

THE OBJECTIVE OF CHRIST'S DEATH

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A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY,
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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“Who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”
Galatians 1:4, 5.

THE Apostle Paul, in his writings, is notable for the fact that he scarcely ever mentions the name of the Lord Jesus Christ without pausing to praise and bless Him. There are many benedictions and hallelujahs in Paul's Epistles which might have been omitted so far as the run of the sense is concerned, but not one of them could be omitted because his heart was so aglow with love to his Divine Master that he only needed to mention that dear name and out burst his praises in a second! Brethren, let us all try to keep a heart like the Apostle's—so full of love to Christ that we have only to come across His track and we shall at once fall down and worship and adore Him or, upon the wings of holy love mount up nearer to His Throne.

I am quite sure that when Paul was writing the Epistle to the Galatians, he was eager to get at his task. The Galatians had turned aside from the Gospel of God's Grace and Paul was in dead earnest to bring them back to the grand Truth of the doctrine of salvation and justification by faith in Christ. He was burning to get at his work of trying to win them back to the old paths, but it seemed necessary and courteous to begin with a salutation. In that salutation occurred the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, so off went the Apostle! Earnest as he was to get to the special subject on which he was about to write, he felt that he must tarry a while and write a little to the honor of his Divine Master. So we read, “Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” Then He gets at the business he has in hand—“I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that called you into the Grace of Christ to another gospel: which is not another; but there are some that trouble you and would pervert the Gospel of Christ,” and so on.

He is red-hot upon that subject, yet he must stop a minute or two to pen some few words of praise to his glorious Lord and Savior. The old proverb says, “Prayer and provender hinder no man's journey.” And to stop a little while, to praise and bless the name of Jesus Christ, hinders no man's argument! Whatever it is that you have to do, if your Master

shall cross your path, pause a while and praise Him as best you can. When Mary sat at Christ's feet, she was not wasting her time, she was employing it then to the highest possible profit! And when you and I get away from the Master's work to think of our Lord, Himself, and to praise Him and commune with Him, we are by no means wasting our time! We are gathering strength and laying it out to the best possible purpose with regard to our future work and warfare.

I can see the great wisdom of the Apostle in acting in such a fashion as this. He is about to write to these Galatians concerning their leaving the Gospel—what is the best way to make them sorry for turning aside from the faith? Why, to set before them Jesus Christ, Himself, who is the very essence and glory of the Gospel! I have heard of one who preached much against certain errors, but there was another servant of the Lord who never preached against those errors, but who always proclaimed the Gospel right out straight—and when one asked him why he did not attack the errors, he said, “I do preach against them most effectually. If there is a crooked stick about and you want to show how many crooks there are in it, you need not do anything except lay a straight one down by the side of it—and the crookedness of the other stick will be detected at once.” So the Apostle admires, extols and adores the Lord Jesus Christ and thus, in the best possible manner, introduces what he has to say concerning the errors of the Galatians. Oh, for a burst of sunlight from the face of Christ! Then would the shadows of today soon fly away! They who have never seen Him may love modern novelties and falsehoods, but if they have beheld His face and have been won by His charms, they will hold that He who is the same yesterday, today and forever, is infinitely to be preferred to all the inventions of men! I could say no less than this when I noticed the position in which our text is placed.

But now let us come to the text itself. To my mind it contains four things. First, *what our Lord Jesus Christ aimed at with regard to His people*—“that He might deliver us from this present evil world.” Secondly, *what our Lord has done to secure this end*—“Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world.” Thirdly, *why He did it*—“According to the will of God and our Father.” And fourthly, *what we shall say concerning it*—“To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

I. First, then, WHAT DID OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AIM AT WITH REGARD TO HIS PEOPLE?

To preserve them from going down into the Pit? To rescue them from Hell? To bring them to Heaven? Yes, all that, but more than that! His great objective with regard to His people is to deliver them from this present evil world. We are living in this present evil world and, as Paul called it by that name, we need not alter the phrase, for we cannot help knowing that it is *still* an evil world. And in it are God's redeemed and chosen people, by nature part and parcel of that world, equally fallen, equally estranged from God, equally set on mischief, equally certain to go down into the Pit of destruction if left to themselves. The objective of Christ is to carve out a people from this great brook of stone—it is His purpose to find His own people who were given to Him before the earth was—and to deliver them from the bondage and the slavery in which they are found in

this Egypt, of which they seem to form a part, though to the eyes of Christ they are always as separate and distinct as the Israelites were when they dwelt in the land of Goshen.

