

A SPECIAL BENEDICTION

NO. 2412

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, MAY 12, 1895.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 12, 1887.**

***“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,
to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and
preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: mercy unto
you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.”
Jude 1, 2.***

THOSE were troublous times in which Jude wrote this very forcible Epistle. The first early days of Christianity, with all the springtime of the singing of birds and the blossoming of flowers had passed away. There had come times of trial for everyone, but worst of all were the troubles *within* the Church. Unawares, evil men had been admitted into membership. The human mind, always acting like leaven, had begun to corrupt, even, the Truth of the Gospel, so that where there had once been an unadulterated, unmingled preaching of the Cross of Christ, there had come in a savor of Gnosticism and other philosophies of the day. And with all the error there had also come a tendency to tone down the high spirituality, the deep sanctity of Christian life. So the children of God who truly cared for Him and walked with Him, were very sad at heart. I suppose that Paul had gone home to His reward. John still lingered and, perhaps, James and Peter, also, but when the time came for Peter to write his second Epistle, the day was darkening down—and when Jude took up *his* pen and wrote this short Epistle, the times were getting darker and darker and great foreboding of evil were in the hearts of God's servants—foreboding which were only removed by their joyous faith in Him who had gone from them and who would, by-and-by, come again without a sin-offering unto salvation!

This Epistle, therefore, seems to me to fit our times, which are not altogether unlike those of which I have been speaking, and the Apostle might have been writing yesterday, so appropriate are his words to the evils of the present age! If Jude were living, now, he might have to deal with a different form of evil, but, at the bottom, it would really be the same evil as that of which he wrote, the same mischievous root of bitterness which, springing up in our days, troubles us and, thereby, many are defiled.

I thought, as I read this Epistle through, that Jude seems to take the right view of things, namely, that the proper way of meeting evils in the Church is by dealing with the Church, itself—dealing with the truly faithful members of the Church and speaking to those who really are “sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called”—stirring them up to seek the highest degree of spiritual strength and plead-

ing for them that mercy and peace and love may be multiplied to them. If you have to visit infected places, it may help you to ward off disease if you, yourself, are vigorous and full of health. The best protection against surrounding evil will be the cultivation of a right state of heart and life, a continual growth in Grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. That wind which may upset yonder boat with its butterfly sails, may do no mischief, whatever, to the boat which is well ballasted and fitted to weather the gale. Be yourself right—listen to the Word of Wisdom which says, “Take heed unto yourself, and unto the doctrine”—and when these two matters are as they should be, then every wind of error which blows here and there will but little affect you.

Such I take it is the run of this Epistle and the opening verses are a fit preface thereto. I am going to speak of these two verses under three heads. First, here is a *special man*—“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.” Next, the Epistle is written to *special persons*—“to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.” Then, thirdly, it contains a *special benediction*—“Mercy unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied.”

I. First of all, it seems to me that the Apostle who wrote this Epistle was A SPECIAL MAN. Jude evidently wished to set himself apart from the general mass of those who were apostatizing and to make it known that he, himself, was strong in the faith and remaining faithful to his Lord.

To me, it seems as if every word of his own title has a specialty about it. There is something *special in his name*. He begins his Epistle with his own name—“Jude.” Among the members of a certain denomination that I need not name, there is a practice of using initials when they write a book. I never find any instance of that custom in Scripture. “G.B.” did not write an Epistle! And neither “A.B.” nor “X.Y.Z.” has favored us with any book of Holy Scripture! Names, however, are not always used. We have no name at the commencement of the Epistle to the Hebrews, for no writer in the Old or the New Testament gloried in his own name. Still, they were not ashamed of their names and since they were bound to make an open confession of their faith, it is as well that they used their names at the beginning of their writings.

This Epistle was written by Jude, that is to say, by Judas, but not Iscariot, and herein lies the specialty of his name. This Judas was *not* the son of perdition, but a true son of God, a sincere and earnest-hearted Believer. Yet, when he wrote his own name down, Judas, which we pronounce short as, “Jude,” I think that the tears must have come to his eyes as he remembered that other Judas—with the same name, yes, and by birth with the same nature. If left to himself, he might have proved a traitor to his Master, like the other Judas—but Grace had made him to differ from the man who betrayed his Lord. If it had been your case, or mine, I am sure that we could not have written down that name without reflecting upon our obligations to the Sovereign Grace of God which kept us from being sons of perdition!

“There goes John Bradford but for the Grace of God,” is a saying often quoted—and there would have gone this other Judas but for the Grace of God that restrained him! You remember how particular the Holy Spirit is that we should not mistake this Judas for Judas Iscariot, for when he

asked of Jesus, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself unto us, and not unto the world?" the Holy Spirit records the name of the questioner as, "Judas, not Iscariot." No, "not Iscariot." What a mercy for you that though some other of your name may have fallen into gross sin, you have been preserved! But as you remember your own name and remember how often that name has been defiled by others who at first were your companions in your childhood, thank God that He has kept you from falling. Do not think of your name without thinking of that name which is above all names, by which your name has been rescued from the Stygian bog and placed in the Book of the children of God among those whose names are written in Heaven! So, you see, there was something special, even, about the name of Jude.

There was something equally or still more special in his office. "Jude—Judas—the servant of Jesus Christ." Our Revised Version very properly puts in the margin "*bondservant* of Jesus Christ," and it is very beautiful to see how, in the original, these servants of Jesus Christ delighted to set forth the completeness of their service and to declare how perfectly they belonged to Christ. They were not servants that could come and go at their own pleasure, but they were *bondservants of Jesus Christ*. Though there were no free men on earth more truly free than they, yet these servants of Jesus Christ delighted in wearing chains of love which were soft as silk yet stronger than steel! They rejoiced to feel that they had no liberty to run away from Christ—their desire was to have their ear bored to the doorpost of His house, to be His servants through their whole lifetime and throughout eternity. This is what the Apostle meant when he wrote, "Jude, the bondservant of Jesus Christ."

You know how persons came to be bondservants in the olden time, according to Jewish practice. They were bondservants by *purchase*. When anyone had bought a slave with his money, the poor man was reckoned as belonging to him. So, we are not our own, we were bought with a price—we were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ—as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. The fine gentry in the ministry of the present day turn up their noses at this Truth of God and say that it is a *mercantile* idea. So it is, and we are not ashamed to have it so! "You are *bought* with a price," wrote the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, as if to make it clear beyond all question that it was really so! And you and I feel that we, too, have been bought and paid for, and that is one reason why we belong to Christ. We henceforth feel that we have no ownership rights over ourselves, yet we rejoice that we have that which is much more valuable, for we can, each one, say, with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." Henceforth we have no claim over ourselves, but give ourselves over to Him who has bought us with His blood, for we are His *bondservants by purchase*.

Then there was another method by which a man became possessed of bondservants, that was by birth. Under the Law of God, the man born in the priest's house or bought with the priest's money, might eat of the holy things. There were some who were born under gracious influences. David makes mention of this when he says, in the 116th Psalm, "O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid." Having a godly mother, he reckoned that he was born into the

service of God. Even so, you and I, the twice-born, the really regenerate, have been born into the household of God and our regeneration binds us to the noble service of Him whom we call Master and Lord henceforth and forever! As naturally as the old nature rebels, the new nature obeys! And as naturally as the old Adam within us will have its own way, so naturally the new Adam bends to the will of Christ, for we possess another life than that we used to have—we have been born into a new world wherein dwells righteousness! Old things have passed away and all things have become new—and now we surrender our members, which once were instruments of unrighteousness—to become instruments of righteousness and we rejoice in being permitted to enter the service of our God.

Look again at this man, Jude. He does not even call himself an Apostle. Paul did, because with some it was a matter of dispute as to whether he *was* an Apostle or not, and it was necessary for him to assert his right to the title. But Jude, having no question upon that matter, takes the lower-higher title—for lower and higher are one in the Kingdom of Christ—and calls himself, “the bondservant of Jesus Christ.” My dear Hearer, can you, also, take that title—a bondservant of Jesus Christ? Let the freethinker be free to go his own way if he will—you are a Christ-thinker and you wish to go Christ’s way! Let the man who loves himself and seeks to please himself, do what he will! Henceforth you will love your Lord and seek to please Him, for you are, by purchase and by birth, the bondservant of Jesus Christ! Sometimes, also, men became bondservants by indenture. They entered into bonds of servitude for a set time and you and I have freely surrendered ourselves to Christ. We have entered into a covenant that we will be His forever. Paul wrote as if he had been branded with Christ’s mark and I doubt not that Jude might have done the same. “From henceforth,” says Paul, “let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” He belonged undoubtedly, irrevocably, eternally, to the Lord Jesus Christ and he gloried in that fact! Dear Friends, will you not, also, glory in this if it is true of you?

Then Jude added another part of his title showing that he was *special in his relation*—“and brother of James.” This expression seems to me to place Jude in a very pleasant light. He felt as if he was an especially favored person because he had for a brother that famous servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, James the Less, known among the Jews of old as James the Just, who had a reputation, even among the outside world for the great holiness of his life. This man was Jude’s brother. Christianity teaches us to value brotherhood and we highly esteem those with whom we are joined in relationship, especially in the relationships which are of Grace. I like that any man should feel glad of his brother, thankful for his brother, and I am glad that Jude, when under Divine Inspiration, does not forget to say that he was, “the brother of James.”

Some of us owe a great deal to our brothers and all of you have reason to thank God that you are the son of such an one, or that you are the father of such an one, or the sister of such an one, or the brother of such an one. There is a special mercy, probably, in your domestic position, and if there is, do not cease to praise God that He has given you to be associated in life with those who are associated with Him! May our chil-

dren be His children! May our friends be His friends! May our brothers be our Brothers in Christ!

II. Now, secondly, let us think of THE SPECIAL PEOPLE to whom Jude wrote this Epistle.

In this instance, the marginal reading of the Revised Version is, I doubt not, the more correct translation—"To them that are beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ, being called." I shall take that as the best version, believing it to be strictly accurate.

The special persons to whom Jude wrote were, first, *beloved and sanctified*—"To them that are beloved in God the Father." O child of God, in times of darkness and of doubt, above all others, cling to the faith once delivered to the saints, because, according to it, you are beloved in God the Father, or, as our Authorized Version puts it, "Sanctified by God the Father," which means that, by reason of His eternal love to you, He set you apart unto Himself. To His spiritual Israel the Lord still says, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." "They shall be Mine," says the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels." Before the earth was, or sun or moon or stars began to shine, the prescient eye of God was fixed on His beloved and He sanctified them unto Himself, "for the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance."

And because He had thus set them apart unto Himself, in fullness of time He redeemed them unto Himself, redeemed them from among men. "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it," and in consequence of that love of His, He determined that those whom He had redeemed should be the instruments of His gracious working among the sons of men. They were to be vessels meet for the Master's use! They were to be the lamps in which His Light should be carried, the salt by which His preserving power should be made manifest amidst the putrefaction of the world! He set them apart for Himself and His service according to those ancient words, "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise."

Out of this love and this separation there came a sanctification of another kind, namely, that of cleansing, for we were heirs of wrath even as others, polluted like others, but the Spirit of God fulfils the Divine purpose of separation—brings us out from the world, even as He brought Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees—and puts us in a separate path that we may be sojourners with God as all our fathers were. Then He washes us in the precious blood and in that water which flowed with the blood from the side of Jesus, that mystic Fountain opened on Calvary for the sin and uncleanness of the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

This is what is meant by being, "sanctified by God the Father." If you take the other translation, "beloved in God the Father," it comes to the same point, for love has a separating influence upon its object. If the love of a man is fixed upon one woman, he calls her his bride and he looks upon her as different from all other women on the face of the earth. She is always in his thoughts and in his heart, and her praise is often on his lips. He lives for her. Even so has God taken unto Himself a people who are His, alone.

In addition to being beloved and sanctified, they are also “*preserved in Christ Jesus.*” This is a very sweet expression and conveys a very true meaning, but the exact translation is, “kept for Jesus Christ.” To my mind, this is a most delightful Truth of God—it makes my eyes sparkle to think of our being kept for Jesus Christ as jewels that He, alone, must wear. “A garden enclosed is My sister, My spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.” “Kept for Jesus Christ.” I wish that we all carried out this Divine purpose. What have I to do with idols? I am kept for Jesus Christ! What have I to do with seeking the things of this world? I am kept for Jesus Christ! What have I to do with living to myself, or to win the applause of men? What have I to do with the judgments of those who would be thought wise? What have we to do with *anything* but this—“Kept for Jesus Christ”? Our heart should be a cup from which no lip but His shall drink, a chalice consecrated to Him who has given Himself for us. Therefore let us have no eyes but for Jesus, no ears but for Jesus, no tongue but for Jesus—let us be always, only, all for Him!

“Kept for Jesus Christ.” You must not touch that treasure—it is set apart for the King! You must not meddle with that man, you must not seek to engross the love of that woman—they are kept for Jesus Christ. It is to such people that Jude writes his Epistle. Others may be filthy dreamers, but these people are kept for Jesus Christ! Some may be wandering stars or trees plucked up by the roots, but these people are kept for Jesus Christ—kept *by* Him, kept *in* Him—but especially kept *for* Him. May the meaning of this precious Word of God be written upon all your hearts, beloved in Christ!

Then Jude adds, “*and called.*” Do you not see the specialty running through all this description? Those who were beloved, sanctified and preserved, were also called! There is a call in the Gospel which comes to all men to whom it is proclaimed, yet all men are not “called” in the sense meant here. Brother, do you remember that day when you were called? The Gospel had called you many times and, up to that time, it had fallen upon deaf ears. But that day you were called! Just as Lazarus came forth out of the grave because he was called by Christ, so was it with you. You had been lying asleep, wrapped in the arms of sin—no, like Lazarus, you were actually *dead*—but that day there came a voice to you out of the excellent Glory! It was not a voice that you heard with the ears but, better than that, you heard it in your very soul and it was as clear a call from Christ to you as when He called out of Heaven to Saul of Tarsus, and said, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?”

I remember distinctly when the Lord first called me and I recollect it all the better because He has called me many times, since, for that blessed call continues and is often repeated! He called us, first, from death to life, then from darkness to light, then from a lesser light to a brighter one—and He has called us to go up, step by step! Not even the angels go up Jacob’s ladder with a flight—they ascend it step by step—and every day and all the day there is a call that comes to some of us, “Friend, come up higher.” When we are half inclined to sit down on the step of life and admire the golden way up which we have, up to now, ascended, we hear a voice that says to us, “Higher”—and there is our gracious God at the top of the ladder, still beckoning us to ascend, and say-

ing to us, again and again, “Seek you My face,” and making us respond, “Your face, Lord, will we seek.”

Those who are the beloved of the Lord are called. They have heard a voice which worldlings have not heard. They have seen a face which the blind men of this world have never seen. They have touched a hand and a mystic hand has touched them, which those dead ones who still lie in the Wicked One have never felt. They are the called—they are called by Christ to come out from among the ungodly, to be separate from them, to follow Him and to keep following Him till, at last, He bids them enter into His Glory to be with Him forever!

O Beloved, the blessings of the Gospel belong to men and women such as these, who have been set apart by Divine Love, who have been held apart and consecrated to Christ and who have been taken apart by effectual calling and so made to dwell apart to the glory of Christ, alone, and for His use only! Shall any Belshazzar drink out of these golden cups? God forbid! Shall Satan come and take away these crown jewels of the Prince and bedeck himself with them? God forbid! When I see professedly Christian men seeking worldly amusements and worldly honors, and thus giving themselves over to Belial, what can I think or say of them? God grant that it may not be so with any of us, but may we be “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”!

III. Now I must close by noticing, with brevity, A SPECIAL BENEDICTION which Jude wished to these people, and this is to be the very pith and point of my sermon. It is, dear Friends, my special desire and prayer to God for all who are separated unto Him, that mercy, peace and love may be multiplied unto them.

Beloved, may you have *mercy*! You will always need it, for even a saint is still a sinner. May you have the mercy that will continue to forgive your sin, the mercy that will continue to wash your feet from the defilement of the way! May you have the mercies of Providence that will supply your need, the mercies that will sustain you under trial, the mercies that will lead you on from strength to strength! May you have much mercy, for you will need it and, blessed be God, “He delights in mercy.”

Then, says the Apostle, he wishes that we may have *peace*. Oh, may you have it! The man who is at perfect peace with God, who is at perfect peace with his own conscience, who is at peace with all his fellow men, who especially cultivates peace by behaving himself aright in the household of God—this is the man who is strong in the midst of unrest and turmoil! This is the man who will stand firm when others flinch, for he can say, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.” May you have this peace, Beloved!

Jude next wishes that we may have *love*. That is to say, first, a sense of the love of God shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Spirit, a ravishing realization that God loves us with that everlasting love which knows no measure, nor change, nor end. May your heart dance at the very *thought* of the infinite love of God which He displays towards you! And then may you have love towards men, loving your neighbor as yourself with that compassionate love which is pictured in the parable of the Samaritan, that love which does not say, “Be you warmed and be you filled,” but

which proves itself to be real by *deeds of charity and acts of kindness!* May you abound in love to God's people. May your love be exceedingly abundant to those who are your Brothers and Sisters in Christ, whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life! I wish, dear Friends, that you and I could be suffused with love. One said of Basil that he was a pillar of light—I do not so much care for that comparison as to be a pillar of *love*. Look at holy John next to his Master, surely, and chiefly so because he abounded in love.

The benediction of the Apostle is this—that this *mercy, peace, and love may be multiplied to you*. Is not that a beautiful word, “multiplied”?—not merely increased, but multiplied! You know what it is to increase—you add one to two, that is three—but when you *multiply*, you say, “Three times three, that is nine.” Multiplying is a quick way of growing! Oh, that you had all these blessings multiplied—that, if you have had mercy, you might have ten times as much mercy—that, if you have had peace, you might have a deeper, fuller, richer, more abiding peace, multiplied peace, peace upon peace, “the peace of God, which passes all understanding”—and that, if you have had love, your love might be multiplied, squared, cubed! May the biggest figures that can be found multiply your love, for never did any man, yet, have too much love to God, or too much of the right kind of love to his fellow men! May the Lord make us to grow in Grace, to be filled with Grace, to have these three Graces multiplied unto us!

Now I come back to where I began. It was a dark time when Jude wrote this Epistle, but instead of saying to the Christian people, “You see that all these people have gone astray, the cause is in danger—go forth and fight with them”—he says, “mercy, and peace, and love, be multiplied unto you.” The *Graces* of Christians will be the *defeat* of the enemy! If you need to improve a dark night, give us brighter stars, and if we need to enlighten a Dark Age, let us have brighter Christians! If there is mischief abroad in the world, the fault, dear Brothers and Sisters, is, to a great extent, in ourselves. If we lived wholly to God, people would better know what Christians are! I believe that the short way to the conversion of sinners is the sanctification of saints. If we had more faith, we would preach better. If we had more believing prayer, we would see more souls converted. If we lived nearer to God, it would be better for the far-off ones. Is it not written that when a man receives this Water of Life into himself it, “shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” and, “out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water”? God make you to be such reservoirs of Grace!

I have not spoken hardly a word to the unconverted, you see, because I want you professors so to live that your lives shall preach sermons. It is all very well to preach with the mouth, but the best sermons in the world are preached with the legs, with the life, by the walk and conversation of God's people! If there is piety at home, if there is uprightness in business, if there is a burning zeal for God in your common conversation, then the ungodly will say, “What does this mean?” And they will want to know more about it. How earnestly I wish that every person here who cannot be described as, “Kept for Jesus Christ,” might long that it were so with him, and before he goes to bed, tonight, might pray that he may

belong to Christ! Then, giving himself up to Christ by faith, he may, this very night, know that sweet peace of which I spoke just now. So may it be with you all, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.**

Verses 1, 2. *Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.* Our holy faith breeds in us the best wishes for others. As we desire to find mercy, ourselves, so do we long that others, also, should find mercy and, as we rejoice in the peace and love which the Holy Spirit works in us, we desire that others may partake of the same spiritual benefits. Hence the Apostles usually begin their Epistles with these good wishes which are not mere wishes, but earnest prayers and Inspired benedictions. May we breathe such petitions wherever we go! Let us wish no man any ill, even in the most exciting and trying times, and under the greatest provocation, but let us still breathe out this prayer, "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied."

3. *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was necessary for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints.* These godly men, though they wrote under Divine Inspiration, yet stirred themselves up that they might be in a right condition of mind and heart. Even though the pen does not, by itself, write, yet it is well that it is not corroded, lest it answer not to the hand that uses it. So Jude says, "I gave all diligence to write unto you." All the diligence of Jude, by itself, could not have written this Epistle! Still, while depending upon Divine guidance, he was no mere passive agent—he gave all diligence to the accomplishment of his task. Jude wrote of "the common salvation," for there is but one. He was writing a general Epistle, a catholic Epistle, to all sorts of persons all over the world and he, therefore, wrote of "the common salvation." There is but one salvation—there cannot be another. There are some who trouble us, as some troubled the Christians in the Apostles' day, by preaching "another Gospel, which is not another," but there is only one salvation. "It was necessary," says the Apostle, "for me to write unto you." And oh, how necessary it still is to preach the Gospel and to warn men against defections from it! Jude continues, "It was necessary for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all" (that is the correct rendering) "delivered to the saints." The faith is not a *growth*. It is not an *evolution*. It was once for all delivered to the saints and the great business of the saints, the holy, the saintly among men, is to defend, if necessary with their lives, the faith once delivered unto them! We are put in trust with the Gospel, we are trustees of a Divine deposit of invaluable Truth. And we must be true to our trust at all costs. It was necessary for Jude to write as he did, for he had further to say—

4. *For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the Grace of our God*

into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. These are two vital points in which many have erred—either separating holiness of life from orthodoxy of belief—or denying the Divinity and the supremacy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing could more discredit the Gospel than the first error, that of turning the Grace of God into lasciviousness. And nothing could more injure the Gospel than the second error, that of “denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

5. *I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.* So you may get in among the spiritual children of Israel, you may share their privileges, you may sing the Red Sea song of triumph and yet, after all, if there is not *real* living faith within your soul, God will as surely destroy you as He destroyed the unbelieving Israelites! Those myriads of graves in the wilderness are as sure a token of God’s hatred of sin as the drowning of Pharaoh’s chariots and horsemen in the Red Sea! Beware, then, of having a form of faith which does not purify your lives, a profession of belief in Christ which allows you to live in sin with impunity, for if you have this, however near you may *seem* to be to the people of God, even if you are counted in with them, yet God will not reckon you as His, for He is the same Lord who “afterward destroyed them that believed not.”

6. *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.* The angels—think of how high they stood in their first estate! If sin could drag an angel from the skies, it may well pluck a minister from the pulpit, a deacon from the Communion Table, a Church member out of the midst of his Brothers and Sisters! It is only *perseverance in holiness* which is the token of eternal salvation! If we forsake the Lord and turn back to our former evil ways, it will be the evidence that we never really believed in Christ and that there was no true work of Grace in our hearts.

7. *Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.* Whatever the new gods, newly come up, that some preach, nowadays, may be or may not be, “our God is a consuming fire,” our God is one who takes vengeance upon iniquity and who will by no means spare the guilty! He is as terribly just as He is Divinely gracious—let us bow before Him.

8. *Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.* What a strange thing it is that such evils should spring up in the nominal Church of God! I suppose that out of the professing Church, there have come more monstrous evils than have been nursed in the world, itself! Why, even in these days, we have had those who have professed perfection, who have given themselves over to abominable evils and who have even taught them as a part of their perfection! Ah, me! To what depths of infamy will not men go! Under the very guise of holiness, the most loathsome iniquity has been practiced. Unless the Grace of God prevents, that which is best rots into that which is

worst. You could not make a devil except with an angel for the raw material—a Judas Iscariot could only be produced out of an Apostle of Jesus Christ—and it was into the nominal Church of God that these filthy dreamers of whom Jude wrote had come. They were also, according to the Apostle, those who “despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities,” those who quibble at everything that is right and good, and seek to pull down everything that comes to them with authority, especially everything that is of Divine authority.

9. *Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you.* I do not know when that happened, yet I believe it, because it is here. When we are called to dispute—whether it is about the Law of God, which might be regarded as the body of Moses, or about the Gospel, which is the body of Christ—let us use no railing accusations, for the wrath of man works not the righteousness of God. Let us be satisfied with hard arguments and soft words—and when we feel that our own rebuke will be useless, let us simply say, “The Lord rebuke you.”

10. *But these speak evil of those things which they know not.* Very generally it is so—those who revile Holy Scripture are usually persons who have not read the Bible. They “speak evil of those things which they know not.”

10-12. *But what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. These are spots in your feasts of charity. You seem to be sailing smoothly along over the placid waters, but these men are like hidden rocks—that is the expression used by the Apostle rather than, “spots.”*

12. *When they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear.* At the love feasts in the Apostles’ day, these ungodly men feasted without fear, just as some do at the Communion Table now. The absence of holy fear is a damning mark in the souls of unholy professors! That religion which has no awe in it—which never makes us tremble before the Most High—is not the religion of genuine faith, for there is a fear which even perfect love casts not out, but it rather increases and deepens that holy fear which is the very essence of true piety.

12, 13. *Clouds they are without water, carried about by winds; trees whose fruit withers, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.* Such were in the professing Church in Jude’s time, so we must not be surprised if we meet with men like them in the nominal Church today!

14, 15. *And Enoch, also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.* When Enoch thus prophesied, we do not know. That he did so was re-

vealed to Jude and he, here, tells us of it. It was profitable for us that so pointed and plain a testimony of Enoch should not be lost.

16-18. *These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaks great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But, Beloved, remember the words which were spoken before of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.* Jude gives a summary of warnings uttered by Paul, Peter and James.

19. *These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.* They know nothing of the Divine Life and of that Divine Spirit who dwells in the bodies of the saints as in a holy temple.

20. *But you, Beloved, building*—Is this the way, then, to prevent our falling into sin? Yes. To prevent doing wrong, do right—“You, Beloved, building”—doing good, substantial, solid work, building—

20. *Up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit!* He has told us about the one Foundation, now he bids us build thereon—“Building up yourselves on your most holy faith.” “Praying.” That is the next thing. There is no preservation like that which is given by God in response to believing prayer. “Praying in the Holy Spirit.” There is a kind of praying which is without the Holy Spirit—and it speeds not. There is a praying which is the breath of God in man, returning from where it came—this will keep us from falling and bring us untold blessings

21. *Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.* While you thus carefully watch over yourselves, have great love, also, to others, and seek to bless them, especially your fellow Church members.

22. *And of some have compassion, making a difference.* They may all, apparently, sin in much the same way, but there may be circumstances that make a difference between them. There may not be the same willfulness, or the same continuance in the sin in some as there is in others—there may be, in some cases, *greater* temptation and, therefore, more excuse for them. “Of some have compassion, making a difference.”

23. *And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.* Loving the sinners, but hating their sin.

24, 25. *Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the Presence of His Glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.*

The Lord bless the reading of His Word to our profit! 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.**

THE COMMON SALVATION

NO. 1592

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 10, 1881,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"The common salvation."
Jude 1:3.*

JUDE says, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was necessary for me to write unto you." The Apostle did not write for writing's sake and in this he sets us an example—we are not to speak for speaking's sake, nor even to preach for preaching's sake. When we take upon ourselves to write concerning Divine things, it ought to be because it is necessary for us to write. And when we speak in the name of God, it should be because we have something to say which is necessary to be said. Unless a man feels an imperative necessity to speak, he will not speak as an ambassador of God.

I think that Jude would not have given all diligence to write if he had not, first, felt that necessity was laid upon him to do so. Before you instruct others, endeavor to feel the obligation which rests upon you to impart the Light of God which you have received, for if you have been called of God unto this ministry, woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel! The souls of others require the Truth of God which you have been commissioned to teach—but you, also, require to teach it to them, for, if you do not warn them, their blood may stain your skirts. "That the soul is without knowledge is not good." Neither is it good to any that he should withhold what he knows. That men should live and die in ignorance of Christ is terrible to conceive of, therefore when you speak or write, do it because it is necessary to be done and necessary that you should do it.

You know how it behoved Christ to suffer and, even so, it behooves us to hold forth the Word of Life. The necessity in the present case was that he should write of the common salvation. If it was common—commonly understood and commonly received—why should he need to write about it? Surely a common subject has enough written upon it, already, and it affords no room for freshness and novelty which are so much desired by readers. Yet experience and observation prove that it is more necessary to preach the *common* Doctrines of the Gospel than any other Truths of God and that just those things which appear to be the most elementary and the most generally received are those upon which it is most important to lay stress again and again.

If there are certain high doctrines, speculative theories and dogmas which are rather outgrowths of the Gospel than the Gospel, itself, let them be preached in due proportion. But if they are not preached, the risk and danger will not be extreme. As for the root facts, the fundamental Doctrines, the primary Truths of Scripture, we must, from day to day, insist upon them. We must never say of them, "Everybody knows them," for, alas, everybody *forgets* them! We must not cease from proclaiming them

from fear of being charged with uttering mere platitudes—that which is revealed of the Holy Spirit must not be spoken of so reproachfully. Let men call the Doctrines of the Gospel platitudes if they will—we will only answer that on such platitudes our salvation rests!

After all, on certain grand, wide, well-known Truths of universal acceptance, the Church of God is built—her basis is not a difficult philosophy, but a plain Revelation of God. Let us not strain after matters of ultra refinement, theories of cultured intellects, but let us obey the necessity which calls upon us to write and to speak of the common salvation. The Gospel message is full of world-wide truisms and well-known facts. What did Paul say?—“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” If worthy of all acceptance, it is surely worthy of all proclamation! It is worthwhile for the whole Church to continually rehearse that Jesus came to save sinners, for common Truth as it is, there is a necessity that we should perpetually and diligently make it known.

The common salvation should be commonly spoken of, but I fear it is uncommonly neglected in these days. The immediate necessity to write of the common salvation arose out of certain men who had crept into the Church unawares. Some of these attacked the Gospel on its practical side with Antinomian subtlety. They cried up the Grace of God, but said little of the *holy living* which it produces. They made light of sin under pretense of magnifying the Grace of God! They called careful watchfulness a legal spirit. They derided humble self-examination and claimed, as children of God, they were, in no sense, bound by the precepts of the Moral Law. The Apostle calls it, “turning the Grace of our God into lasciviousness.”

Side by side with these, there crept in another gang of evil ones, “who denied the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” They robbed Christ of His Divine Glory and so denied His Atonement and Sovereignty as to dethrone Him from being either the Savior or the King of His Church. This was the essence of Arianism. They said that Jesus Christ was an admirable *example*, that He was one of a number of persons who have discovered important truths and that He is, therefore, to be greatly admired, but they asserted that still higher truth would yet be discovered as the race proceeded in its progress and so forth. These “men of thought” crept into the Church and stabbed at the heart of the common salvation.

We used to have in our Churches a sad amount of the Antinomian leaven—we had among us men who preached the Doctrines of Grace without the Grace of the Doctrines and professors who forevermore spoke about “the truth,” but seemed little careful about following “the Way” or exhibiting “the Life.” I hope that this evil principle has pretty well departed from us, though I fear that in its removal it has dragged away precious Truths of God with it and now we are assailed by quite another school of thought.

I see no choice in the two kinds of foes, they are equally bad—these last are denying this Truth and paring down the other, moving landmarks and overthrowing monuments, shaking every wall and kicking at every foundation. Having crept in among us unawares, defiant of common honesty, they preach against the Gospel from our own pulpits and wage war

against our Zion from within her own gates! It is essential at this day that such as fear God and are His servants should again and again both write and preach concerning “the common salvation”—and over and over again rehearse the first lessons of Christ—the very alphabet of Grace.

We must make the joyful sound of the common salvation to be more common than ever! I wish to ring it out this morning with all the power that I have and with all that God will grant me by His Holy Spirit! If these men assailed certain speculations of theology it would little matter. What is the chaff to the wheat, says the Lord? Let the chaff be removed, by all means. If they assailed certain peculiarities of method, either in work, or life, or teaching, it might be well for us to be taught something by their censures. If they attacked the specialties of a single person or sect and the particular view of the Truth of God held by a mere party it would not matter, for what are the fashions of men’s minds? Who is Paul and who is Apollos?

But it is at the very *root* of the tree that they lay their axe and, therefore, we must end all hesitation! We must take up our weapons and, for the sake of the common salvation earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints! Our subject, then, is “the common salvation.” Oh to speak in the power of the Spirit!

I. Our first observation at this time shall be that PRESENT SALVATION IS ENJOYED BY THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST, otherwise there could be among them no “common salvation.” Those who are sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ and called, are saved. In the Church of God, salvation is the privilege of all Believers. It is not a matter of the future, alone, a blessing to be sought for on a dying bed and reached in Heaven. But it is a blessing for this world and this *present time*. Those greatly mistake the meaning of salvation who suppose it signifies nothing more than escaping from Hell when you die and entering into Heaven when the time has come.

Salvation means being at *once* delivered from the power of sin and being, once and for all, washed from the guilt of sin. The very word used here—“the common salvation”—shows that Jude did not regard it as a hidden treasure put away from human reach throughout this mortal life. How could it have been common in such a case? He did not regard it as a distant attainment to be reached after 20, 30, or 40 years of holy living, but as a thing to be tasted, handled and received as soon as faith enters the soul—for how else could it be common? “Unto us who are saved,” says the Apostle, “who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling,” says the Scripture in another place. Salvation has come to our house—we have it—it is a common blessing in the household of faith. As salvation is not a *future* benefit only, so it is not a benefit reserved for a few of the more saintly people among Believers.

It is supposed by some that you cannot know whether you are saved till you are in the grip of death, or that, if any do know it, it is only a few eminent teachers or especially holy persons who have lived a very religious life and, consequently, know that they are saved. It is to be confessed that the more holy and godly our life, the brighter our evidence of salvation becomes. But still, the blessing, itself, is common to *all* the children of

God—and those whose faith is feeble and whose spiritual life is weak are still saved in the Lord. Beloved Hearer, you ought not to rest without knowing that you are saved! You may know it and if it is true, you *ought* to know it! I do not think that you have any right to sit quietly on that seat for 10 minutes without knowing that you are saved, for it is an awful thing to be in doubt as to whether you are under the bondage of sin—in doubt as to your being at peace with God.

This is not a subject upon which uncertainty can be endured. You say, “Tis a point I long to know.” It is well that you long to know it—I beg you to long to know it so intensely that you must either know it or become unutterably wretched! Let every doubt on that point be like a sword in your bones. May God cause your heart either to rejoice with full assurance or else to be in agony as with death pangs till you are confident that you are built on the sure Foundation. The salvation which is in Christ Jesus is the common salvation of all who know the Gospel and live upon it. Among simple-minded Believers, salvation is the inheritance of every one of them and the knowledge that they are saved is an everyday possession. We who have joined in Church fellowship in this place can truly say, “We rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.” “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We count it no presumption to say that we are saved, for the Word of God has told us so in those places where salvation is promised by faith in Christ Jesus!

The presumption would lie in doubting the Word of God—but in simply believing what He says, there is far greater humility than in questioning it! Being, then, partakers of like precious faith, we share in salvation bought with precious blood, which, though it is costly beyond all price is, nevertheless, to all Believers the common salvation. This common salvation consists in many works of Grace for us and in us. In part it consists of deliverance from spiritual death. We were dead in trespasses and sins, but the Spirit of God has quickened us into a new and heavenly life and thus we have salvation from spiritual death. This belongs, today, to all Believers, for how can a man be a Believer and not have the inner life? Having that life, he is conscious that it is there. True, he may fall into a fainting fit and lie swooning, scarcely conscious of being alive—but such is not his *usual* condition. Healthy life is conscious life and rejoices in being, acting and growing. You who are strangers to the people of God may think I am fanatical, but, indeed, I am only speaking words of truth and soberness when I say that the conscious possession of a heavenly life is common among Believers and is, in fact, a large part of the common salvation.

This common salvation consists in deliverance from that awful distance at which we once stood from God. We were far off from Him by wicked works and when the quickening began in us, we felt that distance and we mourned it, fearing, also, that it could never be removed. But now in Christ Jesus we are brought near and have become dwellers in the House of the Lord. Abba, Father, is the cry which the blessed God hears and accepts as it rises from our hearts. Once God was not in all our thoughts, but now our thoughts are sanctified and sweetened by a sense of His Presence—and we find our greatest joy in feeling that He is all around us

and within us—that in Him we live and move and have our being! Blessed is the common salvation which has brought us near to God by the blood of Jesus and made us children and heirs of the Most High!

We have also been saved from the gloom of heart which once hung over us because we were conscious of being under God's displeasure. We thought that we could never be forgiven, but we *are* forgiven. We concluded that our heavenly Father would never accept us, but we *are* accepted in the Beloved. We wrote ourselves down among the condemned, but now we are justified by faith which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The darkness has passed and the true light shines into the spirits of the faithful. Peace with God is a sweet part of the common salvation. Now we are delivered, also, from the love of sin. We cannot find pleasure in it as once we did. We sin, but it costs us dearly. When we do so, we lament it with our whole soul. It was our natural way to run the downward road, but now, when our feet tread that path, it is as wanderers who are out of their way.

Once sin was our element, as the water is the living element of fish, but it is far otherwise, now, for sin is death to us. Transgression now breeds sorrow in our conscience and creates misery in the heart, for it is alien to the life of God which is in us. If we could have our desire, we would never offend again—we would have our souls clear as the firmament above us and never would an evil thought or a loose desire flit over the pure heavens of our sanctified minds. We would do God's will on earth as it is done in Heaven. I say, "we," for I speak for all Believers in the Lord Jesus. We are all rescued from the iron yoke of the love of evil and this is a most precious part of the common salvation!

The Lord has also delivered us from that cowardly fear of man which brings a snare and holds men as slaves to evil customs. He has also brought us out of the dark dungeon of spiritual ignorance and renewed us in knowledge—thus has He broken the dominion of the former lusts of our ignorance and given us liberty to serve Him with godly fear. Pride, too, is laid in the dust and we are saved from that dreadful tyrant. The dominant power of selfishness is destroyed and we have learned to love. The woes of others afflict us; the joys of others rejoice us; our soul flows out beyond the narrow confines of our own ribs. Our heart is enlarged with love towards God and to all His creatures. Blessed salvation this! And it is common to all Believers.

We have again and again heard it said that evangelical ministers preach salvation to sinful men and talk to them of a future life, whereas if we were practical, we should denounce the sinner and speak only of present reformation in this life. The charge is, I fear, more often made in malice than in ignorance. But if in ignorance I would reply—O fools and slow of heart, neither to listen nor to understand! Our constant theme is immediate salvation from sin and we are perpetually insisting upon it that this salvation is a *present* business, to be attended to at once for the purposes of today. It is false, utterly false, that we have so preached about the world to come as to have pushed out of sight the duties and temptations of this present life! No, we have regarded the life to come as commenced here below and have viewed Heaven, itself, as to a great extent,

the fruit of a heavenly disposition which must be implanted in us while yet on earth.

Ah, if men did not *hate* the Gospel, they would not so often repeat stale objections and groundless accusations. It is surely time that infidelity should invent something fresh in the way of objection, for this has long passed the stage of toleration and has become a worn-out impertinence. Salvation from sin, leading upward to perfection and Heaven, is called in the text, “the common salvation.” It is, then, the salvation of *all* God’s people—the salvation about which all true Christians are agreed, for, notwithstanding all you hear about our divisions into sects, the Church is really one! The denominations of the Christian Church are very much like the divisions of a plowed field by means of furrows which mark the surface, but the land remains, to all intents and purposes, one field.

I speak not of mere professors, but truly spiritual people. Such are all *one* in Christ Jesus and their salvation is in all respects the same. If they have not all things common, at least they have one and the same salvation! All converted men and women believe in the same essential Truths of God, feel the working of the same Spirit within them and press forward to the same end, namely, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. You shall take a high churchman who is a truly spiritual man—and there *are* such people—and you shall set him down side by side with the most rigid member of the Society of Friends and when they begin to talk of Jesus, of the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul and the desire of their hearts after God, you will hardly know which is which! The nearer we come to Him, who is the Salvation of God, the more plainly we see that among the children of God the basis of agreement is far wider than the ground of division.

Andrew Fuller well and pithily said, “There are, I conceive, four things which essentially belong to the common salvation—its necessity, its vicarious medium, its freeness to the chief of sinners and its holy efficacy.” We may differ on the “five points,” but we are agreed upon these four points! Ask any true Christian if it is not so. You shall get together, if you like, a collection of the odds and ends of Christianity and certainly there are some odd Christian people about whose light comes from above, so they say—I think through a crack in the roof—but if they are really genuine and their hearts are right, you shall find that even in these wrong-headed folk there is an agreement upon their need of a Savior, their faith in His death, the freeness of His Grace and the change of heart which it produces.

All Believers in Christ have a common delight in a common salvation.

II. We go a step further and note, secondly, that THIS SALVATION IS, IN SOME RESPECTS, COMMON IN THE WIDEST POSSIBLE SENSE. It is common because it is to be preached to all nations, to all classes, to all characters, to all ages and to all conditions of men—in fact, it is to be preached to *every* creature under Heaven. It is the common salvation so far as this—that a proclamation of mercy through Jesus Christ is to be made to all mankind—for it is declared that if they believe in Christ Jesus they shall be saved. You need not be afraid of being too free and unre-served in your delivering of the Gospel.

