wore and, having worn them, He counsels us to put on the same. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you," He said. Always while He dwelt in this world He was in fellowship with God. He could truly say, "I came down from Heaven not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. He who sent Me is with Me. I am not alone because the Father is with Me." He always sought the good of His chosen—"having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." And as for His enemies, He had only prayers and tears for them. He was at peace with all above, around and within Him. That peaceableness of His, that wonderful serenity, was one of the marvelous points in His Character. You never find Him worried, disturbed, flustered. No, that is *our* infirmity because we take our shoes off and are taken by surprise—but His feet were always shod—He dwelt in perfect peace and, therefore, He was the grandest Pilgrim and the noblest Worker. We cannot need to be better shod than our Lord was! Let us sandal our hearts with His peace and we shall be royally prepared for our journey!

I may add that these shoes are such as will last all our journey through. We feel most comfortable in our old shoes, for they fit the foot so well, but they will at last wear out. These shoes of my text are old, yet always new and are like those which Israel wore in the wilderness, of

which it is said, “Your shoe is not waxen old upon your foot.” The everlasting Gospel yields us everlasting peace! The good news from Heaven never grows stale, neither will the peace which it brings ever become like the Gibeonites’ “old shoes and patched.” The man who wears the preparation of the Gospel of Peace was comforted by it when he was young and it still cheers him in his later days—it made him a good traveler when he first set out and it will protect his last footsteps when he crosses the river Jordan and climbs the celestial hills!

Friends, are you all thus booted for your life-journey? See you well to it.

II. We come now to our second business, LET US TRY ON THESE SHOES.

Here our joy is great to find that *they fit perfectly* and need no tugging and straining to draw them on. By a miracle more strange than magic, the preparation of the Gospel of Peace suits every foot, whether it is that of a babe in Grace, or a strong man in Christ Jesus. No man can travel well, much less engage in battle successfully unless his dress is comfortable, especially that part of it which relates to the feet. And here we have the grand advantage that no foot was ever uneasy when once it had put on this shoe! Mephibosheths who have been lame in both feet even from birth have found this shoe works miracles and causes them to leap as harts upon the mountains! The Gospel of Peace helps all our infirmities, heals all the wounds of our old sins and suits itself to all our tender places. Whatever the weakness may be, the Gospel provides for it! Whatever the distress, its peace relieves it. Other shoes have their pinching places, but he who wears the preparation of the Gospel of Peace shall know no straitness of spirit, for the Gospel gives rest to our minds. Real Gospel really believed, means real peace! That which disturbs us is something alien to the Spirit of the Gospel, but the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of Peace. Who would not wear such a shoe?

The preparation of the Gospel of Peace is a wonderful shoe for *giving its wearer a firm foothold*. Surely it was of this shoe that Habakkuk sang when he said, “The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and He will make me to walk upon my high places.” When persons are on slippery rocks, or dangerous eminences, where a fall would be fatal, it is well to be so shod that the feet get grip and hold. Nothing aids a man to stand fast in the Lord like the peace of the Gospel. Many professors are very soon thrown over—they are attacked with doctrinal error and they readily yield. They are assailed by temptation and their feet go out from under them. But the man who has perfect peace with God and who relies upon the Most High shall never be moved, for the Lord upholds him. His shoes have driven themselves into the eternal Truths of God and hold like anchors! Tell him the Atonement is not true, preach up to him the bloodless neology of modern thought and he ridicules the ineffectual attempt because he knows whom he has believed and feels a heavenly peace within flowing from the substitutionary Sacrifice. Tell him that the Doctrines of Grace are a mistake, that salvation is all of free will and man’s merit, and he says, “No, I know better. I know

the Doctrines of Sovereign Grace to be true by experience, I know I am God's chosen, I know that I am called, I know that I am justified, for I know that I have peace with God as the result of all these." You cannot move him an inch! His creed is interwoven with his personal consciousness and there is no arguing him out of it! In these days of skepticism, when no man seems to have any resting place, it is well to be so shod that you can and do stand on the Truth and cannot be blown about like thistledown in the breeze.

The shoe of our text is equally famous for its *suitability for marching* in the ways of daily duty. Soldiers have little time for contemplating the comfort of their shoes, or their fitness for mere standing, for they have daily marching to perform. We, too, have our marching, and as far as some of us are concerned, they are no mere parades, but heavy marching involving stern toil and protracted effort. A soul at perfect peace with God is in a fit state for the severest movements. A sense of pardoned sin and reconciliation with God fits us for anything and everything. When the burden of sin is gone, all other burdens are light. Since we are no longer on the road to Hell, the roughest places of our pilgrimage do not distress us. In every sphere, a heart at perfect peace with God is the soundest preparation for progress and the surest support under trials. Try on these shoes, my Brothers and Sisters, and see if they do not enable you to run without weariness and walk without fainting. All earth cannot find their like—they are unrivalled—they make men like the angels to whom duty is delight!

These Gospel shoes are also *an effectual preservative* from all the ordinary roughness of the road of life, although to most of us it is far from smooth. He who expects to find a grassy walk all the way to Heaven, well mown and rolled, or looks for a highway leveled by a steam-roller, will be sorrowfully mistaken. The way is rugged, like the goat tracks of Engedi, and oftentimes so narrow and so far on high that the eagle's eye cannot discern it! The blood of former pilgrims stains the way to Glory, yet from all perils to our feet, the preparation of the Gospel of Peace will guard us! From fears within and fighting without, Gospel peace will surely deliver us. Perhaps we are more vexed with little trials than with great ones—certainly we bear them with far less equanimity—but a peaceful heart protects alike from tiny thorns and terrible rocks. Everyday vexations as well as extraordinary tribulations we shall bear cheerfully when the Peace of God keeps our heart and mind!

Beloved, this shoe is also *good for climbing*. Do you ever practice the holy art of spiritual climbing, God's blessed Spirit leading the way? Do you ever climb Mount Tabor to be transfigured with your Master? Have you watched with Him one hour and seen His conflict and His victory? Have you ever looked from Pisgah's glorious heights upon the goodly land and Lebanon, anticipating the glory to be revealed? Has your spirit ever been away there alone in mysterious communing with God upon the Hermons? I trust you know what climbing work means and that you have enjoyed rapt ecstatic fellowship with Jesus Christ. But of this I am sure, you can never mount on high if your feet are not shod with the Peace of God! Unshod with these sacred sandals, there is no climbing!

Only those who delight themselves in the Lord God shall ascend the Hill of the Lord and stand in His Holy Place!

The heart prepared by peace with God is shod suitably for *running* as well as for climbing. There are periods when all our energies must be put forth and we must rush forward at the heroic pace, for, at certain passages in life's campaign, things must be carried by storm and every faculty must dash forward at its swiftest speed. We cannot at all times keep up the swiftness, which, nevertheless, is occasionally required of us, but the man for a push and a dash is he whose soul abides in peace. Troubled in heart, our feet are blistered, our knees are weak and our movements are painfully slow. But the joy of the Lord is our strength and in the power of it we become like Asahel, fleet of foot as a young roe. Try on these shoes, my limping Brothers and Sisters! What do you say?

Lastly, this shoe is *good for fighting*, and that I gather from Paul having put it among the armor. In the old style, fighting meant hand to hand and foot to foot, and then it was necessary for the feet to be well protected and, indeed, so well covered over as to be useful in assault, for the warriors kicked with their feet as well as struck with their hands—and many a foe was placed *hors de combat* with a heavy kick! Christians are expected to fight with their feet in the battle against sin and Satan! Indeed, they must fight with all their powers and faculties! That grand promise has been given to us, "The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." What a tread we will give him when we once have the opportunity! We shall need to have our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace to break that old dragon's head and grind his snares to powder! And God helping us, we shall do it! Our Covenant Head has trampled on the old serpent and so shall all His members.

Let this suffice concerning these shoes, but a serious question suggests itself to me. Are there not some of you who have to travel to eternity and yet have no shoes for the journey? How can the unconverted man hope to reach Heaven when he has no shoes on his feet? How will he bear the troubles of life, the temptations of the flesh and the trials of death? I pray you, unconverted ones, look at yourselves and at the way—and see how impossible it is for you to accomplish the journey unless you go to Jesus and obtain from Him the Grace which will make you pilgrims to Glory! Go, I pray you, and find peace in Him—and then your life-journey shall be happy and safe, and the end eternal joy—for your feet will be shod with "the preparation of the Gospel of Peace."

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
EPHESIANS 6:10-24.**

Verse 10. *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.* Everything depends upon that. Whether you are called upon to work, or to wait, or to watch, or to suffer, you have need to be strong. If you are not strong, the very armor that you wear will be a burden to you! It is of the utmost importance that Christians should be as strong in Grace as they can possibly be. And the power that is to be in them is to

be the power of God—“the power of His might.” What a wonderful power that is! The power of flesh is weakness and the power of man is fading, but the power of God is almighty and unchangeable! And if we can be girt about with this power, there is scarcely any limit to what we may successfully attempt.

“Finally”—as if this were a matter of the highest importance, to be considered first and last—“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” You know how strong Paul was—he was a veritable giant for Christ and he here calls upon his brethren to be as he was. He did not want to be brother to dwarfs, so he appealed to his brethren to “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.”