What does the Apostle mean by saying that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world?

First, Christ came that He might *deliver His people from this common condemnation of this present evil world*. This is the City of Destruction which is to be burned with fire and Christ's business is to fetch His people out of it. Therefore He sends His Evangelists to cry to them, "Flee from the wrath to come! Tarry not in the city, but escape for your lives—you are in a doomed world which will certainly be destroyed—therefore, flee to the only Shelter from the coming storm." The Lord desires that we should be so clear of this world that when it is condemned we may not share in the condemnation. It is Christ's purpose to bring us into a state of justification before God, through His blood and righteousness, that we may not perish in the common wreck in the day when the world shall be consumed with fire, but that we may have our ark wherein, as righteous Noah was preserved from the deluge of water, we may be saved from the fiery floods of Divine Wrath. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world that He might deliver us from that condemnation which now rests upon all the race of Adam except those who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel.

But He came with this further purpose, *to deliver us from the condition in which the world is found*. In Paul's day the world was in a horrible state. Then the slave was chained to his master's door, like a dog, and slept at night in a hole under the stairs—and the slave's master indulged in all kinds of debauchery and sin. The cruelty of the Romans satisfied itself with gladiatorial shows where men murdered each other to make a public holiday. Christ came to gather out a people even from among these abominations—and He did gather them out—a holy people who could not and would not live as the rest of the world lived! They did not go away into the deserts, or hide themselves in caves, living as hermits, but they went up and down in the earth, attending faithfully to the duties of daily life, yet everywhere marked as differing from other men. Their moral tone—their whole thought about the things of this world and the next—was altogether different from that of the rest of mankind, for Christ had come to draw them out of the kennel of iniquity in which others lived like beasts, to lift them up out of the bog of sin and make them to be a pure-minded, holy, kind, generous, loving people who should be like their Master, Jesus Christ!

For this purpose, the Savior died. He thought it worth His while, even, to die upon the Cross that He might thereby make a better, purer, nobler, more unselfish, more devout people than as yet had appeared in the Roman or Jewish world. And this is what He is still doing in this present evil world! He is lifting up men and women out of the filthiness in which they have been wallowing—making them love holiness, purity, temperance—and hate all that is evil in the sight of God.

This, then, is the great objective of Christ's death—to deliver us from the world's condemnation, and to deliver us from the world's condition.

He also came *to deliver us from the world's customs*. There are many things which a worldling does which a Christian cannot do. I need not enlarge upon the tricks in trade which are all too common in the present day, but if you are Christ's own, I charge you, do not even *think* of them, but let your course be straight as an arrow's and let your conscience be clean as the driven snow! It is not for God's people to say, "It is the custom of the trade, so we may do it." What have you to do with that? It is the custom of the trade to ruin men's souls, but the Churches of God have no such custom, nor have those who follow closely after the Lord Jesus Christ. He has come on purpose that we may not conform to the sinful fashions of men, but that we may have a way of our own, or rather, that we may make Christ's way the way of holiness, to be our way.

Hence, He has come *to deliver us from the spirit of the world*. The spirit of the world is, "I can swim. So, if everybody else is drowned, there will then be the more room for me." "I fight for my own hand," says the worldling, "and if, in the process, I crush the widow and the fatherless, I cannot help that—they should not get in my way." The rules of political economy do not permit of anything like mercy—they are as inflexible as the laws of nature. They are something after this fashion—"Grind down the poor and get as much as you can out of them for as little money as possible. Care for nobody but yourself. Mind the main chance. Make money, honestly, if you can, but if not, make it anyway, only keep clear of the law, for it would be a mistake to fall into its clutches." Now, Christ has come to gather out of the world a people who will not be possessed with this detestable spirit, but who will resolve to live for others rather than for themselves. We are to consider those who are around us and to think what influence our conduct will have upon them. We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. We are to love even our enemies. We are to do good to the unthankful and to the evil. We are, in all ways, and according to the measure of our ability, to copy the example of our Father who is in Heaven, who makes His sun to shine and His rain to fall upon the evil as well as upon the good. O Friends, look what Christ has come to do—even to separate to Himself a people like Himself out of this present evil world!