Let the great trumpet be blown and let every mortal ear attend! I am as firm an adherent to the Doctrines of Sovereign Grace as any man living, but never shall this tongue hesitate to declare the common salvation! Whenever I am called upon to address a congregation, I will always cry, "Ho, everyone that thirsts, come you to the waters!" "Whoever will, let him take of the Water of Life freely." The invitation of the Gospel is so far-reaching that it may well be called "the common salvation." It is common in the widest sense because every man that believes in Christ Jesus will be saved—not the Jew only, but the Gentile, also—not the only *poor* man, but the rich man, also! Not only the black man, or the white man, but men of every color—not the ignorant or the learned, the rude or the refined, exclusively—but every soul of Adam born that believes in Christ Jesus shall be saved.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And so to you, dear Hearer, whoever you may be, comes this common salvation. It is a command addressed to you and a promise made sure to you, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." It is common in this wide sense, that if any man is saved he will be saved by this common salvation! Men talk as if there were half-a-dozen different roads to Heaven and yet there is but one—they prattle as if there were seven or eight saviors at the least, or as if every man must be his own savior as we heard the other day of every man being his own lawyer!

And yet there is but one name given among men whereby we must be saved! He who tries to be his own savior has a fool for his client. He will utterly fail to his eternal confusion—why did Jesus die to save us if we can save ourselves? All born of Adam who enter Eternal Life come in by the one door! Infants are saved through Christ and if any attain to Heaven from among the heathen, it must be by virtue of the salvation of Christ. He is the common Life for all that live, the common Bread for all who are fed by God, the common joy of all who have been blessed of the Lord. Thus in its publication, in its promise and in its efficacy, the salvation of Christ is the one and only Gospel of Life to men. As there is but one common air, one common sea, one common earth, so there is but one common salvation! O that we may be among those who prove its power in their own person by being saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation!

III. But I am persuaded that this is not what Jude meant, so I come, in the third place, to say that IT IS COMMON TO ALL BELIEVERS. Do you remember what this same Jude once said to the Savior? He asked Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself unto us and not unto the world?" He understands that matter, now, but he is not looking so much at the "not unto the world" as at the first fact in his question, "You will manifest Yourself unto us." He is evidently full of joy that the manifestation of the salvation of Jesus is common to all Believers. Upon that blessed fact let us dwell.

Certain offices, gifts, attainments and enjoyments are given to some and not to others. "Are all Apostles? Are all Prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?" It is not every Believer that possesses full as-

urance, or enjoys ecstasy, or is made largely useful to others. But *all* Believers have the common salvation! There they share and share alike and every one of them is saved in Christ Jesus and called. An Apostle may say to the newest of his converts, "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you spiritual gifts, to the end you may be established. That is, that I may be comforted together, with you, by the mutual faith of both you and me."

For, first, it is a common salvation which all Believers possess, since it springs from the same Divine Grace. There are not some saved by Grace and others by works, many by pure Grace and more partly by works—but salvation is altogether of Grace in every case and that Grace is the same in all who possess it. All Believers are chosen by the same electing love, for the same reason, namely, to the Glory of the Father's Grace and, being so chosen, they are all ordained unto the same life, secured by the same Covenant and given into the hands of the same Surety. Eternal Love encompasses, enriches, comforts and preserves each individual Believer and guarantees to each the same inheritance in Christ Jesus.

Brother, are you saved by Grace? So am I. Am I saved by Grace? Then my Sister, if you believe in Christ, you are saved as I am! It is a common salvation—common because we are all saved by the same Savior. We are not, some of us, looking to Jesus and others to Moses, or to ourselves! Neither are we, some of us, looking to the atoning death and others to the perfect life of Christ—but we are *all* saved by the same one work, life, death, Resurrection and intercession of Christ Jesus! When He made Atonement by blood, it was for *all* His redeemed. When He rose, it was to justify *all* who are in Him! When He stands at the right hand of God to plead, He intercedes for *all* the saints! And when He comes, it will be that *all* His saints may be with Him where He is and may behold His Glory.

Do not fall into the modern notion which divides up Christ and allots something to one class of Believers and another portion to others of the chosen. They tell us there are such-and-such promises for Israel and other promises for the Church. I have not so read the Word of God, for I am persuaded that all Believers are the Israel of God! God loves all His saints and the same blessedness shall be to them all! You may rejoice and be glad that God will not give special raptures and soaring up into the skies to a *portion* of His family and leave the rest in the cold! In all that is "salvation" we have a common heritage, for Christ belongs to us all and we are all members of His body, partakers of His life and sharers of His Glory.

It is a common salvation because we are all saved through the same faith. We believe the same precious Truths of God and receive Christ in the same way. All the saved possess faith, though not all to the same degree. Would God we were all strong in faith! Still, faith is a childlike confidence in God in the greatest as much as in the least of God's people—and this is the essential requisite to salvation in every case. He that believes in Christ is not condemned, but He that believes *not* is condemned already! To all participation in Christian privilege we have only one right—"If you believe with all your heart you may." Faith makes a man a fellow commoner with the saints of God. It is a common salvation because faith and spiritual life are worked in us by the same Spirit. Faith does not come to

one by the operation of free will and to another by Free Grace, but to every one by the same Spirit.

You, then, my Brothers and Sisters, are plucked like a brand from the burning by the power of the Spirit of God and so, also, is your friend who rejoices with you. All are quickened by the same Spirit and kept alive by the same Quickener. The love of the Spirit should be joyfully acknowledged by us all without exception, for the Spirit has worked all our works in us. It is a common salvation as to its results, for all Believers are equally born again and they are all renewed by Him who says, "Behold I make all things new." Brought into the one family of God, they are all made children of God and joint heirs with Christ Jesus. They are all justified, accepted, preserved, guided, upheld and comforted. Their feet are set upon the same Rock, they are led in the same King's highway and a new song is prepared for every one of their mouths.

The common salvation, like the common table of a household, satisfies all their mouths with good things and renews their youth like the eagle's. By-and-by they shall meet in the same Heaven. There will be no division before the Throne of God between the different tribes and denominations of Believers. One family, we dwell in Him even now, with all our petty strifes—but the great family relationship shall be more fully developed, by-and-by, when imperfections and errors shall be cast aside. The saints before the Throne will sing a common hymn to the common Savior as they gather in the common home, saved with a common salvation!

Brethren, I am right glad of all this. I feel inclined to stop the sermon and ask you to join in singing Charles Wesley's verse—

***"Partners of a glorious hope,
Lift your hearts and voices up
Jointly let us rise and sing
Christ our Prophet, Priest, and King."***

To me it is a joyous thing that God's best gifts should be the most common. It is so in nature—the sunshine, the dew, the air, the heavens—these cannot become the particular estate of a few. They are *common* blessings. When Richard the Second banished Bolingbroke, that nobleman is represented as saying—

***"This must my comfort be,
That sun that warms you here, shall shine on me!
And those His golden beams, to you here lent,
Shall point on me and gild my banishment."***

There is no monopolizing the best gifts, for Heaven ordains them to be the right of *all* mankind and so the chief things of the Covenant of Grace are common to all Believers!

One may have greater powers of speech than another, but God has spoken to the silent Brother the same promises. Gifts are to this man and to that—but the gift of salvation is to all who believe! The choicest saint may have far less of this world's riches than his brother, but the riches of God's Grace are all his own by equal title. We live on common ground, here, fed by our Father with the same Bread from Heaven. Thank God that in so many points the saints have fellowship, for all these should make them of one mind and of one heart towards each other. Some of God's children are not learned, but they shall all be taught of the Lord! All

are not experienced in the deep things of God, but they are all entitled to the best things of God!

There are some few points in which we are unlike, even as children of the same family differ in age and height, or in the color of their eyes or hair. But we are one in so many vital and conspicuous features that we should, with one voice and heart, praise our common Father. We may not all wear the same form of garment, but we all breathe the same Life. We may not eat from the same plate, but we all eat the same Bread. We may not all drink from a silver chalice, but the wine is from the one cluster. "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."

It is a great comfort to my heart that, among you who are bound to me by such loving ties, I can speak without hesitation of the common salvation, for you know it, feel it, love it, rejoice in it, even as I do this day!

IV. That brings me to close by noticing that this fact of the common salvation was mentioned by Jude that he might use it as an argument. So then THIS FACT HAS MANY LESSONS IN IT. First, this common salvation forbids a monopolizing spirit. The old divines used to say that enclosures were contrary to Law. I am afraid that I may not say so, now, for almost everywhere the commons have been taken from the poor man and his goose. May there yet be an end to such enclosing. But enclosures in *spiritual* things are contrary to the Law of Christ. Who are we that we should cut off from fellowship with us those whose fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ?

Yet we have those around us who make it a point of Christianity to be exclusive. Their exclusions are perpetual. Shut that door! Shut that door! Shut that door! That seems to be the one great command of their house and the second is like it—make more doors, one within the other and take care to bolt them all! Their sheep must keep within their fold without fail, for if they once get a bite of pasture outside the enclosure, their doom is sealed! In many forms this spirit has been among our denominations, but I do not believe in it. If the spirit of Christianity begets in us love to all mankind, much more, my Brothers and Sisters, are we to love those in whom there is the Life of God!

Is it really so, that this man is to be un-Christianized because of a mistake and the other because of a misapprehension? Does God make your Brother a Christian and do you try to unmake him? Does God think so much of him as to forgive him, to give him power in prayer and enjoyment of His Presence and do you think so little of him that you will hardly acknowledge him to be a partaker in Christ at all? Does the Father smile on *all* His children and do we *frown* on *half* of them? If I could do it, the last thing I should attempt would be to wall in my own special company and say, "The temple of the Lord are we."

I would not wish to set a fence round about the baptized and say, "These are the Church of Christ, even as many as have been immersed in water that they may be buried into His death." Beloved Brothers and Sisters, our Lord has a people that are on other points as right as right can be who on the point of Baptism are as wrong as wrong can be! But, for all

that, they are His people and in other respects are sound in the faith and valiant for the Lord our God. Unto such our love goes forth and must go forth, in spite of their grievous error. Upon other matters there are distinctions among Believers, but yet there is a common salvation enjoyed by the Arminian as well as by the Calvinist, possessed by the Presbyterian as well as by the Episcopalian, prized by the Quaker as well as by the Baptist. Those who are in Christ are more near of kin than they know and their intense unity in deep essential Truths of God is a greater force than most of them imagine—only give it scope and it will work wonders. As for us, let us not be among the men of whom Jude says, “These are they that separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.”

Next, this doctrine fosters the spirit of benediction. Jude begins his Epistle with, “Mercy unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied.” Brothers and Sisters, fill your lungs with this healthy air! You are saved with a common salvation! Desire the profit, the growth, the happiness of all who partake of this one salvation! You are in one ship—seek the good of all who sail with you. You are enlisted in one army—pray the Captain of salvation to make every soldier strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. The common salvation should excite us to seek the prosperity of every part of Zion—we would seek the good, not of our Tabernacle, alone, but of *every* tabernacle or temple where Christians meet to worship the Most High.

Next, this fact awakens in us a common spirit of contention for the one faith. For what says the Apostle? “It is necessary that I write unto you of the common salvation, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.” When the Gospel is assailed, we must all rise in its defense, for it is the common salvation which is involved in it. When they frightened this nation years ago with the rumor of an invasion by the French, the Russians, or somebody or other, what was the result? Everybody became warlike! Our young men joined rifle clubs and our elderly men polished up their old blunderbusses. Everybody hastened to arm himself to protect the common country from the coming foe—and had the enemy really arrived—even the women would have shouldered their brooms to sweep the intruder over our white cliffs! Every man, woman, and child would have found some fork, or scythe, or spade, or axe to protect the common fatherland!

Community of interest begets community of feeling. We are all Englishmen and we all sing, “Britons never will be slaves,” so, in this case, when the Gospel of Jesus Christ is assailed, it does not matter by whom, I feel I may call upon all Christians to take action for the common salvation. Brothers, awaken to the fight, for more than our hearths and homes are now attacked. Do they deny the Deity of Christ? It is not only my religion that is assailed, it is yours as well! Do they turn the Grace of God into lasciviousness? It is not this *branch* of the Church that is now endangered. The *entire* Church is placed in jeopardy! This Gospel is not my heritage or yours, it is the common domain of all the faithful and I beseech you feel it to be so. In your own spheres and in your own ways hold the Truth of God, and hold it firmly.

You who can neither preach nor write in defense of sound doctrine can at least give negative help by refusing to countenance error. Do not go to hear those who preach false doctrine. Do not encourage them in any way. Do not bid them God speed. Love all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, but if a word is spoken against the Lord or against the Gospel which He has revealed, turn your back upon the speaker! Be like the loving John, who, when he went to take a bath, found Cerinthus, the heretic, there, and departed at once with all speed. I want to see more backbone in all professors, more determination never to compromise their faith by pretending to believe that black is white and that white is a shade of black.

Love—do I not preach it with all my heart and do I not bid you manifest it in your deeds? But with that love mingle a firm adherence to the Truth of God as it is in Jesus and a zealous resolve that it shall not lose its honor while you are capable of upholding it! Let the common salvation be protected by the earnest zeal of the entire body of the Church and by us, also. This fact, I think, puts everyone of us to the question—It is a common salvation, but have I a part in it? It belongs to all the people of God, but am I one of them? I should like you, this morning, when you get home, to write on a piece of paper, if you will, whether you are saved or not. It would be a timely searching. Here you are, on this 10th day of April—write down, “Saved, bless the Lord for it!” And if you are obliged to feel you could *not* write that down, go up into your chamber and cry mightily unto God till you can!

Well, if you are able to write, “saved,” then inasmuch as it is a common salvation, go and try to spread that salvation among others. “Others save,” says Jude. I know, he says, “others save with fear,” but still he says “others save.” Try, as far as you can, to bring others to the Savior! A man’s salvation that he never wishes to spread among others is a salvation that is not worth having. You are not saved from selfishness if you do not wish to see your children, relatives and neighbors, yes, and all the *world* brought to Jesus’ feet. If it is a common salvation, go and make it common. And, lastly, this text calls for a common song of praise from all those who have the common salvation and I cannot suggest to you a better doxology than that with which Jude closes his Epistle—“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.”

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

SPOTS IN OUR FEASTS OF CHARITY NO. 797

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 23, 1868,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN. TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you,
feeding themselves without fear.”
Jude 1:12.*

WHEN the Church of God is extending her bounds rapidly, it is of the utmost importance that the growth should be real and permanent. If the walls of Zion are being built quickly, the master builders should keep an anxious eye upon the workmanship lest the stones should be put together with untempered mortar and the whole erection should, by-and-by, come to the ground. We desire not to grow up in a night, as the gourd, lest we also perish in a night. Our Lord Jesus, who is the great Shepherd of the sheep, sends to His Churches, at times when they are most prospering, sad reminders of human frailty by which He warns them to, “take heed that they be not deceived; but see to it that they make sure work, and build substantially, with gold, silver, and precious stones, and not with wood, and hay, and stubble.”

It is a very doleful season for the Church of God when everything is asleep, but there are dangers connected even with activity. When a man is under the intense excitement of earnest endeavor for Christ, it is possible that much within him may be spurious—a mere fungus growth forced out by heat—and hence it is deeply necessary, as Jude says, to write unto the saints and to speak unto Believers concerning this thing, that they be sound, true, real, sincere and approved in the sight of God. Jude tells us in the text, and indeed in his whole Epistle, that many who make a high profession are not what they profess to be, and that in the Church of God, in her best estate, many are clouds without rain, trees without fruit and wandering stars reserved for eternal darkness.

I. To come to the text at once, we have to remark from it that WE MUST EXPECT TO FIND UNGODLY MEN IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. They ought not to be there—the Church is bound to use her most earnest endeavors to keep them out—and, being in and being *discovered*, she should not be slow to cast them forth. She should put away wicked members and endeavor to preserve her purity! But for all that there will never be a perfect Church this side of the grave. They are without fault in the Canaan *above*, but a mixed multitude always will be mingled with the tribes of Israel while we are in this wilderness.

We may look for this, in the first place, because it has always been so. If even in the Paradise of God among perfect beings, sin intruded, how much more in our imperfect assemblies Where every man's heart is naturally deceitful? The very first human family had a Cain in it who, on the day of solemn sacrifice, came to God's altar although he was of that

Wicked One, and slew his brother. When, after a solemn judgment, the earth had been purged, and a little Church of only eight members was gathered in the ark, there was among them one of whom the Patriarch said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be." Ham was in the ark an ungodly reprobate, though surrounded by saints!

When the Lord had been pleased, according to the election of Divine Grace, to take Abraham from among mankind and set apart both him and his household, we read of Ishmael who mocked Isaac. In Isaac's family we hear of profane Esau. However few may be the chosen, there is sure to be some connected with them who are *with* them, but not *of* them. The people who were eminently typical of the Church of Christ, I mean Israel in the wilderness, were polluted in the same manner—no matter how strict might be its regulations, and how earnest might be its leader—yet the rebellious murmured, the mixed multitude fell a lusting, and Korah, Dathan and Abiram were a root of bitterness. I need not take you through all the history of the Lord's people down to the coming of Christ, but wherever you may put your finger you will be certain to discover the tares mingling with the wheat, and the serpent's seed nestling in the bosom of the elect household.

As for the days since the coming of our Master, this fact is painfully conspicuous! Our Lord had but 12 disciples who were near to Him, and yet He said, "I have chosen you 12 and one of you is a devil." The name of Judas will go down to eternity stamped with the curse, "It were better for that man that he had never been born." Afterwards, when Jesus had ascended and the Spirit of God had been given—when the Church had all things in common and was in her first love—yet we read of Ananias and Sapphira who hypocritically pretended to have given their substance when they had kept back much of it—and upon them the stern voice of Peter pronounced sentence of immediate death. So early were the liar and the hypocrite found within the gates of Zion that pristine purity could not utterly exclude the unworthy.

Look again at the Church in Samaria. The preaching of Philip had stirred the city, and a pretender to magic who had deluded the people professed to become, himself, a Believer. He believed, it is said, and was baptized—but his heart was not right in the sight of God—his faith was not the faith of God's elect. How solemn were the words of Peter to him, "You have neither part nor lot in this matter...For I perceive that you are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity!" The execrable name of Simon Magus is another proof that the Church of Christ, in her most zealous state, cannot expect to be clear of the basest of men.

Our own observation and the history of any branch of the Lord's Church will go to show the same thing. It is said that the emperor Frederick III once heard a courtier declare that he desired to go to a place where he should find no hypocrites. "Then," said his majesty, "You had need to go beyond the frozen ocean where there are no men. And if you should reach the place, there might be one hypocrite there, then." It would be difficult to find any association of persons in which there are no unworthy

individuals. And among those companies which are most select, you may frequently discover the worst of men.

Further, this might be expected to be so because of the many inducements which exist to tempt unscrupulous men to assume the Christian name. Few inducements, I grant you, existed when the stake, the axe, or death in the amphitheater were the only reward for following the Lord Jesus! But *many* inducements are there nowadays—when to be a Christian is to be *respected*—when the Christian profession introduces you into good society, secures you trust and credit in your business, and procures customers for your shop. When religion is altogether a most comfortable and respectable thing it is no wonder that knaves adopt it. Persecution has not ceased—there *are* Christians who have to endure much of it—but, on the other hand, many make a good thing of their profession, and some cunning rogues have proved that they could not have adopted a better trick for succeeding in life than taking up the garb of piety.

Do you wonder, therefore, if persons should be found who thrust themselves upon sacred ground and brave all consequences of future punishment? See yonder eagle how it mounts. Does it care for the ethereal blue, or aspire to commune with the stars of Heaven? Not a whit—such airy considerations have no weight with the ravenous bird! And yet you will not wonder that it soars aloft when you remember that it thus obtains a broader range of vision, and so becomes the more able to provide for its nest. It mounts towards Heaven but it keeps its eye evermore upon the outlook for its prey. No celestial impulse is needed, its love of blood suffices to bear it aloft. It soars only that it may flash downwards with fell swoop upon the object of its desires.

Wonder not that men with the hearts of devils yet mount like angels—there is a reason which explains it all! That wild ass would not bray if there were no fodder. Men would be less in a hurry to avow their pretended faith if there were no advantages to be gained! The rower in the boat sits with his back to the shore but is all the while pulling towards it. Many tug the oar towards the world which they pretend to have renounced. How many are like that famous painting of the olden time in which the artist depicted what seemed at a distance a holy friar with his hands crossed in devotion, and a book before him, looking like a saint, indeed—but when you came close to the venerable impostor, you found that his hands, though clasped, enclosed a lemon—and instead of a book, there was a punch bowl into which he was squeezing the juice! Many an inn has an angel on the sign and a devil for the landlord! Fair without is often foul within. To *seem* to be answers men's purposes so well that it is little marvel if pretenders swarm like the flies in Egypt's plague!

Moreover, Brethren, we might have reckoned that there would be ungracious men mingled with the people of God, since it is clear to every thoughtful man that this must be one of the craftiest designs of Satan. In what way can Satan so seriously damage the Church of God as by thrusting unworthy persons into it? While men slept the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat—because the tares would take away the nourishment from the wheat and help to choke it—and prevent it from yielding so

rich a harvest. The Greeks, outside the walls of Troy, were unable to storm the city but after a long war they succeeded by using the stratagem of the wooden horse.

Putting some few Greeks within the hollow monster, they pretended to flee and left the horse to be dragged within the gates of Troy by the infatuated Trojans. In the dead of night out came these traitor Greeks and opened the gates to their friends outside. Satan knows right well that one devil in the Church can do far more than a thousand devils outside her bounds. He understands that all the blasphemers, and atheists, and free-thinkers, and so on that ever assailed the bastions of the Church of God could not do one tithe as much mischief to her as those who pretend to be followers of the bleeding Lamb, but in secret are crucifying the Lord afresh and putting Him to an open shame. If there are any here of this sort, and I fear there are, I do beseech you look to yourselves—you are cat's paws for the Evil One, mean tools of the fallen spirit—blush to be so degraded!

How sad to be a miserable skulker in the service of the Prince of Darkness! Better, surely, if honor is what you seek, to fight for Satan *openly* and avowedly—wearing the black plume and the diabolical uniform—than to be a base, cowardly assassin, sneaking into the ranks of the godly to stab them in the dark. None but pirates sail under false colors and the yard-arm is the best place for them. O you snakes in the grass! You serpents who insinuate yourselves so craftily! How shall you escape the damnation of Hell? That foul fiend who now employs you upon his secret service laughs in his sleeve as he foresees the triple bands of flame with which you will be bound forever! O that you could repent and turn from your base and crooked ways, for otherwise your end will be terrible and your doom eternal.

Further, my dear Brothers and Sisters, it is a very sad reflection that we may always expect to find ungodly men in the Church of God, for numbers come there, at first, through inadvertence. I will excuse many, in some respects, for being found numbered with God's people though unconverted—I excuse them to some degree—for I believe that they were honest when at first they were added to the Church. They were never saved, of course—but they *thought* they were. Never having had a true sense of sin, they nevertheless experienced some alarms and they set down those alarms for *repentance*. Although they have never truly believed in the Lord Jesus, they have felt a degree of peace and have come to look upon this treacherous calm as the result of true faith.

They have never really received a new heart, still, there is a measure of reformation—and they mistake the outward for the inward. They were excited by the earnestness of God's people, and under a thrilling sermon they were made to feel as they had not felt before! And straightaway, the *wish* being father to the *thought*—they concluded they had passed from death unto life while they still remained dead in trespasses and sin. At first a few fears may have passed their minds, but by degrees, finding these fears uncomfortable, and Satan determining to blind their eyes and sear their consciences as with a hot iron, they at last made no further en-

quiries, but went straightaway onward to ruin with their eyes closed—believing that they were on the road to Glory.

It is said that a certain player had acted the part of Richard III so admirably, and had thrown his whole soul into it so thoroughly that he imbibed the idea that he was *actually* a king. He became so extravagant in his living, and withal so haughty in his behavior that he brought himself first to contempt, and next to beggary. Doubtless there are many who at first were mere actors who at last have grown into the conceit that the part which they have merely acted is a reality, and so they have continued to strut with all the pride of Pharisees till God has plucked the mask from off their wicked faces, and set them up to be butts for the arrows of eternal contempt. Oh, beware lest that should be our lot, lest, inadvertently to ourselves at the first, being mistaken, we should at last become miserable dupes and deceivers of others!

We might naturally expect to find hypocrites, formalists, and unconverted persons in the Church of God because human nature is bad enough for anything and everything. If there is an evil which is detestable beyond all others—for that very reason will men run to it. Nothing can be more mean than hypocrisy, nothing more base than to assume a character which is not properly your own, nothing more horrible than apostasy from plighted vows and promises! But for that very reason, he who knows the heart of man to be deceitful above all things and desperately wicked might expect to find men rioting in such evil. There is no water so deep but fish will swim in it! There is no pond so foul but frogs will live in it! There is no mire so filthy but swine will wallow in it and no sin so damnable but man will commit it! Men will even seek out ways and means of making themselves more and more proficient in the most evil of vices, each one being with his fellow.

The world is getting mightily accomplished in falsehood and has learned to deceive in the most dexterous manner—and while professors of the art of hypocrisy are so numerous—there is no hope of the trade dying out. I expect to see great offenders, for I am told by Inspired penmen that evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse. I expect as the ages roll on to see good men grow better, and bad men grow viler—for each age is in advance of its predecessor. If in these last ages there should arise monsters of iniquity exceeding Nero and Caligula in infamy, we must not be astonished, for long practice of sin makes men proficient therein. The earth is ripening, and men's characters are rotting to the uttermost degree of corruption. This is the age of villainy, the chosen era of shams, lies, and hypocrisies—and we must expect to see more and more of the boiling over of the sink of iniquity which lies in human nature.

Be not startled, if in these last days there should be seen whole herds of wolves in sheep's clothing—deceivers and defamers of the Church—for even so have we been warned by the voice of God.

II. In the second place, UNGODLY MEN DO SERIOUS MISCHIEF IN THE CHURCH OF GOD. We are told in the text that they are spots in our agape, or feasts of love. It is a solemn reflection that they defile the Church before God—they are spots upon her face—they mar her beauty in

the eyes of her heavenly Friend. When the Lord looks upon His Church in Christ, of course she is always fair, but when He looks upon her in *herself*, the defilements which came upon her through the ungodly provoke Him and He is led to send chastisements upon her and, for awhile, to withdraw the converting power of His Spirit and the comforting power of His promises.

Dear Friends, we can little tell how much of evil may be brought upon any community by wicked persons in the midst of it. And we little know how much good may be kept back from the general body of the Church of God by those ungodly professors who are living in uncleanness and yet pretend to have fellowship with God. They are spots upon the Church's sacrifice. According to the Jewish law, no beast could be offered to God which was blemished. What an awful thing it is when a wicked man becomes a Church member, and in public, as he prays in the name of the Church, offers to God an unclean hypocritical prayer! What a *filthy* prayer that must be which comes from the lips of the man who is the slave of vice and yet dares stand up in the public sanctuary to lead the devotions of others!

Can God bear such infamy? Must not the whole service be polluted thereby? Such a man at the Lord's Table? How he profanes the sacred feast! Such a man *preaching*, for there have been many such! How he dishonors the name of minister! Such a man passing round the sacramental cup! What despite to the precious blood! Why, I wonder, when I think of it, that such solemn feasts—since they have been so far as such persons were concerned, deliberate mockeries—have not brought down the thunderbolts of God upon those who were engaged in them! It is an awful thing to have such loathsome sacrifices laid upon our altar in our name—truly, we knew not of the offenders' guilt—our sin was therefore a sin of ignorance. May the Lord have mercy upon us.

When Joshua led his troops to Ai they were defeated—not for lack of courage, nor for want of wit, nor for lack of armed men for the fight—they were put to the rout before their adversaries for no other reason than because Achan was in the camp and had hidden in his tent the goodly Babylonian garment and the wedge of gold. Think me not severe if I speak with indignation of any who have turned aside unto crooked paths after standing high among the Lord's people—from my soul I pity such, I bewail them in my inmost heart—but yet for Christ's sake, and His people's sake, I feel towards them concerning their iniquity as Joshua did when he spared not the sentence, but adjudged the offender to his doom. Even though confession was made, yet every true-hearted Israelite cast a stone at the man who had made Israel naked before her enemies, saying, "Why have you troubled us? The Lord shall trouble you this day."

The Church must be purified and cleansed, for our Lord's fan is in His hands and He will thoroughly purge His floor. He who winks at sin becomes a partaker in it. God would have us put away the unclean thing from the midst of us, lest we be utterly polluted and become an abomination in His sight. O you professors who are not living as you should live, you who are practicing secret sin, you members of the Church who, un-

known to us, are wallowing in evil, I do beseech you go forth from among us of your own accord before the Lord launches out His plagues upon you! Get away from us lest double judgment fall upon you!

As for us, when your case is clear, we dare not excuse you! We hate even the *garment* spotted with the flesh, and much more those filthy dreamers who wrap their lusts about them as a robe. If you have any reason left, you will surely prefer, if lost at all, to perish without incurring the double vengeance which awaits deceivers. Repent and forsake your iniquities that your sins may be blotted out! But if you will not do this, at least cease to dishonor the Church of God by your false professions.

Furthermore, the ungodly in the Christian Church do her mischief in the next respect because they defile her in the eyes of the world, "These are spots in your feasts of charity." They defile the Christian Church in the judgment of onlookers. The world is always glad to find a stick to beat the Church with. It so thoroughly hates professors of godliness that it only wants a chance to spring upon them as a lion upon his prey. So soon as one professor goes aside, men say, "Ah, just so! That is one herring out of the barrel—they are all alike." And yet if a man gets a bad shilling he does not conclude that all *shillings* are bad! Men know that the existence of hypocrites does not prove that all Christians are such. They frequently say so, but they know better! You need not be in any hurry to answer them—they know that they lie in their throats when they declare all Christians to be deceivers—for they must know that there are hundreds who are *not* such—whose lives are pure and holy—and in every way according to their professions.

They know that if they were to treat any body of men in the same way as they treat the Church, they could not stand the test. Have there been no thieves in the House of Commons? Are the members of our legislature, therefore, all rogues? Doubtless some of them have no honesty to spare—but are there *no* honorable men? Was there ever a club in all the world without disreputable persons in it? Was there ever any association of men that might not be condemned, if the fool's rule was followed, of condemning the wheat because of the chaff? When with all our might and power we purge ourselves of deceivers as soon as we detect them, what more can we do? If our rule and practice is to separate the unholy so soon as we unmask them, what more can virtue itself desire?

I ask any man, however much he may hate Christianity, what more can the Church do than watch her members with all diligence and excommunicate the wicked when discovered? It is a foul piece of meanness on the part of the world that they should allege the faults of a few false professors against the whole Church—it is a piece of miserable meanness of which the world ought to be ashamed! Nevertheless, so it is, "Ha! Ha!" they say, "So would we have it! So would we have it!" The daughter of Philistia rejoices and the uncircumcised triumphs when Jesus is betrayed by His friend and sold by His traitorous disciple. O deceitful professor, will not the Lord be avenged upon you for this? Is it nothing to make Jesus' name the drunkard's song? Nothing to make the enemy blaspheme? O hardened man, tremble, for this shall not go unpunished!

I must add here that this defilement falls upon ourselves, too. We cannot mix with deceitful and wicked men without feeling conscious that we have been in contact with pitch and have been defiled thereby. Who sits with a leper without danger of contagion? To talk over the sin of a false professor is injurious to the mind. We cannot deal with the sin of a Brother, even in the way of discipline, without a degree of evil to our own hearts. I believe the reading of newspaper reports of criminal trials is as instructive a school for iniquity as any the devil himself could have invented—and to go into details with the person before your eyes is even more so. When we read or hear of sin, whether we are conscious or not of the effect, there is always a defilement left upon the mind. The Church of God, being conscious of the contagion which a sinner leaves in the camp, should daily sanctify herself.

Let us proclaim a daily repentance for the unknown sin among us. We are all as one body as soon as we join the Christian Church, and in some sense the sin of one is the common fault of the whole. Leaven in one chamber is leaven in the house. The plague in one house is the plague in the city. We must not say, “Oh, I cannot help the fault of such a one.” He is one with us! We must all be humbled before God when there is anything wrong in the case of *anyone*, for he is one of the *family*. Was he not a member of the same body? Is not the whole body concerned in the sickness or sin of the meanest member? There should be a daily walking near to God, a daily seeking of mercy, a daily humbling, a daily coming to the precious blood of Jesus for restoring Grace so the defilement may be removed and the spots in our feasts of charity may be purged.

III. I come, thirdly, to a very important point. THE UNGODLY IN THE CHURCH OF GOD ARE GENERALLY VERY MUCH AT THEIR EASE THERE. This head, I trust, may greatly comfort some who are afraid of sin by showing them that they are *not* hypocrites, “Feeding themselves without fear.” These men have no right to come to the love feasts, have no business whatever in the communion of God’s people—but there they are—without the slightest fear. They have no fear as to whether they are saved or not. They do not trouble their heads to examine—they take it for granted. They say, “Oh well, we are as good as other people!” and so they carelessly dismiss all self-examination. They have no fear about the present—they take all for granted and let well enough alone. If accused of sin, they stand up and deny it, lying in the face of God’s people without the slightest blush.

They have no fear concerning the future, although running themselves into present difficulty and insuring to themselves eternal damnation. They have no bands, either, in life or death. They are unconscious of fear. They look the happiest of people, wearing a perennial smile and looking the image of peace. I have seen the genuine child of God afraid lest he should not be truly regenerate, trembling and alarmed, conscious of his present imperfections, bemoaning them, often trembling because of temptations in the future and afraid lest he might fall. He may be fearful of death and alarmed lest, after all, he should be a castaway. Yet this trembler has been the genuine coin of God’s realm about whom none were anxious but

himself—while the base counterfeit has said, “Oh yes! I believe, I know I do. I am sure I am saved,” while in his private life he is going from bad to worse, plunging himself into the sloughs of sin.

My dear Friends, seek after full assurance of faith, but do, do, do abhor anything like *presumption*. If your lives are not what they ought to be, I beseech you do not be too confident! “By their fruits you shall know them.” If there are any of you living in sin, I do not care what doctrines you have received, or what experience you may boast—I am afraid for you if you are not afraid for yourselves! I entreat you, do not lull your souls into peace while your lives are ungodly, for it will be, “Peace, peace, where there is no peace.” You cannot be *perfect*, I grant, and salvation is not by *works*, but by Divine Grace—but at the same time, “Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.”

Do I cut any of you sharply? I mean to! I only wish I could cut deeper, but my fear is that those who are the best will feel it the most. I know they will, and those who need it most will say, “I am glad the preacher is faithful, but his censures do not apply to *me*.” Remember Cowper’s words—

**“He that never doubted of his state,
He may, perhaps he may, too late.”**

Needless and Too-Bold fell into the ditch. He who is too sure with a carnal security that is not based upon the promise nor rested upon Christ will, sooner or later, find himself compelled to make his bed in Hell. I do wonder, when I look at the text, that these people should feed themselves without fear at the feasts of charity. I suppose this may allude to the love feasts, but also to the Lord’s Supper. How an ungodly man can drink the wine which typifies the blood of Christ when he is all the while *crucifying* Christ, I cannot understand. I cannot comprehend how he can break bread at the Lord’s Table when he is spending his life with harlots, or gaining money by dishonesty.

But sin is an incomprehensible thing. Oh, the depths of human sin! My dear Friends, if any of you are exhibiting this hardness of heart, pray God that you may be forgiven! But I almost fear you never will, for if there is a sin unto death, surely it must be such a sin as this—when a man can come to the solemn feasts of God’s House without fear—while he knows that his heart is rotten, and, as Bunyan says, only fit to be tinder for the devil’s tinderbox.

I shall leave that point when I have read to you from “Pilgrim’s Progress” a passage which struck me yesterday as portraying the deceiver’s doom. “Now, when they had passed by a little way, they entered into a very dark lane where they met a man whom seven devils had bound with seven strong cords, and were carrying him back to the door that they saw in the side of the hill. Now good Christian began to tremble, and so did Hopeful, his companion, yet, as the devils led away the man, Christian looked to see if he knew him, and he thought it might be one Turn-Away that dwelt in the town of Apostasy. But he did not perfectly see his face, for he did hang his head like a thief that is found. But being gone past, Hopeful looked after him, and espied on his back a paper with this inscription, ‘WANTON PROFESSOR AND DAMNABLE APOSTATE.’”

God grant that paper may never be put upon our backs, but by preserving Grace may we be preserved to the last.

IV. I shall now conclude with the fourth point by asking this question—since it is clear that ungodly men are suffered to tarry for awhile in the Church of God, WHAT IS GOD’S INTENTION THEREIN? What is the lesson which He hereby delivers to you and to me this morning? That is our principal business—we have little to do with others—our business is with *ourselves*.

The first lesson is this—God reminds every one of us of what we might have been but for His distinguishing Grace. Judas sells Christ, and his only reward is a halter to hang himself with. Why might not I have been Judas? Ananias dies with a lie in his throat—why might not *I* have been that unhappy man? Ask that question, Christian! Is there any bitterness in your heart beyond the heart of Judas? Are you better than Ananias by nature? Is there any goodness in your constitution which would have kept *you* from their sin had you been left as they were? Judas was an Apostle, mark you—a preacher, a miracle-worker—he dipped his hand with Jesus in the dish, and yet he sold Him—and why not you? Let not Self-Righteousness whisper, “Ah I never could have done so.” How do you know that? Simon Peter said he never would forsake his Master, but before long, with cursing and oaths, he had denied Him. “Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall.” What another man has done I may do! There are no depths of wickedness into which I might not have plunged had not preventing Grace stayed my course.

In the second place, the Lord bids us make sure work for eternity. If we know that fair houses have fallen down, let us build upon a good foundation. If the wind has swept away rotten boughs, let us see to it that we are quickened with the vital sap. If the knife has already removed sundry dead branches, be it our prayer that we may be found fruit-bearing boughs, vitally united to Christ. When I think of those whom I have known who have turned aside in years past in my ministry, I feel concerned to say to myself, “have *I* really repented, or was it all a sham? Am I now resting upon the Rock of Ages, or have I a fictitious confidence, a delusive trust? Am *I* really right with God? Do I love Him? Am I serving Him, or am I, after all, fascinated by some gigantic imposture which is leading me astray to serve *myself*?”

My Brethren, I beseech you—dig deep for eternity! Either make it sure, or have nothing to do with it. The paint and the tinsel are worth nothing! The masquerading and the pageantry of a mere profession will all be scattered to the winds in the great Day of Wrath. Get gold, not gilt! Get the real metal, not the imitation, lest at the last, when you shall most need comfort, you shall find yourselves drowned in despair! Surely that is God’s voice to us. Hear it! Learn its teaching! Practice it thoroughly!

In the next place, should not the departures from the faith of some professors put us on our guard against our own special temptations? I do not know how you are, each one of you, employed in life. But I know this—that there is a precipice near every man’s foot, and a snare in every man’s path. You may not fall into the temptation which besets *me*, and I may

never fall into that which besets *you*—but there is a lure for every bird, a bait for every fish. I would have you specially take heed of those things in regard to which you have ventured to the very edge. There are some things which are allowable up to a point—beware of going beyond the point. Yes, and beware of often going *close* to it, for the temptation is to go a little farther. Edged tools, long handled, wound at last. Beware of extraordinary temptations! Watch against them!

A child would generally stand on his feet in a gust of wind if he knew it was coming—but when the wind happens to come round a corner furiously, he may be taken off his feet. Mind you are well ballasted by prayer every morning before your vessel puts out to sea—or carrying the quantity of sail you do—you may be blown over upon the waves to your perpetual shipwreck. Watch constantly against those things which are thought not to be temptations. The most poisonous serpents are found where the sweetest flowers grow, and when Cleopatra would have an asp to poison herself, it was brought in a basket of fair flowers. Beware of arrows shot from a golden bow, or by a woman's hand. "Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation." I feel as if I could go round among you, and take everyone by the hand, and say, "My Brother and my Sister, will you also go away?" Oh, if you would answer, "No, we will follow the Lamb Wherever He goes," then I would reply in my Master's words, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

Further—the lessons are many, but I will be brief upon each one—should not this make us pray more for one another? When a member of the Church under my care has sinned, I have asked myself, "Did I always pray for that man?" That is a question for *you*, also. Do you know of some Sister in Christ who has dishonored the faith? You have known perhaps the temptation—did you ever pray for her—pointedly for *her*? Did you warn her affectionately of her danger? I am afraid the answer would have to be, "I am afraid I have not." But are we clear of *sin* in such a case? Are our consciences quite void of offense? Should not all the mischief in the Christian Church say to us, "Pray for one another, and by all means hold each other up"?

Aid the tempted, remembering yourself also, lest you also be tempted. Whenever the enemy smites down one of the troops the other soldiers should fill up the gap and stand together determined that the foe shall not kill another. Let every difficulty that comes to us only fuse us more completely into *one*—bring us into more compact squares and firmer battalions—determined that the enemy shall not get the advantage over us, after all. Brethren, pray for one another! Your heavenly Father bids you do so. Whenever any of the ungodly are found in the Church, she should labor with all her might to be avenged on the powers of darkness by filling up the place of the ungodly with those who are really converted.