11. *Put on the whole armor of God.* The armor of God will not serve you unless you, yourself, are strong. It needs a strong man to carry girdle, breastplate, shoes, shield, helmet and sword. Let me impress upon you the fact that we must first of all get strong within and *after that*, “put on the whole armor of God,” that armor which God has provided for the good soldiers of Jesus Christ—that armor which distinguishes men as belonging to the army of God. Do not merely put on a part of it, but put on the whole of it! Do not simply look at the armor and clean it up so as to keep it bright, but put it on, wear it—it is meant for you to use in the great battle for the right against the wrong! “Put on the whole armor of God.”

11. *That you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.* He will attack you sometimes by force and sometimes by fraud. By might or by sleight he will seek to overcome you and no unarmed man can stand against him. Never go out without all your armor on, for you can never tell where you may meet the devil. He is not omnipresent, but nobody can tell where he is not, for he and his troops of devils appear to be found everywhere on this earth.

12. *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood.* Our great fight is not against our fellow men. As Christians, we go not forth armed with sword and shield to fight against “flesh and blood.”

12. *But against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* Our battle is against evil wherever it is to be found, against evil in every shape and form. Evil is as much in the world today as it was in Paul’s time and we must fight against it everywhere. We are not to shut our eyes to it, or try to patch up a compromise with it. Christians are bound to fight against evil principalities, evil powers, the evil rulers of the darkness of this world—and wicked spirits in high places.

13. *Therefore take unto you the whole armor of God.* What stress the Apostle lays upon this point! He repeats the command he had just given and again emphasizes the fact that it is “the whole armor of God” that is to be worn. There are some professing Christians who only in part obey the injunction given here—but it is no use to wear a part of the Christian armor and to leave the rest of the soul unarmed. A little leak will sink a ship and the absence of one piece of the armor of God may cost a man his soul! “Therefore take unto you the whole armor of God.”

13. *That you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.* That is what we have to do—to keep our place and our standing as Christians right to the end. To be apparently pure and holy for a time is no use at all. Transient professors will find everlasting ruin, “but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” We are in God’s army for life—we can never quit this warfare till God shall call us home!

14. *Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with Truth.* Let this girdle of the everlasting Truth of God brace you up. Let it tighten all the rest of your armor.

14. *And having on the breastplate of righteousness.* Let your heart be guarded by the knowledge that you are right with God—that you love that which is holy and true. Put on the righteousness of Christ, Himself, as the best possible protection for your heart.

15. *And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace.* Rough roads grow smooth when these blessed Gospel sandals are on your feet. A little stone in the shoe will make the pilgrim’s progress a very wearisome and painful one, so try to keep out all the stones—everything about which you have any scruple, or that you think may be wrong—and walk in the safe and narrow way set forth in the Gospel of Peace.

16. *Above all.* Over all, covering all from head to foot.

16. *Taking the shield of faith.* [See Sermon #416, Volume 7—SHIELD OF FAITH—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] For you need this shield to protect both your armor and yourself.

16. *Therewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.* Not only the fiery darts of the Wicked One, but those, also, of wicked men and wicked women who may throw at you afar, darts that are all ablaze which would burn as well as pierce you if you were not well guarded against them. Nothing can quench these fiery darts but the shield of faith!

17. *And take the helmet of salvation.* You used to wear the helmet of pride with its fine nodding plumes, but that has been taken off of you long ago. Now put on “the helmet of Salvation.” This will effectually defend your head and no sword will be able to cleave through it to injure you. Your brain and everything that is connected with your mental powers will be right when you know that you are saved—and when the power of God’s salvation is working within you!

17. *And the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.* [See Sermon #2201, Volume 37—THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] There is no sword like that! It pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Nothing can resist the Word of God if it is only wielded aright. There is one more weapon in the heavenly armory.

18. *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.* When you cannot use your sword, and even when you can hardly grasp your shield, you can pray. That weapon of “all prayer” is of the handiest kind because it can be turned in any and every direction. “Praying always with all prayer”—groaning prayers, weeping prayers, prayers that are made up

of single words, prayers that have not a word in them, prayers for others, prayers of confession, prayers of thanksgiving—“praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.”

18. *And watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.* But will prayer for other people help us? Yes, very much! You will sometimes find that when you cannot pray for yourself, it is a good plan to pray for somebody else. Think of some child of God and pray for him or her—and then the fire of supplication will soon burn up in your heart! The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends and He will do the same for you. I have heard many of our members say that when they have felt bound in prayer, they have pleaded for their Pastor and afterwards they have been able to pray for themselves. I advise more of you to try that plan—it will do me good and then if it also does you good, there will be a double advantage in it! Paul was of the same mind as I am, for he added.

19, 20. *And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds.* “An ambassador in bonds!” Such a thing was never heard of in earthly courts! We never think of chaining an ambassador, but this is how men treated this great messenger from the court of Heaven!

20-22. *That therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. But that you also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that you might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.* It is well for Christian people to know how it fares with their spiritual guides. Paul wished the Ephesian saints to know in what state of heart he found himself—that they might the more intelligently pray for him.

23, 24. *Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.* I am sure that we can heartily repeat that benediction. May the Lord send much of His Grace to all His people in every part of the earth who love Him in sincerity! Amen.

—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 SHIELD OF FAITH

NO. 416

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 27, 1861,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall
be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”
Ephesians 6:16.***

LIKE the Spartans, every Christian is born a warrior. It is his destiny to be assaulted. It is his duty to attack. Part of his life will be occupied with defensive warfare. He will have to defend earnestly the faith once delivered to the saints. He will have to resist the devil, he will have to stand against all his wiles—and having done all, still to stand. He will, however, be but a sorry Christian if he acts only on the defensive. He must be one who goes against his foes as well as stands still to receive their advance. He must be able to say with David, “I come against you in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel whom you have defied.”

He must wrestle not with flesh and blood but against principalities and powers. He must have weapons for his warfare—not carnal—but “mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.” He must not, I say, be content to live in the stronghold though he is then well guarded and munitions of stupendous strength his dwelling place may be. But he must go forth to attack the castles of the enemy and to put them down, to drive the Canaanite out of the land.

Now, there are many ways in which the Christian may to a great degree forget his marshal character. And alas, there are not a few who, if they are Christians at all, certainly know but very little of that daily warfare to which the Captain of our salvation calls His disciples. They will know most of fighting who cleave closest to king David. They who are willing not merely to be with him when he is in Saul’s court with his fingers amid the strings of the harp, but going in and out before the people and behaving discreetly, so that “all Israel and Judah loved David because he went out and came in before them.”

They must be men who are willing to go with David into the cave of Adullam when he is outlawed, when his character has become a stench in the nostrils of every proud hypocrite and when Saul the king—in his day the representative of that worldly religion which is not of God, but stands in the strength of man—when he hunts David to seek his life. Thus the men who are willing to follow Christ in the midst of an ungodly and perverse generation must come right out from it and be separate. Their life will have to be like the life of the men of Naphtali who hazarded their lives onto the death in the high places of the field.

You will remember that Jonathan, one of the sweetest characters in the Word of God, is one of whom, after all, there is little to be said. His life was inglorious from the very time that he forsook David and his death was among the slain of the Philistines upon the dewless mountains of Gilboa. Alas, poor Jonathan—he could give David his bow—but he could not draw

the bow for David. He could give David his garments, even to his armor—but he could not put on the armor for David. The attraction of his father's court was too much for him and there he stayed.

In that Book of the Chronicles, where the Holy Spirit has recorded the names of the mighty men that were with David in Adullam we find not the name of Jonathan. We find the names of those who broke through the Philistines to give David a drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem. We find the name of the man who went down into the pit in the time of winter and smote the lion. But Jonathan has not the honor to stand recorded in the list of the great host which was like the host of God. And there are Christians of that kind nowadays. They have a soft religion—religion which shuns opposition, a reed-like religion which bows before every blast—unlike that cedar of godliness which stands aloft in the midst of the storm and claps its boughs in the hurricane for very joy of triumph, though the earth be all in arms abroad.

Such men, like those who shunned David in Adullam, lack the faith that shares the glory. Though saved, yet their names shall not be found written among the mighty men who for our Great Commander's sake are willing to suffer the loss of all things and to go forth without the camp bearing His reproach. Those Christians too, who having come clean out from the world—diligently engaged in building up the Church—will have to fight more than others who are rather built up than builders.

You remember, in Nehemiah's day, how the Jews worked when they built the walls of Jerusalem. With one hand they held the trowel and in the other they held a weapon. "The builders, everyone had his sword girded by his side and so built." Moreover there were master masons along the wall and the laborers all actually worked. But here and there you might see a sentinel ready to sound the trumpet so that the workmen might prove warriors and rush to the fray and drive away their foes.

Be very diligent in doing good to the Church of Christ and you shall soon have reason to defend your cause. Serve your Master zealously and diligently and let the Lord's blessing rest upon your labors, the Lord's blessing will entail Satan's curse, the smile of God will necessarily incur the frown of man. According to your nonconformity to the world, your daring to be singular—when to be singular is to be right—according to your diligence in building up the wall of Jerusalem, you shall be compelled to recognize your soldierly character. To you the text shall come with greater emphasis than to more cowardly souls. "Above all, take the shield of faith wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

Having treated the character of the persons who will most require the shield provided in the text, let us proceed at once to discuss the words before us. We will do so thus. First, let us *expound the comparison*. Secondly, *enforce the exhortation*. And thirdly, *propound it as a word of comfort to any trembling sinners who are now specially attacked with the faith of the fiery darts of the wicked*.