Yet once more, He will do this *by delivering us from all fear of this world*. What a great many of you there are who dare not do anything but what society agrees should be done! If society says, "This is the right thing to do," you call it "etiquette," and you do that particular thing. Then all the people around you are very respectable and you want to be counted respectable—and the consequence is that you dare not call your souls your own, and you do not act as you would wish to until you have first asked your neighbors' permission. There are multitudes of people still in the condition of abject slavery to those who are around them! But when Christ came into the world, He gathered out of the world a people who were not afraid of anybody. After His good Spirit had renewed them, they walked about fearless of the greatest earthly potentates! There was the great Emperor of Rome, for instance, and who dared ever contradict what the Emperor of Rome said? The man who wrote our text did!

And Paul before Nero is a vastly greater man than the cruel tyrant upon the throne. When they bring the saints before the judgment seat, the Roman consul says, "Offer sacrifice to idols. You know the law—take that incense and put it on the altar, this very moment." One of the guards says, "Sir, this man is obstinate and rebellious. I have told him what he is to do, but he refuses." The consul says, "Do you, impious wretch, refuse to worship Jupiter? Put that incense on the altar this moment, or you shall be torn in pieces with hot irons." The man before him replies, "I am a Christian." "Is that your answer?" "Yes, Sir, my only answer. I am a Christian." "Then tear him with the pincers! Let him learn what my hot irons can do." They do it and the brave saint bears it. Perhaps a groan escapes his lips, for flesh is frail, but when he is asked again, "Will you worship Jupiter?" He replies as before, "I am a Christian." "To the lions with him, then! To the lions with him," cries the enraged persecutor, and he is taken off to the amphitheatre. But as that poor simple peasant walks across the arena, the wild beasts, themselves, seem cowed before him and, though he is soon torn in pieces, everybody goes home from the amphitheatre saying, "What a strange being that man was! He seemed utterly devoid of fear!"

Yes, the early Christians were without fear and without reproach, for Christ came to set them free from fear of this present evil world.

O Brothers and Sisters, were the martyrs as brave as this, and are we going to yield to whatever laws and rules the world lives to lay down for us? Do we mean to believe its current theology, or philosophy, and do or not do as it may dictate? For my part, "I would as well not be as live to be in awe of such a thing as I myself." Since Christ has given me my liberty, I am His servant, and whether I am in fashion or out of fashion is no concern of mine so long as I please Him! Dear Friends, let it be so with you, I pray you, and may the Lord daily divide you more and more from the world so that, at home or abroad, everybody can see that you are not of the world! Love men, seek their good and in the highest and best sense be far more loving to the world than the world is to itself, but still, fear it not. Why should you? It is "the present evil world" which "lies in the Wicked One." It is for you bravely to bear your protest against the world every day you live, for to this end did Christ come to this earth, "that He might deliver us from this present evil world."

II. We have seen what our Lord aimed at by His death. Now, secondly, WHAT DID CHRIST DO TO THIS END—to deliver us from this present evil world?

The answer of the text is, "*He gave Himself.*" I will not say that He gave His royal crown, that diadem which did outshine the sun. I will not say that He laid aside His azure vest and hung it on the sky as He came down to earth. I will not say that He gave up for us the thrones and royalties of Heaven. You know that He did all this and far more—nor need I remind you that, when upon earth, He gave up all that He had, even to His last garment, for they parted His raiment among them and for His vesture they cast lots. I need not say that He gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, nor that He gave His hands to the nails and His feet to the cruel iron. I need not say that

He gave His body, His soul and His spirit, for you have it all in these three words—"He gave Himself."