I have often had my blood boil with sacred indignation within me when I have seen the finger of Satan hindering any of the works I have undertaken for God. Sometimes I have thought a Church would be established in such a locality, and something has turned up of an evil kind which has put it out of the question. I have vowed in my soul, "Ah, Satan, I will get

even with you for that—there shall be *two* churches somewhere else—you shall not gain an inch by driving me back in my Master's cause. I will take care that you shall gain nothing of me by all your opposition." Let the ungodly world laugh, and for its sneers we will smite it under the fifth rib with the sword of the Truth of God. Let the enemy sneer, and for that we will discharge more arrows of God's Word! We will pray more vehemently and labor more diligently for the extension of the Lord's kingdom. The tactics of war should dictate this. The children of this generation do so—and let them not be wiser than the children of light.

Lastly, dear Friends, should not this make us long for Heaven? Whenever you at any time are vexed by hypocrites and apostates, should you not at once sigh for the perfect Church and the sweet fellowship of Heaven where none can fall, and none deceive?—

***“O heavenly Jerusalem,
Of everlasting hills,
Thrice blessed are the people
You store in your walls.
You are the golden mansion,
Where saints forever sing,
The seat of God's own chosen,
The palace of the King.
There God forever sits,
Himself of all the crown;
The Lamb the light that shines,
And never goes down.
Nothing to this seat approaches
Their sweet peace to molest;
They sing their God forever,
Nor day nor night they rest.”***

They are without fault before the Throne! There shall be no more curses in the heavenly Jerusalem, and the Throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it. We shall not suspect a Brother there! We shall not bemoan a failure there! We shall not fear backsliding there, for the saints are all complete in Jesus—all conformed to the image of their Master—and they shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

I have not spoken to you one-half as solemnly as my own heart has felt, but I do commend to you the serious considerations I have brought under your notice, and ask you in the name of the Lord Jesus who has suffered enough without being made to suffer in the house of His friends, by His wounds, by His blood, by all His grief and death throes—do not crucify Him afresh and put Him to an open shame—but glorify Him in your lives, your words and acts, and so may the Lord do unto you of His great mercy. Amen.

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

ENOCH NO. 1307

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 30, 1876,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: and Enoch walked with God, after he begat Methuselah, three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.”
Genesis 5:21-24.*

*“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”
Hebrews 11:5, 6.*

*“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”
Jude 1:14, 15.*

THE three passages of Scripture which I have read are all the authentic information we have concerning Enoch. It would be idle to supplement it with the fictions of ancient commentators. Enoch is called the seventh from Adam, to distinguish him from the other Enoch of the line of Cain, who was the *third* from Adam. In the first Patriarchs God was pleased to manifest to men portions of His Truth in reference to true religion. These men of the olden times were not only, themselves, taught of God, but they were also teachers of their age and types in whom great Truths of God were exhibited. Abel taught the need of approaching the Lord with sacrifice, the need of the Atonement by blood—he laid the lamb upon the altar and sealed his testimony with his own blood. Atonement is so precious a Truth of God that to die for its defense is a worthy deed and from the very first it is a doctrine which has secured its martyrs, who being dead yet speak.

Then Seth and Enos taught men the necessity of a distinct avowal of their faith in the Lord and the need of assembling for His worship, for we read concerning the days of Enos and Seth, “Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.” Those who worshipped through the atoning Sacrifice separated themselves from the rest of men, assembled a Church in the name of the Lord and worshipped, calling upon the name of Jehovah. The heart must first believe in the great sacrifice with Abel and then the mouth must confess the same with Seth. Then came Enoch whose life went beyond the reception and confession of the Atonement, for he set before men the great Truth of communion with God. He displayed in his life

the relation of the Believer to the Most High and showed how near the living God condescends to be to His own children. May our progress in knowledge be similar to the growth of the Patriarchal teaching!

Brothers and Sisters, you know as Abel did, the sacrificial Lamb. Your confidence is in the precious blood and so by faith you bring to God the most acceptable of all offerings. Having advanced so far, the most of us have proceeded a step further, and we have called upon the name and are the avowed followers of Jesus. We have given ourselves up to the Lord in the solemn burial of Baptism, when we were baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, because we reckoned ourselves dead in Christ to all the world and risen with Him into newness of life. Henceforth the Divine name is named on us and we are no more our own.

And now we gather together in our Church capacity. We assemble around the table of fellowship, we unite in our meetings for prayer and worship and the center for us all is the name of the Lord. We are separated from the world and set apart to be a people who declare His name. Thus far so good—we have seen the Sacrifice of Jesus as the way with Abel. We have avowed the Truth with Seth. Now let us take the next step and *know* the life with Enoch. Let us endeavor to walk with God as Enoch did! Perhaps a meditation upon the holy Patriarch's life may help us to imitate it. While considering what he was and under what circumstances he came to be so, we may, by the Holy Spirit, be helped to reach the point to which he attained.

This is the desire of every godly man! All the saints desire communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. The constant cry of our soul is to our Lord, "Abide with me." I buried, yesterday, one of the excellent of the earth who loved and feared and served his God far better than most of us. He was an eminently devout Brother. One of the last wishes of his heart he had committed to writing in a letter to a friend, when he little thought of dying. It was this, "I have longed to realize the life of Enoch and to walk with God."—

"Oh for a closer walk with God!"

He did but write what you and I feel. If such are your desires, and such I feel sure they are, so surely as you are the Lord's people, then I hope a consideration of the life of Enoch may help you towards the realization of your wish.

First, then, *what does Enoch's walking with God imply?* It is a short description of a man's life, but there is a mint of meaning in it. Secondly, *what circumstances were connected with his remarkable life?* These are highly instructive. And thirdly, *what was the close of it?* It was as remarkable as the life itself.

I. First, then, WHAT IS MEANT BY ENOCH'S WALKING WITH GOD? Paul helps us with our first observation upon this by his note in Hebrews. His walk with God was a testimony that *Enoch was well-pleasing to God*. "Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." This is evidently the Apostle's interpretation of his walking with God and it is a most correct one, for the Lord will not walk with a man in whom He has no pleasure. Can two walk together, except they are agreed? If men walk contrary to God, He will not walk *with* them, but contrary to them. Walk-

ing together implies amity, friendship, intimacy, love—and these cannot exist between God and the soul unless the man is acceptable unto the Lord.

Doubtless Enoch, like Elijah, was a man of like passions with ourselves. He had fallen with the rest of mankind in the sin of Adam. There was sin about him, as there is sin about us by nature, and he had gone astray in act and deed as all we, like sheep, have done. Therefore he needed pardon and cleansing, even as we do. Then to be pleasing with God it was necessary that he should be forgiven and justified, even as we are—for no man can be pleasing to God till sin is pardoned and righteousness is *imputed*. To this end there must be *faith*, for there can be no *justification* except by faith. And as we have said, already, there is no pleasing God except our persons are justified.

Right well, then, does the Apostle say, “Without faith it is impossible to please God,” and by faith Enoch was made pleasing to God, even as we are at this day. This is worthy of earnest notice, Brothers and Sisters, because this way of faith is open to *us*. If Enoch had been pleasing to God by virtue of some extraordinary gifts and talents, or by reason of marvelous achievements and miraculous works, we might have been in despair! But if he was pleasing to God through *faith*, that same faith which saved the dying thief, that same faith which has been worked in you and in me—then the wicket gate at the head of the way in which men walk with God is open to us, also!

If we have faith we may enter into fellowship with the Lord! How this ought to endear faith to us! The highest grades of spiritual life depend upon the lower ones and rise out of them. If you want to walk with God as a man of God, you must begin by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, simply, as a babe in Grace! The highest saintship must commence by the confession of your *sinnerness*, and your laying hold upon Christ Crucified. Not otherwise does the strongest Believer live than the weakest Believer—and if you are to grow to be among the strongest of the Lord’s warriors—it must be by faith which lays hold upon Divine strength.

Beginning in the Spirit you are not to be made perfect in the *flesh*. You are not to proceed a certain distance, by faith in Christ, and then to commence living by your own works—your walk is to continue as it begun. “As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk you in Him.” Enoch was always pleasing to God, but it was because he always believed and lived in the power of his faith. This is worth knowing and remembering, for we may yet be tempted to strive for some imaginary higher style of religious life by looking to our *feelings* instead of looking alone to the Lord! We must not remove our eyes from looking, alone, to Jesus, Himself, even to admire His image within ourselves—for if we do we shall go backward rather than forward. No, Beloved, by faith Enoch became pleasing to God and by faith he walked with God—let us follow in his footprints.

Next, when we read that Enoch walked with God we are to understand that *he realized the Divine Presence*. You cannot consciously walk with a person whose existence is not known to you. When we walk with a man, we know that he is there. We hear his footsteps if we cannot see his face. We have some very clear perception that there is a person at our side.

Now, if we look to Hebrews again, Paul tells us, "He that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Enoch's faith, then, was a *realizing* faith. He did not believe things as a matter of creed and then put them up on the shelf out of the way, as too many of us do today—he was not merely orthodox in his *head*—but the Truth of God had entered into his *heart*.

What he believed was true to him, practically true, true as a matter of fact in his daily life. He walked with God—it was not that he merely *thought* of God, that he *speculated* about God, that he *argued* about God, that he *read* about God, that he *talked* about God—he *walked* with God, which is the practical and experimental part of true godliness! In his daily life he realized that God was with him and he regarded Him as a *living* God, in whom he confided and by whom he was loved. Oh, Beloved, do you not see that if you are to reach to the highest style of Christian life, you must do it through the realization of those very things which, by faith, you have received?

Grasp them! Let them be to you substance and evidence. Make them sure, look upon them, handle them, taste them in your inmost soul and so know them beyond all question. You must see Him who is invisible and possess that which cannot be as yet enjoyed. Believe not only that God is, but that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, for this, according to Paul, is the Enoch faith! God realized as existing, observing, judging and *rewarding* human deeds—a real God, really with us—this we must know, or there is no walking with God.

Then, as we read that Enoch walked with God, we have no doubt it signifies that *he had very familiar communion* with the Most High. I scarcely know a communion that is more free, pleasant and cordial than that which arises out of constant walking with a friend. If I wished to find a man's most familiar friend, it would surely be one with whom he walked daily. If you were to say, "I sometimes go into his house and sit a little while with him," it would not amount to so much as when you can say, "I have, from day to day, walked the fields and climbed the hills with him." In walking, friends become communicative—one tells his trouble and the other strives to console him under it—and then imparts to him his own secret in return. When persons are constantly in the habit of walking together from choice, you may be quite sure there are many communications between them with which no stranger may intermeddle.

If I wanted to know a man through and through, I should want to walk with him for a time, for walking communion brings out parts of the man which even in domestic life may be concealed. Walking for a continuance implies and engenders close fellowship and great familiarity between friends. But will God, in very deed, thus walk with men? Yes, He did so with Enoch and He has done so with many of His people since. He tells us His secret, the secret of the Lord, which He reveals only to them that fear Him. And we tell Him, alike, our joys in praise, our sorrows in prayer and our sins in confession. The heart unloads itself of all its cares into the heart of Him that cares for us! And the Lord pours forth His floods of goodness as He imparts to His beloved ones a sense of His own everlasting love to them. This is the very flower and sweetness of Christian experi-

ence, its lily and its rose, its calamus and myrrh. If you would taste the cream of Christian life, it is found in having a realizing faith and entering into intimate communion with the heavenly Father. So Enoch walked with God.

Next it is implied in the term, “walked,” that *his communion with God was continuous*. As an old Divine has well remarked, he did not take a turn or two with God and then leave His company, but he walked with God for hundreds of years! It is implied in the text that this was the tenor of his life throughout the whole of its 365 years. Enoch walked with God after Methuselah had been born, 300 years, and doubtless he had walked with Him before. What a splendid walk! A walk of 300 years! One might desire a change of company if he walked with anybody else, but to walk with God for three centuries was so sweet that the Patriarch kept on with his walk until he walked beyond time and space—and walked into Paradise—where he is still marching on in the same Divine society! He had Heaven on earth and it was, therefore, not so amazing that he glided away from earth to Heaven so easily.

He did not commune with God by fits and starts, but he abode in the conscious love of God. He did not, now and then, climb to the heights of elevated piety and then descend into the marshy valley of lukewarmness, but he continued in the calm, happy, equable enjoyment of fellowship with God from day to day. Night with its sleep did not suspend it. Day with its cares did not endanger it. It was not a run, a rush, a leap, a spurt, but a steady walk. On, on, through three happy centuries and more did Enoch continue to walk with God!

It is implied, also, in this phrase that *his life was progressive*, for if a man walks either by himself or with anybody else, he makes progress, he goes forward. Enoch walked with God. At the end of 200 years he was not where he began. He was in the same Company, but he had gone forward in the right way. At the end of the third hundred years Enoch enjoyed more, understood more, loved more, had received more and could give out more, for he had gone forward in all respects. A man who walks with God will necessarily grow in Grace and in the knowledge of God and in likeness to Christ. You cannot suppose a perpetual walk with God, year after year, without the favored person being strengthened, sanctified, instructed and rendered more able to glorify God.

So I gather that Enoch’s life was a life of spiritual progress. He went from strength to strength and made headway in the gracious pilgrimage. May God grant us to be pressing onward, ourselves. Suffer a few more observations upon Enoch’s walk. In “Kitto’s Daily Bible Pleadings” there is an exceedingly pleasing piece illustrating what it must be to walk with God by the figure of a father’s taking his little son by the hand and walking forth with him upon the breezy hills. Kitto says, “As that child walks with you, so do you walk with God. That child loves you now. The world—the cold and cruel world—has not yet come between his heart and yours. His love, now, is the purest and most beautiful he will ever feel, or you will ever receive. Cherish it well, and as that child walks *lovingly* with you, so do you walk *lovingly* with God.”

It is a delight to such children with their fathers. The roughness of the way or of the weather is nothing to them—it is joy enough to go for a walk with father. There is a warm, tender, affectionate grip of the hand and a beaming smile of the eyes as they look up to father while he conducts them over hill and dale. Such a walk is *humble*, too, for the child looks upon its father as the greatest and wisest man that ever lived! He considers him to be the incarnation of everything that is strong and wise. All that his father says or does he admires. As he walks along, he feels the utmost affection for his father, but his *reverence* is equally strong. He is very near his father, but yet he is only a child, and looks up to his father as his king.

Moreover such a walk is one of *perfect confidence*. The boy is not afraid of missing his way. He trusts implicitly his father's guidance. His father's arm will screen him from all danger and, therefore, he does not so much as give it a thought—why should he? If care is needed as to the road, it is his father's business to see to it and the child, therefore, never dreams of anxiety—why should he? If any difficult place is to be passed, the father will have to lift the boy over it, or help him through it—the child, meanwhile, is merry as a bird—why should he not be? Thus should the Believer walk with God, resting on eternal tenderness and rejoicing in undoubted love! A Believer should be unconscious of dread either as to the present or to the future.

Beloved Friends in Christ, your Father may be trusted, He will supply all your needs—

***“You are as much His care as if beside
No man or angel lived in Heaven or earth.”***

What an *instructive* walk a child has with a wise, communicative parent! How many of his little puzzles are explained to him, how everything about him is illuminated by the father's wisdom! Every step the boy takes, he becomes the wiser for such companionship. Oh, happy are the children of God who have been taught of their Father while they have walked with Him! Enoch must have been a man of profound knowledge and great wisdom as to Divine things. He must have dived into the deep things of God beyond most men. His life must, also, have been a *holy* life, because he walked with God, for God never walks out of the way of holiness. If we walk with God, we must walk according to truth, justice and love. The Lord has no company with the unjust and rebellious and, therefore, we know that he who walked with God must have been an upright and holy man.

Enoch's life must, moreover, have been a *happy* one. Who could be unhappy with such a Companion! With God Himself to be with us, the way can never be dreary. “Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for You are with me.” Granted that God is your Companion and your road must be a way of pleasantness and a path of peace. Did Enoch walk with God? Then his pilgrimage must have been safe. What a guard is the Great Jehovah! He is sun and shield! He gives Grace and Glory. He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Nothing can harm the man who is walking with the Lord God at his right hand.

And oh, what an *honor* it is to walk with the Eternal! Many a man would give thousands to walk with a king. Numbers of people are such worshippers of dignities that if a king did but smile at them they would be intoxicated with delight! What, then, is the honor of walking with the King of kings? What a patent of nobility it is to be permitted to walk with the blessed and only Potentate all one's life long? Who is he that is thus favored to be the King's companion, to walk alone with Him and to become His familiar Friend? Jehovah rules earth and Heaven, and Hell. He is Lord of all who shall walk with Him!

If it were only for the honor of it, oh Christians, how you ought to desire to walk with God! Enoch found it safe, happy, holy, honorable and I know not how much more that is excellent! But certainly this was a golden life—where shall we find anything to equal it?

II. Secondly, let us consider WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES WERE CONNECTED WITH ENOCH'S WALKING WITH GOD. The first remark is that *the details of his life are very few*. We do not know much about Enoch and this is to his advantage. Happy is the nation which has no history, for a nation which *has* a history has been vexed with wars, revolutions and bloodshed. But a nation that is always happy, peaceful and prosperous has no chronicle to attract the lover of sensations. Happy is Enoch that we cannot write a long biography of him! The few words, "Enoch walked with God," suffice to depict his whole career, until, "he was not, for God took him."

If you go and look at a farmer's field and you say of it when you come back, "I saw yellow flowers covering it till it seemed as a cloth of gold. And then I spied out, here and there, white flowers like silver buttons set on the golden vesture. I also saw blue corn-flowers looking up with their lovely eyes, causing the whole field to sparkle," you would think that it is a very pretty field if you are a child. But the farmer shakes his head, for he knows that it is in bad condition and overrun with weeds! But if you come back and simply say, "It is as fine a wheat field as ever grew and that is all," then your description, though brief, is very satisfactory.

Many of those dazzling events and striking incidents and sensational adventures which go to make up an interesting biography may attract attention, but they do not minister to the real excellence of the life. No life can surpass that of a man who quietly continues to serve God in the place where Providence has placed him. I believe that in the judgment of angels and all pure-minded beings, that a woman's life is most to be admired which consists simply of this—"She loved the Lord and did all she could for Him." And that man's life shall be the most noteworthy of whom it can be said, "He followed the Lord fully." Enoch's life has no adventures. But is it not adventure, enough, for a man to walk with God? What ambition can crave a nobler existence than abiding in fellowship with the Eternal?

But some will say, "Well, but Enoch must have been very peculiarly situated. He was, no doubt, placed in very advantageous circumstances for piety." Now, observe that this was not so, for first, *he was a public man*. He is called the "seventh from Adam." He was a *notable* man and looked up to as one of the fathers of his age. A Patriarch in those days must have been a marked man, loaded with responsibility as well as with

honor. The ancient custom was that the head of the family was prophet, priest and king in his household. And abroad, if he was a man of station and substance, he was counselor, magistrate and ruler. Enoch was a great man in his day, one of the most important of the period. Therefore we may be sure he had his trials and bore the brunt of opposition from the powerful ungodly party which opposed the ways of godliness.

He is mentioned among a noble list of men. Some have unwisely thought, "I could walk with God if I had a little cottage, if I lived in a quiet village, but you see I am a public man, I occupy a position of trust and I have to mix with my fellow men. I do not see how I am to walk with God." Ah, my dear Friend, Enoch did! Though he was, undoubtedly, a man distinguished in his time and full of public cares, yet he lost not the thread of sacred converse with Heaven, but held on in his holy course through a life of centuries. Note again that *Enoch was a family man*. "Enoch walked with God and begat sons and daughters."

Some have said, "Ah, you cannot live as you like if you have a lot of children about you. Do not tell me about keeping up your hours of prayer and quiet reading of the Scriptures if you have a large family of little ones. You will be disturbed and there will be many domestic incidents which will be sure to try your temper and upset your equanimity. Get away into the woods and find a hermit's cell—there, with your brown jug of water and your loaf of bread, you *may* be able to walk with God—but with a wife, not always amiable, and a troop of children who are never quiet, neither by day nor night, how can a man be expected to walk with God?" The wife, on the other hand, exclaims, "I believe that had I remained a single woman I might have walked with God. When I was a young woman I was full of devotion. But now with my husband, who is not always in the best of tempers, and with my children who seem to have an unlimited number of needs and never to have them satisfied, how is it possible that I can walk with God?"

We turn to Enoch, again, and we are confident that it can be done! "Enoch walked with God, after he begat Methuselah, 300 years, and begat sons and daughters, and all the days of Enoch were 365 years." Thus, you see, he was a public man and he was a family man—and yet he walked with God for more than 300 years. There is no need to be a hermit, or to renounce married life in order to live near to God. In addition to this, *Enoch lived in a very evil age*. He was prominent at a time when sin was beginning to cover the earth. It was not very long before the earth was corrupt and God saw fit to sweep the whole population from off its surface on account of sin.

Enoch lived in a day of mockers and despisers. You know that from his prophecy, as recorded by Jude. He prophesied, saying, "The Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." He lived when few loved God and when those who professed to do so were being drawn aside by the blandishments of the daughters of men. Church and State were proposing an alliance, fashion and pleasure ruled the hour and unhallowed compromise

was the order of the day. He lived towards the close of those primitive times wherein long lives had produced great sinners—and great sinners had invented great provocations of God. Do not complain, therefore, of your times and of your neighbors and other surroundings, for amid them all you may *still* walk with God.

Enoch walked with God and, in consequence thereof, *he bore his witness for God*. “Enoch, the seventh from Adam prophesied.” He could not be silent! The fire burned within his soul and could not be restrained. When he had delivered his testimony, it is clear that he encountered opposition. I am certain that he did so from the context in Jude, because the passage in Jude has to do with murmurers and “complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaks great swelling words,” and Enoch is brought in as having had to do with such persons. His sermon shows that he was a man who stood firm amidst a torrent of blasphemy and rebuke, carrying on the great controversy for the Truth of God against the wicked lives and licentious tongues of the scoffers of his age. He says, “Behold, the Lord comes with myriads of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed.”

It is clear that they spoke against Enoch, they rejected his testimony, they grieved his spirit and he mourned that in this they were speaking against God. For he speaks “of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” He saw their ungodly lives and bore witness against them. It is remarkable that his great subject should have been the Second Advent! And it is still more noteworthy that the two other men whom one would select as living nearest to God, namely, Daniel and John, were both men who spoke much concerning the coming of the Lord and the Great Judgment Day. I need not quote the words of Daniel, who tells us of the judgment which is to be set, and of the Ancient of Days who shall come upon His Throne. Nor need I repeat the constant witness of John concerning the Lord’s Second Coming. I will only mention his fervent exclamation, “Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!”

Thus you see that Enoch was a preacher of the Word of God and, therefore, he had a care over and above that which falls to the lot of most of you. And yet, with that and all the rest put together, he could please God until his life’s end! If I may speak of an end to a life which ran into an endless state of joy—he continued as long as he was here to walk in faith, to walk in a manner in which God was pleased—and so his communion with the Lord was never broken.

III. This brings us to conclude with the third head—WHAT WAS THE CLOSE OF ENOCH’S WALK? We would first remark that *he finished his work early*. Enoch walked with God and that was such a good, sure, progressive walk that he traveled faster and reached Home sooner than those of us who walk with God, sometimes, and with the world at other times! Three hundred and sixty-five years would have been a long life to us, but it was a short life for that period when several Patriarchs attained to nearly a thousand years of age.

Enoch’s life, as compared to the usual life of the period, was like a life of 30 or 35 years in these short-lived ages—in fact, the best parallel to it is

the life of our Lord. As with the extended ages of men of his period, Enoch's life was of about the same length as that of the Lord Jesus in comparison with such lives as ours. He passed away comparatively a young man, as our dear Brother and Elder Verdon, just departed, has done, and we do not wonder that he did. They say, "Whom the gods love die young," and both Enoch and Verdon were men greatly beloved. Perhaps these holy men ended their career so soon because they had done their lifework so diligently that they finished early.

Some workmen, if they have a job to do in your house, are about it all day long, or rather all week long and make no end of confusion! No wonder that some people live a long while, for they need to do so much to do anything at all! But this man did his work so well and kept so close to God that his day's work was done at noon and the Lord said, "Come home, Enoch! There is no need for you to be out of Heaven any longer. You have borne your testimony, you have lived your life. Through all the ages men will look upon you as a model man and, therefore, you may come Home." God never keeps His wheat out in the fields longer than is necessary! When it is ripe, He reaps it at once! When His people are ready to go Home, He will take them Home. Do not regret the death of a good man while he is young. On the contrary, bless God that there is still some early ripening wheat in the world and that some of His saints are sanctified so speedily!

But what did happen to Enoch? I am afraid I have said he died, or that I shall say so, it is so natural to speak of men as dying, but he, alone, and one other of all the human race are all that have entered the heavenly Canaan without fording the river of death! We are told concerning him that, "he was not." Those gentlemen who believe that the word, "to die," signifies to be annihilated, would have been still more confirmed in their views if the words in my text, "he was not," had been applied to *all* departed men, for if any expression might signify annihilation in *their* mode of translation—this is the one! "He was not" does not, however, mean that he was annihilated! And neither does the far feebler term of dying signify anything of the kind!

"He was not," that is to say, he was not *here*—that is all. He was gone from earth, but he was *there*—there where God had translated him. He was, he *is* with God! And that without having tasted death! Do not grudge him his avoidance of death. It was a favor, but not by any means so great as some would think, for those who do not die must undergo a change and Enoch was changed. "We shall not all sleep," says the Apostle, "but we shall all be changed." The flesh and blood of Enoch could not inherit the kingdom of God—in a moment he underwent a transformation which you and I will have to undergo in the day of the Resurrection. And so, though he was not on earth, he was translated or transplanted from the gardens of earth to Paradise above.

Now, if there is any man in the world that shall never die, it is he who walks with God. If there is any man to whom death will be as nothing, it is the man who has looked to the Second Advent of Christ and gloried in it. If there is any man who, though he passes through the iron gates of death, shall never feel the terror of the grim foe, it is the man whose life

below has been perpetual communion with God! Go not about by any other way to escape the pangs of death but walk with God, and you will be able to say, "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?" It is said of Enoch that, "*God took him.*" A very remarkable expression! Perhaps He did it in some visible manner. I should not wonder. Perhaps the whole of the Patriarchs saw him depart, even as the Apostles were present when our Lord was taken up.

However that may be, there was some special rapture, some distinct taking up of this choice one to the Throne of the Most High. "He was not, for God took him." Note that *he was missed*. This is one thing which I could not overlook. *He was missed*, for the Apostle says he, "was not found." Now, if a man is not found, it shows that *somebody* looked for him. When Elijah went to Heaven, you remember, 50 men of the sons of the Prophets went and searched for him. I do not wonder that they did—they would not meet with an Elijah every day—and when he was gone away, body and all, they might well look for him! Enoch was not found, but they looked for him.

A good man is missed. A true child of God in a Church like this, working and serving his Master, is only one among five thousand—but if he has walked with God, his decease is lamented. The dear Brother whom we have just buried, we shall miss. His brother Elders will miss him. The many who have been converted to God and helped by his means will miss him. And assuredly I shall miss him. I look towards the spot where he used to sit—I trust that someone else will sit there who will be half as useful as he was. It will be almost more than I can expect. We do not want to live and die so that nobody will care whether we were on earth or not. Enoch was missed when he was gone and so will they be who walk with God.

Last of all, *Enoch's departure was a testimony*. What did the Blessed Spirit say by the fact that, "he was not, for God took him," but this—there is a future state. Men had begun to doubt it, but when they said, "Where is Enoch?" and those who had witnessed his departure said, "God took him," it was, to them, an evidence that there was a God and that there was another world. And when they asked, "But where is his body?" there was another lesson. Two men had died before him, I mean two whose deaths are recorded in Scripture—Abel was killed and his witness was that the seed of the serpent hates the woman's seed. Adam, too, had died about 50 years before Enoch's translation, whose witness was that, however late the penalty may come, yet the soul that sins, it shall die.

Now comes Enoch and his testimony is that the *body* is capable of immortality! He could not bear testimony to resurrection, for he did not die—for that we have testimony in Christ who is the first fruits from among the dead. But the testimony of Enoch went a good way towards it, for it bore evidence that the *body* was capable of being immortal and of living in a heavenly condition. "He was not, for God took him." His departure also was a testimony to mankind that there is a reward for the righteous, that God does not sit with stony eyes, regardless of the sins of the wicked, or of the virtues of His saints. It proved that He sees and is pleased with His people who walk with Him—and that He can give them, even now, present

rewards by delivering them from the pangs of death—and therefore He will certainly give rewards to all His people in some way or other.

Thus you see, living and dying—no, not dying, again I am mistaken—living and *being translated*—Enoch was still a witness to his generation! And I pray that all of us, whether we live or whether we sleep, may be witnesses for God. Oh that we could live as my good Brother, Verdon, whom we have lately buried, lived, whose soul was on fire with love to Christ! He had a very passion for souls! I scarcely think there is one among us who did as much as he, for though he had to earn his daily bread, his evenings were spent with us in the service of the Lord, or in preaching the Gospel! And then, all night long he frequently paced the weary streets, looking after the fallen, that he might bring them in! He often went to his morning's work weary, except by the rest which he found in the service of Christ.

He would sometimes meet a Brother with eyes full of joy, and say, "Five souls won for Christ last night!" At other times, after a sermon, here he was a great soul hunter and would fetch enquirers downstairs into the Prayer Meeting. And when he had squeezed my hand he would say in his Swiss tones, which I cannot imitate, "Jesus saved some more last night! More souls were brought to Jesus." For him to live was to win souls! He was the youngest in our eldership, but the gray-heads do him honor. As we stood weeping about his tomb, there was not one among us but what felt that we had lost a true Brother and a valiant fellow soldier. My the Lord raise up others among you to do what Elder Verdon did!

May the Lord quicken the older Brothers and Sisters to be more active than they are and make the young ones more devoted. Our ranks are broken, who shall fill up the gap? We are getting fewer and fewer as the Lord takes one and another Home of the best-instructed and of the bravest-hearted. But, by His Grace, recruits are daily coming in! May others come forward—yes, Lord, bring them forward by Your Holy Spirit to be leaders in the front ranks, that as the vanguard melts into the Church Triumphant, the rear may continually find additions! Translated to the skies are some, may others be translated out of darkness into marvelous light, for Christ's sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Psalm 119:33-56.*
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—122, 780, 775.**

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

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE ONE CHURCH

NO. 167

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 13, 1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.”
Jude 1:19.***

WHEN a farmer comes to thrash out his wheat and get it ready for the market there are two things that he desires—that there may be plenty of it, of the right sort—and that when he takes it to market, he may be able to carry a clean sample there. He does not look upon the quantity alone—for what is the chaff to the wheat? He would rather have a little clean than he would have a great heap containing a vast quantity of chaff, but less of the precious corn. On the other hand, he would not so winnow his wheat as to drive away any of the good grain and so make the quantity less than it need to be. He wants to have as much as possible—to have as little loss as possible in the winnowing and yet to have it as well winnowed as may be.

Now, that is what I desire for Christ’s Church and what every Christian will desire. We wish Christ’s Church to be as large as possible. God forbid that by any of our winnowing, we should ever cast away one of the precious sons of Zion. When we rebuke sharply, we would be anxious lest the rebuke should fall where it is not needed and should bruise and hurt the feelings of any who God has chosen. But on the other hand, we have no wish to see the Church multiplied at the expense of its purity. We do not wish to have a charity so large that it takes in chaff as well as wheat. We wish to be just charitable enough to use the fan thoroughly to purge God’s floor—but yet charitable enough to pick up the most shriveled ear of wheat, to preserve it for the Master’s sake, who is the Husbandman.

I trust, in preaching this morning, God may help me so to discern between the precious and the vile. And, that, I may say nothing uncharitable which would cut off any of God’s people from being part of His true and living and visible Church. And yet at the same time I pray that I may not speak so loosely and so without God’s direction as to embrace any in the arms of Christian affection whom the Lord has not received in the Everlasting Covenant of His love.

Our text suggests to us three things. First, *an inquiry*—have we the Spirit? Secondly, *a caution*—if we have not the Spirit we are sensual. Thirdly, *a suspicion*—there are many persons that separate themselves.

Our suspicion concerning them is that notwithstanding their superfine profession, they are sensual, not having the Spirit—for our text says, “These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.”

I. First, then, our text suggests AN INQUIRY—Have we the Spirit? This is an inquiry so important that the philosopher may well suspend all his investigations to find an answer to this question on his own personal account. All the great debates of politics, all the most engrossing subjects of human discussion may well stop today and give us pause to ask ourselves the solemn question—“Have I the Spirit?” For this question does not deal with any *externals* of religion, but it deals with religion in its most vital point. He that has the Spirit, although he is wrong in fifty things, being right in this, is saved. He that has *not* the Spirit, be he ever so orthodox, be his creed as correct as Scripture—yes, and his morals outwardly as pure as the Law—is still unsaved. He is destitute of the essential part of salvation—the Spirit of God dwelling in him.

To help us to answer this question, I shall try to set forth the effects of the Spirit in our hearts under sundry Scriptural metaphors. Have I the Spirit? I reply, “and what is the operation of the Spirit? How am I to discern it?” Now the Spirit operates in many ways, all of them mysterious and supernatural, all of them bearing the real marks of His own power and having certain signs following whereby they may be discovered and recognized.

1. The first work of the Spirit in the heart is a work during which the Spirit is compared to the *wind*. You remember that when our Savior spoke to Nicodemus He represented the first work of the Spirit in the heart as being like the wind, “which blows where it lists.” “Even so,” says He, “is everyone that is born of the Spirit.” Now you know that the wind is a most mysterious thing. And although there are certain definitions of it which pretend to be explanations of the phenomenon, yet they certainly leave the great question of how the wind blows and what is the cause of its blowing in a certain direction, where it was before. Breath within us, wind without us—all motions of air—are to us mysterious. And the renewing work of the Spirit in the heart is exceedingly mysterious. It is possible that at this moment the Spirit of God may be breathing into some of the thousand hearts before me. Yet it would be blasphemous if anyone should ask, “Which way went the Spirit from God to such a heart? How entered it there?”

And it would be foolish for a person who is under the operation of the Spirit to ask how it operates—you know not where is the storehouse of the thunder. You know not where the clouds are balanced. Neither can you know how the Spirit goes forth from the Most High and enters into the heart of man. It may be that during a sermon two men are listening to the

same Truth. One of them hears as attentively as the other and remembers as much of it. The other is melted to tears or moved with solemn thoughts. But the one though equally attentive, sees nothing in the sermon, except, maybe, certain important truths well set forth. As for the other, his heart is broken within him and his soul is melted. Ask me how it is that the same Truth has an effect upon the one and not upon his fellow. I reply, because the mysterious Spirit of the living God goes with the Truth to one heart and not to the other.

The one only feels the force of Truth and that may be strong enough to make him tremble, like Felix. But the other feels the Spirit going with the Truth and that renews the man, regenerates him and causes him to pass into that gracious condition which is called the state of salvation. This change takes place instantaneously. It is as miraculous a change as any miracle of which we read in Scripture. It is supremely supernatural. It may be mimicked, but no imitation of it can be true and real. Men may pretend to be regenerated without the Spirit, but regenerated they cannot be. It is a change so marvelous that the highest attempts of man can never reach it. We may reason as long as we please but we cannot reason ourselves into regeneration. We may meditate till our hairs are gray with study. But we cannot meditate ourselves into the new birth. That is worked in us by the sovereign will of God alone—

***“The Spirit, like some heavenly wind,
Blows on the sons of flesh,
Inspires us with a heavenly mind,
And forms the man afresh.”***

But ask the man how—he cannot tell you. Ask him when—he may recognize the time, but as to the manner thereof he knows no more of it than you do. It is to him a mystery.

You remember the story of the valley of vision. Ezekiel saw dry bones lying scattered here and there in the valley. The command came to Ezekiel, “Say to these dry bones, live.” He said, “Live,” and the bones came together, “bone to his bone and flesh came upon them.” But as yet they did not live. “Prophesy, son of man. Say to the Wind, breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” They looked just like life. There was flesh and blood there. There were the eyes and hands and feet. But when Ezekiel had spoken there was a mysterious something given which men call life and it was given in a mysterious way, like the blowing of the wind. It is even so today. Unconverted and ungodly persons may be very moral and excellent—they are like the dry bones, when they are put together and clothed with flesh and blood.

But to make them live *spiritually* it needs the Divine Inspiration from the breath of the Almighty, the Divine Spirit, the Divine Wind should blow

on them and then they would live. Say, my Hearer, have you ever had any supernatural influence on your heart? For if not I may seem to be harsh with you. But I am faithful. If you have never had more than nature in your heart, you are “in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity.” No, Sir, sneer not at that utterance. It is as true as this Bible, for it is from this Bible it was taken and for proof thereof hear me. “Except a man be born again (from above) of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” What say you to that? It is in vain for you to talk of making yourself to be born again. You can not be born again except by the Spirit and you must perish unless you are. You see, then, the first effect of the Spirit and by that you may answer the question.

2. In the next place, the Spirit in the Word of God is often compared to *fire*. After the Spirit, like the wind has made the dead sinner live, then comes the Spirit like fire. Now fire has a searching and tormenting power. It is purifying, but it purifies by a terrible process. Now after the Holy Spirit has given us the life of Christianity, there immediately begins a burning in our heart—the Lord searches and tries our reins and lights a candle within our spirits which discovers the wickedness of our nature and the loathsomeness of our iniquities. Say, my Hearer, do you know anything about that fire in your heart? For if not, you have not yet received the Spirit. To explain what I mean, let me just tell a piece of my own experience by way of illustrating the fiery effects of the Spirit.

I lived careless and thoughtless. I could indulge in sin as well as others and did do so. Sometimes my conscience pricked me, but not enough to make me cease from vice. I could indulge in transgression and I could love it—not so much as others loved it—my early training would not let me do that—but still enough to prove that my heart was debased and corrupt. One time something more than conscience pricked me. I knew not then what it was. I was like Samuel, when the Lord called him. I heard the voice, but I knew not from where it came. A stirring began in my heart and I began to feel that in the sight of God I was a lost, ruined and condemned sinner. That conviction I could not shake off. Do what I might it followed me. If I sought to amuse my mind and take it off from serious thoughts it was of no use. I was obliged still to carry about with me a heavy burden on my back.

I went to my bed and there I dreamed about Hell and about “the wrath to come.” I woke up and this dreary nightmare, this incubus, still brooded on me. What could I do? I renounced first one vicious habit—then another—it mattered not. All this was like pulling one firebrand from a flame that fed itself with blazing forests. Do what I might, my conscience found no rest. Up to the house of God I went to hear the Gospel. There was no Gospel for me. The fire burned but the more fiercely and the very breath of

the Gospel seemed to fan the flame. Away I went to my chamber and my closet to pray—the heavens were like brass and the windows of the sky were barred against me. No answer could I get. The fire burned more vehemently. Then I thought, “I would not live always. Would God I had never been born!”

But I dared not die, for there was Hell when I was dead. And I dared not live, for life had become intolerable. Still the fire blazed right vehemently till at last I came to this resolve—“If there is salvation in Christ, I will have it. I have nothing of my own to trust to. I do this hour, O God, renounce my sin and renounce my own righteousness, too.”

And the fire blazed again and burned up all my good works, yes—and my sins with them. And then I saw that all this burning was to bring me to Christ. And oh, the joy and gladness of my heart when Jesus came and sprinkled water on the flame and said, “I have bought you with My blood. Put your trust in Me. I will do for you what you can not do for yourself. I will take your sins away. I will clothe you with a spotless robe of righteousness. I will guide you all your journey through and land you at last in Heaven.” Say, my dear Hearer, do you know anything about the Spirit of burning? For if not, again I say, I am not harsh, I am but true—if you have never felt this, you know not the Spirit.

3. To proceed a little further. When the Spirit has thus quickened the soul and convicted it of sin, then He comes under another metaphor. He comes under the metaphor of *oil*. The Holy Spirit is very frequently in Scripture compared to oil. “You anoint my head with oil, my cup runs over.” Ah, Brethren, though the beginning of the Spirit is by fire, it does not end there. We may be first of all convicted and brought to Christ by misery. But when we get to Christ there is no misery in Him and our sorrow results from not getting close enough to Him. The Holy Spirit comes, like the good Samaritan and pours in the oil and the wine. And oh, what oil it is with which He anoints our head and with which He heals our wounds! How soft the liniments which He binds round our bruises! How blessed the eye salve with which He anoints our eyes! How heavenly the ointment with which He binds up our sores and wounds and bruises and makes us whole and sets our feet upon a Rock and establishes our goings!

The Spirit, after He has convicted, begins to comfort. And you that have felt the comforting power of the Holy Spirit will bear me witness there is no Comforter like He that is the Paraclete. Oh, bring the music, the voice of song and the sound of harps! They are both as vinegar upon niter to him that has a heavy heart. Bring me the enchantments of the magic world and all the enjoyments of its pleasures. They do but torment the soul and prick it with many thorns. But oh, Spirit of the living God, when You blow upon the heart there is not a wave of that tempestuous sea

which does not sleep forever when You bid it be still! There is not one single breath of the proud hurricane and tempest which does not cease to howl and which does not lie still, when You say to it, "Peace be unto you. Your sins are forgiven you." Say, do you know the Spirit under the figure of oil? Have you felt Him at work in your spirits, comforting you, anointing your head, making you glad and causing you to rejoice?