I. First, then, let us EXPOUND THE METAPHOR. Faith is here compared to a shield. There are four or five particulars in which we may liken faith to a shield.

The natural idea which lies upon the very surface of the simile is that faith, like a shield, *protects us against attack*. Different kinds of shields

were used by the ancients but there is a special reference in our text to the large shield which was sometimes employed. I believe the word which is translated "shield," sometimes signifies a door, because their shields were as large as a door. They covered the man entirely. You remember that verse in the Psalms which exactly has the idea, "You, Lord will bless the righteous, with favor will You compass him as with a shield."

As the shield enveloped the entire man, so, we think faith envelopes the entire man and protects him from all missiles wherever they may be aimed against him. You will remember the cry of the Spartan mother to her son when he went out to battle. She said, "Take care that you return with your shield, or upon it." Now, as she meant that he could return upon his shield dead, it shows that they often employed shields which were large enough to be a bier for a dead man and consequently quite large enough to cover the body of a well man. Such a shield as that is meant in the text. That is the illustration before us.

Faith protects the whole man. Let the assault of Satan be against the head, let him try to deceive us with unsettled notions in theology, let him tempt us to doubt those things which are verily received among us. A full faith in Christ preserves us against dangerous heresies and enables us to hold fast those things which we have received, which we have been taught and have learned and have made our own by experience. Unsettledness in notion generally springs from a weakness of faith. A man that has strong faith in Christ has got a hand with such a grip on the doctrines of grace that you could not unclasp it.

He knows what he has believed. *He* understands what he has received. *He* could not and would not give up what he knows to be the Truth of God, though all the schemes that men devise should assail him with their most treacherous art. While faith will guard the head, it will also guard the heart. When temptation to love the world comes in, then faith holds up thoughts of the future and confidence of the reward that awaits the people of God. Faith enables the Christian to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt and so the heart is protected.

Then when the enemy makes his cut at the sword-arm of a Christian, to disable him if possible from future service, faith protects the arm like a shield. And he is able to do exploits for his Master and go forth, still conquering and to conquer, in the name of Him that has loved us. Suppose the arrow is aimed at his feet—the enemy attempts to make him trip in his daily life—endeavors to mislead him in the uprightness of his walk and conversation? Faith protects his feet and he stands fast in slippery places. Neither does his foot skip, nor can the enemy triumph over him.

Or suppose the arrow is aimed at the knee and Satan seeks to make him weak in prayer and tells him that God will shut out his cry and never listen to the voice of his supplication? Then faith protects him and in the power of faith, with confidence, he has access to God and draws near unto His Mercy Seat. Or let the arrow be aimed at his conscience and let it be winged with the remembrance of some recent sin. Yet faith protects the conscience, for its full assurance of atonement quenches the fiery darts with that delightful text, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans us from all sin."

So there is no part of a man which is not secure. Although Satan will certainly attack him in every direction—let him come where he will—

**“He that has made his refuge God,
Shall find a most secure abode.”**

Nor does faith only protect the whole man, but if you will think for a moment you will see that the Apostle suggests the idea that *it protects his armor, too*. After not counting various pieces, he says, “Above all.” The man of God is to put on the girdle and the breastplate and he is to be shod and he is to wear his helmet. But though these are all armor, yet *faith* is an armor for his armor. It is not only a defense for him but a defense for his defenses. Thus faith not only shields the man but shields his graces, too.

You may easily perceive how this is. Satan sometimes attacks our sincerity. He tries to cut the girdle of Truth which is about our loins. But faith enables us to be all sincere, like Moses who forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king and refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. Then the enemy will often make an attack against our righteousness and try to batter our breast-plate. Yet does faith come in and enable us like Joseph to exclaim, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God.” Or like Job we cry, “Till I die I will not remove my integrity from me.”

Or like David we can cry, even in the worst of slanders, “You Lord that delivered me out of the jaw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.” You see how faith guards the breast-plate and protects the girdle? All our virtues are unable to live of themselves—they need grace to preserve them and that grace is given us through faith. Are you meek? Cover your meekness with faith, or else you will give way to a hasty speech. Are you full of decision? Let your decision be shielded with confidence in God or else your decision may waver and your firmness may give way.

Have you the spirit of love and gentleness? Take care that you have the shield of faith, or your gentleness may yet turn to anger and your love be changed to bitterness. We must protect our graces with faith as well as the nature they adorn. It is not simply the head but the helmet, not the feet merely, but the shoes. Not the loins, but the blade—all must be shielded and secured by this all-covering, all-protecting, all-triumphant shield of faith.

In the second place, let me suggest that faith like a shield *receives the blows which are meant for the man himself*. Some Christians think that faith would enable them to *escape* blows—that if they had faith everything would be quiet, everything would be peaceful and calm. I know how young Christians imagine this. They think as soon as ever they have come out of their first convictions of their own sinfulness and found the Savior, oh, now they are going to ride softly to Heaven, singing all the way. Why did they put their armor on at all if there were to be no battles? Why have they put their hand to the plow if they are not to plow to the end of the furrow and often to wipe the sweat from their face through their hard toil?

Why enlist, young men, if you are not wanted to fight? What is the good of a fair-weather soldier—one who stays at home to feed at the public expense? No, let the soldier be ready when war comes. Let him expect the conflict as a part and necessary consequence of his profession. But be

armed with faith—it receives the blows. The poor shield is knocked and hammered and battered like a hen house exposed in the time of storm. Blow after blow comes rattling upon it and though it turns death aside, yet the shield is competent itself to bear the cut and the thrust.

So must our faith do—it must be cut at, it must bear the blows. Some people, instead of using the shield of faith to bear the blow, use the skulking place of cowards. Ashamed of Christ they make no profession of Him—or having professed Christ, ashamed of the profession—they hide themselves by deserting their colors, by conformity to the world. Perhaps they are even called to preach the Gospel but they do it in so quiet and gentle a way—like men that wear soft raiment and ought to be in kings' houses. Unlike John the Baptist, they are “reeds shaken with the wind.”

Of them no one says anything ill because they have done no ill to Satan's kingdom. Against them Satan never roars—why should he? He is not afraid of them, therefore he need not come out against them. “Let them alone,” he says, “thousands such as those will never shake my kingdom.” But this is *not* to use the shield of faith. This, I repeat it, is to use the sulking-places of an ignoble coward. Others use the shield of presumption. They think it is right with them when it is not. They are proof, not against the attacks of Satan, but against the weapons of our spiritual warfare.

Seared in *their* conscience as with a hot iron they fear not the rebukes of God's Law. Deadened even to the voice of love they bow not before the invitations of Christ. They go on their way caring for none of those things. Presumption has made them secure. Such people have no blows to suffer. Their shield lets them go through the world quietly, saying, “Peace, peace, where there is no peace.” But only uplift the shield of faith, bearing the blood-red emblem of the Cross and there are plenty of the knights of Hell who are ready to unhorse you. On, Champion, on! In the name of Him that is with you. No lance can pierce that shield. No sword shall ever be able to cut through it. It shall preserve you in all battle and in all strife—you shall bring it home yourself—through it you shall be more than conqueror. Faith, then, is like a shield because it has to bear the blows.

Thirdly, faith is like a shield because it has good need to be *strong*. A man who has some pasteboard shield may lift it up against his foe—the sword will go through it and reach his heart. Or perhaps in the moment when the lance is in rest and his foe is dashing upon him he thinks that his shield may preserve him—and lo it is dashed to shivers and the blood gushes from the fountain and he is slain. He that would use a shield must take care that it be a shield of *proof*. He that has true faith, the faith of God's elect, has such a shield that he will see the swords of his enemies go to a thousand shivers over it every time they smite the shield of faith.

And as for their spears, if they but once come in contact with this shield, they will break into a thousand splinters, or bend like reeds when pressed against the wall—they cannot pierce it, but they shall themselves be quenched or broken in pieces. You will say, how then are we to know whether our faith is a right faith and our shield a strong one? One test of it is it must be all of one piece. A shield that is made of three or four pieces in this case will be of no use. So your faith must be all of one piece—it must be faith in the finished work of Christ. You must have no

confidence in yourself or in any man but rest wholly and entirely upon Christ else your shield will be of no use.

Then your faith must be of Heaven's forging or your shield will certainly fail you. You must have the faith of God's elect which is of the operation of the Holy Spirit who works it in the soul of man. Then you must see to it that your faith is that which rests only upon Truth, for if there is any error or false notion in the fashioning of it—that shall be a joint in it which the spear can pierce. You must take care that your faith is agreeable to God's Word—that you depend upon true and real promises, upon the sure word of testimony—and not upon the fictions and fancies and dreams of men.

And above all, you must mind that your faith is fixed in the *Person of Christ*—nothing but a faith in Christ's divine Person as “God over all, blessed forever” and in His proper manhood when as the Lamb of God's Passover He was sacrificed for us—no other faith will be able to stand against the tremendous shocks and the innumerable attacks which you must receive in the great battle of spiritual life. Look to your shield, Man. Not so fast there with that painted God! Not so fast there with that proud heraldic symbol which has no strength in it. See to your shield! See if it is like the shields of Solomon which were borne before the king, each one made of gold. Or at least let them be like the shields of Rehoboam, every one of the best brass, so that there be found no wooden shield in your hand which may be dashed in pieces when you need its help most.