"He gave Himself *for our sins*." That is the wonder of Christ's death! Our sins could not be put away except by His dying in our place. There was no expiation of our sin and, consequently, no deliverance from its condemnation except by Christ's bearing in our place, that wrath of God which was due to us—and He did it. "He gave Himself for our sins." I need not say more upon that point except just this. Do not, I pray you, let us permit Him in any sense or measure to fail in His supreme objective. "He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world," therefore, out of gratitude to Him, if for no other reason, let us not be of the world, or like the world, servants of the world, slaves of the world. What? Did Christ die to deliver us from the world and do we go back to it and deliberately put our necks under the world's yoke, wear the world's yoke and become, again, the world's slaves? I am ashamed of myself and of you whenever we, for a moment, act as the ungodly world acts and become as the world is—self-seeking, rebellious against God's will, living contrary to the Divine Law of Christ. Oh, let every drop of blood He shed on Calvary purge you from all resemblance to the world! Let the dying Savior's cries move you to hate the sin which the world loves! From Calvary, hear Him cry, "Come out from among them and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." By the blood with which He bought you, be you not of the world, seeing that He has redeemed you from among men that you might be altogether His own!

How does the death of Christ deliver us from the world? It does this *by removing from us the condemnation of our sin*. Having borne our sins in His own body on the tree, Christ has forever freed us from the penalty that was our due. You know that is the very essence of the Gospel and you also know that I preach this Truth of God every time I stand here, so I need not enlarge upon it now.

Christ has also delivered us from the world *by making sin hateful to us*. We say to ourselves, "Did sin kill Christ? Then we cannot play with that dagger that stabbed our Lord! How can we be friendly with the world that cast Him out and hanged Him on a tree? O murderous sin, how can I give you lodgment in my heart when you killed the Altogether Lovely One?" Men speak hard things of regicide, but what shall I say of *deicide*? And sin is that deicide which slew the Christ of God! Yet, marvel of marvels, by that death on the Cross He has crucified us to the world and the world to us and so He has delivered us from this present evil world!

I may add that Christ has also delivered us from the world *by the splendor of His example in giving Himself to die for His enemies* and by the Glory of His infinite merit whereby He purchased back that image of God in Adam which sin had obliterated. He gave Himself, the very image of God, and more than that, *God Himself*, that He might give back to us that image of God which long ago we had lost. Thus has Christ delivered us from this present evil world. Judge, Sirs, whether He has thus delivered you.

III. Time flies, therefore I must hasten on to the third question which is, WHY DID CHRIST DO THIS?

First, because our holiness was included in the purpose of God. The text says, "According to the will of God and our Father." Mr. Charles Simeon used to say that there were some, in his day, who thought that the very word, "predestination," sounded almost like blasphemy. And I have no doubt that there are some left who cannot bear to hear of the will and the purpose of God! But to us these words sound like sweetest music! I do not believe that there ever would have been a man delivered from this present evil world if it had not been according to the will, the purpose, the *predestination* of God, even our Father! It needs a mighty tug to get a man away from the world. It is a miracle for a man to live in the world and yet not to be of it—it is a continuous miracle of so vast a kind that I am sure it would never have been worked if it had not been according to the will of God our Father. Yet so it stood in the Divine Decree, that there should be a people chosen from among men—a people who would be called out from among the mass of the ungodly, who would be drawn by supernatural power to follow after that which is right and good and holy. A people who would be washed in the blood of Jesus and renewed by the Holy Spirit in the spirit of their minds and, therefore, should be a peculiar people in the world but not of it—the people of God set apart to Himself, to be His, now, and His, hereafter forever and ever! I delight to remember that this is the will of God, even our sanctification, our separation from the world!

Now I want to push home this Truth of God into your very hearts. If this is, indeed, the purpose of God, let us see to it, my Brothers and Sisters, every one of us, that we *fulfill that purpose in our daily lives*. Let us come out from the world more clear and straight than we have ever done. I believe that there would be much more persecution than there is if there were more real Christians. But we have become so like the world, that the world does not hate us as it once did. If we would be more just, more upright, more true, more Christ-like, more godly, we would soon hear all the dogs of Hell baying with all their might against us! But what of that? It would just be the fulfillment of the Divine Purpose and God would be well pleased with us. Come, then, and let us fall back upon the Omnipotent strength which always slumbers within the Divine will. Lord, if it is Your will, fulfill it in me! If this is Your purpose, accomplish it in me! Oh, what brave men and women those early saints were! I do not wonder that our friend cried out, just now, when I depicted the martyr—but there were tens of thousands of such holy men and women in the days of persecution!