There are many people that never felt this. They hope they are religious. But their religion never makes them happy. There are scores of professors who have just enough religion to make them miserable. Let them be afraid that they have any religion at all. For religion makes people happy. When it has its full sway with man it makes him glad. It may begin in agony, but it does not end there. Say, have you ever had your heart leaping for joy? Have your lips ever warbled songs of ecstatic praise? Do your eyes ever flash the fire of joy? If these things are not so, I fear lest you are still without God and without Christ. For where the Spirit comes, His fruits are—joy, peace, love, confidence and assurance forever.

4. Bear with me once more. I have to show you one more figure of the Spirit and by that also you will be able to ascertain whether you are under His operation. When the Spirit has acted as wind, as fire and as oil, He then acts like *water*. We are told that we are "born again of water and of the Spirit." Now I do not think you foolish enough to need that I should say that no water, either of immersion or of sprinkling, can in the least degree operate in the *salvation* of a soul. There may be some few poor creatures, whose heads were put on their shoulders the wrong way, who still believe that a few drops of water from a priest's hands can regenerate souls. There may be such a few, but I hope the race will soon die out. We trust that the day will come when all those gentry will have no "other Gospel" to preach in our Churches but will have clean gone over to Rome and when that terrible spot upon the Protestant Church, called Puseyism, will have been cut out like a cancer and torn out by its very roots. The sooner we get rid of that the better. And whenever we hear of any of them going over to Rome, let them go—I wish we could as easily get rid of the devil—they may go together—we do not want either of them in the Protestant Church.

But the Holy Spirit, when He comes in the heart, comes like water. That is to say, He comes to purify the soul. He that today lives as foul as he did before his pretended conversion is a hypocrite and a liar. He that this day loves sin and lives in it just as he was likely to do, let him know that the Truth is not in him, but he has received the strong delusion to believe a lie. God's people are a holy people. God's Spirit works by love and purifies the soul. Once let it get into our hearts and it will have no rest till it has turned every sin out. God's Holy Spirit and man's sin cannot live together

peaceably—they may both be in the same heart—but they cannot both reign there, nor can they both be quiet there. For “the Spirit lusts against the flesh and the flesh lusts against the Spirit.” They cannot rest, but there will be a perpetual warring in the soul, so that the Christian will have to cry, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” But in due time the Spirit will drive out all sin and will present us blameless before the Throne of His Majesty with exceeding great joy.

Now, my Hearer, answer you this question for yourself and not for another man. Have you received this Spirit? Answer me, anyhow—if it is with a scoff, answer me. If you sneer and say, “I know nothing of your enthusiastic rant,” be it so, Sir—say “no,” then. It may be you care not to reply at all. I beseech you do not put away my entreaty. Yes or no? Have you received the Spirit? “Sir, no man can find fault with my character. I believe I shall enter Heaven through my own virtues.” That is not the question, Sir. Have you received the Spirit? All that you say you may have done. But if you have left the other undone and have not received the Spirit, it will go ill with you at last. Have you had a supernatural operation upon your own heart? Have you been made a new man in Christ Jesus! For if not, depend on it, as God’s Word is true, you are out of Christ and dying as you are. You will be shut out of Heaven, be you who you may and what you may.

II. Thus, I have tried to help you to answer the first question—the inquiry—have we received the Spirit? And this brings me to the CAUTION. He that has not received the Spirit is said to be sensual. Oh, what a gulf there is between the least Christian and the greatest moralist! What a wide distinction there is between the greatest professor destitute of grace and the least of God’s Believers who has grace in His heart. As great a difference as there is between light and darkness, between death and life, between Heaven and Hell is there between a saint and a sinner. For mark, my text says—in no very polite phrase—that if we have not the Spirit we are sensual. “Sensual!” says one. “Well, I am not a converted man—I don’t pretend to be—but I am not sensual.” Well, Friend and it is very likely that you are not—not in the common acceptance of the term sensual. But understand that this Word, in the Greek, really means what an English word like this would mean, if we had such a one—*soulish*.

We have not such a word—we want such a one. There is a great distinction between mere animals and men—man has a soul and the mere animal has none. There is another distinction between mere men and a converted man. The converted man has the Spirit—the unconverted man has none. He is a soulish man—not a spiritual man. He has got no further than mere nature and has no inheritance in the spiritual kingdom of

grace. Strange it is that soulish and sensual should after all mean the same! Friend, you have not the Spirit. Then you are nothing better—be you what you are, or whatsoever you may be—than the Fall of Adam left you. That is to say, you are a fallen creature, having only capacities to live here in sin and to live forever in torment. But you have not the capacity to live in Heaven at all, for you have no Spirit. And therefore you are unable to know or enjoy spiritual things. And mark you, a man may be in this state and be a sensual man and yet he may have all the virtues that could grace a Christian. But with all these—if he has not the Spirit—he has got not an inch further than where Adam’s fall left him—that is, condemned and under the curse.

Yes, and he may attend to religion with all his might—he may take the sacrament and be baptized and may be the most devout professor. But if he has not the Spirit he has not started a solitary inch from where he was, for he is still in “the bonds of iniquity,” a lost soul. No, further, he may pick up religious phrases till he may talk very fast about religion. He may read biographies till he seems to be a deep taught child of God. He may be able to write an article upon the deep experience of a Believer—but if this experience is not his own, if he has not received it by the Spirit of the living God, he is still nothing more than a carnal man and Heaven is to him a place to which there is no entrance. No, further—he might go so far as to become a minister of the Gospel and a successful minister, too. And God may bless the word that he preaches to the salvation of sinners. But unless he has received the Spirit—be he as eloquent as Apollos and as earnest as Paul—he is nothing more than a mere soulish man, without capacity for spiritual things.

No, to crown all, he might even have the power of working miracles as Judas had—he might even be received into the Church as a Believer as was Simon Magus and after all that—though he had cast out devils, though he had healed the sick, though he had worked miracles—he will have the gates of Heaven shut in his teeth if he has not received the Spirit. For this is the essential thing—without which all others are in vain—the reception of the Spirit of the living God. It is a searching Truth, is it not, my Friends? Do not run away from it. If I am preaching to you falsehood, reject it. But if this is a Truth which I can substantiate by Scripture, I beseech you, rest not till you have answered this question—Have you the Spirit, living, dwelling, working in your heart?

III. This brings me, in the third place, to THE SUSPICION. How singular that “separation” should be the opposite of having the Spirit. Hark, I hear a gentleman saying, “Oh, I like to hear you preach smartly and sharply. I am persuaded, Sir, there are a great many people in the Church that ought not to be there. And so I, because there is such a corrupt mix-

ture in the Church, have determined not to join anywhere at all. I do not think that the Church of Christ nowadays is at all clean and pure enough to allow of my joining with it. At least, Sir, I did join a Church once, but I made such a deal of noise in it they were very glad when I went away. And now I am just like David's men—I am one that is in debt and discontented and I go round to hear all new preachers that arise. I have heard you now these three months—I mean to go and hear someone else in a very little time if you do not say something to flatter me. But I am quite sure I am one of God's special elect. I don't join any Church because a Church is not good enough for me. I don't become a member of any denomination, because they are all wrong, everyone of them."

Hark, Brother, I have something to tell you, that will not please you. "*These are they that separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.*" I hope you enjoy the text. It certainly belongs to you, above every man in the world. "These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." When I read this over I thought to myself, there are some who say, "Well, you are a Dissenter, how do you make this agreeable with the text, 'These are they who separate themselves.' " You are separated from the Church of England. Ah, my Friends, that a man may be and be all the better for it. But the separation here intended is separation from the *one universal Church of Christ*. The Church of England was not known in Jude's day—so the Apostle did not allude to that. "These are they who separate themselves"—that is from the Church of Christ—from the great universal body of the elect. Moreover, let us just say one thing. We did not separate ourselves—we were turned out. Dissenters did not separate themselves from the Church of England, from the Episcopal Church. But when the Act of Uniformity was passed they were forcibly turned out of their pulpits.

Our forefathers were as sound Churchmen as any in the world—but they could not take in all the errors of the Prayer Book and they were therefore hounded to their graves by the intolerance of the conforming professors. So they did not separate themselves. Moreover, we do not separate ourselves. There is not a Christian beneath the scope of God's Heaven from whom I am separated. At the Lord's Table I always invite all Churches to come and sit down and commune with us. If any man were to tell me that I am separate from the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, or the Methodist, I would tell him he did not know me, for I love them with a pure heart fervently and I am not separate from them. I may hold different views from them and in that point truly I may be said to be separate. But I am not separate in heart, I will work with them—I will work with them heartily. No, though my Church of England brother sends me, as he has done, a summons to pay a Church tax that I cannot in conscience pay, I

will love him still. And if he takes chairs and tables it matters not—I will love him for all that. And if there is a ragged-school or anything else for which I can work with him to promote the glory of God, therein will I unite with him with all my heart.

I think this bears rather hard on our friends—the Strict Communion Baptists. I should not like to say anything hard against them for they are about the best people in the world. But they really do separate themselves from the great body of Christ's people. The Spirit of the living God will not let them do this really, but they do it professedly. They separate themselves from the great Universal Church. They say they will not commune with it. And if anyone comes to their table who has not been baptized, they turn him away. They “separate,” certainly. I do not believe it is willful schism that makes them thus act. But at the same time I think the old man within has some hand in it.

Oh, how my heart loves the doctrine of the one Church. The nearer I get to my Master in prayer and communion, the closer am I knit to all His disciples. The more I see of my own errors and failings, the more ready am I to deal gently with them that I believe to be erring. The pulse of Christ's body is communion. And woe to the Church that seeks to cure the ills of Christ's body by stopping its pulse. I think it sin to refuse to commune with anyone who is a member of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. I desire this morning to preach the unity of Christ's Church. I have sought to use the fan to blow away the chaff. I have said no man belongs to Christ's Church unless he has the Spirit. But, if he has the Spirit, woe be to the man that separates himself from him.

Oh, I should think myself grossly in fault if at the foot of these stairs I should meet a truly converted child of God, who called himself a Primitive Methodist, or a Wesleyan, or a Churchman, or an Independent and I should say, “No, Sir, you do not agree with me on certain points. I believe you are a child of God, but I will have nothing to do with you.” I should then think that this text would bear very hard on me. “These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.” But would we do so, Beloved? No, we would give them both our hands and say, God speed to you in your journey to Heaven. So long as you have got the Spirit we are one family and we will not be separate from one another. God grant the day may come when every wall of separation shall be beaten down! See how to this day we are separate. There! You will find a Baptist who could not say a good word to a Paedo-Baptist if you were to give him a world. You find to this day Episcopalians who hate that ugly word, “Dissent.” And it is enough for them that a Dissenter has done a thing—they will not do it then—be it ever so good.

Ah, and furthermore, there are some to be found in the Church of England that will not only hate Dissenters, but hate one another into the bargain. Men are to be found that cannot let brother ministers of their own Church preach in their parish. What an anachronism such men are! They would seem to have been sent into the world in our time purely by mistake. Their proper era would have been the time of the dark ages. If they had lived then, what fine Bonners they would have made! What splendid fellows they would have been to have helped to poke the fire in Smithfield! But they are quite out of date in these times and I look upon such a curious clergyman in the same way that I do upon a Dodo—as an extraordinary animal whose race is almost, if not quite extinct.

Well, you may look and look and wonder. The animal will be extinct soon. It will not be long, I trust, before not only the Church of England shall love itself, but when all who love the Lord Jesus shall be ready to preach in each other's pulpits, preaching the same Truth, holding the same faith and mightily contending for it. Then shall the world "see how these Christians love one another." And then shall it be known in Heaven that Christ's kingdom has come and that His will is about to be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

My Hearer, do you belong to the Church? For out of the Church there is no salvation. But mark what the Church is. It is not the Episcopalian, Baptist, or Presbyterian—the Church is a company of men who have received the Spirit. If you can not say you have the Spirit, go your way and tremble. Go your way and think of your lost condition. And may Jesus by His Spirit so bless you that you may be led to renounce your works and ways with grief and fly to Him who died upon the Cross and find a shelter there from the wrath of God.

I may have said some rough things this morning, but I am not given much to cutting and trimming and I do not suppose I shall begin to learn that art now. If the thing is untrue, it is with you to reject it. If it is true, at your own peril reject what God stamps with Divine authority. May the blessing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit rest upon the one Church of Israel's one Jehovah. Amen and Amen.

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

PRAYING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

NO. 719

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 4, 1866,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Praying in the Holy Spirit.”
Jude 1:20.

THESE words occur in a passage where the Apostle is indicating the contrast between the ungodly and the godly. The ungodly are mocking, speaking great swelling words and walking after their ungodly lusts, while the righteous are building themselves up in their most holy faith, and keeping themselves in the love of God. The ungodly are showing the venom of their hearts by mourning and complaining, while the righteous are manifesting the new principle within them by “praying in the Holy Spirit.” The ungodly man bears wormwood in his mouth, while the Christian’s lips drop with the virgin honey of devotion. As the spider is said to find poison in the very flowers from which the bees suck honey, so do the wicked abuse to sin the same mercies which the godly use to the glory of God.

As far as light is removed from darkness, and life from death, so far does a Believer differ from the ungodly. Let us keep this contrast very vivid. While the wicked grow yet more wicked, let us become more holy, more prayerful, and more devout, saying with good old Joshua, “Let others do as they will, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Observe that the text comes in a certain order in the context. The righteous are described, first of all, as building themselves up in their most holy faith. Faith is the first Divine Grace, the *root* of piety, the foundation of holiness, the dawn of godliness—to this must the first care be given.

But we must not tarry at the first principles. Onward is our course! What, then, follows at the heels of faith? What is faith’s first-born child? When the vine of faith becomes vigorous and produces fruit unto holiness, which is the first ripe cluster? Is it not prayer—“praying in the Holy Spirit”? That man has no faith who has no prayer, and the man who abounds in faith will soon abound in supplication. Faith the mother, and prayer the child, are seldom apart from one another. Faith carries Prayer in her arms, and Prayer draws life from the breast of Faith. Edification in faith leads to fervency in supplication. Elijah first manifests his faith before the priests of Baal, and then retires to wrestle with God upon Carmel.

Study our text carefully and see what follows after “praying in the Holy Spirit.” “Keep yourselves in the love of God.” Next to prayer comes an abiding sense of the love of God to us and the flowing up of our love towards God. Prayer builds an altar and lays the sacrifice and the wood in order, and then *Love*, like the priest, brings holy fire from Heaven and sets the offering in a blaze! Faith is, as we have said, the root of Grace. Prayer

is the lily's stalk, and love is the spotless flower. Faith sees the Savior, prayer follows Him into the house, but love breaks the alabaster box of precious ointment and pours it on His head.

There is, however, a step beyond even the hallowed enjoyments of love! There remains a top stone to complete the edifice—it is believing *expectantly*—“looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” Far-seeing Hope climbs the staircase which Faith has built, and bowing upon the knees of Prayer looks through the window which Love has opened, and sees the Lord Jesus Christ coming in His glory and endowing all His people with the eternal life which is to be their portion. See, then, the value of prayer as indicating the possession of faith, and as foreshadowing and supporting the strength and growth of love.

Coming directly to the text, we remark that the Apostle speaks of prayer, but he mentions only one kind of praying. Viewed from a certain point, prayers are of many sorts. I suppose that no two genuine prayers from different men could be precisely alike. Master artists do not often multiply the same painting—they prefer to give expression to fresh ideas as often as they grasp the pencil. And so the Master Artist, the Holy Spirit, who is the Author of prayer, does not often produce two prayers that shall be precisely the same upon the tablets of His people's hearts.

Prayers may be divided into several different orders. There is *deprecatory* prayer in which we deprecate the wrath of God, and entreat Him to turn away His fierce anger, to withdraw His rod, to sheath His sword. Deprecatory prayers are to be offered in all times when calamity is to be feared, and when sin has provoked the Lord to jealousy. Then there are *supplicatory* prayers in which we supplicate blessings and implore mercies from the liberal hand of God, and entreat our heavenly Father to supply our needs out of His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. There are prayers which are *personal* in which the supplicant pleads mainly concerning himself. And there are pleadings which are *intercessory*, in which, like Abraham, the petitioner intercedes for Sodom, or entreats that Ishmael might live before God.

These prayers for others are to be multiplied as much as prayers for ourselves, lest we make the Mercy Seat to become a place for the exhibition of spiritual selfishness. The prayer may be public or private, vocal or mental, protracted or ejaculatory. Prayer may be salted with confession, or perfumed with thanksgiving. It may be sung to music, or wept out with groans. As many as are the flowers of summer, so many are the varieties of prayer! But while prayers are of these various orders, there is one respect in which they are all one if they are acceptable with God—they must be, every one of them, “in the Holy Spirit.”

That prayer which is not in the Holy Spirit is in the *flesh*. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and we are told that they which are in the flesh cannot please God. All that comes of our corrupt nature is defiled and marred, and cannot be acceptable with the most holy God. If the heavens are not pure in His sight, how shall those prayers which are born of the earth be acceptable with Him? The seed of acceptable devotion must come from Heaven's storehouse. Only the prayer which comes *from* God can go

to God! The dove will only bear a letter to the cote from which it came, and so will prayer go back to Heaven if it came from Heaven. We must shoot the Lord's arrows back to Him.

That desire which He writes upon our heart will move His heart and bring down a blessing, but the desires of the flesh have no power with Him. Desirous to press this great Truth of God upon the minds of my Brothers and Sisters this morning, I shall use the few words of the text in five ways.

I. First we shall use the text as A CRUCIBLE to try our prayers in. I beseech you, examine yourselves with rigorous care! Use the text as a refining pot, a furnace, a touchstone or a crucible by which to discern whether your prayers have been true or not! This is the test—have they been in very deed—“praying in the Holy Spirit”? Brothers and Sisters, we need not judge those who pray unintelligible prayers, prayers in a foreign tongue, prayers which they do not understand. We know without a moment's discussion of the question that the prayer which is not understood cannot be a prayer in the Spirit, for even the man's own spirit does not enter into it—how then can the Spirit of God be there?

The mysterious words or Latin jargon of the priests cannot come up before God with acceptance! Let us, therefore, keep our judgment for ourselves. There may be those present who have been in the habit of using from their infancy a *form* of prayer. You perhaps would not dare to go out to your day's business without having repeated that form at the bedside. You would be afraid to fall asleep at night without going through the words which you have set yourselves to repeat. My dear Friends, may I put the question to you—will you try to answer it honestly? Have you prayed in the Holy Spirit? Has the Holy Spirit had *anything* to do with that form? Has He really made you to feel it in your heart? Is it not possible that you have mocked God with a solemn sound upon a thoughtless tongue? Is it not *probable* that from the random manner in which one comes to repeat a well-known form that there may be no heart whatever in it—and not an atom of sincerity?

Does not God abhor the sacrifice where the heart is not found? It would be a melancholy thing if we had increased our sins by our prayers! It would be a very unhappy fact if it should turn out that when we have bowed the knee in what we thought to be the service of God, we were actually *insulting* the God of Heaven by uttering words which could not but be disgusting to Him because our hearts did not go with our lips! Let us rest assured that if for seventy years we have punctually performed our devotions by the use of the book, or of the form which we have learned, we may, the whole seventy years, never once have prayed at all! And the whole of that period we may have been living in God's esteem an ungodly, prayerless life because we have never worshipped God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth, and have never prayed in the Holy Spirit! Judge *yourselves*, Brothers and Sisters, that you be not judged!

But are there not others of us who never did use a written prayer? Who from our earliest childhood have eschewed and even abhorred forms of prayer, who nevertheless have good reason to try our prayer just as much

as others? We have given forth extemporaneous utterances, and those extemporaneous utterances necessarily required some little exercise of the mind, some little attention—but still we may have been heartless in them. I suppose we are well aware that we can get into such a habit of extemporaneous prayer that it is really very little or no better than if we repeated what we had learned. There may be such a fluency acquired by practice that one's speech may ripple on for five or ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, and yet the heart may be wandering in vanity or stagnant in indifference! The *body* may be on its knees, but the *soul* on its wings far away from the Mercy Seat.

Let us examine how far our *public* prayers have been in the Holy Spirit. The preacher standing here begs God to search him in that matter. If he has merely discharged the business of public prayer because it is his official duty to conduct the devotions of the congregation, he has much to account for before God—to lead the devotions of this vast throng without seeking the aid of the Holy Spirit is no light sin! And what shall be said of the prayers at Prayer Meetings? Are not many of them mere words? It were better if our friends would not speak at all rather than speak in the flesh!

I am sure that the only prayer in which the devout hearer can unite, and which is acceptable with God, is that which really is a *heart* prayer—a *soul* prayer, in fact—a prayer which the *Holy Spirit* moves us to pray. All else is beating the air and occupying time in vain. My Brethren, I thank God that there are so many of you in connection with this Church who are gifted in prayer, and I wish that every member of every Christian Church could pray in public. You should all try to do so, and none of you should give it up unless it becomes an absolute impossibility. But oh, my Brethren who pray in public, may it not be sometimes with you as with others of us—the exercise of *gift* and not the outflow of Divine Grace? And if so, ask the Lord to forgive you of such praying and enable you to wait upon Him in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We may not forget to scrutinize our more private prayers, our supplications at the family altar, and above all, our prayers in that little room which we have dedicated to communion with God. O Brothers and Sisters, we might well be sick of our prayers if we did but see what poor things they are! There are times when it is a sweet and blessed thing to lay hold of the horns of the altar and to feel that the blood which sprinkles the altar has sprinkled you—that you have spoken to God and prevailed! Oh it is a blessed thing to grasp the Angel of the Covenant, and to wrestle with Him even hour after hour, saying, “I will not let You go except You bless me”! But I fear these are not constant things. We may say of them that they are angels' visits, few and far between.

Come, my Brethren, put your prayers into this crucible of “praying in the Holy Spirit.” You will cast in much metal, but there will come out little of fine gold. Come and lay your prayers upon this threshing floor, and thresh them with this text, “praying in the Holy Spirit.” And oh, how much of straw and of chaff will there be, and how little of the well-winnowed grain! Come and look through this window at the fields of our devotions,

overgrown with nettles, and briars, and thistles—a wilderness of merely outward performances! And how small that little spot, enclosed by Grace, which God the Holy Spirit Himself has cleared, and dug, and planted—from which the fruit of prayer has been brought forth unto perfection!

May our heavenly Father teach us to be humble in His Presence as we reflect how little even of our best things will stand the test of His searching eyes, and may those of us who are His saints come to Him afresh, and ask Him to fill us with His Spirit, and to accept us in His Son!

II. We shall next use the text as A CORDIAL. It is a very delightful reflection to the Christian mind that God observes His people and does not sit as an indifferent spectator of their conflicts and difficulties. For instance, He closely observes us in our prayers. He knows that prayer, while it should be the easiest thing in the world, is not so. He knows that we erring ones find it not always easy to approach Him in the true spirit of supplication and He observes this with condescending compassion. That is a precious verse for those hearts which are very weak and broken, “He knows our frame: He remembers that we are dust.” And that other, “Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.”

He takes notice of our frailties and of our failures in the work of supplication. He sees His child fall as it tries to walk and marks the tears with which it bemoans its weakness. “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry.” A sweeter thought remains in the text, namely, that having considered these failures of ours, which are many of them sinful, our Lord is not angry with us on account of them. And instead of being turned to wrath, He is moved to pity for us and love towards us. Instead of saying, “If you cannot pray, you shall not have. If you have not Grace enough even to ask aright, I will shut the gates of mercy against you.” No, He devises means by which to bring the lame and the banished into His Presence! He teaches the ignorant how to pray and strengthens the weak with His own strength!

Herein He also does wonders, for the means whereby He helps our infirmity are exceedingly to be marveled at. That help is not to be found in a book or in the dictation of certain words in certain consecrated places, but in the condescending assistance of God Himself, for who is He that is spoken of in the text but God? The Holy Spirit, the third Person of the adorable Trinity, helps our infirmities, making intercession for us with groans that cannot be uttered! It is a mark of wondrous condescension that God should not only answer our prayers when they are made, but should make our prayers for us! That the King should say to the petitioner, “Bring your case before me and I will grant your desire,” is kindness. But for him to say, “I will be your secretary. I will write out your petition for you. I will put it into proper words and use fitting phrases so that your petition shall be framed acceptably”—this is goodness at its utmost stretch!

And this is precisely what the Holy Spirit does for us poor, ignorant, wavering, weak sons of men. I am to understand from the expression, “praying in the Holy Spirit,” that the Holy Spirit is actually willing to help me to pray—that He will tell me how to pray! And that when I get to a point where I am at a pause and cannot express my desires, He will ap-

pear in my extremity and make intercession in me with groans which cannot be uttered. Jesus in His agony was strengthened by an *angel*—you are to be succored by God Himself! Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses, but the Holy Spirit Himself helps your infirmities!

My beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, the thought needs no gar- nishing of oratorical expressions! Take it as a wedge of gold of Ophir and value it. It is priceless, beyond all price. God Himself, the Holy Spirit, con- descends to assist you when you are on your knees, and if you cannot put two words together in common speech to men, yet He will help you to speak with God! Ah, and if at the Mercy Seat you fail in words, you shall not fail in *reality*, for your heart shall conquer. God needs not *words*. He never reads our petitions according to the outward utterance, but accord- ing to the inward groaning. He notices the longing, the desiring, the sigh- ing, the crying.

Remember that the *outward* of prayer is but the shell—the *inward* of prayer is its true kernel and essence. If prayer is wafted to Heaven in the song of the multitude, with the swell of glorious music, it is not one whit more acceptable to God than when it is wailed forth in the bitter cry of anguish from a desolate spirit. That cry so discordant to human ears is music to the ears of God—

**“To Him there’s music in a sigh,
And beauty in a tear.”**

Notice this, then, and be comforted.

III. The text may further serve as A CHART to direct us in the way of prayer. Here I shall need to speak at greater length. Praying how? By the book? Without a book? In public? In private? By the way? In the house? On your knees? Standing? Sitting? Kneeling? Nothing is said about these! Posture, place, and time are all left open. There is no rubric except one— “in the Holy Spirit.”

That is indispensable. That granted, nothing else matters one whit. If it is praying in the Holy Spirit, all else may be as you will. What does pray- ing in the Holy Spirit mean? The word may be translated, “*by* the Holy Spirit,” or, “*through* the Holy Spirit,” as well as, “*in* the Holy Spirit.” And the phrase means, first, praying in the Holy Spirit’s *power*. The carnal mind knows nothing about this. I might as well express myself in high Dutch as in English upon this point to an unregenerate man. But regen- erate men who are born of the Spirit and live in the Spirit world are cogni- zant of communications between their spirits and the Holy Spirit who is now resident in the midst of the Church of God.

We know that the Divine Spirit, without the use of sounds, speaks in our hearts. We know that without an utterance which the ears can hear He can make our soul know His Presence and understand His meaning. He casts the spiritual shadow of His influence over us, coloring our thoughts and feelings according to His own design and will. It is a great spiritual fact which the Christian knows for certain that the Holy Spirit, the Divine Spirit, has frequent dealings with spiritual minds and imparts to them His power. Our new-born spirit has a certain degree of power in

it, but the power is never fully manifested or drawn out except when the Spirit of God quickens our spirit and excites it to activity.

Our spirit prays, but it is because it is overshadowed and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. I cannot just now explain myself, but I mean this, that if I, as a man, could go to the Throne of Grace and only pray as my fleshy nature would pray, that prayer would be unacceptable. But when I go to the Mercy Seat and my new nature prays as the Holy Spirit enables me to pray, then my prayer will succeed with God. If I do before God at the throne what flesh and blood can do and no more, I have done nothing—for that which is of the flesh still mounts no higher than flesh.

But if, in coming before the Throne of the heavenly Grace, God's eternal Spirit speaks to my soul and lifts it out of the dead level of fallen humanity. And if He brings it up to be filled with Divine force—if that Spirit is in me a well of water springing up unto everlasting life, if I receive that Divine light and power of the Holy Spirit—and if in *His* power I fervently draw near to God, my prayer must be prevalent with God! This power may be possessed by every Christian. May God grant it to all of His people now, that they may all pray in the Spirit!

That, I think, is one meaning of the text—praying in the *power* of the Spirit. No doubt the principal sense of the text is praying in the Spirit as to *matter*. We do not know always what to pray for, and, Brothers and Sisters, if we were to refrain from prayer for a few minutes till we did know, it would be a good and wise rule. The habit into which we have fallen, in extemporaneous praying, of always praying directly what we are asking—without an instant's pause in which to think of what we are going to ask—is very prejudicial to the spirit of prayer. I would like, when I am alone, to take a few minutes to consider what I am going to ask of God, for otherwise it seems to me to be like seeking an interview with one of the officers of State to ask for something which might occur to us at the moment.

How would you like to have an audience with Lord Derby, and then consider all of a sudden what it was you had come for? Surely common sense would say, Tarry awhile till you have your case mapped out in your own mind, and then when you clearly know yourself what it is you want, you will be able to ask for what you need. Should we not wait upon God in prayer, asking Him to reveal to us what those matters are concerning which we should plead with Him? Beware of hit-or-miss prayers! Never make hap-hazard work of supplication. Come to the Throne of Grace intelligently understanding what it is that you require.

It is well with us in prayer when the Holy Spirit guides the mind. Are not all spiritual men conscious of this, that they feel themselves shut up as to certain matters, and only free in another direction? Then let them obey the Holy Spirit and pray as He directs, for He knows what should be our petition. Well, then what? My dear Brothers and Sisters, pray for that which God the Spirit moves you to pray for, and be very sensitive of the Holy Spirit's influence. I like a metaphor used by Thomas Shillitoe in his *Life*, when he says he wished his own mind to be like a cork upon the water, conscious of every motion of the Spirit of God. It were well to be so

sensitive of the Spirit of God that His faintest breath should cause a ripple upon the sea of our soul and make it move as the Spirit would have it.

We have reached a high state of sanctification when God the Spirit and our own inward spirit are perfectly in accord. May we be led into that unspeakably blessed state! We do not pray aright if we think what it is we want and we wish for, and then ask for it in selfish willfulness. We pray aright when we consent to that which is the mind of the Spirit, and speak as He moves us to speak. We shall be surely enriched with good things when we wait for the very matter of our supplications to have it all from Him. Lord, teach us to pray! Put the thoughts into our minds, the desires into our hearts, and the very words into our lips, if it is Your will, so that all our prayers may be praying in the Spirit and not in the flesh.

The main part of praying in the Spirit must lie not merely in the Spirit's power, or in the Spirit's teaching us the matter, but in the Spirit's *assist-ing* us in the manner. Observe, Brothers and Sisters, the many ways there are of praying which are obnoxious to God—observe them and avoid them! There is but one manner of praying which the Lord accepts. You know what it is. I will briefly describe its attributes. He that comes to God must remember that He is “a Spirit, and that they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him.” The very first essential of prayer is to pray in *truth*, and we do not pray in truth unless the Spirit of God leads our vain minds into the sincerity and reality of devotion.

To pray in truth is this—it is not to use the empty expression of prayer, but to mean what we say. It is for the heart to agonize with God and heave with strong desires. And where will you obtain such a manner of prayer except in the spiritual man, when moved by the Holy Spirit? The carnal man, if he is foolish enough, can intone a prayer. The carnal man can “read the office,” and “do duty” as well as anybody else who can read a book, but he is not praying! No prayer can come from him. Only the *spiritual* man can sigh and long, and cry in his inmost heart, and in the chamber of his soul before God—but he will not do it except as the Spirit of Truth leads him in sincerity into the secret of heart prayer.

Praying in the Holy Spirit is praying in *fergency*. Cold prayers, my Brothers and Sisters, ask the Lord not to hear them! Those who do not plead with fervency, plead not at all. As well speak of lukewarm fire as of lukewarm prayer! It is essential that it be red hot. Real prayer is burnt as with hot iron into a man's soul, and then comes forth from the man's soul like coals of juniper which have a most vehement heat. Such prayers none but the Holy Spirit can give. I have heard from this spot prayers which I never can forget, nor will you ever forget them either.

Last January and February there were times when certain of our Brethren were helped to pray with such power that we were bowed down in humiliation, and afterwards borne up as on the wings of eagles in the power of supplication! There is a way of praying with power in which a man seems to get hold of the posts of Heaven's gate, as Samson grasped the pillars of the temple, and appears as though he would pull all down upon himself sooner than miss the blessing. It is a brave thing for the

heart to vow, "I will not let You go except You bless me." That is praying in the Holy Spirit. May we be tutored in the art of offering effectual fervent prayer!

Next to that, it is essential in prayer that we should pray *perseveringly*. Any man can run fast at a spurt, but to keep it up mile after mile—there is the battle! And so, certain hot spirits can pray very fervently every now and then, but to continue in prayer—who shall do this except the Spirit of God sustains him? Mortal spirits flag and tire. The course of mere fleshly devotion is as the course of a snail which melts as it crawls. Carnal minds go onward and their devotion grows small by degrees and miserably less, as they cry out, "What a weariness it is!" But when the Holy Spirit fills a man and leads him into prayer, he gathers force as he proceeds—and grows more fervent even when God delays to answer! The longer the gate is closed the more vehemently does he use the knocker till he thunders in his prayer! And the longer the Angel lingers, the more resolved is he that if he grasps Him with a death grip he will never let Him go without the blessing.

Beautiful in God's sight is *tearful* and yet unconquerable importunity. Jesus delights to be laid hold of by one who says, "I cannot take No for an answer, this blessing I must have, for You have promised it and You have taught me to ask for it, and I will not believe that You can belie yourself." Surely we must have the Holy Spirit to help us thus to pray. Praying in the Spirit we shall be sure to pray in a holy frame of mind. Brothers and Sisters, do you ever get distracted in your minds? "Ah," you say, "I wonder when I am *not*." I will venture to say that you have come into this house burdened, and yet on the road you were saying, "This is a blessed Sunday, I feel I have God's Presence."

Then some silly gossip met you on the steps and told you an idle tale which distracted you. You may even get quietly seated here, and then the recollection of a child at home, or the remembrance of what somebody said about six weeks ago will perplex your mind so that you cannot pray. But when the Holy Spirit comes, He takes a scourge of small cords and drives these buyers and sellers out of the temple and leaves it clear for God. And then you can come with a holy, devout frame of mind, fixed and settled in your great object of approach to God. This is to approach Him in the Spirit. Oh for more of this blessed, undisturbed devotion!

I could not, however, finish the description of praying in the Spirit if I did not say that it means praying *humbly*, for the Holy Spirit never puffs us up with pride. He is the Spirit that convicts of sin and so bows us down in contrition and brokenness of spirit. We must pray before God like the humble publican, or we shall never go forth justified as he was. We shall never sing Gloria in Excelsis except we pray to God De Profundis—out of the depths must we cry, or we shall never see the glory in the highest! True prayer must be *loving* prayer if it is praying in the Holy Spirit. Prayer should be perfumed with love, saturated with love—love to our fellow saints, and love to Christ. Moreover, it must be a prayer full of *faith*. The effectual fervent prayer of a man prevails only as he believes in God,

and the Holy Spirit is the Author of faith in us, and nurtures and strengthens it so that we pray believing God's promises.

Oh that this blessed combination of excellent Graces, priceless and sweet as the spices of the merchant, might be fragrant within us because the Holy Spirit's power is shed abroad in our hearts! Time fails me, therefore I must dispense with a full description of what praying in the Holy Spirit is, but I hope you will possess it and so understand it.

IV. Fourthly, I shall use the text as A CHERUB to proclaim our success in prayer. Praying in the Spirit—blessed words! Then with such prayer it is an absolute certainty that I must succeed with God in prayer. If my prayer were my *own* prayer, I might not be so sure of it. But if the prayer which I utter is God's own prayer written on my soul, God is always One with Himself—and what He writes on the heart is only written there because it is written in His purposes.

It is said by an old Divine that prayer is the shadow of Omnipotence. Our will, when God the Holy Spirit influences it, is the indicator of God's will. When God's people pray, it is because the blessing is coming and their prayers are the shadow of the coming blessing! Rest assured of this, Brothers and Sisters, God never did belie Himself! He never contradicted in one place what He said in another. You and I may contradict ourselves, not only through untruthfulness, but even through infirmity.

We may not be able to stand up to our word, and we may forget what we said—and so in another place may say something that contradicts it—but God is neither infirm as to memory, nor yet changeable as to will. What He promised yesterday He fulfils today. What He said in one place, He declares in another. Then if God said in my heart, "Pray for So-and-So," it is because He has said it in the book of His decrees. The Spirit of God's writing in the heart always tallies with the writing of destiny in the book of God's eternal purpose. Rest assured that you cannot but succeed when you have laid your soul like a sheet of paper before the Lord and asked Him to write upon it! Then it is no more your own prayer, merely, but the Spirit making intercession in you according to the will of God.

At such time you need not say, "I hope God will answer the prayer." He *will* do it—He is *pledged* to do it. It is a kind of infidelity to say, "I do not know whether the Lord is true to His promise or not, but I hope He is." He is true! Let God be true and every man a liar. Oh, if more of you tried Him as some of us have been compelled to do, you would have to hold up your hands in astonishment, and say, "Truly, whatever else is *not* a fact, it is a fact that God, who sits in the highest heavens, listens to the cries of His people, and gives them according to the desire of their hearts." If the Spirit teaches you to pray, it is as certain as two times two make four that God will give you what you are seeking for.

V. Then I will use the text in conclusion as A CHARIOT in which to convey our own souls onward in the delightful exercise of prayer. The exercise allotted to us today and tomorrow is that of praying in the Spirit. Brothers and Sisters, it is delightful to some of us to believe that the Spirit of God is the Author of the great wave of prayer now breaking over the Churches to which we belong. It was not of our devising or planning, but

it was the motion of God's Holy Spirit upon a few Brethren who desired to spend a day in solemn prayer and found such blessing in it that they could not but tell others of it!

That, then, others spontaneously moved, and without a word of opposition or difference of opinion all said, "Amen. Let us also meet together for prayer." The spirit of brotherly kindness, unanimity, and love was given to our denomination, and then a spirit of earnest desire to bring down a blessing from God. We have known the time when it was not so. We have known the time when a day of fasting and prayer, if not despised, at any rate would not have been appreciated as it will be now. We are of one heart in this matter and I know from communications with many Christian men that many of God's people already feel as if they were peculiarly in prayer—as if it were no effort now to pray, but as if it were their very breath now to breathe out longing desires for the revival of saints and the ingathering of sinners.

Brothers and Sisters of this Church, you have had God's Presence. For many years you have been favored with much of "praying in the Holy Spirit," and seen with your own eyes the great things God has done in answer to supplication. Will one of you draw back now? Will there be one man today or tomorrow who will not be earnest in prayer? Will one man, or even one child in union with this Church, be lukewarm in prayer? I would say, Sin not against the Lord by abstaining from going up to the Mercy Seat with your Brothers and Sisters. Offend not the Lord so that He deprive you of the blessing because you deprive yourself of joining in the exercise.

My dear Friends, it was when they were all met together with one accord in one place that suddenly they heard the sound as of a rushing, mighty wind. We cannot be all in one place, but, at any rate, let us be all with one accord. What? Do you say you have nothing to pray for? What? No children unconverted, no friends unsaved, no neighbors who are still in darkness? What? Live in London and not pray for sinners? Where do you live? Is it in some vast wilderness, amidst "some boundless contiguity of shade," where rumor of sin and of ignorance has never reached your ear? No, you are living in the midst of millions of ungodly millions! Millions that despise the God who made them! Millions that despise the Gospel of Christ!

Millions, not thousands! Hear that word and see if you can tell its meaning! *Millions* who are living without God and without hope, and are going down to Hell! We have, throughout the realm, too, dangerous mischiefs spreading. Need I continually remind you of them? Infidelity wearing the miter, and Popery usurping the place of Protestantism! You are assailed by the wolf and the lion, the serpent and the bear! All forms of mischief are coming forth to attack the Church. Not pray? If you pray not, shall I say, May you smart for your negligence? No I dare not in the slightest shade speak as though I imprecated a woe upon you, but the woe will come upon you, depend upon it! If I say it not, yet will God say it at this present hour. "Curse you Meroz, said the Lord, because they came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

We are not asking you to contribute of your wealth in this case. If we did, the Lord Jesus has a right to it, and you should freely give it. Neither are we asking you all this day to preach. If we did, some of you might be excused for lack of ability. But we claim your *prayers*, and must not be denied! Not able to pray? Then are you graceless, Christless, hopeless, lost, and I will not ask you to join with us! But I ask you first to go to God for yourselves. And if you are a Christian you *can* pray. Poverty does not make you poor in prayer. Lack of education need not hinder you upon your knees. Lack of position and rank in society will be no encumbrance to you when you deal with God who hears the poor man when he cries and answers him with a largess of Divine Grace!