But to pass on—for we must not pause long on any one particular—faith is like a shield because it is of no use except it is *well handled*. A shield needs handling and so does faith. He was a silly soldier who, when he went into the battle said he had a shield but it was at home. So there are some silly professors who have a faith but they have not got it with them when they need it. They have it with them when there are no enemies. When all goes well with them, then they can believe. But just when the pinch comes, then their faith fails.

Now there is a sacred art in being able to handle the shield of faith. Let me explain to you how that can be. You will handle it well if you are able to quote the *promises* of God against the attacks of your enemy. The devil says, “One day you shall be poor and starve.” “No,” says the believer, handling his shield well, “He has said ‘I will never leave you, nor forsake you.’” He has said, “Bread shall be given you and your water shall be sure.” “Yes,” says Satan, “but you will one day fall by the hand of the enemy.” “No,” says faith, “for I am persuaded that He that has begun a good work in me will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

“Yes,” says Satan, “but the slander of the enemy will overturn you.” “No,” says faith, “He makes the wrath of man to praise Him. The remainder of wrath does He restrain.” “Yes” says Satan, as he shoots another arrow, “you are weak.” “Yes,” says faith, handling his shield, “but ‘my strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” “Yes,” says Satan, “but your sin is great.” “Yes,” says faith, handling the promise, “but He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.”

“But,” says the enemy again, drawing his sword and thrusting, “God has cast you off.” “No,” says faith, “He hates putting away, He does not cast off His people, neither does He forsake His heritage.” “But I will have you, after all,” says Satan. “No,” says faith, dashing the enemy’s jaws, “He has said, ‘I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.’ ” This is what I call handling the shield.

But there is another way of handling it, not merely with the promises, but with the *doctrines*. “Ah,” says Satan, “what is there in you that you should be saved? You are poor and weak and mean and foolish!” Up comes faith handling the shield doctrinally, this time and says, “God has chosen the base things of this world and things which are despised has God chosen, yes and things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,” for “not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.” “Has not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to them that love Him?”

“Yes,” says Satan, “if God should have chosen you, yet after all you may certainly perish!” And then, Christian handling his shield of faith doctrinally again, says “No, I believe in the final perseverance of the saints, for is it not written, ‘the righteous shall hold on His way and he that has clean hands shall wax stronger’ ”? “Those that You gave Me I have kept and none of them is lost,” and so forth. So by well understanding the doctrines of grace there is not a single doctrine which may not in its way minister to our defense against the fiery darts of the wicked.

Then the Christian soldier ought to know how to handle the shield of faith according to the rules of observation. “Yes,” says the enemy, “your confidence is vain and your hope shall soon be cut off.” “No,” says faith, “I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken.” “Yes, but you have fallen into sin and God will leave you.” “No,” says faith, “for I saw David and he stumbled, but yet the Lord surely brought him out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay.” To use this shield in the way of observation is very profitable when you mark the way whereby God has dealt with the rest of His people. For as He deals with one, so He will deal with the rest and you can throw this in the teeth of your enemy.

I remember the ways of God. I call to remembrance his deeds of old. I say has God cast off His people, has He forsaken one of His chosen? And since He has never done so, I hold up my shield with great courage and say He never will. He changes not. As He has not forsaken any, He will not forsake me.

Then there is another blessed way of handling this shield and that is *experimentally*. When you can look back, like the Psalmist, to the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar. When you can return to those days of old and call to remembrance your song in the night. When your spirit can say, “Why are you cast down, O my soul, why are you disquieted within me? Hope you in God, for I shall yet praise Him.” Why, Brethren, some of us can talk of deliverances so many that we know not where to end, scarcely do we know where to begin. Oh, what wonders

has God done for us as a Church and people! He has brought us through fire and through water.

Men did ride over our heads, but up to now all things have worked together for our good. His glory has appeared amidst all the villainies and slanders of men to which we have been exposed. Let us handle our shield, then, according to the rules of past experience! And when Satan tells us that God will fail us at the last, let us reply, "Now you lie and I tell it to you to your face, for what our God was in the past, He will be in the present and in the future and so on even to the end." Young soldiers of Christ, learn well the art of handling your shield.

Lastly for the matter of the figure. The shield in olden times was an emblem of the warrior's honor and more especially in later days than those of Paul. In the age of chivalry, the warrior carried his escutcheon, his shield. Now, faith is like a shield, because it carries the Christian's glory, the Christian's coat of arms, the Christian's escutcheon. And what is the Christian's coat of arms? Well, good Joseph Irons used to say it was a Cross and a crown, with the words "No Cross, no crown"—a most blessed coat of arms, too.

But methinks the Christian's best coat of arms is the Cross of his Savior—that bloodied Cross. Always stained, yet never stained. Always dyed in blood, yet always resplendent with ruby brightness. Always trod on, yet always triumphant. Always despised, yet always glorified. Always attacked, yet always without resistance, coming off more than conqueror. Some of the old Reformers used to have an anvil for their coat of arms and a significant one, too, with this motto, "The anvil has broken many hammers." By which they meant that they stood still and just let men hammer at them till their hammers broke of themselves.

Another old coat of arms with some of the Reformers was likely to be a candle with a great many enemies all puffing to blow it out. Although they all blew as hard as they could, yet the candle did but burn the brighter. Out of darkness came light and from all their attacks the light grew stronger. This morning put your coat of arms upon your shield and lift it up. Let that blood-red Cross be your choice. Then when your battle is over, they will hang your escutcheon up in Heaven. And when the old heraldries have gone and the lions and tigers and beasts and all manner of strange things have vanished from remembrance, that Cross and your old shield indented with many a blow shall be honorable with many a triumph before the Throne of God. Above all things, then, take the shield of faith.

II. I now leave the expounding of the figure in haste and pass on to ENFORCE THE EXHORTATION.

"Above all taking the shield of faith." If you sent a servant upon an errand and you said to him, "Get so-and-so and so-and-so and so-and-so, but above all now see to such-and-such a thing," he would not understand that he should not neglect any. He would perceive that there was some extra importance attached to one part of his mission. So let it be with us. We are not to neglect our sincerity, our righteousness, or our peace—but above all, as the most important, we are to see to it that our faith is right—that it is true faith and that it covers all our virtues from attack. The necessity of true faith is clearly explained by the text.

Faith is here said to have a quenching power. The ancients were likely to use small arrows, perhaps light cane arrows which were tinged with poison. They would be called fiery darts, because they no sooner touched the flesh or even grazed the skin than they left a fiery poison in the veins. Sometimes, too, they employed darts which were tipped with tow that had been dipped in some inflammable spirit and were blazing as they flew through the air in order to set the tents of their antagonists on fire, or burn down houses in besieged cities. Now faith has a quenching power—it sees the temptation or the blasphemy, or the insinuation coming against it with poison and with fire in it to take away its life or to burn up its comforts.

Faith catches the dart—not only receives it—but takes away its sting and quenches the fire. Oh it is wonderful how God sometimes enables His people to live in the midst of temptations and tribulations as though they had none of them! I believe that some of the martyrs, when they were burned in the fire, suffered hardly any pain because the joy and peace which God gave them delivered them from the vehement heat. This I know. There are times when everybody is speaking well of some of us and we are wretched by reason of the world's fawning. We do not want to be called "Son of Pharaoh's daughter."

And yet there are other times when, though every one speaks ill, our peace is like a river and our righteousness like the waves of the sea. Truly at such times we can say, "Now I am in my proper place. This is where I should be—outside the camp bearing the reproach of Christ." The *praise* of man is deadly and damnable. His *censure* is goodly and godlike. Let it come. It cannot dishonor, it does but ennoble. Thus does it often happen that faith quenches the fire of attack. No, more—it turns the attack itself into comfort, extracts honey from the nettle and sweets of joy from the wormwood and the gall. "Above all, take the shield of faith."

Another commendation which the text gives is this—that faith alone, out of all the pieces of armor, is able to quench *all* the darts. The helmet can only keep off those that are aimed against the head. The foot is only and alone protected by the sandals. The breast alone is guarded by the breastplates, but faith protects against all attacks. Have all other virtues, but most of all have faith, for faith is the cure-all, it is the universal remedy. It is good not only for the heat of fever, but for the shaking of fever. It is good for everything—good for the timid to make them strong. Good for the rash to make them wise. It is good for those who are desponding to make them brave and good for those who are too daring, to make them discreet. There is no respect in which faith is not useful to us. Therefore, whatever you leave out, see to your faith. If you forget all besides, be careful above all that you take the shield of faith.

And then, again, we are told above all to take the shield of faith *because faith preserves from all sorts of enemies*. The fiery darts of the *wicked*! Does that refer to Satan? Faith answers him. Does it refer to wicked men? Faith resists them. Does it refer to one's own wicked self? Faith can overcome that. Does it refer to the whole world? "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our *faith*." It matters not who the enemy may be—let the earth be all in arms abroad—this faith can quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Above all then, take the shield of faith.

I know there are some ministers who seem to teach doubting as a duty. I cannot. I dare not. Above all, take the shield of faith. You know in the old Grecian contest the aim of the enemy was to get near enough to push aside the shield and then to stab under the armor. And that is what Satan wants to do. If he can knock aside the shield and get under it, then he can stab us mortally. Take care of your shield. Do not fight in perpetual unbelief. Be not always cast down. Pray unto your God till you can say—"I know in whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him."