Have you never heard of her whom they set in a red-hot iron chair because she would not turn away from Christ, or of that other poor feeble woman who was tossed on the horns of bulls, but who, nevertheless, spoke up right bravely for her Master as she came to die? Yes, and there have been boys and girls, who, for Christ's sake, sooner than sin, have braved the most fearful deaths! Remember John Bunyan when he refused to give up preaching? They put him in prison and said to him, "Mr. Bunyan, you can come out of prison whenever you will promise to cease preaching the Gospel." He said, "If you let me out of prison today, I will preach again tomorrow, by the Grace of God." "Well," they said, "then you must go back to prison," and he answered, "I will go back and stay

there, if necessary, till the moss grows on my eyelids, but I will never deny my Master." This was the stuff of which the godly were made, then! May the Lord make many of us to be like they—men and women who cannot and will not do that which is evil, but will, in the name of God, stand to the right and the true, come what may!

IV. Lastly, WHAT SHALL WE SAY CONCERNING IT ALL? Why, just this, "To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

First, *God is glorified in Christ's death*. Has the Father given His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us? Then there is Glory enough in Jesus Christ upon the Cross to last throughout eternity! Fix your eyes upon that bleeding Savior—behold the glorious Justice of God in laying guilt on Him, punishing it on Him and behold, also, the inconceivable love of God in thus putting His Only-Begotten to death that we might live through Him! You need not range the world around to see the Glory of God in nature, though that is a delightful employment, for there is enough Glory in the Cross of Christ to last throughout all eternity. The Apostle says, "To whom be glory forever and ever." How long that is, I cannot tell. "Forever" is without any end, but Paul says, "Forever *and* ever," and there is Glory enough in the Cross of Christ to last forever and ever, as long as the Eternal Jehovah, Himself, exists!

Well, then, has Jesus Christ delivered us from the world? Have we fled to Him and been pardoned? Are we accepted in the Beloved? Then *let us begin to glorify God now*. Let us glorify His dear Son. Let us praise Him. Let every beat of our heart proclaim our joyous thankfulness and so continually yield sweet music to God. I would that every breath were like a verse of a Psalm and our whole life an endless hallelujah to His Glory!—

***"I would begin the music here,
And so my soul should rise!
Oh for some heavenly notes to bear
My passions to the skies,"***

for it is, indeed, a subject of great praise to be separated from the world, and to be made holy to the Lord.

But, Brothers and Sisters, *when you once begin the music, never stop* because, as the Apostle says, Glory is to be given to God, "forever and ever." I saw, last week, a Brother from the backwoods of America, and he said to me, "Twenty years ago I was in your vestry and you did me much good by something that you said to me." I asked, "What did I say?" And the good man replied, "You said, 'Brother, as a minister, there are two occasions upon which you ought to preach Jesus Christ.' I enquired, 'What are those two occasions?' You answered, 'In season and out of season.'" Well now, there are two occasions upon which we ought to praise God—"in season, and out of season!" Praise Him when you feel like praising and when you do not feel like it—praise Him till you do! When you can say—

"I feel like singing all the time,"

then sing! And when you say, "I do not feel like singing," make a point of singing just to let the devil know that he is not your master! It is a good thing to praise Christ in the presence of His friends. It is, sometimes, a better thing to extol Him in the presence of His enemies. It is a great thing to praise Jesus Christ by day, but there is no music sweeter than

the nightingale's—and she praises God by night. It is well to praise the Lord for His mercy when you are in health, but make sure that you do it when you are sick, for then your praise is more likely to be genuine. When you are deep down in sorrow, do not rob God of the gratitude that is due to Him—never stint Him of His revenue of praise whatever else goes short. Praise Him, sometimes, on the high-sounding cymbals—crash, crash—with all your heart and being. But when you cannot do that, just sit and give Him praise in solemn silence in the deep quiet of your spirit.

To be redeemed from a dying world, to be fetched out from a condemned world, to be brought out from slavery, to be made a child of God is enough to make you emulate the angels and even to excel them! They cannot rise to so high a pitch of gratitude as you ought to reach, even now, and ought to keep up all the days of your life—and then, “forever and ever” in the Presence of the King.