Brothers and Sisters, if you love Christ, if you ever felt His love shed abroad in your heart. If you have been washed in His blood. If you have been saved from wrath through Him. If you are new creatures in Him. If you hope to see His face with acceptance at the last, I might put it to you as a demand! But I press it upon you as a brotherly entreaty—join with us in praying in the Holy Spirit! Shall one start back? Take heed, then, if you refuse to unite with your Brethren in prayer, lest when you choose to cry you should find yourself straitened and shut up in prison! Beware, lest by refusing to pray now, that the Spirit of God has come, you afterwards feel yourself deprived of the comfortable Presence of the Holy Spirit and find the sweetness of devotion to have departed from you.

The Lord send a blessing. He must send it—our hearts will break if He does not! We feel that it is coming. We have grasped the promise. We have pleaded with Jehovah! We have pleaded the blood of Jesus! We are pleading it now! We mean to continue in such pleading till the blessing comes, and we may rely upon it that the heavenly shower will soon descend! He has not said to the seed of Jacob, “Seek you My face in vain.” Brothers and Sisters, be hopeful, and let us unanimously join in praying in the Holy Spirit!

May the Lord bless you, dear Friends, in this respect for Jesus’ sake.

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

A WEIGHTY CHARGE

NO. 1286

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 26 1876,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Keep yourselves in the love of God.”
Jude 1:21.***

JUDE gives a very terrible picture of what will happen in the last days. He describes apostates and paints them in the blackest colors. And he then informs us that there will come, in the last time, mockers and with them separatists and sensualists, all of whom will assail the Church of the living God. It feels very natural, that after foretelling our adversaries and describing them, and so bidding us view the hosts assembled for the war, he should next instruct us how to prepare our defenses and set our forces in battle array. In the 20th and 21st verses of his epistle, Jude mentions the great Christian *Quadrilateral*, the four forts which must be well manned and carefully maintained if we would battle the advancing foe.

I shall call your attention to the four important points, though I must do so with the utmost brevity. The Apostle says, “You beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith.” *Edification* is a grand defense against the assaults of skeptics and heretics. These prey upon the ignorant and unestablished, but fail to overthrow those who are rooted and grounded in the Truth of God. We need to be continually built up—learning more, loving more—and *living* more the grand Truths of the Gospel. We must see to it that the foundation is right, for it will be useless, or worse than useless, to be built up upon false principles—it is “on our most holy faith” that the building must be based.

We should be so established in the Doctrines of Grace as to recognize their holiness and to imitate them in our own lives. Only a “most holy” faith is safe for the soul and woe unto the man who rests content with any other. See, then, Brothers and Sisters, that to ward off the ills of these last times we must labor to know the Truth ourselves, and must endeavor to instruct our Brethren in them. Personal and mutual edification in the Church should be zealously maintained as one of the most valuable defenses against the invasion of error.

The second most necessary defensive principle in the Church is *devotion*. “Praying in the Holy Spirit” is the weapon with which the hosts of the Lord will put to rout the armies of the alien. The prayers of saints are the mighty artillery with which the walls of our Jerusalem are protected. Supplication is a cannon which throws tremendous bolts against the advancing foe, as Sennacherib knew when Hezekiah pleaded with God. The prayers, however, must be deeply spiritual, written on the heart by the Holy Spirit and presented with energy of His creating. Formal, lifeless petitions are but a Chinese painted fortress—while praying in the Holy Spirit is an impregnable castle!

Those “groans which cannot be uttered” are pieces of ordinance which make the gates of Hell tremble. But we must put our hearts under the influence of the blessed Spirit of God, to have this, and then lift them up in continued intercession before God. Then there can be no fear about the preservation of our minds from the error of the wicked. A praying Church soon tries the spirits of false Prophets and casts them forth as evil. I have far more faith in prayer than in controversy. Keep the Prayer Meetings going! Maintain private prayer with earnestness and we may laugh to scorn all the sophisms of unbelievers and deceivers!

Jude next mentions as a third important matter the *affections* of the Church. If the hearts of the members of the Church are right, mockers and scoffers can do very little against them. “Keep yourselves in the love of God,” for a warm-hearted company of Christians who love the Lord with all their hearts and with all their souls, are not likely to be overcome by mockers and sensualists. Love to God will be as a wall of fire round about them. In dull, decaying Churches, errors spread like ivy on the crumbling walls of an old abbey. But life, zeal, earnestness, warm-heartedness throw off these evils even as a red-hot iron plate evaporates the drops which fall upon it. Love God and you will not love false doctrine. Keep the heart of the Church right and her head will not go far wrong. Let her abide in the love of Jesus and she will abide in the Truth.

The fourth point to which he calls attention is the brightness of our *expectancy*. “Looking,” says he, “for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” Expect that Christ will come and come with blessings undeserved, which shall display the mercy of God to us! Expect that when He comes it will be to end our conflicts, to tread Satan under our feet and to reveal and perfect that eternal life which He has already implanted in us! Looking forward to the sure coming of Christ, the Church will not be afraid of the great swelling words of men, nor dread their murmurings. She will have an answer to the tyrant’s question, “Where is the promise of His coming?” She will reply, “Behold the Lord comes with 10,000 of His saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

First, “building,” and then, “looking” from her watchtower, the Church will defy the powers of evil, confident of victory at the appearing of her Lord. Brethren, if the darkest times should come, if these four points are diligently maintained we shall be perfectly safe against the cunning assaults of the arch enemy! O servants of the living God, seek with all your hearts the edification of the saints! Keep your devotions warm, keep your affections pure and keep bright your expectancy, for so shall you stand fast in the tempest! In prospect thereof we may sing with Jude, “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the Presence of His Glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

At this time we take the third of the four exhortations as our text—“*keep yourselves in the love of God.*” This may refer, and I have no doubt it does, to mutual oversight. Christians are to labor to keep *each other* in communion with God. If they see a Brother grow cold in his attachment to the Lord, it is their duty to endeavor, by gentle rebukes, consolations and admonitions, to restore the heart of the backsliding one to a proper warmth. “Keep yourselves in the love of God,” that is to say—exercise a mutual oversight and practice watchfulness over each other, lest any of you should, by little and little, lose your sense of the love of God. Let not the wolf steal here a lamb and there a sheep, and so diminish your numbers as a Church, but ask for the Spirit’s aid that you may keep yourselves and your Brethren near to the great Shepherd, for so shall you be safe.

Mutual oversight will not, however, be the theme of this morning’s discourse. I must narrow the text down to a *personal* duty—let each man keep *himself* in the love of God. To many minds, this exhortation will appear to be somewhat unguarded. I am quite certain that if I were the author of the sentence, my very sound Brothers and Sisters would seriously object to it and would say, “We are kept by the power of *God* through faith unto salvation—to exhort us to keep *ourselves* is useless, carnal, and legal.” To whom I reply—dear Brethren, I am *not* the author of the phrase and, therefore, if you have any quarrel with it, will you be so kind as to remember that your dispute is with the Holy Spirit and not with me? I find it in the Inspired Volume and I have no power or wish to blot it out!

Moreover, I find in the Word of God many other exhortations against which the same objection may be brought and I do not intend, either to twist them to mean something else, or to avoid expounding them from fear of being thought unsound. With half an eye, one can see that while in Holy Scripture we are taught that we can do nothing without Christ, we are, at the same time, exhorted to do all sorts of things and are even bid to be perfect, even as our Father in Heaven is perfect! If this is inconsistent it is the inconsistency of Scripture and I bow before it and leave others to quibble if they choose. All power to do good comes from the Holy Spirit and all will towards good is from the same source, yet are we bid to perform right things as freely as if we could and would do them of ourselves.

Nor are the exhortations of the Word of God couched in guarded language and hedged round with limiting phrases. Holy Scripture seldom guards its own utterances, but speaks freely, and whereas men are so fearful lest they should be mistaken that they frequently interject parentheses and explanations and so spoil the effect of what they are saying, we find the Holy Spirit speaking out what He has to say and leaving it to the instructed minds of Believers, themselves, to remember those other Truths of God which balance the doctrine in hand. We are too fearful about Truth—she needs no armor—her naked beauty is better protection than a coat of mail.

As no one thinks of wrapping the sun in a blanket on a winter’s day, so we need not anxiously guard and protect the Truth of God—let it shine

forth and it will be its own interpreter! Yet look at the connection and you will see that it lends no sanction to the proud idea that a man can keep himself apart from the Grace of God, for the sentence which precedes the text is, “praying in the Holy Spirit.” Remember to keep yourselves, but do so by praying in the Holy Spirit, and so confessing that you are dependent upon His Divine power. The following sentence also lifts my text out of a legal atmosphere by saying, “Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life”—showing that your eyes are to be on Jesus and to the mercy of God and not to yourself—and by no means to any merit or power of your own.

My Brothers, we must never be afraid to exhort one another because of the Scriptural doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit! This should urge us forward and by no means hold us back. We are not to feel ourselves muzzled and gagged when we preach practical precepts because we believe comforting doctrines. Let us speak the whole Truth with a gracious liberty, resting quite assured that the Lord can reconcile His own Truth in the hearts and experiences of His people and does not need us to be perpetually agitated with the fear of damaging His Truth, as if it were some delicate eggshell china which we might break with a touch, or a cobweb which would be swept away by the movement of our hand. Let us speak the Truth with all boldness as we ought to speak and say as the text does, “keep yourselves in the love of God.”

This implies, however, beloved Friends, that you *are* in the love of God. It is not an exhortation directed to every man, for some men are not in the love of God. It is directed to those of you who are in that love to keep yourselves in it. Let me, then, begin by enquiring, are you in the love of God? Not, are you an *object* of Divine benevolence, for that He exercises towards *all* His creatures—but do you *know* His love in Christ Jesus? Have you believed in Jesus Christ unto eternal life and seen the Father’s love beaming in the face of Jesus? If you have believed it, you have also enjoyed it, for the love of God has been shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit which is given unto you—and you have been conscious of a joy superior to anything which this world can create.

Well, then, continue to believe in that love so deep, so strong, so true! Abide, also, in the enjoyment of that love and pray for more. Do not lose the sense of it by careless living. If you have ever known that love, it is quite certain that you love God in return. Therefore continue to love the Lord. This is, probably, the particular meaning of the exhortation before us. The love of God in you is made manifest by the love which you have towards God—and the consequent affection which you feel to all His people. Endeavor, then, to always love God and to love Him more and more. Feed the sacred flame of Divine affection till it becomes an all-consuming fire. “Oh, love the Lord all you His saints.” With all your heart, with all your soul and all your strength, love the Lord and love your neighbor as yourselves!

Especially cultivate love unto all the saints, for this, also, is the love of God. “Let brotherly love continue.” “Walk in love as Christ, also, has loved you.” Keep yourselves in the love of God. You are in that love—you believe

it, you enjoy it, you reflect it, you manifest it to others—then continue, both to believe and enjoy it and persevere in displaying and manifesting it in your love to God and your love to men. Two things this morning, and only two. The first will be *motives for keeping ourselves in the love of God*. And the second will be *means to assist us in so doing*.

I. First, MOTIVES for “keeping yourselves in the love of God.” It is as though a courtier, having gained the favor of his sovereign, should receive, upon his entrance into court, this good advice from a friend—“You are now, yourself, in your sovereign’s favor, so act as to retain your position, that you may never be sent away from his presence and made to occupy a lower place. He is not capricious, but he is jealous, therefore be careful, so you may dwell in the light of his countenance.”

Believers are always God’s servants, but they are not always smiled upon. Let them so live as never to lose that smile. When we go to the sunny south in the winter for our health, we are advised by the physician to keep ourselves as much as possible in the sun. We are told to let our rooms look towards the rising sun and to keep clear of sunless streets and courts. This is the advice of wisdom, for if you lodge in rooms upon which the sun never shines, you might as well be at home in our own chilly land. The sun is the great physician and, by basking in his beams, we find healing beneath his wings.

It is even thus with the love of God, “Keep yourselves in it,” sun yourselves in it all day long. The flowers teach us this, for when the sun shines upon them, they open themselves and turn their faces towards its light. They love him and they delight to be kissed by his beams and, therefore, they keep themselves as much as they can in his brightness. When trees are planted in a spot where the sun only reaches them in one direction, they put forth their boughs towards the sun’s quarter and seek his beams. Do you the same! You are in God’s love, continue in it, grow towards it, keep yourselves in it! Your Father loves you. Do not, like the Prodigal, go away from that love, or forget it, or slight it, or grieve it. Enjoy it, be warmed by it and be sanctified by it evermore.

What is to be the motive for this? It is clear that *all the motives which led you to desire God’s love at first should lead you to keep in it*. If it is to me—a poor broken-hearted sinner—of the utmost importance to find the love which heals my wounds, then, being healed, it is equally important that I should keep in that love lest I should be wounded again. If being my father’s prodigal child, it was a great thing to get back and once more receive the kiss of love, and hear him acknowledge me as his son, it must be equally good for me to stay at home and never play the prodigal again. The true son abides in the house forever and dreads the very idea of going forth from it. You know, Beloved, with what earnestness you were formerly pleaded with that you should not rest without the love of God in Christ.

Now, I have but a few minutes, this morning, to spend on any one argument and, therefore, I shall leave it to you to remember what those arguments were and to enforce them upon yourselves. That which is worth getting is worth keeping. If Divine love was worth seeking, even if you had

been called to lay down your lives in the search, it must be equally worth retaining, cost what it may. I have heard that many who have been shrewd at making money, have not been able to keep a fortune after they have gained it. And I fear there are many Christians who, with much zeal, obtain a high degree of enjoyment of the love of God—and become very warm and earnest in the ways of God—but they cannot retain their fervor and, after a while, relapse into lukewarmness.

Many get into the sunlight of full assurance, but they soon leave it and are darkened with doubts and fears. They are chilled with insensibility and indifference and so they do not keep themselves in the love of God as they should do. Let it not be so with you, but hear your Master's words, wherein He says, "Abide in Me." If love within the soul is worth the getting, it is worth the keeping—continue in it.

Next, *we should continue in God's love because it is His due*. Brethren, that I should know that God loves me and should rejoice in it—and then should love Him in return—is His due under the Law. This is the substance of His Law to Israel, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength." And that because He had revealed His love to Israel—for the preamble of the Commandments runs thus—"I am the Lord your God that brought you out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage." He claims their love because of His love to them.

Much more is it so under the Gospel. That matchless display of Divine mercy should exercise upon us a Divine influence. It should be permitted to melt, renew, restrain, constrain and govern us. Receiving its blessings and meditating upon its glories, we ought to be as much affected by it as wax by the flame. Touched with its flames of love, our hearts ought to burn with loving gratitude, as with coals of juniper. See God in the Gospel and not love Him? It is monstrous!

Brothers and Sisters, if you have a part and lot in the Covenant of Grace, the love of God with all subduing power must and will hold you beneath its sway. That God's love should be felt and returned is a *duty*, but at the same time a *privilege* unbounded. Remember that God's Nature makes love to be His due. Such a Character as His engrosses the love of every intelligent and right-minded creature. Not to love such an one as God is, would be impossible to renewed hearts! He reveals himself as Father, Son and Spirit, and in each Divine Person displays a sacred form of matchless goodness, so that *not* to love Him is baseness and profanity.

God's Nature claims it and our nature, also, cannot rest without it—I mean, of course, our *regenerate* nature. Grace has made us the children of God and true children must love their Father. It cannot be that the life of God is in your soul if there is no sense of the Divine love and no return of that love to Him from where it came. As the sparks seek the sun, who is the father of flame, so in warm affections and communing, the love of God in the soul seeks the God who gave it. You cannot be God's children and yet not love Him! Well, then, since Law and Gospel, since His Nature and your renewed nature, since Father, Son and Spirit all have claims upon

your hearts, oh, if you love the Lord Jesus, “keep yourselves in the love of God.”

Remember, too, dear Brethren (and this is a strong argument) that *love is the evidence of faith and the Grace by which faith operates*. The faith which saves the soul is always attended by love. It is written, “Faith works by love.” “Faith without works is dead,” but faith without love is faith without works, therefore faith without love is a dead thing and cannot possibly save a soul. If you say, “I believe in Jesus Christ,” my dear Brother, if that is true, you have proved it already by loving God. Therefore prove it, still, by loving on, even to the end! May the ever blessed Spirit help you to do so.

Another argument lies here—*the love of God is the spring of all our Graces*. I include in the term, “the love of God,” both God’s love to us and our love to Him, for they are very much the same. Let me use one illustration—You have a burning-glass and hold it up before the sun till you focus the rays upon a piece of dry wood and set it on fire. Now, while you see the wood burning to ashes, will you tell me what it is that burns? Does the heat of the sun burn the wood or does the wood burn? The heat which you feel while the wood is burning, is it due to the sun or to the wood? Of course, at first, the fire is purely and simply the flame of the sun. But afterwards the wood, itself, begins to burn. The sun burns the wood and then the wood, itself, burns. Even so, the love of God comes into our heart and then our heart loves, too, and in both cases, “love is of God.”

No man is a Christian unless he, himself, loves God with his own heart, but yet our love to God is nothing more nor less than the reflection of God’s love to us—so that it comes to the same thing. The love of God, whether from Him to us or from us to Him, is, practically, one and the same thing. This, I say, we must retain in our souls, because it is the source of every virtue. No man can do anything aright if he does not love God. Without love to God, where is zeal for His Glory? Where is patient endurance for His sake? Where is cheerful obedience to His will? Without love to God where is true knowledge of God? Can any man know a God whom he does not love? Without love to God can any action be acceptable in His sight?

Brothers and Sisters, if you have more love you will have more of every Grace—your love will be the test of the healthiness of your condition. When love burns, the whole of our nature blazes with holy fire, but when love smolders, every Grace is like a smoking flax. Love must be maintained as a primary necessity of the Divine life if we are, indeed, to glorify God. Keep yourself in the love of God, because *though your love is all you can give, it is very little*. Suppose you loved Christ more than any saint that ever lived, more than any Apostle or martyr? Yet I put it to you—What is the highest supposable love compared with the love of *Christ to you*?

If you regard the excellency of the Character of God, does He not deserve a vastly more intense admiration and affection than we have, as yet, been capable of? Our whole heart is all too little, let it not be divided!

Daily increasing in love, give Him all your affections. Consider that if you do not give Him all your love, you have given Him nothing. If you give your body to be burned and have not love to God, it profits you nothing. Though I should speak with the tongues of men and of angels, though I should traverse the whole world to preach the Gospel of Christ, though with dauntless courage I should brave the gates of Hell, yet if I loved not God what would it all be but a dead sacrifice which could not be accepted upon His altar? Keep yourselves, then, dear Friends, in the love of God, for it is the least you can do.

Remember, too, that *we must give the Lord our love, or else that love will go somewhere else*. We are so created that we must love something or other. If the Ever-Blessed One does not win our love, the world, the flesh, or the devil will gain it. The worst witch in all the world is the world herself—and she soon casts her spell over the man who grows chill in his love to Jesus. You are hankering after some idol or other, my Brethren, if God is not all in all to you! If His love is not very sweet within you and if it does not cause you to love Him intensely, you will fall under the dominion, either of some lust or passion or corruption, or else your heart will be cankered and consumed with the rust of care, covetousness and worldliness. Your heart cannot be kept from loving—its only safety lies in keeping it in the love of God.

As a motive for loving God, I should remind you *that here lies happiness*. Without an exception, this is the rule, that he who loves God most, is happiest. “But there must be exceptions,” says one. “If a man is in prison, if he is on the eve of a cruel death, will love to God fill him with delight?” It has done so many a time! “But if a man rolls in riches, if he is blessed with good health and every comfort of life, surely *he* can be happy without the love of God in his soul.” There is abundant evidence to show that it is *not* so, for the most favored children of this world become, before long, heart-sick of its joys. And the more honest among them have declared that they could find no satisfaction in all their possessions.

It scarcely needs a Solomon to tell us that all the world, apart from the love of God, is “vanity of vanities.” A Christian at his worst is really more to be envied than a worldling at his best! I would sooner have a dram of the love of God than be loaded down with the wealth of nations. When the soul is filled with the love of Christ, it seems lifted beyond ordinary manhood. It burns with holy fire and, as it glows, it mounts on wings of flames and soars towards Heaven! Love’s feet are like hinds’ feet, so that it treads upon the high places of the earth and leaves care and doubt below it, even as the hinds of the mountains leaves the marshes of the plains for those who cannot climb.

The love of God breeds an enthusiasm and a sacred fervor within the soul which lifts men out of themselves and bestows on them a sort of celestial other-life, a Divine *furor*, by which the soul is borne up as on eagle’s wings and triumphs in unspeakable joy! This makes them 10 times stronger, braver, grander, happier than they were before. I suppose to make us equal to the angels, we have but to love God more. And to make

us *superior* to the angels, as we shall be in Heaven, there will be nothing more needed than to fill us with a superior love to that which angels feel.

Brothers and Sisters, this shall be my last argument. Get love to God and keep it, because *it will make you like Jesus*. Jesus Christ, your Lord and Master, dwelt in the love of God and was full of love to God. And, consequently, of love to men. This made it His meat and His drink to do His Father's will. The secret of the life of Christ lies in the supremacy of love within Him. He was, indeed, embodied Love—into His heart no selfishness, ambition, anger, wrath, or any gross or sinister motive had ever entered. The Prince of this world found nothing in Him, because God had everything in Him. Love shone in His eyes and spoke from His mouth.

The Father's love upheld Him and His own love to the Father covered Him with zeal as with a cloak. Get love, much love, healthy love, sacrificing love and you will be like Jesus—and so you will be fit to dwell with Him in Heaven. Love is the very atmosphere of Paradise, it is the odor of the flowers of the new Eden. Put on your beautiful garments, O bride of Jesus, the garments of glory and beauty which become your rank—the garments which the Bridegroom's love has worked out for you! Gird on the sandals of love, which are fairer than the lily and more precious than the gold of Ophir. Robed in the love of Jesus, you shall shine as if you were clothed with the sun, while your love to Him shall make you fair as the moon in His sight!

Wear love to Jesus as your jewels and your adornments and, when you put them on, take care you never lay them aside, but wear them evermore, for so shall the King greatly desire your beauty. These are some of the motives out of a mass, but having no time to mention them all, we must leave to your own instructed minds the easy task of arguing for love.

II. Secondly, THE MEANS for calming out the exhortation of the text shall now be considered. "Keep yourselves in the love of God." I am not going to dwell upon prayer because that is in the sentence before my text. Nor will I, at this moment, insist upon the necessity for the Holy Spirit's aid in this work, for that Truth you all know and believe, and we have frequently dwelt upon it of late. The text does not make that doctrine prominent and, therefore, I forbear to enlarge upon it. Not because I undervalue it, but because, just now, it is not our theme.

"Keep yourselves in the love of God"—how are you to do that? Well, first I should say, Brethren, *endeavor to be full of that love at this present moment*. If I were told that a city was about to be besieged and if I were commanded to keep the people supplied with provisions during the siege, I should lay in a plentiful store, at once, to provide for the famine. So, if you desire to continue in the love of God, have much of the love of God, *now*, and pray for more of it. Oh, to know the love of God as much as ever it can be known! Be greedy, be hungry, be covetous after it! Store it up, fill your soul full of it as a man would fill his storehouses and granary if he knew that a dearth would be in the land.

Notice that just before my text these words occur—"You, Beloved, building," which means increasing and growing up. The way to keep yourselves in the love of God is to obtain more and more of it. Love is like a fire

which, if it does not consume more fuel, burns low. You cannot stop where you are—to retain you must annex. Napoleon used to say, “Conquest has made me what I am and conquest must maintain me.” O Christians, remember that you must advance or backslide! You must build higher and higher! Love must become more and more supreme in your souls, or you will decline. If you would remain warm, be warm now!

Alas, what a little stock of love some Christians have! You may look into their hearts long before you can spy it out. They are true Believers and, therefore, there must be *some* love in their bosoms, but their cruse of oil is almost run out. There is just a little at the bottom, hardly enough to cover the wood of the barrel. We ought not to be in so evil a case, for if we have so little Grace in prosperous seasons, what shall we do in times of temptation and trial? If the heart is full to overflowing, there is a likelihood that its stores will hold out. But scant affection makes us fear that it is a transient emotion and not the love which is born from above.

If you desire to keep yourself in the love of God, *avoid everything that would dampen your love*. Avoid sin, especially, for sin is the poison of love to God. Love of sin is the death of love to God! I mean by *sin*, not merely the grosser forms of vice, but everything which has a tendency to tarnish the virgin purity of your soul. I know some Christians who complain a good deal about their need of love to Jesus and the smallness of their faith, and so on. When I track them to their haunts, I find that they keep ill company and frequent amusements and assemblies where love to Christ is sorely wounded and almost slain. I put it to their own consciences whether they are ever likely to increase their love to Christ by going where His name is not adored and His cause is not befriended.

I heard of one who professed to be a Christian, that he claimed to be able to attend the theater and yet to live very near to God. And I remembered the remark of a minister who said, “When I see great Grace in those who frequent the theater, I shall at once grow prize roses in my coal cellar.” Just so! I shall cultivate not only roses, but palms and oranges in the vault under my house when that is the case! He who says that gay amusements help him to grow in the love of God utters a lie! Conscience condemns the worldly professor—he cannot come home from a place of amusement, where the ungodly congregate, without feeling, “I have been where I had no right to be.”

I am not now judging the outside world, but I am dealing with the members of our Churches who profess to be separated from the world. If a worldling loves worldly amusement, I do not wonder at it, nor wish to deny him his enjoyments. Just as one feels about the swine, that they ought to have their pig wash, for it suits them, but none of us want to share it, so say we of the unconverted and their frivolities! But the case is otherwise with the children of God! O man of God, run not with the multitude! Wantonness, chambering, lewdness and unclean mirth are not for you. No, “let them not be mentioned among you as becomes saints.”

I would also have you *avoid, as much as possible, the company of those who deaden your spirituality*. I like to drop into the house of the poorest Christian man whose conversation will edify me. But though a man may

be richer than I am, and his company may be desirable to me in many ways, if I find, on coming out of his house, that he has insinuated doubts into my mind, or that his language has tainted the purity of my conscience, I am bound to avoid him. If business calls me into connection with him, I must go, or else I must go out of the world, but I will not seek, as my companion, any man who in any measure takes me off from keeping myself in the love of God.

Neither should we read books which have an injurious effect upon the mind. I wish some of our younger friends would take good heed to this remark. You have little enough of the love of God in your souls—you do not need to pour cold water on it by emptying trashy novels upon it. Go not into the chill, cold air of irreligion and vanity! Brothers and Sisters, put everything aside that would hinder your loving God and knowing that He loves you. And if you have erred and you find out, this morning, that you have done so, do not be angry at my rebuke, nor yet be led to despair of yourself—for the times of your ignorance God winks at and forgives!

Go to your heavenly Father and say, “O Lord, help me to make this the rule of my conduct—that whatever prevents my feeling that You love me, and prevents my loving You, I may withdraw from at once and have nothing more to do with it, for You have bid me keep myself in Your love.” If you would love the Lord, *meditate much upon what He is and what He has done for you*. Your debts to Him are overwhelming—try to feel them and you will love Him because He first loved you. See your daily dependence, your hourly indebtedness and the patience, constancy, faithfulness and tenderness with which He cares for you! Here I need not enlarge, for you will not fail to do this if you are, indeed, the subjects of Divine Grace.

Next, dear Friends, if you want to be kept in the love of God, follow earnestly the means of Grace. Do not neglect the hearing of the Word, nor the reading of it in private, nor secret prayer, nor the assembling of yourselves together. Come often to the Lord’s Table—you will find it a very blessed means of quickening the pulse of your soul. There are God’s appointed ordinances for stirring up your love—do not be so proud as to think you can do without them. I fear there are some Christians who are so busy in *doing* good that they do not allow themselves opportunities of *getting* good. Incessantly do I urge Christian people here to be engaged in some work for Christ and I would urge it again and again. But some of you young people ought not to absent yourselves from public worship in order to go and teach in ragged schools or elsewhere—you have not yet enough knowledge, nor enough strength to be able to bear the frequent loss of the instructive ordinances.

And even those of you who can bear to go upon half rations will be wise not to do so, for a man who works so long every day that he does not sleep enough, or eat enough, will, in the long run, be less capable of labor than if he had attempted less and had taken more time for the feeding and resting of his body. Do remember that Martha, though she was very busy, was not so much commended as Mary, who sat at Jesus’ feet. Be busy as Martha, but be devout as Mary and so will you keep your heart in the love of God! You will do this very much, too, by *communing with the Lord*. Never

spend a day without hearing your Master's voice! Do not come down from your chamber to see the face of man till you have seen the face of God. Do not let week after week roll by without communion with Heaven.

There is no trading like it—send the ships of prayer to the gold coast of communion with the Lord and they will come back to you with priceless treasures! Hold high communion with the supreme Invisible and your soul will be sure to love Him, for never man drew near to God without the love of God flowing into his soul. Then I would say next, if you would love God, *be sure to work for Him*. If I wanted a man to love me and I had my choice of two things, either to do something for the man or to let that man do something for me—if my sole object were to secure his love, I know which I would do—I would let him serve me.

If you do a kindness for a man, he may be ungrateful and forget you, but if you let him do something for you, the more he does for you the more he will stick to you through life. For this reason, therefore, you will not only love God because of what He has done for you, but you will love Him because you have been allowed to do something for Him. Read the song of Deborah when she and Barak had chased away the adversaries. You do not read much in Judges about love to God, but at the end of her song you find it appearing—“So let all Your enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love You be as the sun when he goes forth in his might.”

She felt that she loved God because she had bravely led, with Barak, the host of God, and love to God had been kindled while she was battling for Him. Go and teach the ignorant, visit the sick, help the poor and guide those that are out of the way—and though you thought you did not love Christ, you will soon discover that you do. Laziness is a bolster with which to suffocate love, but honest service of Jesus Christ is a platform upon which love shows herself in all her beauty and there, also, she gathers her strength. O love the Lord, all you His saints!

And if you need yet another means of keeping in His love, then *live in expectation of seeing Him*. Nothing inflames a Christian's love more than feeling how much he owes in the past and how much he expects in the future. Jesus is coming! You are soon to be with Him! Perhaps before another week is over you will behold His face! Surely you feel, even now, the kindling of warm desire—a passion for Him springs up within your spirit and you long for the lagging days to fly—that you may be in His arms! Keep yourselves thus in His love. May God help you so to do, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—John 15.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—766, 804, 811.**

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

GOD'S PRISON, WARDEN AND PRISONER

NO. 3378

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1913.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 4, 1866.**

***Keep yourselves in the love of God.”
Jude:21st verse.***

THIS exhortation is not addressed to all who are here present. It is only addressed to those who “are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.” It is, in fact, addressed only to the true Christian who has passed from death unto life—who is a new creature in Christ Jesus—and in whom dwells the Holy Spirit. To such persons the Apostle Jude says in the text, “Keep yourselves in the love of God.” To other persons we have this to say—You cannot keep yourselves in the love of God, for you never knew what it was to be in it. You have lived—with shame and sorrow be it spoken—you have lived all this while in a world that is full of God and yet you have never perceived Him! You have been a pensioner upon His bounty, clothed by His charity, protected by His Providence and yet you have been altogether forgetful of the God whom you ought to have loved with all your heart, soul and strength! Ah, little do you know what you have lost by living without the love of God! The love of God is that which fills our mortal existence with the brightness of Heaven and makes us feast on immortal joys, even in this vale of tears! If some men were born and bred in mines, where they saw not the light of day, I can suppose that they would think themselves possibly better off than those who had lived above and who had walked abroad in the light. I can suppose them to be even conceited because they found themselves better able to find their way about in the gloomy caverns below than those would be whose eyes had been used to the light—more at home there in the gloomy bowels of the earth than the sons of light who had lived above. I can imagine their getting much conceit to themselves because of their enjoying the darkness which is beneath. But still, what a miserable life would it always be to live in that gloom—and what a change to be taken suddenly and for the first time from the dark pit out into the light—to look upon the green fields, the god of day, the flashing waves of the sea and the glories of the starry night! So I can conceive many of my hearers having lived so long in the dark world where there is no light, that they have acquired the art of living in this gloom until they are “wiser in their generation than the children of light.” They can do a thousand things better than God's people can

do and they, therefore, perhaps despise the Christian. But oh, my Friends, if you could but be brought out into the world of love, the world of light, where God, the blessed Sun of Love who floods the earth with peace and blessedness could shine upon those darkened eyeballs of yours—if you could but “know the love of Christ which passes knowledge”—you would think that you had never lived before and would pity yourselves to think you could have spent so many years without knowing what true life means! May that come to pass with some tonight! Pray, Christian, pray for those who know not God, that He may be found of them. Ask for them that mighty Grace may come and meet with them and that they may also begin to understand what “the love of God” means!

But the text is spoken to Christians and we must keep it to them and come at once to apply it to the Believer.

The word, “keep,” which is used here, has in it, in the Greek, the idea of keeping under a guard, or of keeping a prisoner in custody. There is the thought of watchfully regarding one who is likely to escape—and so we are told to keep ourselves in the love of God as the warden keeps his prisoner in his cell. I do not like to use such a metaphor in connection with so sweet a text, and yet I must, and so we will have three thoughts. First, *we will speak a little about this prison*—oh, that we may be always shut up in it!—“the love of God.” Secondly, about *the earnest warden who is told to keep the prisoner*. And then, thirdly, about the free prisoners, “*keep yourselves in the love of God.*” Keep yourselves in heavenly custody, being never so free and never so happy, as when shut up in this Divine enclosure!

I really do not like to use the text with such a meaning, but I cannot very well bring out the meaning of it in any better way. Let us speak, then, first of—

I. THE HEAVENLY PRISON OF “THE LOVE OF GOD.”

There is no restraint about this prison. He who gets into it finds, for the first time, true liberty! Then his mind is free from all its bondage. Then his faculties find themselves in a sea where they may swim. Then are his purest longings gratified. Then are his passions allowed to take wing and mount as they will. Then the soul has space to float onwards and when it comes fully to the love of God, the new-born soul is in its element!

But what is the meaning of this “love of God,” in which we are to keep ourselves? It means, first, Believer, that you are to *keep your mind in the remembrance of the love of God to you*. We, alas, forget too often what a Friend we have above. Keep up, Christian, the recollection of what the Father did for you when He chose you before all worlds! Be continually mindful of what the Son did for you when He poured out His precious blood upon the Cross and gave His life a ransom for many. Never be unmindful of what the Holy Spirit did for you when He called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. About the neck of memory let the glit-

tering pearls of God's mercy always hang! Take care, whatever else you may forget, that you forget not the love of God to you! As the Krishna said—

***“Let every idol be forgotten,
But oh, my Soul, forget Him not.”***

Let your ear be bored to this doorpost of God's love to you! Set this as a seal upon your arm and as a ring upon your finger. Brand it into your inmost heart and let your soul's core always wear in it the thought of God's love to you. Queen Mary said that when she died they would find the word, “*Calais*,” written upon her heart, for the loss of that town had grieved her so. But while the Christian lives—for he shall not die—there shall always be engraved upon his heart the name of Christ, for the love of Christ shall abide there! Yes, we will remember You—“we will remember Your love, for Your love is better than wine!”

The Apostle means, too—Keep yourselves *in the assurance of the Divine Love*. Brothers and Sisters, you have known that Christ loves you. You have had it proven to you as clearly as a mathematical demonstration, that God loves you. You have even been able to speak in the singular, and say, “He loved me, and gave Himself for me.” There have been blessed moments when no ripple of doubt disturbed the glossy surface of your calm and peaceful soul. Oh, keep that assurance! Pray that no evil doubt may come in to make you think that God does not love you. Ask that you may be always able to say, “This is my Beloved: my Beloved is mine, and I am His.” Do not sometimes climb the mountain and then slip down into the treacherous mists of the valley, but ask that you may always bathe your forehead in the sunlight of the Divine Assurance of the love of God to you! And so keep yourselves in the love of God.

It means next, keep yourselves *in the enjoyment of the love of God*. No one knows what the enjoyment of the Divine Love is but the man who has experienced it. Oh, the calm which a sense of that Divine Love will bring to the heart! Our Lord said to the noisy billows of the lake, “Be still,” and they quickly hushed their raging and there was a great calm! But the love of Christ is more than peaceful—it is joyful, it is inspiring! The man who has it has a cup filled to the brim and running over! And he who drinks of that holy chalice can say, “There is none like it.” Like the water of the well of Bethlehem by the gate, if any of God's people should not be able to get at it, they will sigh for it and say, “Oh, that one would give me a drink of that water again!” Some of us know what mirth means—we are of a genial nature and can enter into the common joys of men. We can sit around the social hearth and feel the joys of childhood's prattle and the glee of the little ones. We thank God we are not stoics—we can share the joys that are common to mankind, but oh, we do proclaim and bear our witness that all the joys of earth heaped together are as nothing compared with the bliss of having the love of God shed abroad in the heart! The others are but common joys, but the love of God is Heaven's own joy! They are but husks, which are well enough in their way,

but the kernel of joy lies in a full understanding of the love of God in the soul. Oh, that we could always live upon it! That this manna dropped from Heaven every morning, that we gathered our omer of it as soon as the sun dawned and fed on it till the sun went down! Happy Christians, seek to keep yourselves thus in the love of God!

But, Brothers and Sisters, this is not all. The Apostle also means, "Keep yourselves in the *power of the love of God.*" Oh, the power of the love of God has in governing and influencing a man! Nothing can master a strong temper, a forceful will, an obstinate disposition, or a wayward heart like the love of God! Even God's Law is but a frail reed compared with God's love, which is the rod of Omnipotence. If the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, the idols will soon depart and the love of sin will take its flight—and the wickedness which you and I could not conquer without it will be driven out with this two-edged sword of the power of the love of God manifested in the soul! I love to feel myself bowed down under this power until I would sacrifice my own interest, relinquish all self-seeking, abandon all care of being obedient to my own will and be passive in the hand of the Omnipotent Ruler to mold me, rule me and govern me just as He wills! We are not like the horse and the mule that have a bit in their mouths and that require the rod, but when love impels us, our willing feet in swift obedience move and we feel it to be a blessed thing to obey His commandments, or even His gentle leadings by His gracious Spirit!

Brothers and Sisters, I pray you take this exhortation in its practical, as well as its experimental form. Keep yourselves in the love of God, *in the manifestation of it.* Love the souls of your fellow men! Pity the poor and needy. Have compassion upon the ignorant and the wicked. Let no strangeness nor excess of sin prevent your loving the sinner—and let no extravagance or unkindness prevent your forgiving one another even unto 70 times seven! Keep yourselves in the love of Christ under provocations as multiplied as those which fell upon your Master's shoulders and so prove that your charity suffers long and is kind, hopes all things, endures all things because it is not mere human charity, beautiful as that is, but is the love of God reigning and commanding your heart! "Keep yourselves in the love of God" in your relations one to another. May no root of bitterness spring up in this Church, nor in any other. Love one another as one happy family. Love one another, for you will have to dwell together forever in Heaven! Bear with each other, as you hope to be borne with by your loving Savior. Be knit together in brotherly love! Be as one man—be forceful like a phalanx of soldiers marching on to victory. Let the love of God reign in your hearts! Let it gleam from your eyes! Let it flash radiantly from your countenance! Let it bedew your lips and let its savor sweeten your words! Let it give a holy blessedness to your deeds and your thoughts!

Keep yourselves, in all these senses, in the love of God. It is a wondrous prison for a man to be in a blessed paradise for him to walk in. Pa-

radise had a gate and once Adam never wanted to get out of it—just in that sense keep yourselves in this blessed paradise of the love of God and wander not from it. And now, secondly and briefly, let us say two or three words about—

II. THE EARNEST WARDEN WHO IS TO KEEP HIMSELF IN THE LOVE OF GOD.

This warden is not the minister. The minister has to preach and assist me, but the minister is not to take care of my soul as though I had nothing to do with it. I do not believe in any such nonsense as that you can be responsible for other people's souls, so that others may assist you with their vigilance. Never, I beseech you, Englishmen and Englishwomen, never be such fools as to put yourselves at the feet of a priest! Believe that you have as much prevalence with God as these pretenders have and that if you go to God, and take your burden of sin, you will get it taken off—but if you go roundabout to seek relief and pardon through them—you will never get it, for you insult God in the way by which you go to work! Oh, may God grant that we may never live to see our countrymen so befooled as to put their necks under the Romish yoke once again! May England never be beneath a Pope's feet, but may we always have too much manliness ever to fall to the snare of this cunning fowler! May we always be kept from it and so may always keep ourselves in the love of God.

And now, Mr. Warden, we are to say a word or two to you. See, then, your prisoner. He is one, alas, who is very apt at escaping from the gracious prison. So infatuated does he become with worldly joys that he will oftentimes let his God, his Savior, go. And besides this, there are many who are prison breakers and who will break his prison bars for him. Shall I tell you their names? There is one fellow called *sin*. Sin will soon prevent your enjoying the love of God. Let the Christian hesitate to walk disorderly and he will soon begin to talk lightly of his wickedness, and this, again, will soon stop his communion with God. Though the Christian shall not perish, yet many of his joys shall—though God will keep him so that he shall not be utterly destroyed—yet the gladsome sense of the love of God will soon depart when sin comes in to lead astray!

And so it shall be when another breaks the prison, namely, those under the command of *idolatry*. Let your hearts begin to idolize an earth-born creature and very soon you will not be able to keep yourselves in the love of God. Father, that dear child of yours may become as much an idol to you as even the golden calf was to the Israelites! Husband, wife, friends, acquaintances, brothers, sisters, our goods, our persons, our fame, our reputation—any one of these may become our idol—and when this is the case, there is no keeping the heart in the love of God, for the prison doors are opened and the prisoner, unhappily, comes out.