Oh, the old saints were not always doubting. "My Beloved is mine and I am His," said Solomon. David said—"Say unto my soul, I am your salvation." "The Lord is my salvation." "The Lord is my shepherd." Job, too, could say, "I know that my Redeemer lives." Paul could speak very confidently in many places. And why should we be content to say—"I hope, I trust"—when *they* said they *knew* and were persuaded all was well between God and their souls? Let it be so with us. Unbelief dishonors us, weakens us, destroys our comforts, prevents our usefulness. Faith will make us happy and make us useful and what is best of all, it will enable us to honor God on earth and to enjoy His presence while yet we are in the low-lands of this present world.

III. Lastly, I have a word or two to say by way of conclusion to some POOR SINNER WHO IS COMING TO CHRIST BUT WHO IS GREATLY VEXED WITH THE FIERY DARTS OF THE WICKED ONE.

You remember how John Bunyan in his *Pilgrim's Progress* represents Christiana and Mercy and the children coming to knock at the gate? When they knocked, the enemy who lived in a castle hard by sent out a big dog which barked at them at such a rate that Mercy fainted and Christiana only dared to knock again. And when she obtained entrance, she was all in a tremble. At the same time, hard by in the castle there were men who shot fiery darts at all who would enter. And poor Mercy was exceedingly afraid because of the darts and the dog.

Now it generally happens that when a soul is coming to Christ the devil will dog him. As sure as ever he feels his need of a Savior and is ready to put his trust in Christ, it will be true of him as of the poor demoniac child. As he was a coming the devil threw him down and beat him. Now, poor tempted Sinner, there is nothing that can bring joy and peace into your heart but faith. Oh, that you may have grace this morning to begin to use this shield. "Ah Sir," you say, "I have been looking within and I cannot see anything that is good. I have been looking to my experiences and I am afraid I have never felt as So-and-So did."

That is the way to ruin yourself. Did you ever hear of a man who in cold winter's weather got warm by rolling on the ice and saying, "I don't feel any heat as some people do." No, because he is looking in the wrong place to get the heat. If you expect to get anything in yourself you expect more than Paul ever got, for he said after he had long known his Master, "I know that in me—(that is, in my flesh)—there dwells no good thing." "Oh, Sir," you reply again, "I find I am willing to do a great many things, but I cannot. And when I would be what I should be, I find a resistance somewhere within my own breast."

Well and what of that? Even so did the Apostle—"When I would do good, evil is present with me." The fact is you have no business to look there. These things are not shields against Satan. What cares he for your experiences? Were they ever so good he would still roar at you. What he is afraid of is your *faith*. Throw down these things, then, which only encumber you and expose you and lay your breast bare to his attacks and take up the shield of faith. What has Satan said to you? "You are too great a sinner to be saved." Well, quote this text, "Him that comes unto Me, I will in nowise cast out."

I had a lesson this week in the case of a good Christian man who through feebleness of mind has fallen at last into the deepest despair. I never met with a person in such awful despair as he was and you cannot tell how it puzzled me to give him any sort of comfort. Indeed, I failed after all. He said, "I'm too big a sinner to be saved." So I said, "But the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans us from all sin." "Yes," he said, "but you must remember the context, which says, 'If we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans us from all sin.'

"Now, I do not walk in the light," he said. "I walk in the dark and I have no fellowship with the people of God now and therefore it does not apply to me." "Well," I said, "but He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him." "That is the only text," he said, "I never can get over, for it says 'to the uttermost,' and I know I cannot have gone beyond that and still it does not yield me comfort." I said, "but God asks nothing of you but that you will believe Him. And you know if you have ever so feeble a faith you are like a child—the feeble hand of a child can receive. And that is the mark of a Christian—of His fullness have all we received—and if you only receive with your hand, that is enough."

"Yes," said he, "I have not the hand—I have not the hand of faith." "Very well," I said, "you have the mouth of desire. You can ask, if you cannot receive with the hand." "No," said he, "I have not. I do not pray, I cannot pray. I have not the mouth of desire." "Then," I said, "all that is wanted is an empty place, a vacuum, so that God can put it in." "Ah, Sir," said he, "you have got me there! I have a great deal of vacuum. I have an aching void—a vacuum. If ever there was an empty sinner in this world, I am one." "Well," I said, "Christ will fill that vacuum. There is a full Christ for empty sinners."

Let me now say the same to you as I said to that poor man. All God wants is a vacuum. You have got a vacuum. This is not much to have—simply to be empty, to be pumped dry, to have nothing at all in you. But then, "He fills the hungry with good things and the rich He sends empty away." All that is wanted is to be down there on the ground. It is not hard work. It is not to sit up, nor to stand up, nor to kneel—but to lie there at His feet. And when He sees the soul flat on its face before Him, He will have mercy upon you.

Now, Soul, for that shield of faith, say to Satan, "In the name of God I dare believe." "You are a great sinner," says he. "Yes, but I believe He is a great Savior." "But you have sinned beyond all hope." "No, there is forgiveness with Him, that He may be feared." But he says, "You are shut out." "No," you say, "though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." "But your

disease is of long standing.” “Yes, but,” you say, “if I but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be clean.” But says Satan again, “How dare you? Would you have the impudence?” “Well,” you say, “if I perish I will trust Christ and I will perish only there.”

Have it fixed in your soul that in the teeth of everything you will trust Christ—that be you such a sinner or not, still you will trust Christ—that whether Satan’s accusations are true or false, you mean to have done answering them and simply trust Christ. Ah, Soul, *then* you shall have such joy and peace that nothing shall be like it. O that you would believe on Jesus *now*! Leave your feelings, leave your doings and your works—and trust Christ.

“I dare not,” says one. Dare it, Man, dare it! You cannot do wrong for He commands you. This is the commandment, “that you believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent.” “Oh, but I may be lost even if I do.” You will be lost if you do not, for “he that believes not shall be damned.” “But I am afraid of being condemned if I were to believe.” “He that believes not is condemned already.” You are like the poor lepers at the gate. You are dying and you say, “Let us fall to the Syrians—if they kill us we can but die and if they save us alive we shall live.”

Say, as Benhadad did concerning king Ahab, “We have heard that the kings of Israel are merciful kings, but let us put ropes upon our heads and go out to the king of Israel—perhaps he will save our life.” So say you to God, “I have heard that You are merciful, if there is a wretch out of Hell that deserves to be in it, I am that sinner. If there is one that now feels that earth is provoked against him and the ground says, swallow him up—I am he. If there is one which Heaven is provoked against him and cries, let the lightning flash destroy him. And the sea says, drown him. And the stars say, smite him with pestilence. And the sun says, scorch him.

“If there is one which the moon says let him be blasted. And the mildew says, let me devour his crops. And fever says, let me cut off the thread of his life—if there is such a wretch out of Hell, I am he.” Yet, say but to God, “By Your grace I believe in Your mercy, I believe in Your promise, I believe in your Son Jesus. I believe in His precious blood and here I am—do with me as seems good in Your sight.” Say but this and you shall have mercy and pardon and peace. My dear Hearers, shall I say this for myself and not for you? No, but may God grant that many a score of you this morning may be led to put your trust in Him who has said, “They that trust in Me shall never be confounded.”

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THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

NO. 2201

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 19, 1891,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”
Ephesians 6:17.***

To be a Christian is to be a warrior. The good soldier of Jesus Christ must not expect to find ease in this world—it is a battlefield! Neither must he reckon upon the friendship of the world, for that would be enmity against God. His occupation is war. As he puts on, piece by piece, the panoply provided for him, he may wisely say to himself, “This warns me of danger; this prepares me for warfare; this prophesies opposition.”

Difficulties meet us even in standing our ground, for the Apostle, two or three times, bids us—“Stand.” In the rush of the fight, men are apt to be carried off their legs. If they can keep their footing, they will be victorious, but if they are borne down by the rush of their adversaries, everything is lost. You are to put on the heavenly armor in order that you may stand. And you will need it to maintain the position in which your Captain has placed you. If even to stand requires all this care, judge you what the warfare must be! The Apostle also speaks of *withstanding* as well as standing. We are not merely to defend, but also to attack. It is not enough that you are not conquered, you have to conquer and, therefore, we find that we are to take, not only a helmet to protect the head, but also a sword with which to annoy the foe. Ours, therefore, is a stern conflict, standing and withstanding—and we shall need all the armor from the Divine magazine, all the strength from the mighty God of Jacob!

It is clear from our text that our defense and our conquest must be obtained by sheer fighting. Many try compromise, but if you are a true Christian, you can never do this business well. The language of deceit fits not a holy tongue. The adversary is the father of lies and those that are with him understand the art of equivocation, but saints abhor it. If we discuss terms of peace and attempt to gain something by policy, we have entered upon a course from which we shall return in disgrace. We have no order from our Captain to patch up a truce and get as good terms as we can. We are not sent out to offer concessions! It is said that if we yield a little, perhaps the world will yield a little, also, and good may come of it. If we are not too strict and narrow, perhaps sin will kindly consent to be more decent. Our association with it will prevent its being so barefaced and atrocious. If we are not narrow-minded, our broad doctrine will go down with the world and those on the other side will not be so greedy of

error as they now are. No such thing! Assuredly this is not the order which our Captain has issued. When peace is to be made, He will make it, Himself, or He will tell us how to behave to that end. But at present our orders are very different.