O you poor souls who are still in the world, God help you to get out of it! O you who are lost and ruined, there is no hope for you but in Jesus Christ our Savior! Tell all men about Him, Brothers and Sisters! You who are saved, talk about Christ everywhere! Let no man whom you ever meet be without a knowledge of the way of salvation. “I do not know what to say,” says one. “I do not yet know much about it myself.” Do not say it, then, if you do not know it! But, if you do know it, proclaim it! If you have tasted and handled it, proclaim it as best you can—in broken English, if in no other style—

***“Proclaim to sinners round
What a dear Savior you have found.”***

So, even through you the purpose for which Christ bled shall be accomplished, that is, the severance of His elect from the great mass of mankind among whom they lie, and this shall be to the praise of the glory of His Grace forever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: JOHN 17.

This matchless chapter contains that great intercessory prayer of Christ for His people which may most properly be called “the Lord’s prayer.”

Verse 1. *These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to Heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.* What a sight it must have been to see the Divine Intercessor in this, His last great prayer before He poured out His soul to death! We can never read this chapter so as fully to enter into its meaning, for there must always be in it a depth far greater than our experience can fathom. A man must die and enter Heaven before he can fully realize all that Christ meant when He said, “Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.”

2. *As You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.* Notice the doctrine of this verse. Here is the mention, both of a general and a particular relation to Christ. “You have given Him power over all flesh.” Never think of setting a limit to the value of Christ’s atoning Sacrifice! Never dream that you can

understand all its influences and all its bearings. By His death, Christ has power over all flesh. But notice, also, the special purpose and objective of redemption. Observe how it applies particularly to the elect of God. The motive for the Father's giving Christ power over all flesh is this, "that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him."

3. *And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.* The knowledge of God and the knowledge of the Messiah, the Sent One—this is not only life, but it is life that can never die—"This is life eternal." Have you, dear Friend, received this eternal life? Do you know the only true God? Do you know Jesus Christ whom He has sent? Then, at this very moment, you possess eternal life and you shall never perish, for eternal life is a life that cannot possibly die!

4, 5. *I have glorified You on the earth: I have finished the work which You gave me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the Glory which I had with You before the world was.* This is such a prayer as never could have been prayed by a mere man and you cannot understand this prayer at all apart from the Manhood and the Deity of Christ combined. No human being could have written such a prayer as this even if it had been proposed to him to write a prayer that would be equally suitable to God and man. It is only suitable to Christ, the God-Man, and it is, in itself, one of the best evidences of the Inspiration of Scripture! I dare take my stand upon this chapter, alone, and say that here we have the finger of God, the writing of the Holy Spirit—and here we have the very Words of Him who was God and Man in one Person.

6. *I have manifested Your name to the men which You gave me out of the world: Yours they were, and You gave them to Me; and they have kept Your Word.* How gracious it was on our Lord's part to say the best He could of His disciples! These 12 men had learned but little of the Divine Word, but they had believed what they had been taught, so Jesus could say of them to His Father, "Yours they were, and You gave them to Me; and they have kept Your Word."

7, 8. *Now they have known that all things whatever You have given Me are of You. For I have given to them the Words which You gave Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from You, and they have believed that You did send Me.* I want you to notice how the Lord Jesus Christ makes no boast of being "an original thinker." On the contrary, He says to His Father concerning His disciples, "I have given to them the Words which You gave Me." I would rather repeat the Word of God, syllable by syllable, than I would *dare* to think for myself apart from the revealed will of God! What are men's thoughts, after all, but vanity educes from vanity? But the Word of the Lord endures forever—it shall abide when even Heaven and earth shall pass away! Hence our Savior lays great stress upon this fact, "I have given to them the Words which You gave to Me." Brother minister, may you and I, when we come to die, be able to say to the Lord concerning our people, "I have given to them the Words which You gave to me."

9. *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me; for they are Yours.* In this, our Lord's last great intercessory prayer, He was especially engaged in petitions for His own people. There

is a sense in which He intercedes for all mankind, but in the higher and more special sense referred to in this verse, Christ's own chosen ones occupied all His thoughts—"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me; for they are Yours."