Warden, if you would keep your prisoner, remember he cannot well come out except through the doors, and, therefore, watch well the door

by which he has *communications with the outward world*. If you would keep yourself in the love of God, Christian, watch yourself well when you are in business! Watch yourself when you are in the family. Watch the door in private. Watch the communications which you have with the ungodly—and as it is here that you would be apt to fritter away your joys and lose the richness of your communion—be the more watchful here. And, Warden, watch in the night, when it is dark in your soul, for many a prisoner has made his escape at nightfall. Watch well when trouble comes, lest doubts and fears should come in. And if you would lock your prisoner securely in and keep him from escaping from the all-surrounding love of God, watch yourself carefully at all times, lest by any means you slip from this good way!

And, Warden, I would recommend you to take care that every bolt in the prison door is securely fastened. God has given you certain Gospel ordinances and if you would keep yourself in the love of God, read His Word, for it will stir you up to bind yourself to Him! Be much in private prayer, for this has a force like a bolt to keep out the world and keep you in.

Come to the Communion Table, for at the time when Christ is known in the breaking of bread, another bolt is put between you and the world! In fine, whatever He says unto you, do it, for in keeping of His commandments there is great reward.

And, Warden, since you have a prisoner to keep who needs much watching, *load him well with chains*. Do you think this is a hard suggestion? The chains are such that the more of them the prisoner wears, the more free, light, and happy he will be! Shall I tell you how to forge them? Forge them on the anvil of meditation! Think of what God did before the earth was. Think of eternal love before the day star had begun to shine. Think of what Jesus did for you in the Covenant and in the suretyship engagements of eternity! Bind about your soul the chain of the Savior's pangs and griefs. If you would keep your heart a blessed prisoner in the love of God, nail it with nails which pierced the hands of Christ and bind it to the pillar where the Lord was scourged! Make every drop of blood which Jesus sweat in the Garden and shed upon the Cross, to be a course of mighty network bound about your heart to hold it a fast prisoner forever!

Oh Brothers and Sisters, we have indeed enough to bind us to Christ if we were not the most willfully forgetful men and women in the world! Oh, what has Jesus done for me? Rather, what has He *not* done for me? He is All-in-All and being to me more than all, let me bind the sacrifice with cords, even with cords to the horns of the altar! Let the hands of a man and the cords of love be cast about this prisoner so that he may never get out of the Divine enclosure of the love of God!

I cannot set before you as I would, nor with all the earnestness I want to command, the necessity of thus binding your heart to the love of Christ, but I will add this. Warden, *take care to call in help* and remember

there is One who can help you very efficiently. It is the Holy Spirit. You keep yourself in the love of God? Indeed, you *cannot* do it unless you call in Divine Power. If ever you get the love of God in your heart, go down on your knees and ask the Holy Spirit to always keep it there! You shall never catch this bird and shall never be able to keep it unless the Holy Spirit helps you. Oh, to be crucified with Christ! We may well desire it—to be fastened to His Cross so that we shall never again desire to wander, but feel ourselves the happy bond-slaves, the free servants of our Lord Jesus Christ! And now, time flies and we have, thirdly, to say a word or two about—

III. THE FREE, THE HAPPY AND THE BLESSED PRISONER who is thus exhorted to keep himself in the love of God.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, if by the help of God we shall be able to do this, *how happy we shall be*. I would make no stipulation of any kind if God would grant me one request, namely, that He would keep me in His love. If I might but have this request granted, I am sure it would be equal to me whether He may have appointed me life or death, or whether He may have appointed me weal or woe! It would make no difference where one lived, if one lived in the love of God!

It would make no difference, either, whether one were in wealth or poverty, if the love of Christ had consumed all care about self. When once the love of God, like a devouring flame, has consumed and destroyed all care about self, then we are perfectly happy. It is impossible to then be miserable—all that the heart wants is to be kept in the love of God—for then it would always be in a state of true blessedness! Dear Brothers and Sisters, how important it is that we should be happy! Moses, without the brightness of his face, would be little more than other men. And a Christian without holy joy—what is he? I am certain that nothing has done more mischief to Christianity than the loss of joy of some professors. Why, there are some of you that only dishonor your religion by your constant moans and groans! If we are not happy, who ought to be? Children of God, heirs of Heaven, accepted in the Beloved—all our sins forgiven and we ourselves on the way to Heaven—if we do not sing, who can sing? If there is no holy mirth in our hearts, no joyous songs set to glorious tunes in our souls as we go along our pilgrimage to Heaven, then it must be a miserable world indeed! But a happy Christian entices others to Christ. His very face and bearing are a Gospel ministry of invitation to others. And those others say, “We will go with you, for we perceive that the Lord is with you.”

And there is another thing. If you are kept in the love of God, besides being happy, you *will be so useful*. If we do not enjoy the love of God, ourselves, we cannot do much good to others. You will be blessed to your families. You will be blessed to the ungodly and you will be blessed wherever you are if you are kept in the love of God. I can conceive that a man with the love of God in his heart, if he saw a stranger here, would be

pretty sure to have a word with him and, perhaps, the stranger would be very glad. I am sure there are here every Sunday a great many people who would be quite willing to have a little talk about Divine things and to whom a little private conversation might be far more useful than any sermon that I could deliver. You who have the love of God in you will look after such—you cannot help it. You love, and God loves. God is blessing you and you want to bless men—and you will pine and pant to bring others to the Savior! I need you, the members of this Church, particularly to have the love of God in your hearts just now, so that these daily Prayer Meetings of ours may be seasons of great and miraculous power! When a cold heart comes into the Prayer Meeting, if it does not hinder, at any rate it brings no help—but every warm and loving heart that comes increases the general fire. You each bring your bundle of wood, as it were, and put it on the hearth, and so it makes one great blaze! Oh, when a thousand hearts that are full of love come together, then prayer is sure to speed!

If your heart is full of the love of God, it will keep on going up to Heaven in prayer, even when you are at your business or your work, as well as when you are in the House of God. Brothers and Sisters, we shall yet have great times! God is going to bless us and we shall see greater things than the world has ever beheld since the day of Pentecost! I trust we are seeking for it and expecting it—and if so, we shall get it! Let us seek to have the blessing in ourselves and ask to be kept in the love of God!

It would not do for the farmer to have his men ill in harvest time—they must be strong and hearty and robust when they have to reap. Oh, that you and I may be made strong to reap here! At such times they bring out the big bottle and though some of us do not think that that is the best thing that could be done for the workman, yet I would like, tonight, to bring out among you the big bottles of the promises of God of which you may drink without any fear of getting intoxicated! Oh, that you could drink of such a promise as this, “I will be with you,” and then, full of strength, go out into the fields and work for Christ without weariness! When Heaven begins to open its golden gates and throw open its windows, and cast out its blessings, then, at all events, let us open the doors of our hearts, throw them wide open in expectancy and open the doors of our mouths wide that God may fill them! Let us come up to this House and go to our own houses, too, with the love of God plenteously shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit and let this be always our prayer—

***“Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,
With all Your quickening powers.
Come, shed abroad a Savior’s love,
And that shall kindle ours.”***

Now, to many here I am afraid I have been saying some things which are no more understood by them than Latin or Greek would be! You could not understand it, but there is one thing I want you to understand

before you go tonight, and that is this, "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," and whoever here believes in Him—that is, trusts Christ to save him—shall not perish, but have everlasting life! Whatever his past life may have been, however black his character may be, if he will but come to the Heavenly Father, through Christ, trusting in Christ who bore the punishment for sin, such a man or woman or child shall be forgiven! They shall be saved, shall be made a new creature, shall go on their way rejoicing! And they will be filled with the love of God and, with all the blood-washed, shall pass through the pearly gates—and in Heaven shall join with them in singing of the love of God, world without end! May you and I have a portion there, for Christ's sake.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
JOHN 14.**

Verse 1. *Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me.* You will be troubled—that cannot be helped. But let not your heart be troubled. You are like a ship and all the water in the sea cannot hurt a ship if it is kept outside of her. Let not your heart be troubled. How are you to prevent it? Faith is the remedy. You already believe—believe more. "You believe in God, believe also in Me." "You have a trust in the infinite power of God—believe in Me as the Incarnation of His infinite love."

2. *In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.* There is no room for you on earth—there will be in Heaven. If troubles should so multiply that it seems impossible to live in them, you shall be carried away where you shall live above them. "In My Father's house are many mansions." You may depend upon the love of Christ, Beloved, for if there were anything dark, mysterious, or distressing which would lead you to despair, He would not have kept it back. He treats you frankly. "If it were not so, I would have told you. I go and you are sorry that I go. It is one source of your sorrow. But I go to prepare place for you."

3. *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.* Oh, this is ground for sweet comfort, and it ought to yield it to us tonight! He has gone, but He will come again. He has not left us forever. Space divides us for awhile, but, skipping over the mountains like a roe and a young hart, He will come again, even to this poor world and to us, His waiting Church, He will come again. Therefore, have patience. Let not your heart be troubled. Jesus Christ will come very soon.

4. *And where I go, you know, and the way you know.* You know where Christ is gone. You know how to get at Him. The Throne on which He sits is the Throne of Grace. He is gone to the Father, and your prayers will find the Father. You know the way. Then frequent it and though as yet in

your bodies you cannot reach Him, yet in spirit you can. "Where I go you know, and the way you know."

5. *Thomas said unto Him, Lord, we know not where You go; and how can we know the way?* Which was a contradiction of His Master, which Thomas ought not to have uttered! He should have put it much rather in the form of a question for explanation, than of such a flat denial. His Master said, "Where I go you know." Thomas said, "We know not where You go." We must take care that we do not contradict Christ! Our unbelief would be shamed out of us if we were to look at it and examine it. I am persuaded that your faith will be justified the more you examine it, till you will discover that faith in God is nothing, after all, but sanctified commonsense! So unbelief will appear to be more shameful the more you examine it, till you discover at length that it is nothing but garish folly. An outrage upon the first principles of wisdom is distrust of God!

6, 7. *Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also: and from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.* This, then, is the main point of knowledge with us—to know Christ. All the studies in the world are vain compared with the study of Christ Crucified! This is the most excellent of all the sciences. He that knows Christ, knows the way, the truth, the life, yes, and God Himself!

8, 9. *Philip said to Him, Lord show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us. Jesus said to him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet have you not known Me, Philip? He that has seen Me has seen the Father; and why do you say, then, Show us the Father?* The best view of God we can ever have is Christ! In the Person of His Son there is more seen of God than in all Nature—yes and in all history added to Nature! God has given us a full-length portrait of Himself in Jesus, while in all His works, we have no more than a mere miniature of Him. Oh, that we knew Christ more! Then should we know the Father.

10-12. *Believe you not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwells in Me, He does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do because I go to My Father.* Oh, what strength there is in faith! These are the same people who are not to be troubled. They are to rise so much above trouble of heart that they are to become performers of works like Christ's! Yes, and since Christ has gone and He has endowed us with the Holy Spirit, we are to do yet greater works than He did! Oh, to know the possibilities of our nature—to know what God can do by us! What appears to us as we are, as unable to be done, we may be enabled to do through the spirit of God which is in Christ Jesus.

13, 14. *And whatever you shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask anything in My name, I*

will do it. It does not mean that every prayer will be answered. The power to ask a thing in Christ's name is not given to everybody. It is not merely to say at the end of your prayer, "for Christ's sake." It is another thing—it is to be able to feel that as Christ stood in your place, so you dare stand in Christ's place—and what you have asked, you have asked in His name, feeling that what you have asked is such that Christ would have asked it. Now, when you can feel that, and can feel that Christ puts His seal on what you have asked, then you ask in His name! A person cannot always speak in the name of another—cannot do it at all unless he has received an authorization to do so. Then he stands as that person's deputy—stands in his place—speaks in his name. I am sure that nine out of ten of the prayers of Christians are not offered in the name of Christ and could not be! It would be a sin against Christ for such prayers to be supposed to be the prayers of Christ! But when we talk of the Spirit of God, and we dare ask in the name and use the seal of Christ—to set His signature at the bottom of our petition, then, Brothers and Sisters, depend upon it—Christ will do it!

15. *If you love Me, keep My commandments.* Oh, some of us would have liked Him to have said, "If you love Me, give all your money! Go into a convent! If you love Me, perform some wonderful action. Go into the streets and preach where you will be hooted. Go to some foreign country and get yourself made a martyr." No, no! "If you love Me, keep My commandments. Stay at home near your father and mother. If you love Me, love My disciples. Let love rule you. And in that place in life in which I have set you, try to honor My name by exhibiting My Character. If you love Me, keep My commandments."

16-19. *And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever. Even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him: but you know Him: for He dwells with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world sees Me no more; but you see Me: because I live, you shall live also.* "Yet a little while and the world sees Me no more; but you see Me." Now, when the world does not see Him, we still see Him. He is present to our faith, though passing from our sight. "Because I live, you shall live also." Is He a dead Christ? Then He has a dead people for His Church. He is a living Savior! He has a living people and they shall no more die than He shall die, "for He, being raised from the dead, dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him." "Because I live, you shall live also."

20. *At that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in You.* What a wonderful union this is—Christ in the Father, the saints in Christ and Christ in the saints! These are riddles which are not meant for the children of this world—but they who are the children of God shall understand them, shall live upon them!

21. *He that has My commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves Me. Not He that preaches about them, talks much about them, boasts about a higher life and all sorts of things, but, "He that has My commandments and keeps them, He it is that loves Me: and he that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him."*

21, 22. *And He that loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. Judas said unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself unto us, and not unto the world? If you do manifest Yourself to us, who are only a few poor fishermen, You do not extend Your Kingdom much. But if You would manifest Yourself to the world in all Your Glory, surely they would be surprised and overwhelmed, and Your Kingdom would thus come." But that is not Christ's way. His manifestations are for His own: not for glitter, but for edification. He comes to bless them—not that He may be ostentatious among men.*

23. *Jesus answered and said to him, If a man loves Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him. Oh, what an honored man that—for the Father and the Son to be his guests—to make an abode in his heart!*

24-28. *He that loves Me not keeps not My sayings; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me. These things have I spoken unto you being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If you loved Me, you would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I. Christ had stooped to take a lower place for our sakes.*

29-31. *And now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it is come to pass, you might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world comes, and has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father: and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go from here.*

—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.**

SAINTS GUARDED FROM STUMBLING NO. 2296

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1893.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.”
Jude 1:24,25.

THE point and pith of what I may have to say will lie in the alteration of this text caused by the revision of the New Testament. The Revised Version runs thus, “Now unto Him that is able to guard you from *stumbling*.” I am not going to speak at any length upon the rest of the text, but shall dwell mainly upon this remarkable alteration, which certainly gives the meaning of the original better than the rendering in the Authorized Version.

To begin, then, here is a doxology. Jude is writing upon very practical subjects, indeed. His short Epistle is of the most practical kind, but he cannot finish it without a doxology of praise. Is there any work which we should complete without praise to God? Prayer should always have praise mingled with it. The preaching of the Gospel, or the writing of it. The teaching of the young and every other form of Christian service should be combined with the spirit of praise. I think that I may say of praise what we read of salt in the Old Testament—“salt without prescribing how much.” You cannot have too much of praise! “With all your offerings you shall offer salt,” and, “with all your offerings you shall offer praise.” It seems delightful to me to notice how the Apostle Paul stops almost in the midst of a sentence to bow his knees and utter a doxology of praise to his God. And here Jude, with burning words denouncing sin, and urging Believers to purity, cannot conclude his Epistle without saying, “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.”

Beloved Friends, we may well continue to praise God, for our God continues to give us causes for praise! If we will only think, we shall begin to thank! If we will only consider, even, the mercies of the present, we shall break out with ascriptions of praise to Him. At this very moment, every Believer here has a reason for a doxology. My text begins with, “Now,” and closes with, “now and forever.” The praise of God should be given at the present time and it is to be perpetually carried on—therefore now is the time for it to be rendered—“both now and forever. Amen.”

Consider, then, dear Brother or Sister, you have at this moment a cause for ascribing praise to God, and you have this reason for it, at any rate, that He is able to guard you from stumbling—His ability is to be employed for your good! His power is intended for your keeping! Oh, sing unto the Lord a now song, tonight, with heart and soul bless Him who is able to guard you from stumbling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy!

I. Coming to the text at once, I shall notice, first, THE DANGER TO BE DREADED. It is “stumbling.” What is that?

Well, first of all, it is *a lesser form of falling*. A horse may stumble and not fall—yet it is a *sort* of falling. If there is much stumbling, it *will be* a fall! Now, there are faults to which the child of God is very liable, which do not amount to actual falling—but they are *stumbings*. Like David, we have to say, “My feet were almost gone; my steps had well near slipped.” We are not actually down, but it is a wonder that we are not. We have not broken our knees, but we were within an inch of doing so! A little more and we would have fallen to our serious hurt. The text speaks of, “Him that is able to guard you from stumbling”—to preserve you from the smallest form of grieving the Spirit, or the faintest trace of sin which would not amount to a fall. The Lord can keep you from that which is not a fall, but which might lead to it. I want to set a high standard before you tonight. Jude does not say that you are able to guard *yourselves* from stumbling, for you are not—but the ascription of praise is to Him who *is* able to guard you, even, from stumbling, and to present you, not only pardoned, but *faultless* before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy!

Stumbling is, next, not only a form of falling, and a matter, therefore, to be grieved over, but it is *a prelude to falling*. Oftentimes we first stumble and then, after a while, down we go! If we could recover ourselves from the stumble, we should not have to gather ourselves up from the fall. Long before the child of God falls into public sin and injures his character, those who watch him will have perceived his stumbling. He stayed up, just stayed up—but you wondered that he did. He kept on, perhaps for months, but as you looked at him, you said to yourself, “I am afraid that he will come to something worse. I feel sure that he will have a stumble, and another stumble, and then another stumble. And he will be down, by-and-by.” Oh, that a child of God could notice his own stumbings! Then he would soon be delivered from them! But it is too often with us, to change the metaphor, as Hosea says, “Gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knows it not.” He is getting feeble, he is becoming prematurely old, but he has not seen the change in the color of his hair! He has not looked in the glass of the Word lately, so he is unconscious that he is declining. If Satan cannot conquer Mansoul by storming it, he sometimes triumphs by sapping and mining, gradually undermining the walls and getting a secret entrance in that way. May the Lord make us very watchful—that we may not be ignorant of Satan’s devices—and may our Savior guard us, even, from *stumbling*—for then we shall be kept from falling!

I think that I can put this matter pretty plainly. You must have known, you must have read of, or you must have seen some people whom you be-

lieve to be true and real Christians. And in their lives there is nothing glaringly wrong, nothing that is so offensive that they can be excluded from the Church, or for which their Christian friends would condemn them as hypocrites. Yet, somehow, their lives are, to say the least, questionable, doubtful. There is good in them, but that good is blotted. We trust that there is in them a true desire to be right, but there are so many sad failures in their lives that they seem to stumble to Heaven rather than to run there! Now, our desire is that our life may not be of that kind and, therefore, we would lay hold upon this text and plead it before the Throne of God, "Lord, You are able to guard us from stumbling, be pleased to do so, to the praise of the glory of Your Grace!"

You will see that stumbling is *itself a form of evil*, if you think of another phase of it. There were some who stumbled at the doctrine of Christ in His own day. He had a number of followers who kept with Him up to a certain point. But when the Savior said, "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you," they went back and walked no more with Him. They could not understand what He meant and they murmured, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" So, being staggered and stumbled at the depth of this great mystery, they turned aside and walked no more with Him.

Beloved, we need God so to uphold us and guard us that, whatever the teaching of His Holy Word may be, we shall receive it without a doubt. I know that there are some Christian people who stumble at one doctrine, especially if they hear somebody denounce it. And there are others who are staggered at another doctrine because they have met some very wise man who knows better than the Word of God and says that it cannot be true! In these days there is very great liability to this kind of stumbling, especially among Christians who do not read their Bibles much—and, I am sorry to say, that there are plenty of such Christians! They read magazines, or perhaps works of fiction, rather than the sure Word of God! And they are thus easily caught in the snare of the fowler.

Many professing Christians do not know what God's Word really teaches, so they are not established in the faith. They do not know, even, the elements of the doctrines of Christ—they have not examined the immutable foundations of the faith—and they are staggered. And truly, the mysteries of the Kingdom of God are so deep, and the teachings of Christ are so contrary to the reasonings of flesh and blood, that we need not wonder if some are stumbled! Let us cry to Him who is able to guard us from stumbling that, with steady step, we may press on in the way of life and never be ashamed of the Truth of God, lest the Truth of God should be ashamed of us! Let us believe what the Bible says, however difficult the believing may be, because God has said it! This should always stand for us as the grand master argument—not the reasonableness of the doctrine, not because it commends itself to our judgement—but the fact that God has said it! That ends all debate. Christ is able to guard from stumbling as to doctrine.

Many others are stumbled at the Cross. Strange to say, the Cross of Christ has always been the stumbling stone to the ungodly and to mere professors. What? The Cross of Christ an occasion of stumbling? Why, it

is the very center of Apostolic teaching—"We preach Christ Crucified." Nowadays, there are two great points of attack—the one is the Inspiration of Scripture—and the other is the Substitutionary work of our Lord Jesus Christ. The enemies of the Cross will not have a crucified Savior! They stumble at that which is the very foundation of our faith! The Lord will keep us from stumbling at Christ's Cross, I am quite sure. It is the rock of our refuge, the pillar of our hope!

The Cross that Christ carried involves one for us to carry. No sooner does a Christian man become a Believer and confesses Christ in Baptism, than he is sure to meet with some who straightway revile him. He has to take up his cross. A working man among skeptical companions, a young girl in a book-folding warehouse, a wife who has an ungodly husband—as soon as they come out boldly on the side of Christ, straightway they have a cross to carry—and this causes a great many to stumble. Persecution and ridicule are too much for them—by-and-by they are offended—that is, they stumble at the Cross. They would have Christ, but not any shame for Christ's sake! They are like Mr. Pliable, who set out to go to the Celestial City, but when he tumbled into the Slough of Despond with Christian, he said that if he could only get out on the side nearest to his own house, Christian might have the Celestial City all to himself, for he could not go through a slough to get there! How many there are of this kind—fearful ones—cowardly ones! But there is a God who is able to guard us from stumbling and I trust that He will do so. May we never be stumbled by anything that happens to us for Christ's sake! May we take joyfully the spoiling of our goods, if need be—yes, and suffer death itself if it should ever come to that—sooner than turn aside from bearing the Cross after the crucified Christ!

And this stumbling sometimes happens not only at the doctrine of Christ and at His Cross, but at the precepts He has given. If we are to be Christ's, we must obey Him. "You call Me Master and Lord: and you say well; for so I am." But one will stagger at one command of Christ and another at another! Though Christ bids us love one another, there are some who can do anything *but* love. They can give their bodies to be burned, but they have no charity. When Christ bids us walk in integrity before all mankind, there are some who can do many good things, but they like little sly practices in trade—and they stumble at Christ because of those evil ways. You know there are many ways in which people try to be as little Christians as they can be, so as just to get into Heaven. Miserable wretches, they want to save their souls and yet, after all, to follow the ways of the world! So they stumble at the precepts of the Holy Christ. They cannot put up with commands like His which lay the axe at the root of the tree. If you are kept by Him who is able to guard you from stumbling, you will love every way of Christ, and every Word of Christ, and your prayer will be, "Teach me Your statutes," and your heart will willingly obey every precept of the Lord!

Once more, there are some who are staggered by the *experience* of Believers. I speak, now, especially to young beginners. You have begun to be believers in Christ and you have been very, very happy. I am very glad that you are. Long may your happiness continue! But there is another

who has been, perhaps, in the way of the Lord for a few months, and suddenly a depression of spirit has come over him and he says to himself, "Oh, dear me, is this the way of God's people?" I remember that within a week after I had found joy and peace in believing, I began to feel the uprisings of inbred sin and I cried out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" I did not know that such a sigh and cry *could never come out of an unbelieving heart*—that there must be a new heart and a right spirit within the man to whom sin is a burden and who loathes it. I did not know that, then, and I wondered whether I could be a child of God at all! Oh, there are strange experiences for those who are on the road to Heaven! You remember how John Newton sings—

***"I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith, and love, and every Grace
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek more earnestly His face.
I hoped that in some favored hour
At once He'd answer my request,
And by His love's constraining power,
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.
Instead of this He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart,
And let the angry powers of Hell
Assault my soul in every part."***

The good man began to discover more and more his own sinfulness and he said, "Lord, is this the way to holiness?" and he was stumbled for a moment.

O Beloved, it is only the Grace of God that can make us feel that whatever experiences we have within us, our faith looks to a living Christ who never changes—and we rest in His finished work! Whether we are up or whether we are down, whether we sing or whether we sigh, we look *beyond* our changing moods unto Him who loved us and gave Himself for us! Yet many have been stumbled by their own inner experiences, not understanding them. There is only One who can guard us from such stumblings.

So, then, dear Friends, to close this description of stumbling, if we are guarded from stumbling we shall certainly be kept from falling. *This is an inclusive blessing.* It includes preservation from falling into outward sin and, especially all final falling, all fatal falling! Christ is able to guard us from stumbling—much more is He able to preserve us from falling away, from utterly departing from the faith. But we would do that if it were not for His guardian care. There is nothing that the worst of men have done which the best of men could not do if they were left by the Grace of God! Do not think so much of yourself as to imagine yourself incapable of even the greatest crime. That very thought proves that you are capable of committing *any* crime. I think that it is Mr. Cecil who says, "I thought myself humble, one day, when I said that I did wonder that I should have sinned as I had done in such a way. Whereas," he said, "if I had been truly humble, I should not have wondered that I sinned like that! I should have wondered at the Grace of God that kept me from even greater sin! And I should have understood that my natural tendencies all went to—

wards evil—and that the marvel was that they did not master me and lead me farther into evil than I had gone.”

Oh, Beloved, we must be kept by God, Himself, or else stumbling, falling—fouly and fatally falling—will be our lot! From that, however, the Lord will preserve us who are truly His. So much, then, upon the danger to be dreaded.

II. Now, I must be somewhat more brief on the second point, THE PRIVILEGE TO BE ENJOYED—“Now unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling.”

Well, beloved Friends, it is a great privilege to be guarded from stumbling, for *it is a privilege that we greatly need*. I was thinking of the many things that make us in danger of stumbling. There is, first, our weakness. It is the weak horse, you know, that stumbles and falls. It is out of condition, out of health—and down it goes. And we are weak, very weak. Then, consider the many roads that we have to travel. Here is a man who is a preacher, a husband, a father, a master. Some of you are tradesmen, or workmen and, beside your daily occupation, you have all your domestic relationships. Now, what you need is to be guarded all round from stumbling. We have heard of one who was all right at home, but he was very vulnerable outside his house. I have heard of another who was an excellent man in the Church, but if you had asked his wife about him, she would not have liked to describe him. A man may be a very good man at a Prayer Meeting, but he may be a very poor hand when you get him at his work. I have known some move very slowly, indeed, at that time—nobody would have liked to pay them by the day. Now, it is an evil thing when a Christian is bad *anywhere*, but it is a grand thing—and only God can enable us to attain to it—when we do not stumble in any one of the ways which we have to go, but are always kept walking uprightly.

And then, you know, it is the pace that makes some people stumble. See the pace we have to go at now. When I think of our dear old fathers in the country, I almost envy their quiet lives—not up too early, and seldom going to bed very late—not much to do, leading very steady sort of lives. They traveled by broad-wheeled wagons, and we fly over the ground by express trains—and need to go twice as quickly as we can—and all the while we have so much to do.

And, then, it is not only the pace, dear Friends, but it is the loads that some of you have to carry. Oh, the weights that are piled upon some of God’s people in their business! Only God can keep an overloaded heart from stumbling and the ways are very rough just now. You hardly meet anybody in trade who does not say, “Ah, we have a rough bit of ground to travel over now—stones in plenty, and no steam roller!” But there is One who is able to keep you from falling.

Perhaps there are some of you who have not to travel over a rough bit of road. Your path is very smooth, you have all that heart can wish for and every comfort that you could desire. You need to be guarded from stumbling, for you are on a very slippery road. If there has been a thaw and then a frost comes on at night, the road may be very pretty to look at, but it is very bad for a horse’s feet, and so prosperity is a very slippery

way for God's people. The Lord must keep them from falling or they will go down with a crash.

Then there is the length of the road as well as the other things I have mentioned. If we had to serve God only for a short time, one might easily do it, but we may have to go on for 50 years, 60 years, 70 years, 80 years. I think, sometimes, that if martyr days were to come, and they would burn me quickly, I could endure it. But it would be a terrible trial to be roasted on a slow fire! Yet our lives are often so prolonged and filled with trial and temptation, that it is like being roasted alive by a slow fire. The road is long and the pace has become very trying, so we may easily stumble. But the text gives us good cheer, for it tells us of Him that is able to guard us from stumbling.

It is not only necessary for us to be kept, but *it is very gracious on Christ's part to keep us*. Beloved, what if you should have this text fulfilled in you, so that, through a long and trying life, you should so live that when your enemies wanted to find fault with you, they would not know where to begin? Live so that if they look you up and down, they will have to say of you as they said of Daniel, "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the Law of his God." Oh, if you should go down to the grave faultless—not that we can, any of us, be in ourselves faultless in the sight of God—but if you live such blameless lives that no one shall be able to say evil of you, but shall be compelled to confess that in you the life of Christ has been reflected in your measure, what a privilege it will be! And this is the privilege set before you in the text—that you shall not be stumbled.

What distress you will be saved from if you are guarded from stumbling! A stumbling Christian has to be a sorrowing Christian. When a child of God stumbles, and knows it, he very soon takes to weeping and humbling himself in the Presence of his God. But if you are kept by the Grace of God, you will be saved from many a bitter pang, and helped to go from joy to joy and Grace to Grace.

What a blessing such a person is to other people in the Church of God! Without saying anything against our fellow Christians, we know where our respect and confidence usually go. When we have seen Brothers and Sisters who have been upheld and sustained in trial and temptation, and have not stumbled, we take delight in them! Those of us who are younger and weaker, go and hide, as it were, under the shadow of their wings.

And what a blessing such people are to the world! Those are the true saints who help to spread the Gospel of Christ! A holy life is a missionary enterprise. An unstumbling life is an incentive to others to run along the heavenly road, trusting in the Divine Power to guard *them*, also, from stumbling!

Best of all that I have to say is this, that this privilege is attainable—"Unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling." "Oh!" says one, "if I just get to Heaven, it will satisfy me." Will it? I pray you, do not talk so. Just to get in, like a tempest-tossed boat, water-logged, or like a wreck just towed into the harbor—well, it is a great mercy to get to Heaven anyway—but that is a poor way of getting in! Better would it be to steam into the harbor with a full cargo and plenty of passengers on board, and all the

flags flying to the honor of the Great King and Pilot who has guarded you through the storm, that, “so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

May it be so with you! Oh, that we may not have to send off the tugs and tow you into the harbor, but that, instead thereof, you may come in with a fleet of little ships behind you, able to say, “Here am I, and the children that You have given me”! This is a privilege worth having, but it cannot be attained except through Him who is able to guard you from stumbling.

III. Now I will lead you on, in the third place, with great brevity, to remember THE POWER WHICH BESTOWS THIS PRIVILEGE.

To be guarded from stumbling throughout a long life, *is not of ourselves*. It is not to be found in our own experience—not even in the means of Grace alone. That same power that made the heavens and the earth, and keeps the earth and heavens in their places, is needed to make a Christian, and to keep him standing before the sons of men.

“Unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling.” God has this power. *He has power over all circumstances*. He can so arrange the trials of your life that you shall never be tempted beyond what you are able to bear. He has power, also, over Satan, so that, when he desires to sift you as wheat, the Lord can keep him back. God will not allow him to overcome you.

Best of all, *God has power over our hearts*. He can keep us alive with holy zeal. He can keep us so believing, so loving, so hoping, so watching, so fully obedient that we shall not stumble at His Word, or stumble at anything else.

Jude speaks of “the only wise God,” so that, *God’s power is joined with wisdom*. He knows your weakness and He can guard you against it. He knows your tempters and He can thrust them aside, or help you to overcome them. It is the wise God, as well as the strong God, who is able to guard you from stumbling. He knows where the stumbling stones are and where your weakness is—and He can and He will bring you safely through.

Yet once more, the One who guards us from stumbling *is our Savior* as well as the only wise God. It is His business to save you. It is His office to save you—and save you He will! Commit yourself tonight to His guardian care, and walk with him. That is a high favor, that you may not only be kept from falling, but even be guarded from stumbling, to the praise and glory of His Grace.

I have been very brief where I should have liked to enlarge.

IV. I finish with this point, THE GLORY WHICH IS DUE TO CHRIST FOR THIS PRIVILEGE. If we are guarded from stumbling, we may take no credit to ourselves, but we must lay the crown at the feet of Him to whom the power belongs.

If He has kept us from stumbling until now, let us praise Him for the past! Oh, what a mercy to have had this keeping year after year! Notwithstanding many imperfections and follies, which we have had to confess, yet we have been kept from any grievous stumbling that would have dis-

honored the holy name of Christ! Bless God, tonight, that you have been kept from stumbling, today. I do not know where you have been, but I have no doubt you have been where you might have slipped if you had been left by the Spirit of God! You have been in the shop. You have been in the home. You have been in the street. You have been on the Exchange. You have been among ungodly men. Yes, and even among Christian men, you can soon commit yourself and trip up. If you have been kept, today, do not say, "How good I am!" No, no, no! Say, "Now unto Him who has guarded me from stumbling, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever."

Now, will you begin to praise Him for the future as well? You have not experienced it, yet, but remember that verse which we often sing—

***"And a new song is in my mouth,
To long-loved music set!
Glory to You for all the Grace
I have not tasted yet."***

Begin to thank the Lord that He will keep you from falling in the future! Bless Him that He will present you faultless before the Presence of His Glory with exceeding joy.

And the next time that danger comes to you, praise Him that *He can guard you from stumbling*. Tomorrow morning, perhaps, you have a difficult task before you. You are looking forward, in the course of the week, to something that will be very trying. Well, praise God *now*, that He is able to guard you from stumbling! But oh, what a song we will give Him when we are once over the river! When we climb the celestial hills, when we enter Heaven and find ourselves among the white-robed, blood-washed throng, I wonder which of us will praise Him most? Well, let us not wait till then, but let us begin *here*—let us rehearse the music of the spheres *now*! Let us say, "Now unto Him that is able to guard us from stumbling, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever."

This sermon does not belong to all of you, I am sorry to say. I wish that it did, but remember, dear Hearer, that He who can keep the *saint* from stumbling can bring the *sinner* into the right way! The same Grace that can preserve the child of God from falling into sin can bring you out of sin! And as we have to look wholly to Christ, certainly you must do so. May the Lord lead you to look, tonight, out of *yourself*, your *feelings* and your *works* and trust to the Lord Jesus, who died, but lives again, and lives to save guilty men!

Whoever believes in Him has everlasting life and He will bring them into His way! And He will keep them from stumbling and present them among the rest of His blood-washed, to praise His name forever. The Lord bless this meditation for Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. PSALM 91.

Verse 1.—*He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.* It is not every man who dwells there, no, not even every *Christian*. There are some who come to God's House, but the man mentioned here dwells with the God of the House! There are

some who worship in the outer court of the Temple, but, “he that dwells in the secret place of the Most High” lives in the Holy of Holies—he draws near to the Mercy Seat and stays there! He walks in the Light, as God is in the light. He is not one who is sometimes on and sometimes off, a stranger or a guest, but like a child at home he dwells in the secret place of the Most High. Oh, labor to get to that blessed position! You who know the Lord, pray that you may attain to this high condition of dwelling in the inner shrine, always near God, always overshadowed by those cherubic wings which indicate the Presence of God. If this is your position, you “shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” You are not safe in the outer courts. You are not protected from all danger anywhere but within the veil. Let us come boldly there and, when we once enter, let us *dwell* there.

2. *I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust.* This is a daring utterance, as if the Psalmist would claim for himself the choicest privileges of any child of God. When you hear a glorious doctrine preached, it may be very sweet to others, but the honey lies in the particular application of it to *yourself*. You must, like the bee, go down into the bell of the flower, yourself, and fetch out its nectar. “I will say of the Lord, He is my”—then come three “mys”, as if the Psalmist could grasp the Triune Jehovah—“*my* refuge, *my* fortress, *my* God: in Him will I trust.” What a grand word that is, “My God”! Can any language be loftier? Can any thought be more profound? Can any comfort be surer?

3. *Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler.* If you dwell near to God, you will not be deceived by Satan. In the Light of the Lord you will see light and you will discover the limed twigs and the nets and the traps that are set to catch you—“He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler.”

3. *And from the noisome pestilence.* The pestilence is something that you cannot see. It comes creeping in and fills the air with death before you perceive its approach. But, “He shall deliver you from the noisome pestilence.” There is a pestilence of dangerous and accursed error abroad at this time—but if we dwell in the secret place of the Most High, it cannot affect us—we shall be beyond its power! “Surely,” oh, blessed word! there is no doubt about this great Truth of God, “Surely, He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence.”

4. *He shall cover you with His feathers.* The Psalmist uses a wonderful metaphor when he ascribes “feathers” to God and compares Him to a hen, or some mother bird, under whose wings her young find shelter. Yet the condescension of God is such that He allows us to speak of Him thus—“He shall cover you with His feathers.”

4. *And under His wings shall you trust.* God is to His people a strong defense and a tender defense. “His wings” and “His feathers” suggest both power and softness. God hides not His people in a casing of iron—their shelter is stronger than iron—yet it is soft as the downy wings of a bird for ease and comfort. As the little chicks bury their tiny heads in the feathers of the hen and seem happy, and warm, and comfortable under their mother’s wings, so shall it be with you if you dwell with your God—“He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust.”

4. *His Truth shall be your shield and buckler.* Twice is he armed who has God's Truth to be his shield and buckler.

5. *You shall not be afraid for the terror by night.* Nervous as you are, and naturally timid, when you dwell near to God, your fears shall all go to sleep. That is a wonderful promise—"You shall not be afraid." If it had said, "You shall have no cause for fear," it would have been a very comforting word, but this is even more cheering! "You shall not be afraid for the terror by night."

5. *Nor for the arrow that flies by day.* Both night and day you shall be safe. Your God will not leave you in the glare of the sun, nor will He forsake you when the dampness of night dews would put you in peril. We, dear Friends, may have secret enemies, who shoot at us, but we shall not be afraid of the arrow! There may be unseen influences that would ruin us, or cause us dishonor, or distress—but when we dwell with God, we shall not be afraid of them.

6, 7. *Nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday. A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you.* When God takes His people to dwell in nearness to Himself and they have faith in this promise, I make no doubt that, literally, in the time of actual pestilence, they will be preserved! It is not every professing Christian, nor every Believer who attains this height of experience, but only such as believe the promise and fulfill the heavenly condition of dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. How could cholera or fever get into the secret place of the Most High? How could any arrows, how could any pestilence, ever be able to reach that secure abode of God? If you dwell there, you are invincible, invulnerable, infinitely secure!

8-10. *Only with your eyes shall you behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the Most High, your habitation; there shall no evil befall you.* "There shall no evil befall you." It may have the *appearance* of evil, but it shall turn out to your good. There shall be but the *appearance* of evil, not the *reality* of it—"There shall no evil befall you."

10, 11. *Neither shall any plague come near your dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.* You remember how the devil misapplied this text to Christ. He was quite right in the application, but he was quite wrong in the quotation, for he left out the words, "in all your ways." God will help us in our ways if we keep in His ways. When we meet with trouble and Providence, we ought to enquire whether we are in God's way. That famous old Puritan, holy Mr. Dodd, having to cross a river, had to change from one boat into another and, being little used to the water, he fell in, and, when he was pulled out, in his simplicity and wisdom, he said, "I hope that I am in my way." That was the only question that seemed to trouble him. If I am in my way, then God will keep me. We ought to ask ourselves, "Now, am I in God's way? Am I really moving, today, and acting, today, as Divine Providence leads me, and as duty calls me?" He who travels on the king's business, by daylight, along the king's highway, may be sure of the king's protection. "He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in *all your ways*." Come here,

Gabriel, Michael, and all the rest of you,” says the great King of Kings to the angels around His Throne. And when they come at His call, He says, “Take care of My child. Watch over him, today. He will be in peril—suffer no evil to come near him.”

12. *They shall bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone.* What royal protection we have, a guard of angels, who count it their delight and their honor to wait upon the seed-royal of the universe, for such are all the saints of God!

13. *You shall tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shall you trample under feet.* Strength and mastery may be united—“The young lion and the dragon”—but the child of God shall overcome them. Talk of St. George and the dragon! We ought to think more of the saint and the dragon! It is he that dwells in the secret place of the Most High, who, by God’s help, treads upon the lion and adder and of whom it is written, “The young lion and the dragon shall you trample under feet.”

14. *Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him.* Does God take notice of our poor love? Oh, yes, He values the love of His people, for He knows where it came from—it is a part of His own love—the creation of His Grace!