Neither may we hope to gain by being neutral, or granting an occasional truce. We are not to cease from conflict and try to be as agreeable as we can with our Lord's foes, frequenting their assemblies and tasting their dainties. No such orders are written here. You are to grasp your weapon and go forth to fight.

Neither may you so much as dream of winning the battle by accident. No man was ever holy by a happy chance. Infinite damage may be done by carelessness, but no man ever won life's battle by it. To let things go on as they please is to let them bear us down to Hell. We have no orders to be quiet and take matters easily. No, we are to always pray and constantly watch. The one note that rings out from the text is this—TAKE THE SWORD! TAKE THE SWORD! No longer is it talk and debate! No longer is it parley and compromise! The word of thunder is—*Take the sword*. The Captain's voice is clear as a trumpet—*Take the sword!* No Christian here will have been obedient to our text unless with clear, sharp and decisive firmness, courage and resolve, he takes the sword! We must go to Heaven with sword in hand, all the way. "TAKE THE SWORD." On this command I would enlarge. May the Holy Spirit help me!

It is noteworthy that there is only one weapon of offense provided, although there are several pieces of armor. The Roman soldier usually carried a spear as well as a sword. We have seen frequent representations of the legionary standing guard as sentry and he almost always stands with a spear in his right hand, while his sword hangs at his side. But Paul, for excellent reasons, concentrates our offensive weapon in one, because it answers for all. We are to use *the sword* and that only. Therefore, if you are going to this fight, see well to your only weapon. If you are to have no other, take care that you have this always in your hand. Let the Captain's voice ring in your ear, "*Take the sword! Take the sword!*" and so go forth to the field.

Notice, first, *the sword you are to take is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*. That is our first head and the second is equally upon the surface of the text—*This sword is to be ours*. We are ordered to take the sword of the Spirit and so make it our own sword.

I. First, the Word of God which is to be our one weapon is of noble origin, for IT IS "THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT." It has the properties of a sword, and those were given it by the Spirit of God.

Here we note that *the Holy Spirit has a sword*. He is quiet as the dew, tender as the anointing oil, soft as the zephyr of eventide and peaceful as a dove. And yet, under another aspect, He wields a deadly weapon. He is the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning and He bears not the sword in vain. Of Him it may be said, "The Lord is a man of war: Jehovah is His name."

The Word of God in the hand of the Spirit wounds very terribly and makes the heart of man to bleed. Do you not remember, some of you, when you used to be gashed with this sword Sunday after Sunday? Were you not cut to the heart by it, so as to be angry with it? You almost made up your mind to turn away from hearing the Gospel again. That sword pursued you and pierced you in the secrets of your soul—and made you bleed in a thousand places. At last you were “pricked in the heart,” which is a far better thing than being, “cut to the heart”—and then execution was done, indeed! That wound was deadly and none but He that killed could make you alive! Do you remember how, after this, your sins were slain, one after the other? Their necks were laid on the block and the Spirit acted as an executioner with His sword. After that, blessed be God, your fears, doubts, despair and unbelief were also hacked to pieces by this same sword. The Word gave you life! But it was, at the first, a great killer. Your soul was like a battlefield after a great fight, under the first operations of the Divine Spirit, whose sword returns not empty from the conflict.

Beloved, the Spirit of God has war with the Amalek of evil and error from generation to generation. He will spare none of the evils which now pollute the nations. His sword will never be quiet till all these Canaanites are destroyed. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ not only by what He reveals, but also by what He overturns. The strife may be weary, but it will be carried on from age to age, till the Lord Jesus shall appear, for the Spirit of God shall always espouse the cause of love against hate, of the Truth of God against error, of holiness against sin, of Christ against Satan! He will win the day and those who are with Him shall, in His might, be more than conquerors. The Holy Spirit has proclaimed war and wields a two-edged sword.

The Holy Spirit wields no sword but the Word of God. This wonderful Book, which contains the utterances of God’s mouth, is the one weapon which the Holy Spirit elects to use for His war-like purposes. It is a *spiritual* weapon and so is suitable to the Holy Spirit. The weapons of His warfare are not carnal—He never uses either persecution or patronage, force or bribery, glitter of grandeur, or terror of power. He works upon men by the Word, which is suitable to His own spiritual Nature and to the spiritual work which is to be accomplished. While it is spiritual, this weapon is “mighty through God.” A cut from the Word of God will cleave a man’s spirit from head to foot, so sharp is this sword! Though by long practice in sin a man may have coated himself as with impenetrable mail, yet the Word of the Lord will divide the northern iron and the steel. The Holy Spirit can make a man feel the Divine power of the sacred Word in the very center of his being!

For battling with the spirits of man, or with spirits of an infernal kind, there is no weapon so keen, so piercing, so able to divide between the joints and marrow, so penetrating as to the thoughts and intents of the heart. The Word, in the Spirit’s hand, gives no superficial wound, but cuts into the man’s heart, and so wounds him that there is no healing save by

supernatural power! The wounded conscience will bleed; its pains will be upon it day and night; and though it seeks out a thousand medicines, no salve but *one* can cure a gash which this terrible sword has made. This weapon is two-edged—indeed, it is *all* edge—and whichever way it strikes, it wounds and kills. There is no such a thing as the flat of the sword of the Spirit—it has a razor edge every way. Beware how you handle it, you critics! It may wound even you. It will cut you to your destruction, one of these days, unless you are converted. He that uses the Word in the Lord's battles may use it upon carnal hopes and then strike back upon unbelieving fears. He may smite with one edge, the love of sin, and then with the other, the pride of self-righteousness. It is a conquering weapon in all ways, this wondrous sword of the Spirit of God!

The Word, we say, is the only sword which the Spirit uses. I know the Holy Spirit uses gracious sermons, but it is only in proportion as they have the Word of God in them. I know the Holy Spirit uses religious books, but only so far as they are the Word of God told out in other languages. Conviction, conversion and consolation are still worked, but only by the Word of God. Learn, then, the wisdom of using the Word of God for holy purposes. The Spirit has abundant ability to speak of His own self, apart from the written Word. The Holy Spirit is God and, therefore, He is the greatest spirit in the universe. All wisdom dwells in Him. He thought out the laws which govern Nature and direct Providence. The Holy Spirit is the great Teacher of human spirits—He taught Bezaleel and the artificers in the wilderness how to make the fine linen and the gold and carved work for the Tabernacle. All arts and sciences are perfectly known to Him and infinitely more than men can ever discover. Yet He will not use these things in this holy controversy. In the quarrel of His Covenant, He uses neither philosophy, nor science, nor rhetoric. In contending against the powers of darkness, “The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.” “It is written” is His masterstroke! Words which God has spoken by holy men of old and has caused to be recorded on the sacred page—these are the battle-axe and weapons of war of His Spirit! This Book contains the Word of God and *is* the Word of God—and this it is which the Holy Spirit judges to be so effectual a weapon against evil that He uses this, and *only* this, as His sword in the great conflict with the powers of darkness.

The Word is the sword of the Spirit because it is of His own making. He will not use a weapon of human workmanship, lest the sword boast itself against the hand that wields it. The Holy Spirit revealed the mind of God to the minds of holy men. He spoke the Word into their hearts and thus He made them think as He would have them think and to write what He willed them to write—so that what they spoke and wrote was spoken and written as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Blessed be the Holy Spirit for deigning to use so many writers and yet, Himself, to remain the veritable Author of this collection of holy Books! We are grateful for Moses, for David, for Isaiah, for Paul, for Peter, for John, but most of all for that superintending Editor, that innermost Author of the whole sacred Volume—even the Holy Spirit!

A warrior may well be careful as to the make of His sword. If a man had made his own sword, had tempered the metal, had, himself, passed the blade through many fires, and worked it to perfection—then, if he were a skillful workman, he would feel confidence in his sword. When work is done, nowadays, it is, as a rule, badly done. Work done by contract is usually done poorly in some part or another. But when a man does a work for himself, he is likely to do it thoroughly, and produce an article which he can depend upon. The Holy Spirit has made this Book, Himself—every portion of it bears His initial and impress—and thus He has a sword worthy of His own hands, a true Jerusalem blade of heavenly fabric. He delights to use a weapon so Divinely made and He does use it right gloriously!

The Word of God is also the sword of the Spirit because He puts the edge upon it. It is because He is in it that it is so keen and cutting. I believe in the Inspiration of Holy Scripture, not only in the day when it was written, but onward, and even to this day. It is still Inspired. The Holy Spirit still breathes through the chosen Words. I told you the sword was all edge, but I would add that the Holy Spirit makes it so. It would have no edge at all if it were not for His Presence within it and His perpetual working by it. How many people read their Bibles and yet derive no more benefit from it than if they had read an old almanac! In fact, they would more easily keep awake over an ancient Bradshaw than over a chapter of Scripture. The ministers of the Gospel may preach God's Word in all sincerity and purity and yet, if the Spirit of God is not present, we might as well have preached mere moral essays, for no good can come of our testimony. The Holy Spirit rides in the chariot of Scripture and not in the wagon of modern thought. Scripture is that Ark of the Covenant which contains the golden pot of manna and also bears above it the Divine Light of God's shining. The Spirit of God works in, by, through and with the Word—and if we keep to that Word, we may rest assured that the Holy Spirit will stay with us and make our testimony to be a thing of power. Let us pray the blessed Spirit to put an edge on our preaching, lest we say much and accomplish little! Hear us in this thing, O blessed One!