10-11. *And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You.* Christ is God and, therefore, looking into the future, He can speak of His approaching departure as though it had already happened.

11. *Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one, as We are.* See the plaintive power of this prayer of a tender heart. First, our Lord shows His love by praying for us and then by dying for us. Notice what importance He attaches to the unity of His people—"that they may be one, as we are." Let us all try to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." I suppose that while we are in this world, we shall never all think alike, but let us all think alike about our Lord—and gather to His name and feel a holy unity through His Spirit! When shall it be again said that all Christ's disciples have "one Lord, one faith, one Baptism"? Alas, they tore His seamless robe and it still remains torn through the schisms and errors which divide His people, one from another!

12, 13. *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name: those that You gave Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to You.* These are sweet Words with which to die. Oh, that you and I might have them in our hearts, if not on our lips, in our expiring moments! "And now come I to You." Our Lord thinks nothing of the bloody way by which He was to go to the Father. What though the Cross, nails and spear are in the road? He thinks comparatively little of all those terrible things, for He looks beyond them. And He says, "Now come I to You."

13. *And these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves.* Have you ever obtained this blessing, Brothers and Sisters—Christ's joy in you—what is more, Christ's joy fulfilled in you? God grant to all of us to know, by happy experience, the meaning of this wondrous expression!

14, 15. *I have given them Your Word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the Evil One.* "Do not let the world so besmear and defile them as to do them mischief. Let them keep on as lamps burning in dark places. Take them not out of the world, but keep them from the Evil One."

16-18. *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Your Truth: Your Word is Truth. As You have sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.* As the Father took Jesus out of the bosom of His love and bade Him go as His missionary to men, so does Jesus keep us, for a while, away from the bosom of His Glory that we may stop here to be missionaries among our fellow men. Are we fulfilling our calling? Are we justifying the commission which Christ has laid upon us? Oh, that we were doing so to the fullest extent that is possible!

19. *And for their sakes I sanctify Myself*—“For their sakes I set Myself apart.”—

19, 20. *That they also might be sanctified through the Truth. Neither pray I for these alone*—This little handful of followers gathered about Me—

20. *But for them, also, which shall believe on Me through their word.* In the glass of prevision, Christ saw us, my Brothers and Sisters, and He saw all the myriads, yet unborn, who are to be gathered to His Cross and to bow before His feet—and He prayed for them all—“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them, also, which shall believe on Me through their word.”

21, 22. *That they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are One.* Let us, more and more, lay aside everything that divides, especially that evil heart of unbelief, and pride, and self-seeking which is the great sect-making faculty. May we get rid of that evil and come more and more to realize that all men who are really in Christ are, and must be, one. If we are members of one body, one blood courses through our veins and gives us life! One Spirit is in the one body of Christ. There cannot be two lives. There cannot be two beings within the one body of Christ. All true Believers must be one and truly, if we speak the Truth of God to one another concerning our Lord—and especially if we speak much to God together in prayer—we straightway perceive that we are one!

23-26. *I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them, as You have loved Me. Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory, which You have given Me: for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world has not known You: but I have known You and these have known that You have sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them.* Here the Master ended His sweet prayer and went off to His terrible passion in Gethsemane.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—387, 399, 580.

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

OUR MANIFESTO

NO. 2185

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JANUARY 25, 1891,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT AN ASSEMBLY OF MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.**

DELIVERED ON FRIDAY MORNING, APRIL 25, 1890.