14. *I will set him on high, because he has known My name.* Does God value such feeble and imperfect knowledge of His name as we possess? Yes, and He rewards that knowledge—“I will set him on high.”

15. *He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him.* Notice, that it is, “He shall,” and, “I will.” The mighty Grace of God “shall” make us pray, and the Almighty God of Grace “will” answer our prayer—“He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him.” How I love these glorious shalls and wills!

15. *I will be with him in trouble.* “Whatever that trouble is, I will be with him in it. If he is dishonored, if he is in poverty, if he is in sickness, if that sickness should drive his best friend away from his bed, still, I will be with him in trouble.”

15. *I will deliver him, and honor him.* God puts honor upon us, poor dishonorable worms that we are! One old Divine calls a man, “a worm six feet long,” and it is rather a flattering description of him, don’t you think? But God says, “I will deliver him, and honor him.”

16. *With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation.* He will live as long as he wants to live. Even if he should have but few years, yet he shall have a long life, for life is to be measured by the life that is in it, not by the length along which it drags. Still, God’s children live to a far longer age than any other people in the world. They are, on the whole, a long-lived race. They who fear God are delivered from the vices which would deprive them of the vigor of life—and the joy and contentment they have in God help them to live longer than others. I have often noticed how long God’s people live. Some of them are speedily taken Home—still, this text is, as a rule, literally fulfilled, “With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation.” He shall see God’s salvation even here! And when he dies, and wakes up in the likeness of his Lord, he will see it to the fullest. May that be the portion of each of us! Amen.

JUDE'S DOXOLOGY

NO. 2994

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 28, 1906.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 7, 1875.

“Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.”
Jude 1:24, 25.

PAUL'S writings abound in doxologies. You will find them in different forms scattered throughout all his Epistles. But he is not the only Apostle who thus pauses to magnify the name of God. Here is “Judas, not Iscariot,” but the true-hearted Jude who has been writing an Epistle which seems all ablaze with lightning, it burns so terribly against certain orders of sinners. Almost every word that Jude writes seems to have the roll of thunder in it—he appears to be more like the Haggai of the Old Testament than the Jude of the New. Yet he cannot close his short Epistle until he has included some ascription of praise to God!

Learn from this, dear Friends, that the sin of man, if we are ever called to denounce it, should drive us to adore the goodness and glory of God. Sin defiles the world, so after you have done your best to sweep it out, resolve that, inasmuch as man has dishonored the name of God, you will seek to magnify that name. It is true that you cannot actually redress the wrong that has been done, but, at any rate, if the stream of sin has been increased, you may increase the stream of loyal and reverent praise! Take care that you do. Jude is not satisfied with having rebuked the sons of men for their sin, so he turns round to glorify his God!

Observe that these doxologies, wherever we meet with them, are not all exactly the same. They are presented to the same God and offered in the same spirit, but there are reasons given for the doxology in the one case which are not given in the other. Our morning text [Sermon No. 1266, Volume 21—PAUL'S DOXOLOGY—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] told us of what God is able to do and so does this. They both begin with praising God's ability, but while Paul spoke about the greatness of that ability in what it could do for us, Jude speaks of the greatness of that ability in *preserving us from falling* and perfecting us so that we may be presented faultless before the Presence of the Glory of God. Let us, in an adoring frame of mind, think over this sublime subject.

I. First, LET US ADORE HIM WHO CAN KEEP US FROM FALLING.

I now address myself, of course, only to God's own people. When shall we ever see a congregation in which it will be needless to make such a remark as that? I cannot call upon some of you to adore God for keeping you from falling, for, alas, you have not yet learned to stand upright!

God's Grace has never yet been accepted by you. You are not on the Rock of Ages—you have not yet set out upon the heavenly pilgrimage. It is a wretched state for you to be in—in which you cannot worship Him whom angels worship. It is a sad state of heart for any man to be in! To be excluded—self-excluded—from the general acclamations of joy in the Presence of God—because you feel no such joy and cannot, therefore, unite in such acclamations!

But to the people of God, I have to say this. Dear Brothers and Sisters, *we need keeping*, therefore let us adore Him who can keep us! As saved souls, we need keeping from final apostasy. "Oh," says one, "I thought you taught us that those who are once saved shall never finally apostatize." I do believe that doctrine and delight to preach it—yet it is true that the saved ones would apostatize—everyone of them—if the Lord did not keep them! There is no stability in any Christian, considered in himself. It is the Grace of God within him that enables him to stand. I believe than the soul of man is immortal, yet not in and of itself, but only by the immortality which God bestows upon it from His essential immortality. So is it with the new life that is within us. It shall never perish, but it is only eternal because God continues to keep it alive. Your final perseverance is not the result of anything in yourself, but the result of the Grace which God continues to give you and of His eternal purpose which first chose you and of His almighty power which still keeps you alive. Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, the brightest saints on earth would fall into the lowest Hell if God did not keep them from falling! Therefore, praise Him, O you stars that shine in the Church's sky, for you would go out with a noxious smell, as lamps do for lack of oil, did not the Lord keep your heavenly flame burning! Glory be unto the Preserver of His Church who keeps His loved ones even to the end!

But there are other ways of falling beside falling finally and fatally. Alas, Brothers and Sisters, we are all liable to fall into errors of doctrine. The best-taught man, apart from Divine Guidance, is capable of becoming the greatest fool possible! There is a strange weakness which sometimes comes over noble spirits and which makes them infatuated with an erroneous novelty, though they fancy they have discovered some great Truth of God. Men of enquiring and receptive minds are often decoyed from the old paths—the good old ways—and while they think they are pursuing the Truth, they are being led into damnable error! He only is kept, as to his thoughts and doctrinal views, whom God keeps, for there are errors that would, if it were possible, deceive even the very elect! And there are men and women going about in this world with smooth tongues and plausible arguments, who carry honeyed words upon their lips, though drawn swords are concealed behind their backs! Blessed are they who are preserved from these wolves in sheep's clothing! Lord, You alone can preserve us from the pernicious errors of the times, for You are "the only wise God, our Savior."

And, dear Friends, we need keeping from an evil spirit. I do not know whom I should prefer—to see one of my dear Christian Brother fall into doctrinal error, or into an un-Christian spirit. I would prefer neither, for I think this is a safe rule—of two evils, choose neither! It is sad to hear some people talk as if they, alone, are right, and all other Christians are

wrong. If there is anything which is the very essence and soul of Christianity, it is brotherly love—but brotherly love seems to be altogether forgotten by these people. And other Christians who, in the judgment of sobriety, are as earnest and as true-hearted and as useful as themselves, are set down as belonging to a kind of Babylonian system—I hardly know what they do not call it, but they give it all sorts of bad names—and this is thought to be a high style of Christianity! God grant that the man may be forgiven who thought it to be a worthy purpose of his life to found a sect, whose distinguishing characteristic should be that it would have no communion with any other Christians! The mischief that man has done is utterly incalculable! And I can only pray that in the Providence of God, some part of it may die with him.

O Brothers and Sisters, I charge you, whatever mistakes you make, not to make a mistake about this one thing—that even if you have all knowledge, and have not charity, it profits you nothing! Even if you could get a perfect creed and knew that your modes of worship were absolutely Apostolic, yet if you also imbibed this idea that you could not worship with any other Christians and that they were altogether outside your camp, your error would be far worse than all other errors put together—for to be wrong in heart is even worse than to be wrong in head! I would have you true to God's Truth, but, above all, I would have you true to God's Love! My Brother, I think you are mistaken about this matter or that, but do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, I love you. I have no doubt that I, also, am mistaken about some things, but do not, therefore, withdraw your hand and say that you cannot have fellowship with me! I have fellowship with my Father who is in Heaven and with His Son, Jesus Christ, and with His blessed Spirit. And I think that it ill becomes you, if you call yourself a son of that same God, to refuse to have fellowship with me when I have fellowship with Him! God save you from this evil spirit, but you may readily enough fall into it unless the Lord shall keep you. Your very zeal for the Truth of God may drive you into a forgetfulness of Christian love! And if it does, it will be a sad pity. O Lord, keep us from falling in this way!

But there are falls of another sort which may happen to the brightest Christian. I mean, falls into *outward* sin. As you read Jude's Epistle through, you will see what apostates some professors became and you will be led to cry, "Lord, keep me from falling!" And if you were the pastor of a large church like mine, you would see enough to convince you that traitors like Judas are not all dead—that amidst the faithful, the unfaithful are still found—that there are bad fish to be thrown away, as well as good fish to be kept. And every time we execute an act of discipline—every time we have to bemoan the fall of one who looked like a Brother—we may thank God that *we* have been kept—and may sing this doxology, "Unto Him who is able to keep us from falling, be glory and power forever."

And, dear Friends, there is a way of falling, out of which people are not so often recovered as when they fall into overt sin. I mean, falling into negligence as to natural or Christian duties. I have known professors who have been very lax at home—children who were not obedient to their

parents—husbands who did not love their wives as they ought—wives who were quite at home at this meeting and that, but very negligent of their domestic duties. And, mark you, where that is the case, it is a thing to mourn over, for the Christian ought to be absolutely reliable in everything he has to do! I would not give twopence for your religion if you are a tradesman—but not fair in your dealings! I do not care if you can sing like David, or preach like Paul—if you cannot measure a yard of material with the proper number of inches, or if your scales do not weigh rightly, or your general mode of business is not straight and true—you had better make no profession of religion! The separation at what is called, “religious,” from the, “secular,” is one of the greatest possible mistakes. There is no such thing as a religion of Sundays, and of chapels and churches. At least though there is such a thing, it is not worth having. The religion of Christ is a religion for seven days in the week—a religion for every place and for every act! And it teaches men, whether they eat, or drink, or whatever they do, to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and to the glory of God! I pray that you may be kept from falling away from *that* religion, and that you may be kept up to the mark in serving the Lord in all things *and* attending diligently to the little commonplace matters of daily life.

And you know, dear Friends, there is another sort of falling—that is when the heart gets gradually cold, when the Christian wanders away little by little—when the life become more or less inconsistent with the profession. Oh, how many professors get into this state! They are like people who are not as well as they used to be. They do not know when they began to feel worse—it was months ago and every day they have got weaker—till now you can see their bones, though once they were full of flesh. Now they discover that whereas once they could have walked ten miles without fatigue, half a mile or less wearies them! Their appetite, too, has gradually gone. They scarcely know how. Ah, these are the sick folk with whom the physician has more trouble than he has with those who are suddenly seized by some well-known disease! And that gradual decline of spiritual health which does not come all at once, but, little by little, is one of the most perilous of evils and we have need to continually cry, “Lord, keep us from this!” And to praise His name that He is able so to keep us!

Thus I have shown you that we need keeping and, Brothers and Sisters, *none but the Lord can keep us*. No man can keep himself. Without God's Grace, he will surely fail! And no *place* can keep us. Some people think that if they could get into such-and-such a family, they could keep from sin, but they are mistaken. In every position which man occupies, he will find temptation. We have heard of the hermit who hoped to get rid of all sin by living in a cave. He took with him his little brown loaf and his jug of water, but he had hardly entered the cave before he upset his jug and spilt the water. It was a long way to the well and he got so angry with himself for what he had done that he soon discovered that the devil could get into a cave as quickly as he could! So he thought he might as well go back and face the trials of ordinary society. There is a story which they tell in Scotland of a family who were thriftless and, therefore, did not succeed. But they thought it was one of

the “brownies” that kept them from getting on, so they decided to “flit.” They put all their things into a cart, but just as they were about to start, they heard a noise that made them cry out, “The brownie is in the churn!” So, wherever the churn went, the brownies would go too. And you may remove wherever you like and think, “If I get into such a position, I shall escape from temptation, but you will find that “the brownie is still in the churn,” and he will follow you wherever you may go! You cannot be kept from falling by choosing another situation. You had better stay where you are, Brother, and fight the devil there, for perhaps the next place that you select as the scene of combat may not be as suitable as the one you have now.

“Ah,” says one, “I wish I could get to—

***‘A lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade
Where rumor of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me again.’***

Yes, yes. But that is not the way to conquer sin, is it? Suppose the battle of Waterloo is just beginning and here is a soldier who wants to win a victory. So he runs away—gets off to Brussels and hides himself in a cellar! Is he likely to be numbered among the heroes of the day? No, Brothers and Sisters, and if there is any sin to be overcome in this world, there is no credit to the man who says, “I’m going to hide somewhere out of the world.” No, no, my Brother, accept the lot that God has provided for you! Take your place in the ranks of His soldiers and whatever temptation comes, look up to Him who is able to keep you from falling—but do not dream of running away, for that is the way to fall—that is being defeated before the battle begins! Nobody but God can keep you. You may join whatever church you like. You may wear a hat with a broad brim and say “thou” and “thee.” You may meet with those who break bread and preach nothing but the Gospel of the Grace of God. You may dwell among the best people who ever lived, but you will still be tempted! Neither place nor people, neither manners nor customs can keep you from falling—God alone can do it!

But here is the mercy, *God can do it*. Notice how Jude’s doxology puts it—“To the only wise God our Savior.” It is because He, alone, is wise that He, alone, is able to keep us from falling. He does it by teaching us the Truth, by warning us against secret sin and by His Providential leading. Sometimes He keeps temptation from us. At other times He allows a temptation to come to us that, by overcoming it, we may be the stronger to meet another one. Oftentimes He delivers us from temptation by letting affliction come upon us. Many a man has been kept from falling into sin by being stretched upon a bed of sickness. Had it not been for the loss of the eye, he would have looked upon vanity. Had it not been for that broken bone, he would have run in the ways of ungodliness. We little know how much preservation from falling we owe to our losses and crosses! The story of Sir James Thornhill painting the inside of the cupola of St. Paul’s is probably well known to you. When he had finished one of the compartments, he was stepping backward that he might get a full view of it and so went almost to the edge of the scaffolding—and

would have fallen over if he had taken another step—but a friend, who saw his danger, wisely seized one of his brushes and rubbed some paint over his picture. The artist, in his rage, rushed forward to save his painting and so saved his own life! We have all pictured life—what a fairy picture we made of it! And as we admired it, we walked further and yet further away from God and safety—and got nearer and nearer to perilous temptation! But when trial came and ruined the picture we had painted and then, though scarcely knowing why, we came forward and were saved, God had kept us from falling by the trouble He had sent to us!

God has often kept us from falling by a bitter sense of our past sin. We have not dared to go near the fire again for our former burns have scarcely healed. I have also noticed, in my own case, that when the desire for sin has come with force, the opportunity for sin has not been present—and when the opportunity of evil has been present, then, by God's Grace, the desire has been absent. It is wonderful how God prevents these two things from meeting and so keeps His people from falling.

Above all, it is by the Divine Spirit that God bears us up as upon eagle's wings. The Spirit teaches us to hate sin and to love righteousness—and so we are daily kept from falling.

Brothers and Sisters, join with me in adoring the Lord that *He will keep us to the end*. Have we committed our souls into the hands of Jesus? Then our souls are safe forever! Are we trusting to Him to keep us till the day of His appearing? If so, He will keep us—not one sheep or lamb out of His flock shall by any possibility be destroyed by the wolf, or the bear, or the roaring lion of Hell! They shall all be His in the day when they pass again under the hands of Him that counts them!

II. NOW, SECONDLY, LET US ADORE HIM BECAUSE HE WILL, AT THE LAST, PRESENT US "FAULTLESS BEFORE THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY WITH EXCEEDING JOY."

There will come a day, Brothers and Sisters, when we shall either be presented in the courts of God as His courtiers, or else be driven from His Judgment Seat as rebels against His authority. We look forward with the confident expectation that we shall be presented as the friends of Christ, unto God, even the Father and that is, indeed, a cause for adoring gratitude!

Do you notice how Jude puts it? "To present you faultless." *There shall be none in Heaven but those who are faultless*. There shall by no means enter into those holy courts anything that defiles. Heaven is perfectly pure and if you and I are ever to get there, we must be pure as the driven snow. No taint of sin must be upon us, or else we cannot stand among the courtiers of God. His flaming Throne would shoot forth columns of devouring fire upon any guilty soul that dared to stand in the courts of the Most High, if such a standing were possible! But we are impure—impure as to our acts and, worst of all, impure as to our very nature! How, then, can we hope to ever stand there? Yet, dear Brothers and Sisters, our confidence is that we shall. Why?

Is it not because *Christ is able to present us faultless there*? Come, Christian, think for a minute how faultless Christ has made you so far as your past sin is concerned. The moment you believed in Him, you were

so completely washed in His precious blood that not a spot of sin remained upon you. Try to realize that whatever your past life has been, if you now believe in Jesus Christ, you are cleansed from all iniquity by virtue of His atoning Sacrifice and you are covered by a spotless robe of righteousness by virtue of His blessed life of perfect purity and obedience to His Father's will. You are now without fault, as far as your past sin is concerned, for He has cast it all into the depths of the sea—but you feel that you are not without fault as to your nature.

“Oh,” you say, “I feel everything that is evil rising at times within me.” But all that evil is under sentence of death. Christ nailed it to His Cross. Crucifixion is a lingering and very painful death—and the culprit struggles before he breathes his last. But your sins have had their deathblow. When Christ was nailed to the Cross, your sins were nailed there, too, and they shall never come down again. Die they must, even as He died. It will be a blessed hour when sin shall at last give up the ghost—when there shall be not even the tendency to sin within our nature! Then shall we be presented faultless before the Throne of God!

“Can that ever be?” asks one. Well may you ask that question, Brother. Can it ever be that we shall not be tempted by one foul lust, nor be disturbed by one unbridled passion, nor feel the emotions of envy or of pride again? Yes, it shall surely be! Christ has secured this blessing for you. His name is Jesus, Savior, “for He shall save His people from their sins.” He must and will do this for all who trust Him. Rejoice that He will do this, for no one but God can do it. It must be “the only wise God our Savior” who can accomplish this—and accomplish it He will! Does your faith enable you to picture yourself as standing faultless before the Throne of God? Well then, give to the Lord the glory which is due unto Him for such a wondrous act of Grace as that!

This is how you are to be presented by Christ in Glory. There is a great stir in a family when a daughter is to be presented at court and a great deal is thought of it. But one day you and I who have believed in Jesus, shall be presented to the Father. What radiant beauty shall we then wear when God, Himself, shall look upon us and declare us to be without fault—when there shall be no cause for sorrow remaining and, therefore, we shall be presented with exceeding joy! It shall be so, my Brother! It shall be so, my Sister! Therefore do not doubt it. How soon it shall be, we cannot tell—possibly, tomorrow. Perhaps before the sun rises again you and I may be presented by Christ “before the Presence of His glory with exceeding joy.” We cannot tell when it will be, but we shall be there in His good time. We shall be perfect! We shall be “accepted in the Beloved” and, therefore, “unto Him be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

III. That is the note with which I have to close my discourse. LET US, BECAUSE OF THESE TWO GREAT BLESSINGS OF FINAL PRESERVATION AND PRESENTATION BEFORE HIS GLORY, OFFER UNTO THE LORD OUR HIGHEST ASCRIPTIONS OF PRAISE.

Jude says, “Both now and forever.” Well, we will attend to the “forever” as eternity rolls on, but let us attend to the praise of God “now”—at this moment! “To the only wise God our Savior be glory and majesty,

dominion and power” now! Come, Brothers and Sisters, think of what you owe to Him who has kept you to this day—and will not let you go! Think of where you might have been and think, I may say, of where you used to be in your unregenerate state. Yet you are not there now—but here you are, without self-righteousness, made to differ from your fellow men entirely through the Grace of God! You have been kept perhaps 20 years, 30 years, 40 years—possibly 50 years! Well, unto Him be the glory! Give Him the glory even now!

How can you do it? Well, feel it in your hearts! Speak of it to your neighbors! Talk of it to your children! Tell everybody you meet what a good and blessed and faithful God He is, and so give Him glory now. And be happy and cheerful. You cannot glorify God better than by a calm, quiet, happy life. Let the world know that you serve a good Master. If you are in trouble, do not let anyone see that the trouble touches your spirit—no, more, *do not let it trouble your spirit*. Rest in God—take evil as well as good from His hands and keep on praising Him. You do not know how much good you may do and how greatly you may glorify God if you praise Him in your dark times. Worldlings do not care much about our Psalm-singing unless they see us in pain and sorrow and observe that we praise God then. I like, and the world likes, a religion that will wash—a religion that will stand many showers and much rough usage. Some Christians' joy disappears in the wear and tear of life—it cannot endure the world's rough handling. Let it not be so with us, Beloved, but let us praise, bless and magnify the name of the Lord as long as we have any being!

I know that in speaking thus, I am only addressing a part of my congregation. I wish that every man and woman here were now praising the Lord—and I am sure that you could not have a better occupation to all eternity. Remember that if you do not praise God, it is impossible for you ever to enter Heaven, for that is the chief occupation of Heaven! And also remember that praise from your lips, until those lips are divinely cleansed, would be like a jewel in a swine's snout, a thing altogether out of place! For you, dear unsaved Hearer, the first thing is not praise, but prayer—no, not even prayer first, but *faith*. “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” And then, in faith, pray the prayer which God accepts. But you must first believe in Jesus. “And what does believing in Jesus mean?” you ask. It means this—your sin deserves punishment, for God, who is just, must punish sin. But His Son came into the world to suffer in the place of those who trust Him. And now, God can be just and yet the Justifier of every soul that believes in Jesus! In the Person of His Son, God hangs upon a tree and dies a felon's death—will you believe in the merit of that death and in the love of God who spared not His own Son in order that He might spare us? Can you trust Jesus as your God and Savior? Will you do it now? Then you are saved!

The first moment of thus trusting God is the beginning of a new life—a life which will drive out the old death of sin. The moment that you thus trust your God, you will be placed upon a new footing with regard to Him—your whole aspect towards God will be changed. Repentance will take such possession of your spirit that you will be actuated by new

motives and swayed by new desires! In fact, you will be a new man in Christ Jesus. This is being saved—saved from the love of sin, saved from returning to sin, saved from falling and so completely saved that Christ shall one day present you “faultless before the Presence of His glory with exceeding joy.” May God do this for everyone of you, my Hearers, according to the riches of His Grace! It is my heart’s last, best and strongest desire that everyone of you may be saved. May we all meet in Heaven, before the Throne of God, never more to be parted!

While I am away, listen with all earnestness to other heralds of the Cross, and pray the Lord to bless their messages to your salvation, if mine have not been so blest. I pray that by some instrumentality, you may all be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE.

Verse 1. *Jude.* That is to say Judas, not Iscariot.

1. *The servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.* He does not say, “and brother of our Lord,” for we know that James and Judas were, both of them, among the Lord’s kinsman according to the flesh. But now, after the flesh, knows he Christ no more, but is content and happy to be known as “the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.”

1. *To them that are sanctified by God the Father.* For the decree of election, the setting apart of the chosen is usually ascribed unto God the Father.

1. *And preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.* We have here a very blessed description of the whole work of our salvation—set apart by the Father, joined unto Christ and preserved in Him—and then, in due time, called out by the Spirit of God.

2. *Mercy unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied.* Christian letters should be full of love and good will. The Christian dispensation breathes beneficence—it is full of benediction! “Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.” May the Divine Trinity give you a trinity of blessings!

3. *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was necessary for me to write unto you and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints.* In the sense of being once and for all given to the saints, the faith of Christians is not a variable quantity. It is not a thing which changes from day to day, as some seem to suppose, vainly imagining that fresh light is bestowed upon each new generation. No, the Truth of God was delivered once and for all, it was stereotyped, fixed—and it is for us to hold it fast as God has given it to us.

4. *For there are certain men crept in unawares.* They did not boldly avow their heresy when they came in—they would not have been allowed to enter if they had done so—but they sneaked in, they climbed into the pulpit, professing to be preachers of the Gospel when they knew, all along, that they intended to undermine it. Basest of all men are those who act thus! “There are certain men crept in unawares.”

4. *Who were before of old ordained to this condemnation.* Proscribed by God as traitors long ago! Those who have not the courage of their convictions probably have no convictions at all, but seek to undermine the faith which they profess to hold.

4. *Ungodly men, turning the Grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and Our Lord Jesus Christ.* Antinomians, “turning the Grace of our God into lasciviousness,” falsely declaring that the Law has no binding force upon the Christian’s life and saying that we may do evil that good may come—and Socinians, “denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

5. *I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.* If we have no real faith, we may appear to go a long way towards Heaven—but we shall not enter the heavenly Canaan.

6. *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.* See, then, the need of stability, the need of abiding in the faith and abiding in the practice of it, lest we should turn out to be like the Israelites, who, though they came out of Egypt, left their carcasses in the wilderness, or like the angels, who, though they once stood in God’s Presence in Glory, have fallen to the deeps of the abyss because of their apostasy!

7, 8. *Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion and speak evil of dignitaries.* They cast off all restraint; they claim to have liberty to do whatever they like—and when reprov’d, they utter railing words against those who honestly rebuke them!

9. *Yet Michael the Archangel, when contending with the devil when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you.* To what does this refer? I am sure I do not know. I cannot think it refers to anything recorded in the Old Testament, but to some fact, known to Jude, who here speaks by Revelation and records it. We believe it and learn from it that when an archangel disputes with the devil, he does not use hard words even against him, for hard words are an evidence of the weakness of the cause which they are used to support! Hard arguments softly put, are the really effective weapons, but it takes some of us a long time to learn this and generally, in our younger days, we wear away our own strength by the violence with which we use it.

10. *But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.* It is a horrible thing when a man’s sin goes the full length of his knowledge and he sins up to the degree of his possibilities!

11, 12. *Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. These are spots.* “These are spoilers,” so it may be rendered.

12. *In your feasts of charity.* They spoil your love feasts at the Communion Table. They mar your fellowship when you gather together for worship.

12. *When they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear.* Some of the best Christians who come to the Lord's Table, come there in great fear and trembling. And I have known some who have had an undoubted right to be there, half afraid to come. Yet those very persons who have a holy fear lest they should come amiss, are those who really ought to come. "Feeding themselves without fear" is the mark of those who are further off from God.

12. *Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds.* They believe according to what is said to them by the last man who speaks to them—they are easily persuaded to this doctrine, and to that, and the other.

12. *Trees whose fruit withers, without fruit.* They seem to be bearing fruit, but it drops off before it ripens.

12, 13. *Twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea.* They have nothing to say for Christ, yet they must say something, so they are "raging waves of the sea."

13. *Foaming out their own shame, wandering stars, to whom is reserved the thickness of darkness forever.* These are the false professors of religion, the members of the church for whom there are seats reserved in Hell! This is a dreadful thought—"to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever"—not for the heathen, not for the open refusers of the Gospel, but for such as creep into the churches unawares, teach false doctrine, live unholy lives!

14, 15. *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.* How Jude knew that Enoch said that, I cannot tell—it is another instance of Divine Inspiration.

16. *These are murmurers, complainers.* You know the sort of people alluded to here, nothing ever satisfies them. They are discontented even with the Gospel. The bread of Heaven must be cut into three pieces and served on dainty napkins, or else they cannot eat it! And very soon their soul loathes even this light bread. There is no way by which a Christian can serve God so as to please them. They will pick holes in every preacher's coat and if the great High Priest, Himself, were here, they would find fault with the color of the stones of His breastplate!

16-19. *Walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaks great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time who should talk after their own ungodly lusts. These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.* People who must, if they make a profession of religion at all, be continually breaking up churches and holding themselves aloof from

others, having no fellowship with anybody but those who can say "shibboleth" as plainly as they can, and sound the "h" pretty loudly.

20-22. *But you, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference.* Some of those professors who are not living consistently with their profession, in whom you can see signs and tokens of sin, yet there may be some trace of repentance, some reason to hope that they will forsake the evil when they see it to be evil—"have compassion" upon them.

23. *And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.* When you have to deal with unclean professors, there must be an abhorrence and detestation of their sin even when there is great gentleness towards the sinner. We must never be such believers in the repentance of the guilty as to be willing to wink at sin, for sin is a great evil in any case and repentance cannot wipe it away. And though it behooves us to be tender to the sinner, we must never be tender to the sin. How beautifully this short and sad Epistle ends! Having described the many who, after making a profession, yet turn aside, Jude bursts out with this jubilant doxology!

24, 25. *Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"— 441, 245, 160.

—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.

DANGER. SAFETY. GRATITUDE.

NO. 3074

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 1908,**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 8, 1874.**

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”
Jude 1:24, 25.

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon, upon the same text, are #s 634, Volume 11—CHRISTIANS KEPT IN TIME AND GLORIFIED IN ETERNITY and #2296, Volume 39—SAINTS GUARDED FROM STUMBLING—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

WE may derive much evil or much good from the falls of others. We may derive much evil from their falls if we follow their bad example, or if our pride suggests to us that we are better than they are. It is an evil thing for a man to look upon his fallen brother and then to say, in the spirit of the Pharisee, “God, I thank You that I am not such a sinner as that man is.” This kind of spirit would make it very probable that we should yet become even worse than the poor fallen one.

But, on the other hand, much good may come to us through the falls of others if the moment we see or hear of the falling of our brethren, we reflect that we would have done the same if we had not been upheld by God—that all the evil that has come out of them might also have come out of us, for it is in every one of us by nature. Unless God’s restraining hand shall prevent its being displayed, it will be displayed in our life as well as in theirs! Every wreck ought to be a beacon. One man’s fall should be another’s warning. Do you see your brother’s foot trip against a stone? Then take care how you go along that way. Do you see him yield to temptation? Then mind that your ears are closed against that which fascinated him and turned him aside from the right path. Wherein you see that he failed in anything, set a double guard upon yourself just there—and ask God to give you Grace to keep you with special keeping in that particular point which was his weakness and which may, unknown to yourself, be also your own!

I am led to make these remarks because the Epistle of Jude describes certain gross offenders. The Apostle says a good deal about persons who were in the Church, but were evidently not of it and who, therefore, were the Church’s weakness and dishonor—spots in her solemn feasts, clouds without water, trees without fruit—“raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame.” Now, if the reflection from that description should be,

in the case of any of us, “We are superior persons to them and are not at all likely to fall into such a condition as this,” the consideration of their condition would have had a very unhappy influence upon ourselves. But if we use this Epistle in the right way, as Jude means us to do, and begin to look at our own weakness and to dread our own failure—and then close all, as he does, with a doxology to Him who is able to keep us from falling where others have fallen, and to present us faultless when others will be condemned, and to bring us to exceeding joy while they will be banished to the place where they will have to endure exceeding misery—surely we ought to give honor, praise and glory “to the only wise God our Savior.” And this will be a blessed way of extracting good out of the failings and falls of others.

This is my objective in speaking to you upon this text. And I am going to talk to you very simply upon three things—first, *our danger*. Secondly, *our safety*. And, thirdly, *our gratitude*.

I. The first thing we are to consider is OUR DANGER. We are in danger of falling—not only some of us, but all of us! Not merely the weak, but also the strong. Not the young only, but the old and the middle-aged. All are in danger of falling into sin and so bringing dishonor upon our profession, sorrow to our souls and disgrace upon the name of Christ, whom we profess to love and serve!

That we are in danger should strike us very clearly *because we have seen others fall into sin*. I scarcely dare to recall all that I have seen during my observation of the professing Church of Christ. Though I think I have been peculiarly favored as a pastor, there are sore places in my soul—bleeding wounds that will never be healed this side of Heaven that have been caused by the backsliding of men with whom I took sweet counsel and in whose company I used to walk to the House of God. I have known some who have preached the Gospel, and preached it with power, live to depart from it altogether. I have known others who have served at the Lord’s Table who have discharged the duties of the deaconship or the eldership with considerable diligence, who have afterwards given way to their evil passions. I have thought some of them to be among the holiest of men. While they have been praying, I have been lifted up in devotion to the very gates of Heaven! And if anyone had said to me that they would one day fall into gross sin, I could not have believed it. I would sooner have believed it to be possible of myself. When I have heard of their fall, it has struck me with a sharp pang and when it has been my sad duty to enquire into the matter—and I have been compelled to be convinced of the truthfulness of the accusation brought against them—I have been staggered to think how far a man may go in profession and yet not possess the Grace of God in truth and how like a Christian a man may be—and yet not really be a child of God. And how he may have many resemblances to the Grace of God and yet may not have that Grace in his soul indeed and of a truth.

“Howl, fir tree, for the cedar is fallen,” is a cry that may still be heard! Those who seemed stronger than we are have fallen, so why may not we? No, shall we not fall unless Sovereign Grace shall prevent that dread calamity? Our Lord’s disciples, who sat at the table with Him, when they were told that one of them would betray their Master, each one enquired, “Lord, is it I?” That was a very proper question. There was not one who asked, “Lord, is it Judas?” Probably no one of them even suspected him—and it may be that the worst hypocrite in this assembly is the one upon whom there does not rest at this moment a single shade of suspicion! He has learned to play his part so well that his true character has not yet been discovered. One of these days the 30 pieces of silver will prove too attractive to him—and then he will sell his Master. Will that traitor be you, dear Friend, or will it be me? Surely, if this has been the case with others, it must be a matter for our own serious consideration, seeing that we also are as liable to be tempted as they were—and as liable to yield to the temptation. John Newton was right when he wrote—

***“When any turn from Zion’s way,
(Alas, what numbers do)!
I think I hear my Savior say,
‘Will you forsake Me too?’
Ah, Lord! With such a heart as mine,
Unless You hold me fast,
I feel I must, I shall decline,
And prove like they at last.”***

Beside that, not only have others fallen, but *we ourselves, although in a great measure kept by Divine Grace, have not been faultless.* If all men knew all about us that might be known, we would hardly be able to look them in the face! Someone is said to have once wished that he had a window in his heart so that everybody could look in and see all that was there. But if he had such a window, he would need to have blinds on it and he would probably keep them down for the most part, for who would like his neighbor to read the thoughts of his heart even for a single hour? Have there not been times with you, my Brothers, honorable men, Christians of good standing in the Church, when your feet had almost gone, your steps had well near slipped? And Sisters in Christ, preserved as you have been in the faith of Jesus and enabled to honorably maintain your Christian character, have there not been times when temptation has been very strong upon you and when you have half consented to the sin that has been suggested to you? I know if you are flesh and blood like the rest of us, you must confess that it has been so with you.

So, then, we have this double warning—what we have seen in others and what we have felt in ourselves. Besides, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, ought we not to realize the danger of our falling when we consider *the world we live in, the flesh we live in and the tempter who is continually tempting us?* The road we have to tread is often so slippery that we have need not only to watch our feet, but also to pray, “O Lord, hold me up

and I shall be safe.” There are also many who watch for our halting—and some who do more than that, for they set traps for us. And if they could but catch us in them, how rejoiced they would be! If we do not fall, it is not because they have not tried to make us fall, but because God has upheld us by His Grace. If we know ourselves at all, we must have come to the conclusion that apart from the Grace of God, we are a mass of sin and corruption—and capable of anything that is evil. I do not wonder that John Bradford said, as he saw men taken to be hanged at Tyburn, “There goes John Bradford but for the Grace of God.” There is powder enough in all our hearts to blow our character to pieces if God does not keep the devil’s sparks away, or quench them in a mighty stream of Grace before they can do us mischief! Utter weakness are you, O Man, and many and mighty foes are seeking your destruction! You need an infinite Friend to keep you in safety against all the machinations of your adversaries!

We constantly need to cry to God to keep us from falling, remembering what a dreadful thing it would be for us to fall. We know that a true child of God cannot fall fatally or finally, but we also know that some who profess to be the people of God, do fall foully, fatally and finally—and that others who are really the people of God have fallen to their own great grief and to their Lord’s dishonor. O my dear Sister, what sorrow there would be in the hearts of those who know you if you were to turn aside! And how the enemy would blaspheme and how would those who are weak in the faith be staggered if you were to be permitted to disgrace your Christian profession! And my dear Brother, you who are of venerable years, looked up to and respected by many—what grief would fill your own heart when the Lord brought you to penitence for your guilt—if you were allowed to fall into sin and, meanwhile, how much mischief you would have done to the Church of God and to souls seeking the Savior! Pray very specially for those of us who stand in prominent positions, for it is not easy to keep a clear head when one is upon the top of a pinnacle. And when you have prayed for us, pray also for yourselves. God can keep men in safety on the tops of pinnacles if He puts them there. But the men in the valley will fall if they think they can securely keep themselves.

I remember talking once to a lady who assured me again and again that she prayed daily for me that I might be kept humble. I told her that I would pray the same prayer for her. And when she said, “Oh, I am never tempted to be proud,” I replied, “Well, dear Friend—I am afraid you are already very far gone in that direction, or else you would not talk as you do.” We can easily perceive the danger in which others are—and if we do, we ought to pray for them—but let us not forget our own peril, for the greatest danger does not lie in the position we are called to occupy, but in our relying upon our own strength—and not upon our God—

***“Lord, through the desert drear and wide,
Our erring footsteps need a Guide.
Keep us, oh keep us near Your side.***

**Let us not fall. Let us not fall!
 We have no fear that You should lose
 One whom eternal love could choose,
 But we would never this Grace abuse.
 Let us not fall. Let us not fall!
 Lord, we are blind, and halt, and lame,
 We have no stronghold but Your name—
 Great is our fear to bring it shame.
 Let us not fall. Let us not fall!
 Lord, evermore Your face we seek—
 Tempted we are, and poor, and weak.
 Keep us with lowly hearts, and meek.
 Let us not fall. Let us not fall!
 All Your good work in us complete,
 And seat us daily at Your feet.
 Your love, Your words, your name, how sweet!
 Let us not fall. Let us not fall!”**

There are dangers that are peculiar to every position. To those who live a very quiet life, there is the danger of the rust and the moth. And to those who live an active life, there is the danger of being cumbered with much service. You who are young are certainly in danger from impetuous companions, and yet it is remarkable that among the offenders, even against morality, mentioned in Scripture, we do not read of many who were young! David falls not into such foul sin until he is advanced in years, as if to show us that it is not age that gives strength to resist evil. Age brings experience, but unless Grace comes with the experience, it gets to be like the manna in the wilderness which bred worms and stank when men tried to feed upon it after its proper time. We are all safe while we are in God's hands, but we are, none of us, safe in our own keeping! And every position that we may occupy has its own peculiar perils. Do not be in haste to get away from a job in which you are tempted, for you will be tempted in *every* job and, possibly, the temptation which assails you in your present circumstances may be less powerful for evil than the one to which you would be exposed if you were to change your place. Many a man of God has leaped out of the frying pan into the fire. I have even known some who have thought that they were going to get into a port where they would never again suffer from storms—and they have gone out of their proper course in order to get into that port. And there the most dreadful hurricane they ever knew has come upon them! Always be afraid of not being afraid—and be always in fear when you feel that you are perfectly safe. When you realize your danger and fly to the Lord to guard you, then you are safe. But when you begin to think, “All is right with me, nothing will make me fall now,” you are not very far off a bad fall in which you may suffer serious hurt. May God keep you, my dear Brothers and Sisters. May He preserve each one of us till we see His face in Glory at the last!

Did you notice that the text indicates what a joy it will be to be kept from falling? Jude says, “Christ is able to keep you from falling, and to

present you faultless before the presence of His Glory *with exceeding joy.*” It will indeed be exceeding joy to be kept from falling and to be presented faultless at the end. I have often prayed that I might be able to say what George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, said just before he died. His words were these, “I am clear. I am clear. I am clear.” He felt that he had faithfully discharged his ministry and spoken all that the Spirit of God had taught him. And if I may say what he did—that I am clear of the blood of all men when I lay down my body and my charge—I will not ask anything more. And if each professing Christian here shall be clear at the last, and be able to say, with Paul, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith,” you will have exceeding joy! I do not think so much of the harps of gold and the streets that shine with dazzling splendor, and the other descriptions of the glories of Heaven, as of this—

**“May I but safely reach my Home,
My God, my Heaven, my All!”**

May I get where I shall never again sin and where I shall not even be tempted to sin! May I get where flesh and sense shall no more destroy the sacred pleasures of my soul! It will be exceeding joy, even to dancing and leaping of spirit, as the Greek has it, if we may but be presented faultless at the last, having been kept by Sovereign Grace even to the end! This must suffice concerning our danger.

II. Now secondly, I am to speak upon OUR SAFETY. “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling...to the only wise God our Savior.” Our safety lies in our Savior—“God our Savior.” Just think of that great Truth of God for a moment. When we first came to Christ, we rejoiced that He was a Savior—a *sinner’s* Savior. All our hope and comfort lay in the fact that God had appointed Him to be our Savior. Well now, Beloved, in looking forward to the temptations that will assail you in your future life, keep your eye on your Savior! You did not have Him to be a Savior for a time, to cleanse you from sin and then to leave you to fall back into sin! When you took Him to be your Savior, I hope you took Him for all your life and for eternity. That is how *He took you*—He espoused you unto Himself in an everlasting wedlock and, therefore, He would have you depend as much upon Him for sanctification as for justification—rely as much upon Him to keep you from sin as to keep you from Hell! And trust as much to Him to enable you to overcome your present temptation as you trusted to Him at the first to overcome your fear of condemnation. Christ is your Savior from beginning to end, so always regard Him in that light. And as your Savior, let it be very comforting to you to reflect that He is Divine—“The only wise *God* our Savior.” He who has undertaken to save you is no mere man and no angel—He is nothing less than the Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient God! Your peril can be averted by His Omnipotent might. The hidden dangers in your pathway all lie unveiled to His all-seeing eyes. You are safe, not because you can see and avoid the dangers that beset you, nor yet because you are strong

and can conquer your adversaries, but because your Savior is God and, therefore, you shall be saved, continuously saved, perfectly saved and presented as a saved one at the last!