It is "the sword of the Spirit" because *He alone can instruct us in the use of it.* You think, young man, that you can pick up your Bible and go and preach from it at once, properly and successfully? You have made a presumptuous mistake! A sword is a weapon which may do hurt to the man who flourishes with it in mere wanton pride. No one can handle the sword of the Spirit aright save the chosen man whom God has ordained from before the foundation of the world and trained in feats of arms. By this, the elect of God are known—that they love the Word of God and they have a reverence for it—and discern between it and the words of man. Notice the lambs in the field, just now, and there may be a thousand ewes and lambs, but every lamb can find its own mother. So does a true-born child of God know where to go for the milk which is to nourish his soul. The sheep of Christ know the Shepherd's voice in the Word and they will not follow a stranger, for they know not the voice of strangers. God's own peo-

ple have discernment to discover and relish God's own Word. They will not be misled by the cunning craftiness of human devices! Saints know the Scriptures by inward instinct. The holy life, which God has infused into Believers by His Spirit, loves the Scriptures, and learns how to use them for holy purposes.

Young soldier, you must go to the training ground of the Holy Spirit to be made a proficient swordsman. You will go in vain to the metaphysician or to the logician, for neither of these know how to handle a spiritual weapon. In other arts they may be masters, but in the sacred use of Divine theology, they are mere fools! In the things of the Word we are dunces till we enter the school of the Holy Spirit. He must take of the things of Christ and show them to us. He must teach us how to grip this sword by faith and how to hold it by watchfulness, so as to parry the adversary's thrust and carry the war into the foeman's territory. He is well taught, who can swing this great two-handed sword to and fro and mow a lane through the midst of his opponents, and come out a conqueror at the end. It may take a long time to learn this art, but we have a right skillful Teacher. Those of us who have been in this warfare 30 or 40 years, feel that we have not yet reached the full use of this sword! No, I, for one, know that I need to be taught daily how to use this mysterious weapon which is capable of so much more than I have yet supposed. It is the sword of the Spirit, adapted for the use of an Almighty arm and, therefore, equal to the doing of far more than *we* think. Holy Spirit, teach us now feats of arms by this, Your sword!

But, chiefly, it is the sword of the Spirit, because *He is the great Master in the use of it*. Oh, that He would come and show us, this morning, how He can thrust and cleave with it! In this house of prayer we have often seen Him at His work. Here the slain of the Lord have been many. We have seen this sword take off the head of many a Goliath doubt and slay a horde of cares and unbeliefs! We have seen the Spirit pile up heaps on heaps of the slain when the Word of conviction has gone forth—and men have seen sin to be sin—and fallen down as dead before the Lord and His Law. We also know what the use of the sword by the Spirit of God means, for within our own being He has left marks of His prowess. He has killed our doubts and fears and left no more mistrusts to worry us.

There was a man of God who was frequently subject to doubts, even doubts upon the fundamentals of religion. He hated this state of mind, but still, he could not get rid of the habit of evil questioning. In answer to prayer, the Spirit came and convinced him of the pride of his intellect and of the wickedness of setting up his judgment against the Word of the Lord—and from that day forward he was never the subject of another fit of unbelief! He saw things clearly in the Light of the Holy Spirit and that is to see them, indeed! The great giant of doubt is sorely wounded by the sword of the Spirit—yes, he is slain outright—for the Spirit works in the Believer such a conviction of the Truth of God that assurance banishes suspicion! When the Holy Spirit deals with the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life, these also lie at His feet, trophies to the power of His

mighty weapon, even the Word of God! The Holy Spirit is glorious in the use of this sword. He finds that this weapon suits His hand and He seeks no other! Let us use it, also, and be glad to do so. Though it is the sword of the Spirit, yet our feeble hand may grasp it. Yes, and find in the grasping, that somewhat of the Divine power comes unto our arm!

Dear Brothers and Sisters, is it not a very high honor put upon you, as soldiers of the Cross, that you should be allowed, no, *commanded* to take the sword of the Spirit? The raw recruit is not trusted with the general's sword, but here you are, armed with the weapon of God, the Holy Spirit, and called upon to bear that sacred sword which is so gloriously wielded by the Lord God, Himself! This we are to bear, and no other. Does the timid heart enquire, "How, my Master, shall I meet my adversaries?" "Here," says the Holy Spirit, "take this! This is My own sword. I have done great marvels with it. Take it and nothing shall stand against you." When you remember the potency of this sword. When the Spirit tests it upon yourself, you may take it with confidence, and use it in your holy war with full assurance. That Word of God which could convert *you*, can convert anybody! If it could kill *your* despair, it can remove another man's dependency. If it has conquered your pride and self-will, it can subdue the same in your children and your neighbors. Having done what it has certainly done for *you*, you may have a full persuasion that, before its power, no case is hopeless. Therefore, see to it that you use, from this day forth, no other weapon than the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

II. This fairly lands me in the second portion of my discourse. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, but IT IS ALSO TO BE OUR SWORD.

Here I must begin again and go over much of the same ground. *We shall need a sword.* Our warfare is not child's play—we mean business. We have to deal with fierce foes who are only to be met with keen weapons. Buffets will not suffice in this contest—we must come to sword-cuts. You may be of a very quiet spirit, but your adversaries are not! If you attempt to play at Christian warfare, *they* will not. To meet the powers of darkness is no sham battle. They mean mischief. Nothing but your eternal damnation will satisfy the fiendish hearts of Satan and his crew. You must take not so much a flag to unfurl, or a drum to beat, as a sword to use and an especially sharp sword, too. In this combat you will have to use a sword such as even evil spirits can feel, capable of dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow. If you are to live through this fight and come off victorious, no form of conflict will suffice less sharp and cutting than sword-work.

Depend upon it that in this struggle you will be forced to come to close quarters. The foe aims at your heart and pushes home. A spear will not do, nor bow and arrow—the enemy is too near for anything but hand-to-hand fighting. Brothers and Sisters, our foes are not only of our house, but of our heart! I find an enemy within which is always near and I cannot get away from him. I find that my antagonist will get his hand on my throat if he can. If our foes were far away and we could reach them with artillery which would kill at six or seven miles' distance, we might lead a

pretty easy life. But no, they are *here!* At our doors! Yes, *within us*—nearer than hands and feet. Now for the short sword! The claymore of Holy Scripture, to stab and cut, near and now. No sling and stone will avail us here, but we must take the sword. You have to slay your foe, or your foe will slay you! It is with us Christians as it was with the Highlanders in battle, when their leader called out to them, “Lads, there they are! If you dinna kill them they will kill you.” There is no room for peace—it is war to the knife, not only now, but to life’s end!

The use of the sword is necessary for attack. I have reminded you several times already that it will not suffice for the Christian to guard against sin and ward off temptation from himself—he has to attack the powers of evil. In our case, the best method of defense is an attack. I have heard of one who would bring an action in law to gain his ends, for he thought this better than being the defendant. That may be matter of question, but in war it is often safer to attack than defend. Carry the warfare into the enemy’s territory. Be trying to win from the adversary and he will not win so much from you. Do not merely be sober, yourselves, but attack drunkenness. Do not be content with being free from superstition, yourself, but expose it wherever it appears! Do not merely be devout when you feel obliged to be so, but pray for the growth of the kingdom—pray always! Do not merely say, “I will keep Satan out of my family by bringing up my children aright,” but go to the Sunday school and teach other children, and so carry the war over the border! God forbid that we should ever go to war as a nation! But if we were at war with some nation on the Continent, I would certainly say, “Let the Continentals have the battles on their own ground—we do not want a campaign over here.” It is wise to keep the war in the enemy’s own regions. If we had fought the devil more in the world, he might never have been able to invade the Church so terribly as he has done. Attack with the sword, for it is your calling, and thus will you best defend yourself.

We need the sword for real fighting. Do you think that you can dream yourselves into Heaven? Or ride there in the chariot of ease? Or fly on the wings of brass music? You make a great mistake if you so imagine. A real war is raging! Your opponents are in deadly earnest and you must take your sword!

And, further, *we need this sword, this sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.* We say with David, “There is none like that; give it to me.” It has worked such wonders that we prefer it to all others. No other will match the enemy’s weapon. If we fight the devil with human reason, the first time our wooden sword comes in contact with a Satanic temptation it will be cut in pieces! If you do not wield a true Jerusalem blade, you are in grave peril—your weapon will break off at the hilt—and where will you be? Standing defenseless, with nothing but the handle of a broken sword in your hand, you will be the object of your adversary’s ridicule! You must have this sword, for no other will penetrate the foe, and no other will last out the battle. After 20 years, what has become of the pious resolutions of your youth? What is the staying power of your consecration made in the

hour of enthusiasm? Alas, how little trust can be placed in it! What would become of us after 30 years of fighting if we had not the Word of God to rely upon? The Word of the Lord endures forever, but nothing else does. We may do well in early days, but we shall fail in old age if we have not eternal Truths of God to fall back upon.

I can commend this sword to you all, my Brothers and Sisters, although you are so varied in character. This sword suits every hand. Youth or age may, alike, use this weapon. These dear girls from the Orphanage and yonder lads from the Bible class, may fight the battle of their youth with the Word of God, for Holy Scripture may impress and guide our freshest life. You that have grown gray. You that have passed 70 or 80, you will value the Bible more than ever and you will find that this sword is the best for veteran warriors. Young men and young women, here is a sword suited for all of you, and well does it become the hand of the feeblest and the gentlest! The Holy Spirit has, in the sacred Word, prepared an implement of warfare suited for great minds and small, for the cultured and the uneducated. A wonderful sword this is, which, in the hands of faith, reveals an adaptation marvelous to the last degree!