Observe how Jude puts this precious Truth—“Unto Him that *is able* to keep you from falling.” Why does the Apostle lay such stress upon the ability of Christ? You know that our faith sometimes fails us concerning Christ’s ability and sometimes concerning His willingness to save us. One came to Christ and said, “Lord, if You will, You can make me clean.” And another said to Him “If you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” Now, in this matter to which Jude is referring, I suppose that we should not have had any doubt about God’s willingness because it must be the will of the thrice-holy God to keep His people from falling! If any question did arise, it would be concerning God’s *power*—not concerning His willingness.

And here let me remark that this is a very wonderful power. The power to create a world, the power to divide the rocks, the power to shake the mountains or set them on a blaze is a very inferior power compared with that which is able to keep us from falling because God has been pleased to make us free agents—and He never deprives us of our free agency. Yet, without the destruction of a quality which is necessary to our responsible manhood, God is nevertheless able to keep us from falling. Of course He could keep us from falling into certain sins by shutting us up in a prison, or by depriving us in some other way of the power to commit those sins. But He does not keep us in that way. He leaves us as free agents with every faculty and propensity that we had before. Yet, by some mysterious, Omnipotent working of His Holy Spirit—which we can no more understand than we can the blowing of the wind—He does keep His people from falling. If He turned them at once into angels, so that they never had a desire to sin again, that would be a simple process. But He lets them remain men and, as I know from my own experience, men with the same passions as before and with the same possibilities of sinning as before! And yet, by a Divine working which is nothing less than a continuous miracle, He keeps them from falling again into the sins in which they once indulged! And everyone who knows by experience the power of God to keep a child of His from falling, must and will magnify the name of the Lord, even as Jude does in this doxology!

Observe, too, that the Apostle puts God’s wisdom side by side with His ability—“to the only *wise* God our Savior.” You know that it needs great wisdom in a parent to keep his child from evil, but it needs far greater wisdom for God to keep men and women, whom He treats as men and women, and not as logs, or bricks, or stones, from falling into sin. And, oh, what Divine Wisdom there is in the dispositions of Providence and in the manifold workings of the Holy Spirit in using saints to protect saints, and even in using sinners to warn saints, in using holy pleasures to allure saints to good and using evils to drive saints from evil! What you and I owe to God’s rod we shall never know till we get to Heaven! The love

there is in every twig of it and in every smart and bruise that it makes, we shall never fully estimate until our faculties are enlarged beyond the narrow bounds of this finite state. It is the tender mercy of God that keeps some of you poor—and makes others of you so frequently depressed in spirit. It is God's loving kindness which prevents you from prospering in your endeavors and which makes you cry out in the bitterness of your spirit, "All these things are against me." God wounds us that He may heal us! He kills us that He may quicken us! He lays us low and digs out our very foundations that He may build us up to be fair temples in which He may abide forever!

So our safety is assured by the fact that we have a God who is able and is as wise as He is able to keep us from falling.

And then we have something more than mere safety, for the text adds, "*and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.*" We have this word, "present," several times in the New Testament. Paul wrote to the saints in Rome, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." He also wrote to the Christians in Corinth concerning his desire to present them "as a chaste virgin to Christ." To the Ephesians he wrote that "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it...that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." And here Jude writes concerning Christ presenting His people "faultless before the presence of His glory"—not presenting them unfallen, but "*faultless.*" I suppose there are some Brothers and Sisters who have grown so familiar with the idea of their own perfection that they can quite understand what it is to feel perfect. But I am so familiar with the sense of my own *imperfections* that it takes me a long while to grasp the fact that I shall one day be "without fault before the Throne of God." I can sit down, sometimes, with an aching head and believe that it will wear a crown, by-and-by. I can look at these hands and believe that I shall one day wave a palm-branch of victory. I can and do fully expect to wear the white robe and to sing the everlasting song in Glory. But it will be more than all this to be absolutely perfect—with never a risk of a hasty temper rising, or the fear of men checking one's lips from saying what is right! There will be no undue haste and, at the same time, there will be no sloth! There will be no preponderance of any Grace so as to cause it to grow into a fault and no deficiency in any point of character. To be faultless before men is a great thing. To be faultless before the devil so that even he cannot find any fault in us, is greatly to be desired. But the most wonderful thing of all must be to be presented by Christ "faultless before the presence of His glory." That is where the light is brightest and no speck of sin is to be seen! The saints shall be so perfectly purified by the Omnipotent Grace of God the Holy Spirit that even the Lord, Himself, in whose sight the heavens are not pure and who charges His angels with folly, shall look upon His

redeemed people and declare that they are faultless, holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight! Oh, blessed portion, glorious hope! This is something that is worth struggling for!

So, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, let us fight more valiantly than ever against our sins and corruptions! Armed with the two-edged sword of the Spirit, we shall win the day! He who is able to keep us from falling will not be satisfied with acting on the defensive for us and protecting us from our enemies, but He will enable us to carry the war into the enemy's country and we shall be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us"! And we shall have this resplendent character at last, that we shall be "without fault before the Throne of God." [See Sermon #2324, Volume 39—THE FOLLOWERS OF THE LAMB—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

III. The last thing upon which I have to speak is OUR GRATITUDE. I must speak upon it briefly, but I hope you will think and act upon it at great length. Yes, throughout your whole lives, and I shall do the same. The Apostle says, "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be Glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever."

So, then, the text winds up with the thought that *to God must be all the praise*. It is well to know on whose head we are to put the crown. If we could save ourselves, we might praise ourselves. But I trust that we are, none of us, so foolish as to imagine that we can do anything to save ourselves! I have heard of a vessel that was once in a storm—not a very severe one—but a gentleman on board thought it was and went about among the sailors and passengers finding fault with the captain's management of the vessel and saying that he was sure the ship would go to pieces, and that all on board would go to the bottom of the sea. He did so much mischief by his foolish talking that, at last, the captain said to him, "We must rely upon every man doing his duty. Will you go and hold that rope over there?" He went at once and there he stood like a martyr and held the rope until the storm had abated—and then he began congratulating himself upon the eminent part that he had played in saving the ship in that terrible storm! When he got too proud, the captain said to him, "I only gave you that bit of rope to hold, to keep you quiet. Your holding it was of no other use whatever."

Then the gentleman saw what a fool he had been! And when a man thinks he has done something towards his own salvation, if he could only know the truth of the matter, he would soon see what a fool he is. He was a far more sensible man who said that he was saved because Christ did His part and he did all the rest. Somebody asked him, "But what was 'the rest' that you did?" and he replied, "Why, Christ did it all and I only stood in His way and hindered Him all I could." That is about all that we shall ever do in the matter of our soul's salvation. It must rest with Christ alone, and our wisdom is to commit ourselves to Him who is able

to meet all the necessities of our case and to conduct us safely to our journey's end. But since, from the first to the last, salvation is of the Lord—

***“Then give all the Glory to His holy name,
For to Him all the Glory belongs.”***

Whenever you hear anybody praising some good minister whom God has blessed to him, join in his praises as one Brother should do concerning another, but then add, “We have had enough of that strain, dear Friend! “So now unto Him that is able to keep us from falling, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.” And if anybody should ever praise you for any spiritual help you may have given, always pass on the praise to Him that is able to keep you from falling, for He deserves it all. Give to Him, in the very highest degree that is possible, glory and majesty, dominion and power—the highest praise of which your thankful heart is capable and the deepest devotion to which your grateful spirit can attain! How much better we will praise God one day than we can ever do while we are in this body! Good old John Berridge, speaking of the saints above singing in Heaven, says—

***“O happy saints, who dwell in light,
And walk with Jesus, clothed in white!
Safe landed on that peaceful shore,
Where pilgrims meet to part no more.
Released from sin, and toil, and grief,
Death was their gate to endless life!
An opened cage to let them fly
And build their happy nest on high!
And now they range the heavenly plains,
And sing their hymns in melting strains.
And now their souls begin to prove
The heights and depths of Jesus' love.
Ah, Lord! With tardy steps I creep,
And sometimes sing, and sometimes weep.
Yet strip me of this house of clay,
And I will sing as loud as they!”***

And so it shall be with us, yet we shall always feel as if our loftiest praises could not rise to the height of His great love wherewith He has loved us. I remember saying in a sermon, one night, “When I get to Heaven, I will sing more loudly than anybody else, for I shall owe the most to Sovereign Grace.” At the close of the service, a good old Sister said to me, “You made a mistake in your sermon tonight.” “What was that?” I asked. “Why, you said that you would sing the loudest in Heaven, but you will not, for I shall, for I shall owe more to Grace than you will.” I soon found that all the 30 other Christians there were of the same opinion as that dear old soul—that each one of them would owe more to the Grace of God than all the rest! And surely, that will be the only contention among the birds of paradise—who shall sing the most sweetly to the praise of their adorable Lord!

But the text seems to me to say that while we are to give God the praise, and to give *Him, only*, the praise, and to give Him the best praise

that we can, *we are to give that praise to Him now*. Jude says, “*Now and ever.*” What? Are we to praise the Lord now for keeping us to the end? Will it not do if we praise Him when the end comes and we have been kept to the end? Will it not do if we praise Him when we are presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy? But can you not believe God’s promise that He will keep you to the end—and bless His name for it even now? Many a time you have expressed your gratitude to a friend when he has said, “I will do so-and-so for you.” You were sure that he would do what he said—his promise was enough for you! And as the Lord has promised to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, surely you can say—

***“And a ‘new song’ is in my mouth,
To long-loved music set!
Glory to You for all the Grace
I have not tasted yet!
I have a heritage of joy,
That yet I must not see—
The hand that bled to make it mine,
Is keeping it for me.”***

Now I close by saying that *this praise is to be perpetual*—“both now and *ever*. Amen.” We may begin now, but we must always keep on, as long as we live, praising Him who is able to keep us from falling. What? Keep on praising Him? Yes, even when the deep waters are all around you, still praise Him. And if they grow deeper, yet still praise Him. Let this be your soul’s resolve—

***“I’ll praise my Maker with my breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers:
My days of praise shall never be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures.”***

If I can send the children of God away from this service praising Him, good will have been done. But I wish that those who are not God’s people would feel a great longing after these good things! Some of you young people are just now starting in life. You have an excellent character and you hope you may be enabled to preserve it to the end. Let me just tell you of something that was a great help in bringing me to Christ. I knew a young man, a little older than myself, who was often held up to me as model. And he certainly was a model in many respects. But I saw him go wrong, sadly wrong. And then I thought within myself, “I may do just as he has done.” And when I heard it said that the Lord would keep His people right to the end—that Christ had 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, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand,” I must confess that the Doctrine of the Final Preservation of the Saints was a bait that my soul could not resist! I thought it was a sort of life insurance—an insurance of my character, an insurance of my soul,

an insurance of my eternal destiny. I knew that I could not keep myself, but if Christ promised to keep me, then I would be safe forever—and I longed and prayed to find Christ because I knew that if I found Him, He would not give me a temporary and trumpery salvation, such as some preach, but eternal life which could never be lost—the living and incorruptible Seed which lives and abides forever, for no one and nothing “shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Dear young people, do you not feel the same kind of drawing that I felt then? Do you not wish that you were Christ’s, that you might be kept through life honorable and consistent? May His gracious Spirit lead you to trust yourself to Jesus this very moment! Then you *will* be safe and saved forever! Yes, and you old people, too, and all of you, whatever your age may be, rely upon Jesus! Make Him your sole confidence and then He will keep you to the end!

When my dear old grandfather was dying, one of my uncles said to him, “Dr. Watts said—

**“Firm as the earth Your Gospel stands,
My Lord, my hope, my trust,”—**

but the aged saint said, “That won’t do for me now. ‘Firm as the earth.’ Why, the earth is slipping away from me! I need something firmer than the earth now. I like the doctor best, my boy, when he says—

**“Firm as His Throne, His promise stands,
And He can well secure
What I’ve committed to His hands,
Till the decisive hour.”**

“Sovereign Grace,” he said, “is my trust now! God’s promise standing firm as God’s Throne, and my faith linked to it. There is the safety of my spirit.” And so he passed away. It is a grand thing to feel that God’s Throne might sooner fail than that a saint can perish, for His Throne, itself, is established in righteousness! And He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness—faithful and just, not merely merciful and gracious! And His very faithfulness and justice require that He should keep the soul that has obeyed His will and committed itself to the Redeemer’s hands. May the Lord thus save us all, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

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

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

CHRISTIANS KEPT IN TIME AND GLORIFIED IN ETERNITY

NO. 634

A SERMON PREACHED
BY C. H. SPURGEON ON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”
Jude 24, 25.

OMITTING all preface it will be well to observe in what state of mind Jude was when he penned this doxology, what had been his previous meditations, and when we have done so we will endeavor to come directly to the text and observe what mercies he sums up in it and what praise is due from us to Him of whom he thus speaks.

I. Then, UNDER WHAT INFLUENCE WAS JUDE'S MIND WHEN HE PENNED THIS DOXOLOGY. Our first observation is that in writing this very short but very full Epistle, he had been led to consider the grievous falls of many others and in contemplating those failures he could not resist the impulse of penning these words, “Now unto Him that is able to keep us from falling.” You observe in reading that he mentions the Israelites who came out of Egypt. That was a glorious day in which the whole host met at Succoth, having just escaped from the thralldom of Egypt and now found themselves delivered from the whips and the lashes of the taskmasters and were no longer compelled to make bricks without straw and to build up palaces and tombs for the oppressors.

That was, if possible, a more glorious day than when God divided the Red Sea to make a way for His people. The depths stood upright in a heap when the elect multitude walked through. Do you not see them, as with songs and praises they are led all that night through the deep as on dry ground? They are all landed on the other side, and then their leader lifts up his rod and immediately there comes a wind and the waters return to their place. The infatuated Egyptian king, who with his hosts had followed them into the depths of the sea is utterly destroyed. The depths have covered them.

They sank as lead in the mighty waters! There is not one of them left. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel, saying, “I will sing unto the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” Is it credible, is it not too sadly *incredible* that this very people who stood by the Red Sea and marked the overthrow of God's enemies, within a few days were clamoring to go back into Egypt? And before many months had passed were for taking to themselves a leader that they might force their way back into the place of their bondage? Yes, and they who saw Jehovah's work and all His plagues in Zoan made to themselves a calf and bowed down before it and said, “These are YOUR gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.”

With tears in your eyes, look at the many griefs which studded the pathway of their forty years' wandering, and with many fears reflect that out of all that multitude which came out of Egypt, there were but *two* who lived to cross the Jordan! Aaron must put off the breastplate, for he has sinned against God. And even Moses, the meekest of men, must go to the top of Nebo and is only permitted to gaze upon the prospect of that land which he must never actually enjoy! Except for Caleb and Joshua there were none found faithful among all the tribes—and these alone shall enter into the goodly land which flows with milk and honey.

Now when Jude thought of this, I do not wonder that he began to consider the case of himself and of his fellow Believers united with him in Church fellowship at Jerusalem and elsewhere. And knowing that all of them who were truly brought up out of Egypt by Jesus shall surely enter into the promised rest, he cannot, he does not desire to resist the impulse of singing, "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever."

If YOU read on to the next verse, you perceive that Jude had another example in his mind's eye—the angels that kept not their first estate. We do not know much of angels, but from what we gather in Holy Scripture—perhaps tinged in our reading with some of the half-inspired ideas of Milton—we believe that angels are spirits vastly superior to ourselves. In intelligence they may well be so, even if they had been created upon a par—for they have had many years in which to learn and gather experience—whereas man's existence is but a handbreadth. We regard an angel with intense respect and while never paying any worship to those noble beings, we cannot but feel how little we are when compared with them.

One of these angels appears to have been named Lucifer, son of the morning. Perhaps he was a leader in the heavenly host and first among the princes of Heaven. He, together with multitudes of others, fell from their allegiance to God. We know not how. We have no idea if they were tempted, unless one of them tempted the other—but they kept not their first estate—they were driven out of Heaven. They were expelled from their starry thrones and therefore they are reserved in chains of darkness until the great day of account.

Now, my Brethren, can you think of the fall of angels without trembling? Can you think of the morning stars put out in blackness? Of the cherub, whose head did wear a crown, cast into the mire and his crown rolled into the dust? Can you think of these bright spirits transformed into the hideous fiends that devils are? Their hearts, once temples for God, now become the haunt of every unclean thing—themselves the most unclean? Can you think of that without feeling a tremor of fear lest you, too, should fall from your first estate? And without another, and a higher thrill of joy, when you think of Him who is, "able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy"?—

***"When any turn from Zion's way,
(Alas, what numbers do!),
I think I hear my Savior say,***

***‘Will you forsake Me too?’
Ah, Lord! With such a heart as mine,
Unless You hold me fast, I feel I must,
I shall decline,
And prove like them at last.’***

But we can also sing right joyously—“The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose, he will not, he will not, desert to its foes. That soul, though all Hell should endeavor to shake, He’ll never, no never, no never, forsake.” We might continue to follow Jude, but we will not do so. We prefer to add something which Jude has not put in his Epistle. Our first parent, Adam, lived in the midst of happiness and peace in the garden. Unlike ourselves he had no depravity—no bias towards evil. God made him upright. He was perfectly pure and it was in his own will whether he should sin or not. The balance hung evenly in his hands.

But you have not forgotten how on that sad day he took of the forbidden fruit and ate and thereby cursed himself and all of us! My Brethren, as you think of Adam, driven out of the Garden of Eden—sent out to till the ground from where he was taken—compelled in the sweat of his face to eat bread. When you recollect the paradise he left, the happiness and peace that have forever passed away through his sin, do you not hear the voice that says to you, as a depraved and fallen creature, “Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall”? Conscious of your own weakness as compared with your parent, Adam, you are ready to cry out, “O God, how can I stand where Adam falls?”

But here comes the joyous thought—Christ, who has begun with you, will never cease till He has perfected you! Can you help singing with Jude, “Now unto Him who is able to keep us from falling”? It strikes me that every time we mark an apostate and see the fall of a sinner or of a fellow professor, we should go down on our knees and cry, “Hold You me up and I shall be safe,” and then rise up and sing—

***“To our Redeemer God
Eternal power belongs,
Immortal crowns of majesty,
And everlasting songs.
He will present our souls
Unblemished and complete
Before the Glory of His face,
With joys divinely great.”***

This partly accounts for the text before us. But on a further reference to the Epistle we get another part of the thoughts which had exercised the Apostle’s mind. Observe, dear Friends, that the Apostle had a very vivid and distinct sense of the nature of the place into which those fell and of their utter ruin and destruction. Notice, concerning the children of Israel he says that, “God destroyed them that believed not.” What is it to be destroyed? Destroyed! This does not end with the white skeleton and the bleached bones which lay in the wilderness—a horror to the passerby! He means something more than even that!

Brought out of Egypt and yet destroyed! Take heed, professor! You may be brought into something like Gospel liberty and yet may perish! Take heed, you carnal professor, I say! You may fancy you have escaped the bondage of the Law, but yet you shall never enter into the rest which re-

mains for the people of God—you shall be *destroyed!* Let that word “destroyed” ring in your ears and it will make you bless God, who is able to keep you from falling, if it shall lead you to flee to Him for help!

Next he says of the fallen angels that they are, “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” What that may be, we can but roughly guess. Satan is allowed to go about the world. Still he wears his chains and he has a tether and the Lord knows how to pull him in, both by Providence and direct acts of power. We believe that these spirits are under darkness—a gloom—a thick darkness that may be felt hangs perpetually over their minds. Wherever they may be they are waiting till Christ shall come to summon them as rebellious creatures before His bar that they may receive their sentence and begin afresh their dreadful Hell.

And remember, dear Brothers and Sisters, unless eternal love shall prevent it, this case must be ours! We, too, must enter into places reserved in darkness, wearing everlasting chains, to endure eternal fire. We should do so, we *must* do so, if it were not for Him, “who is able to keep us from falling and present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.” Nor is this all, for if you will patiently read the next verse, you will see that Jude has, if possible, introduced a more graphic picture.

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are bright as the sun goes down. The inhabitants are merry with boisterous laughter. There is plenty in the barn. There is luxury in the hall, for the plain of Sodom was well watered and lacked for nothing. Down went that sun upon a disastrous evening—never to rise upon the most of those who were in that doomed city. At daybreak, just as the sun is beginning to shine upon the earth, angels had hastened Lot and his family out of the city—and no sooner had they reached the little city of Zoar than straightway the Heaven is red with supernatural flame and down descends a terrific rain—as if God had poured Hell out of Heaven! He rained fire and brimstone upon the cities and the smoke of their torment went up so that Abraham, far away to the west, could see the rolling cloud and the terrible brightness of the fire, even at midday.

And as men go to the “Lacus Asphaltites,” or the Dead Sea, they see to this day where death has reigned. There are masses of asphalt still floating upon the surface of that sea where there is nothing that lives. No fish swim in its turbid streams. There are indubitable evidences there of some dread judgment of God. And as Jude thought of this, he seemed to say, “Oh God, preserve us from such a doom, for this is the doom of all apostates, either in this world, or in that which is to come, thus to be consumed with fire.” And as he remembered that God would keep His people, he blessed that protecting hand which covers every saint and he wrote down, “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling.”

I have a thought in my mind. I cannot, of course, tell whether it is right or not, but it strikes me just now—the author’s name is Jude—Judas. Did he recollect Judas, his namesake that was called Iscariot, as he penned these words? He had known him, probably had respected him as the others had done. He had marked him that night when he sat at the table and like others said, “Is it I?” Probably Jude was very surprised when he saw

Iscariot take the sop and dip in the dish with the Savior. And when he went out he could scarcely believe his own ears when the Savior said that he that betrayed Him had gone forth!

He must have known how Judas kissed the Son of Man and sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. He could not but be aware how in remorse he hanged himself and how his bowels gushed out. And I think the shadow of the doom of Judas fell upon this better Judas while he penned these words—and he seems to say with greater emphasis—“Unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, unto Him be glory forever and ever.” Thus you see, dear Friends, we are getting into the track, I think, of Jude’s thoughts—he thought about the failures of others and the terrible way in which they had fallen.

Yet again, by your leave, Jude had a very clear view of the greatness of the sins into which apostates fall. Probably there is not in the whole compass of Holy Writ a more fearful picture of the sin of backsliders and apostates than in the Epistle of Jude. I remember preaching to you one evening from that text, “Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.”

I remember how you trembled—myself trembling most with such a terrible message to deliver! Where could such a text or simile be found but in the book of Jude? The sins of apostates are tremendous. They are usually not content with the average of human guilt. They must make themselves giants in iniquity. None make such devils as those that were once angels and none make such reprobates as those who once seemed to bid fair for the kingdom of Heaven! These go into filthy dreams, into sensuality—“they give themselves over to fornication and go after strange flesh,” as he has put it.

In fact, where can we set the bounds to which a man will go, when he crucifies the Lord that bought him and puts Him to an open shame? Oh, Beloved, as I think of the sin into which these apostates have gone, I cannot but feel that you must bless God with Jude, that there is One “who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”

II. I might continue in this strain, but perhaps I had better not. I would rather turn to THE BLESSINGS OF WHICH JUDE SPEAKS. He seems to ascribe in this doxology three blessings, at least, to the power of the Lord Jesus. The first is ability to keep you from falling and for this, I am sure, the highest praise is due when you consider for a moment the dangerous way. In some respects the path to Heaven is very safe. It is so as God made it. But in other respects there is no road so dangerous as the road to eternal life. It is beset with difficulties.

In some of our mountain climbing we have gone along narrow pathways where there was but a step between us and death—for deep down beneath us was a gaping precipice—perhaps a mile in perpendicular descent. One’s brain reels at the thought of it now and yet we passed along quite safely. The road to Heaven is much like that. One false step, (and how easy it is to take that, if Divine Grace is absent), and down we go!

What a slippery path is that which some of us have to tread. You know that there are a million opportunities in a single week for your foot to slip and for your soul to be ruined. There are some spots, I believe, upon some of the more difficult Swiss mountains where no man ought to go at all, and where, if any must go, they should be only such as have become most accomplished mountaineers through years of practice—for one has to cling to the side of the rock—to hold on, perhaps, by bushes or stones that may be there, with nothing for the feet to rest upon except, perhaps, an inch of projecting crag!

And so we go creeping on with our backs to the danger, for to look down upon it would be to make the brain reel and cause us to fall. And the result of falling, of course, would be the end of life—the body would be dashed into a thousand pieces. Such is truly the way to Heaven. You must all have passed some such difficult places, and, in looking back, I can only, myself, say, “Unto Him that has kept me from falling, when my feet had well near gone and my steps had almost slipped. Unto Him be glory forever and ever!”

But next you have to think of the weakness of the *person*. Some men may travel roads which would not be safe for others and what are you, my brother pilgrim, but a little babe? It is unsafe to trust you along the pathway to Glory. In the best roads you are soon tripped up. Those feeble knees of yours can scarcely support your tottering weight. A straw might throw you and a pebble could wound you. Oh, if you shall be kept, how must you bless the patient power which watches over you day by day! Reflect upon your tendency to sin. The giddiness of that poor brain, the silliness of that deceitful heart. Think how apt you are to choose danger—how the tendency is to cast yourselves down—how you rather are inclined to fall than to stand, and I am sure you will sing more sweetly than you have ever done, “Glory be to Him who is able to keep me from falling.”

Then you have to notice further the many foes who try to push you down. The road is rough enough. The child is weak enough. But here and there is an enemy who is in ambush who comes out when we least expect him and labors to trip us up, or hurl us down a precipice. I suppose you never did see a man fall from a precipice. Some of you may have been fools enough to go and see a man walk on a rope, in which case, I believe, you have incurred the guilt of murder. Because if the man does not kill himself, you encourage him to put himself where he probably might do so. But if you have ever really seen a man fall over a precipice, your hair must surely have stood on end—your flesh creeping on your bones as you saw the poor human form falling off the edge—never to stand in mortal life again! Surely as you left the place where you stood and fled away from the edge of the precipice, you cried, “O bless Him that made me stand and kept my feet from falling!”

How alarmed you would be if you were in such a position and had seen one fall and that same monster who had pushed him over should come to hurl you over, also! And especially if you felt that you were as weak as water and could not resist the gigantic demon! Now just such is your case! You cannot stand against Satan! A little maid made Peter deny his Master and a little maid may make the strongest among us tremble sometimes.

Oh, if we are preserved in spite of such mighty enemies who are ever waiting to destroy us, we shall have great cause to sing praises “unto Him that is able to keep us from falling.” Only Christ has the power to take us into Heaven.

You may keep a man from starving, but you cannot take him into the king’s palace and present him at court. Suppose that a man had been a rebel. You might hide him from the pursuers and aid in his escape but you could not take him into the presence of the king and cause him to live in the royal castle of the land. But you see that Christ preserves His people though they have offended God and daily provoke His justice. And He does more, for He presents them to the King of kings in the high court of Heaven itself! This it is which makes the other blessing so great. We are not anxious to always live in this world. We find ourselves in a strange land here and would be glad to fly away and be at rest. This is to us a wilderness state and we rejoice to know that Canaan lies beyond.

Our heavenly Joshua can lead us into it! He can fight for us against Amalek and slay all our foes and preserve us from falling. But better still He can and He will take us into the Promised Land and give us to see the “better country, even the heavenly,” and to there will He conduct all the host so that not one shall perish or be left behind! Christ gives preservation, but He adds *glorification*—and that is better still! Here then, my Brothers and Sisters, is a thought of incomparable sweetness! We are safe while in this world—

**“More happy, but not more secure are
The glorified spirits in Heaven.”**

And we, too, shall be, before long, as happy as they are because He will present us with them before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy!

We cannot, however, enlarge on this point, though there is much, very much, that ought to be said. We proceed to notice the condition in which the saints are to be when presented—they are to be “faultless”—for our Lord never stops short of perfection in His work of love. That Savior who means to keep His people to the end will not present them at last just alive, all black and foul as when He helped them out of the miry places. He will not bring them in, as sometimes gallant men have to bring those whom they have rescued from drowning, with just the vital spark within them. No, our Savior will carry His people safe from falling through this life and He will present them, how?—faultless!

Oh, that is a wondrous word, “faultless”! We are a long way off from it now. *Faulty*, yes. We are now faulty through and through—but Jesus Christ will never be content till we are *faultless*. And this He will make us in three ways—He will wash us till there is not a spot left, for the chief of sinners shall be as white and fair as God’s purest angel. The eyes of justice will look and God will say, “No spot of sin remains in you.”

You may have been a drunkard, a thief, an adulterer and what not—but if Christ, in mercy, undertakes your case, He will wash you in His blood so thoroughly that you shall be faultless at last! You will be without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Now we are defiled and covered with sin as if we had “lay among the pots.” We have reveled in uncleanness till we are as if we had been “plunged in the ditch.” Our own flesh must abhor us if we could but see how defiled we are by nature and by practice.

Now all this shall be completely removed and we shall be whiter than snow! You remember that when the disciples looked at Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, they saw that His garments were white and glistening—whiter than any fuller could make them! And so shall we be hereafter—whiter and fairer than any earthly art can attain to. The sea of glass, clear as crystal, will not be whiter nor purer than we shall be when washed in the blood of the Lamb. But that is only one way.

If a man had no faults it would still be necessary for him to have some virtues. A man cannot enter Heaven simply because transgression is put away. The Law must be kept! There must be a positive obedience to Divine precepts. Religion is no negation, an absence of things merely evil. It is the presence of the good, the true, the pure. But since even when we do our best we shall be unprofitable servants, we need something higher than we can ever produce by these, our feeble and sinful powers! Therefore the Lord our God imputes to us the perfect righteousness of His Son Christ Jesus, for—

***“Lest the shadow of a spot
Should on my soul be found,
He took the robe the Savior worked,
And cast it all around.”***

The righteousness of Jesus Christ will make the saint who wears it so fair that he will be positively faultless! Yes, perfect in the sight of God! There is a fullness in this which it delights my soul to dwell upon. A man may be faultless in *my* sight, but not in the sight of those who know him intimately. A Christian may be so holy as to escape the censure of all just men. But ministering spirits, who read the heart and deal with the inner man, can speak of evil which has not come to light before human eyes. And we know that God sees even more clearly than angelic spirits, for He charges them with folly.

Now, God is to see no iniquity in us, no shortcoming. We shall be tried in His scales and set in the light of His Countenance and be pronounced “faultless.” God’s Law will not only have no charge against us, but it will be magnified in us and honored by us. We shall have imputed to us that righteousness which belongs to Him who has done all this for us that He might “present us faultless before the presence of His glory.”

Fourthly and best, perhaps, the Spirit of God will make new creatures of us. He has begun the work and He will finish it. He will make us so perfectly holy that we shall have no tendency to sin any more. The day will come when we shall feel that Adam in the garden was not more pure than we are. You shall have no taint of evil in you. Judgment, memory, will—every power and passion shall be emancipated from the thralldom of evil. You shall be holy even as God is holy and in His Presence you shall dwell forever!

How altered we shall be! Look within and see if your experience is not like the Apostle Paul’s who found a potent law in his members so that when he would do good, evil was present with him—and when he desired to escape some evil, he did at times the very thing he allowed not but would most heartily condemn! So is it with us—we would be holy, but we are like a ball that has a bias in it—we cannot go in a straight and direct line. We try to hit the mark but we are prone to start on one side like a

deceitful bow. There is a black drop in our hearts which taints all the streams and none of them can be pure.

But it will be all changed one day—we shall be re-made and all the evil gone, gone forever! How joyous must have been the entrance of Naaman, the Assyrian, into his house after he had washed in Jordan's stream and found his flesh restored to him as the flesh of a little child! I think I see him as the watchman on the tower has given notice of his approach in the distance. The whole household is at the gate to meet him and to see if he comes back in health. His wife, if eastern customs would not permit her going forth in public, would look from her easement to catch a glimpse of his face—to see if the dread spots were gone.

How joyful the shout—"He is cured and clean!" But this is nothing compared with the rapture of that hour when the everlasting doors will be lifted up and we, made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, shall enter into the joy of our Lord! Or take another illustration from Scripture and try and realize the happiness which reigned in the family of the maniac out of whom the legion of devils had departed. Perhaps he had been home before when under the evil influence of the foul fiends—how terrified they doubtless were with the mad frenzy of the poor unhappy wretch as he cut himself with stones and broke all bonds put on him in tenderness and love in order to restrain his self-imposed misery and wounds.

And now, as he comes once more to his house, they see him approach and the old terror seizes them because they know not that he is a changed man, but suppose him still to be the demented being of days gone by. But he enters the door as calm and composed as if he had returned from a long journey and was only anxious to relate the incidents of the pilgrimage and greet loved friends once more! With no fierce frenzy rolling in his eyes, no loud discordant shrieks rending the air, all is the demeanor of a well-regulated, joyful, yet chastened mind! As all this is realized by his friends and they hear what great things the Lord has done for him! What joy must have been in that family circle! I should like to have seen it. I am sure it was a choice exhibition of real human bliss such as earth only witnesses now and then.

It must have been a beam of purest radiance lighting up the scene, like the splendor which Saul of Tarsus saw on the road to Damascus as it lit up the day when he was made a new creature in Christ Jesus. Here, also, we can most truthfully say that the joy, though great, was not comparable to the joy which shall be ours when we are changed into new creatures—when we shall be clothed and in our right mind—no longer prone to wander among the black mountains of iniquity and no more tempted to abide among those dead in trespasses and sins. Then we shall be ever holy and always living unto God and made like He! Oh this is joy indeed! Not only will He keep us from falling, but He will present us faultless!

My Brothers and Sisters, at the thought of this I think you must join with Jude and say, "Now unto Him that is able to do all this, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever." I cannot speak to you as I would wish upon such a theme as this—who could? But when we get to Heaven our song shall be more sweet, more loud, because we shall understand better the dangers from which we have escaped and how very

much we owe to Him who has kept us and brought us safely through all the vicissitudes of life, unto the place He has prepared for us. Meanwhile, never let us be forgetful of that mighty goodness which holds us fast and will not let us go.

III. Still I have not done with the text. I have already forestalled my next thought, but I think it requires a special notice. Observe, the Apostle adds, "To present us faultless before His presence, WITH EXCEEDING GREAT JOY." Who will have the joy? My Brothers and Sisters, *you* will have it! Have you ever mused upon the parable of the Prodigal Son? I know you have! No one can have diligently read the Bible without staying to think over, again and again, of that most tender and instructive of our Lord's parables.

Now, I ask, Who was happy at that feast? Don't you think it was the prodigal? What was the character of those thoughts filling his heart and making it heave as if it would burst? How overjoyed he must have been! How utterly crushed down with his father's love and all the unexpected marks of kindness and affection! He had had his days of feasting and sinful merriment, but no songs could ever have been so sweet as those which rung round the old roof-tree to welcome him home! No viands had ever tasted so delicious as that fatted calf! And no voice of any companion or witching charmer at his guilty feasts had ever sounded such melodious notes in his ears as those words of his father, "Let us eat and be merry."

So will it be with us when we have been restored to ourselves—when wearied of the world and hungering and thirsting after righteousness we shall have been led to the Father's house by the cords of love which the Spirit shall cast around us. When safely brought through all the weary pilgrimage from the far-off country, we shall tread the golden streets and be safe inside the pearly gates and have the past all gone forever among the things we never shall meet again. What rapture will be ours! This will be Heaven, indeed, when sin shall be gone, Satan shut out, temptation gone forever! You shall have a joy of which you cannot now conceive. Rivers of pleasure shall flow into your soul! You shall drink such draughts of bliss as your soul has never known this side the grave.

Oh, be joyful now with a respite of the joy which is to be revealed! And afterwards you shall have the fullness of Divine bliss forever and ever! Who shall be happy? Why, the minister will be happy! What pleasure was there in the heart of the shepherd youth, David, the son of Jesse, when he had gone forth to do battle with the lion and bear in order to rescue the lamb out of their jaws when God had delivered him and made him successful in his attempt! How gladly he must have watched the little lamb run to the side of its dam and in the mutual pleasure of these poor dumb animals I am sure he found a joy.

And so all the shepherds in Heaven—all who have been faithful pastors who have cared for and tended their flocks—shall find a bliss unspeakable in welcoming to Glory those darling ones preserved from the power of the devil, "who goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." Yes, ministers will be sharers in this happiness! I think we shall have a special joy in bringing our sheaves with us. If it may please God to keep me from falling—if I just get inside the door of Heaven with some of the

many thousands that God has given to me as my spiritual children—I will fall prostrate before His feet the greatest debtor to His mercy that ever lived and one that has more cause than any other of His creatures to thank Him and ascribe to Him glory and honor, dominion and power, forever and ever!

Here I am, and the children whom You have given me! Unto You be praise! And what will be the joy of angels, too? How exceedingly great their bliss will be! If there is joy among the angels over one sinner that repents, what will there be over ten thousands times ten thousands, not of repenting, but of *perfected* sinners, cleansed from every stain, set free from every flaw? Oh, you cherubim and seraphim, how loud will be your music! How you will tune your harps anew! How shall every string wake up to the sweetest music in praise of God. “Let the sea roar and the fullness thereof” at the thought of the glorious joy at God’s right hand!

Who will have joy, I ask again? Why Christ will have the most joy of all! Angels and ministers and you, yourselves, will scarcely know such joy as He will have—all His sheep safely folded—every stone of the building placed in its proper position. All the blood-bought and blood-washed ones—all whom the Father gave Him—delivered out of the jaw of the lion! All whom He covenanted to redeem effectually saved—His counsel all fulfilled, His stipulations all carried out—the Covenant not only ratified, but fulfilled in all its jots and tittles! Verily, none will be so happy as the great Surety in that day!

As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall Christ rejoice over you. You know it is written that, “for the joy set before Him He endured the Cross, despising the shame.” And also, “He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be abundantly satisfied.” Now this satisfaction and joy will be our Lord’s when the whole Church is faultless and complete in the presence of His Glory—but not till then. In that hour, when all His jewels are reckoned up and none found missing, He shall rejoice anew in spirit and shall thank God with yet more of joy than He did when here on earth and thought of this day in prospect and by that thought nerved Himself for cruel suffering and a death of shame. Yes, Christ will be glad!

Our Head will have His share of joy with all the members! And happily He will be able to bear more, as He most certainly deserves, and will have more. Who will have joy? Why, God Himself will have joy! It is no blasphemy to say that the joy of God on that occasion will be infinite. It is always infinite! But it will be then infinitely displayed before His creatures’ gaze. Listen to these words—you cannot fathom them, but you may look at them. It is written, “The Lord your God will rejoice over you with joy. He will joy over you with singing” (Zeph. 3:17). As I have said on this platform before, I think that is the most wonderful text in the Bible in some respects—God Himself singing!

I can imagine, when the world was made, the morning stars shouting for joy. But God did not sing. He said it was “very good,” and that was all. There was no song. But oh, to think of it, that when all the chosen race shall meet around the Throne, the joy of the Eternal Father shall swell so high that God, who fills all in all, shall burst out into an infinite, godlike song! I will only put in this one more thought, that all this, Beloved, is

about YOU. All this you have a share in, the least in the Church, the poorest in the family, the humblest Believer—this is all true of you—He will keep you from falling and present you spotless before His Presence with exceedingly great joy.

Oh, cannot you join the song and sing with me, “To the only wise God and Savior be glory and honor, dominion and majesty forever. Amen”? For my part I feel like that good old saint who said that if she got to Heaven, Jesus Christ should never hear the last of it. Truly He never shall—

***“I’ll praise my Savior with my breath;
And when my voice is at last in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers—
My days of praise shall ne’er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures.”***

I want you to go away with a sense of your own weakness and yet a belief in your own safety. I want you to know that you cannot stand a minute—that you will be damned within another second unless Divine Grace keep you out of Hell. But I want you to feel that since you are in the hands of Christ you cannot perish—neither can any pluck you out of His hands! And, poor sinners, my heart’s desire is that you may be put into the hands of Christ tonight! That you may have done with trusting yourselves. You can ruin, but you cannot save yourselves.

“Oh Israel, you have destroyed yourself, but in Me is your help found.” Christ alone can save you! Oh look out of self to Christ! Trust yourselves in His hands! He is “able to keep you from falling.” You cannot even stand upright yourselves and if He should set you upright you cannot keep so for a minute without His protecting care. If saints need to be kept, how much more need have you to seek the shelter of the Savior’s wounded side? Flee there as the dove to the cleft of the rock! If holy men of God cry daily for pardon and profess to have no right of themselves to Heaven, how much more urgent is your case? You must perish if you die as you are! You can never make yourself faultless, but Christ can.

He wants to do it—He has opened a fountain for sin and for uncleanness—wash and be clean! Again, I say, look to Jesus! Away with self and cling to Christ! Down with self-confidence and up with simple faith in Christ Jesus! I shall not let you go, dear Friends, without singing one verse which I think will express the feeling of each one of us—

***“Let me among Your saints be found
Whenever the Archangel’s trump shall sound,
To see your smiling face.
Then loudest of the crowd I’ll sing,
While Heaven’s resounding mansions ring
With shouts of Sovereign Grace.”***

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