Whatever others may say, it is sufficient for us that this is the regulation sword. A soldier is not left to choose his own equipment. He must carry such arms as his sovereign appoints. This is the regulation sword in Christ's army. The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is what you are bid to take and, if you, in willfulness, resolve to exchange it for another, you commit an act of rebellion and you make the change at your own risk and peril! Come, then, let us each take the Word of God and carry it nearer our hearts than ever, for such is the Word of *command*, "Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

Now, see what we are told to do. We need a sword. We need *this* sword. *We are to take this sword.* Note that we are not told that we may lay it down—the demand to take the sword is continuous and there is no hint of its being suspended. There is a time, of course, when the soldier of Her Majesty may remove his sword from his side and take off his regimentals, but there is never such a time with a Christian! One might have thought, from what we have seen of late, that orders had come from headquarters that the soldiers were to lay down the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and take to lighter weapons. Entertainments, amusements, farces, and sing-songs are now used to do what the Gospel has failed to achieve! Is it not sadly so? Well, if any will try these silly toys, I can only say that they have no command from their Lord to warrant them in their proceedings. Take all these things and see what they will do, but you make the trial at your own risk, and on your own heads the result of failure will fall.

The standing orders are to take the sword of the Spirit and no new regulation has ever been issued by the great Captain of salvation. From the days of Paul till now, the Word stands, "Take the sword of the Spirit." All other things will surely fail and, therefore, the one sole abiding command is, "Take the sword of the Spirit." We are not told to hang up this sword for exhibition. Certain people have a handsomely-bound Bible to lie

upon the table of the best room—and a fine ornament it is! A Family Bible is a treasure! But I pray you, do not let your love of the Bible end there. With a soldier in war, a sword is not meant to be hung up in the tent, nor even to be flourished in the air, but it is issued to be *used*. Nor are we to push this sword into a sheath, as many do who take the Bible and add so much of criticism, or of their own opinion to it, that its edge is not felt! Many men use their low opinion of Inspiration as a scabbard into which they push the Bible down. Their vast knowledge makes a beautiful scabbard and they push down the sword, saying, “Keep still, there! O sword of the Lord, rest and be quiet!” After we have preached our heart out, and men have felt the power of it, they make a desperate effort to imprison the Word in their unbelieving theory, or in their worldliness. They hold down the Word all the week with a firm hand, for fear its edge or point should wound them. It is the scabbard of culture, or philosophy, or of progress—and in this they shut up the living Word of God as in a coffin!

We are not to bury the Word under other matters, but we are to take it as a sword, which means, as I understand it, first, *believe it*. Believe every portion of it. Believe it with a true and real faith, not with a mere creedal faith which says, “This is the orthodox thing.” Believe it as a matter of fact for every day, affecting your life. Believe it! And when you have believed it, then *study it*. Oh, for a closer study of the Word of God! Are there not some of you who have never even heard or read all that the Lord has said? Are there not passages of the Bible which have never been read by you? It is a melancholy fact that there would be even a *line* of the sacred Scriptures which has never once come under your eyes. Read the Bible right through, from beginning to end.

Begin tomorrow—no, begin today—and go steadily through the whole of the sacred Book, with prayer and meditation. Never let it be suspected by you that God has recorded Truths in His Word which you have never even once read. Study the Word and work out its meaning. Go deep into the spirit of Inspiration. He gets most gold who digs the deepest in this mine. They used to say of certain mines in Cornwall that the deeper you went the richer was the ore. Assuredly is it so with the mines of Inspired Scripture. The deeper you go under the Spirit’s guidance, the larger is the reward for your toil. Take the sword with the grip of sincere faith. Hold it fast by a fuller knowledge. And then exercise yourself daily in its use. The sword is to be taken for earnest fight. You will not be long before occasion arises in such a world as this. You will have to parry with it, to pierce with it, to cut with it and to kill with it. “Where shall I begin?” says one. Begin at home and, for many a day, you will have your hands full! When you have slain all the rebels at home and long before that, you may take a turn at those around you in the world, and in the *professing church*.

Inside your own heart you will find a band of bandits which should be exterminated. There will always be need to keep the sword going within your own territory. End this civil war before you go into foreign parts. When the war within the city of Mansoul has been victoriously carried through, besiege the heart of your friend, your child, your neighbor. Be-

hold, the world lies in the Wicked One! Errors abound and colossal systems of falsehood still stand aloft. Men are still dragged down by the arch-deceiver. Surely, we feel our swords flying out of their sheaths when we think of the millions who are being ruined by sin and error! Oh, for a mighty onslaught upon the powers of darkness!

Once more, *we are to take this sword with a purpose*. We are to use it that we may be able to stand and to withstand. If you want to stand, draw the sword and smite your doubts. How fiercely unbelief assails! Here comes a doubt as to your election. Pierce it through with the Word. Soon comes a doubt as to the precious blood. Cleave it from head to foot with the assurance of the Word that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin! Here comes another doubt and yet another. As quick as arm can move, drive texts of Scripture through every new fallacy, every new denial of the Truth of God and spit the whole of them upon the rapier of the Word! It will be for your good to kill these doubts outright. Do not play with them, but fight them in real earnest! You will find, also, that temptations will come in hordes. Meet them with the precepts of sacred Writ and slay even the desire of evil by the Spirit's application of the Holy Word! The washing of water by the Word is a glorious cleanser. Discouragements will arise like mists of the morning. Oh, that God's Word may shine them away with the beams of the promises! Your afflictions multiply and you will never be able to overcome impatience and distrust except by the Infallible Word of God. You can bear trial and bear it patiently, if you use this weapon to kill anxiety. You will "stand fast in the evil day" and, having done all, you will still stand, if this sword is in your hand.

You have not only to stand fast, yourselves, but you have to win souls for Christ! Do not try to conquer sin in others, or capture a heart for Jesus except with the sword of the Spirit. How the devil laughs when we try to make converts apart from Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit! He laughs, I say, for he derides our folly. What can you do, you children, playing with your little wooden swords—what can you do against men covered from head to foot with the steel mail of the habit of sin? Sunday school teachers, teach your children more and more the pure Word of God! And preachers, do not try to be original, but be content to take of the things of Christ and show them to the people, for that is what the Holy Spirit, Himself does—and you will be wise to use His method and His sword. No sinner around you will be saved except by the knowledge of the great Truths contained in the Word of God. No man will ever be brought to repentance, to faith and to life in Christ, apart from the constant application of the Truth through the Spirit.

I hear great shouting, great noises everywhere, about great things that are going to be done—let us see them! The whole world is going to be embraced within the Church, so they say. I fear the world will not be much the better for inclusion in such a church! Big boasters should heed the word of the wise man, "Let not him that girds on his harness boast himself as he that takes it off." If the champion goes forth with any other sword than the Word of God, he had better not boast at all, for he will

come back with his sword broken, his shield cast away, and himself grimy with dishonor. Defeat awaits that man who forsakes the Word of the Lord!

I have done when I have asked you to remember that the text is in the present tense—*Take unto you the sword of the Spirit even now*. What varieties of people there are here this morning! Believers have come here in all sorts of perils. Let them each one take the sword of the Spirit and they will overcome every foe! Here, too, are seekers who wish to be Christians, but they cannot compass it. What is the matter this morning? “Oh,” says one, “I have been in the habit of sinning, and the habit is very strong upon me.” Fight with sinful habits with the Word of God, as the sword of the Spirit—so only will you conquer your evil self. Find a text of Scripture that will cleave your sin down to the backbone, or stab it to the heart. “Alas, Satan tempts me horribly,” cries one, “I have been lately assailed in many ways.” Have you? You are not the first. Our Divine Lord in the wilderness was tempted of the devil. He might have fought Satan with a thousand weapons, but He chose to defeat him with only *one*. He said, “It is written. It is written. It is written.” He pricked the foeman so sorely with this sharp point that the arch-adversary thought to try the same sword—and *he* also began to say, “It is written.” But he cut himself with this sword, for he did not quote the passages correctly, nor give the whole of them—and the Master soon found the way to knock aside his sword and wound him still more.

Follow your Lord’s example. “Oh, but,” says one, “I am so low in spirits.” Very well. Fight lowness of spirits with the Word of God. “The doctor recommended me,” says one, “to take a little spirits to raise my spirits.” Those doctors are always having this sin laid to their charge. I am not so sure that they are not often maligned. You *like* the dose and *that* is why you take it! Try the Word of God for lowness of spirits and you will have found a sure remedy. I find, if I can lay a promise under my tongue, like a sweet lozenge, and keep it in my mouth or mind all the day long, I am happy enough. If I cannot find a Scripture to comfort me, then my inward troubles are multiplied. Fight despondency and despair with the sword of the Spirit. I cannot tell what your particular difficulty may be at this moment, but I give you this direction for all holy warfare—“Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”

You must overcome every enemy, but this weapon is all you need! If you, my Hearer, would overcome sin and conquer unbelief, take such a word as this, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” And as you look you shall be saved—and doubt shall die—and sin be slain! God grant you His Spirit’s aid, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Ephesians 6*.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—917, 673, 672.**

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