***“But I make known to you, Brethren, that the Gospel
which was preached of me is not after man.”
Galatians 1:11.***

To me it is a pitiful sight to see Paul defending himself as an Apostle and, doing this, not against the gainsaying world, but against cold-hearted members of the Church! They said that he was not truly an Apostle, for he had not seen the Lord. And they uttered a great many other things derogatory to him. To maintain his claim to the Apostleship, he was driven to commence his Epistles with, “Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ,” though his work was a self-evident proof of his call. If, after God has blessed us to the conversion of many, some of these should raise a question as to our call to the ministry, we may count it a fiery trial—but we shall not conclude that a strange thing has happened to us. There is much more room to question *our* call to the ministry than to cast a doubt upon Paul’s Apostleship! This indignity, if it is put upon us, we can, by His Grace, cheerfully bear for our Master’s sake. We need not wonder, dear Brothers, if our ministry should be the subject of attack, because this has been the lot of those who have gone before us—and we should lack one great seal of our acceptance with God if we did not receive the unconscious homage of enmity which is always paid to the faithful by the ungodly world! When the devil is not troubled *by* us, he does not trouble *us*. If his kingdom is not shaken, he will not care about us or our work, but will let us enjoy inglorious ease. Be comforted by the experience of the Apostle of the Gentiles—he is peculiarly our Apostle—and we may regard his experience as a type of what we may expect while we labor among the Gentiles of our own day.

The treatment which has been given to eminent men while they have lived has been prophetic of the treatment of their reputations after death. This evil world is unchangeable in antagonism to true principles, whether their advocates are dead or living. They said, more than 1,800 years ago—“Paul, what of him?” They still say so. It is not unusual to hear dubious persons profess to differ from the Apostle and they even dare to say, “There, I do not agree with Paul.” I remember the first time that I heard

this expression. I looked at the individual with astonishment. I was amazed that such a pigmy as he should say this of the great Apostle! Altogether apart from Paul's Inspiration, it seemed like a cheese-mite differing from a cherub, or a handful of chaff discussing the verdict of the fire! The individual was so utterly beneath observation that I could not but marvel that his conceit should have been so outspokenly shameless. Notwithstanding this objection, even when supported by learned critics, we still agree with the Inspired servant of God. It is our firm conviction that to differ from Paul's Epistles is to differ from the Holy Spirit—and to differ from the Lord Jesus Christ, whose mind Paul has fully expressed! It is remarkable that Paul's writings should be so assailed! But this warns us that when we have gone to our reward, our names will not be free from aspersion, nor our teaching from opposition. The noblest of the departed are still slandered. Be not careful as to human judgment of yourself in death or in life, for what does it matter? Your real character, no man can injure but yourself, and if you are enabled to keep your garments clean, all else is not worth a thought.

To come more closely to our text. We do not claim to be able to use Paul's words exactly in the full sense which he could throw into them, but there is a sense in which, I trust, we can each one say, "I make known to you, Brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man." We may not only say this, but we ought to be able to say it with thorough truthfulness. The form of expression goes as far as Paul was known to go towards an oath when he says, "I make known to you, brethren." He means, I assure you most certainly—I would have you to be certain of it—"that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man." On this point he would have all the brethren know past all doubt.

From the context we are sure that he meant, first of all, that *his Gospel was not received by him from men*. His reception of it, in his own mind, was not after men. And next, he meant, that *the Gospel itself was not invented by men*. If I can hammer out these two statements, we will then draw practical conclusions from them.

I. First, TO US THE GOSPEL IS NOT AFTER MEN AS TO THE MODE BY WHICH WE HAVE RECEIVED IT. In a certain sense we received it from men as to the outward part of the reception, for we were called by the Grace of God through parental influence, or through a Sunday school teacher, or by the ministry of the Word, or by the reading of a godly book, or by other agency. But in Paul's case, none of these things were used! He was distinctly called by the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, speaking to him from Heaven and revealing Himself in His own light. It was necessary that Paul should not be indebted to Peter, or James, or John—even in the way in which many of us are indebted to instrumentality—so that he might truly say, "I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ." Yet we also can say this in another sense. We, also, have received the Gospel in a way beyond the power of man to con-

vey it to us—men brought it to our ears, but the Lord, Himself, applied it to our *heart*. The best of the saints could not have brought it home to our hearts, so as to regenerate, convert and sanctify us by it. There was a distinct act of God, the Holy Spirit, by which the instrumentality was made effectual and the truth was rendered operative upon our souls.

So I note that *not one among us has received the Gospel by birthright*. We may be the children of holy parents, but we are not, therefore, the children of God. To us it is clear that, “that which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and nothing more. Only, “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Yet we hear of persons whose children do not *need* conversion. They are spoken of as being free from natural corruption and *born* children of God—having a Divine Grace within which only needs to be *developed*. I am sorry to say that my father did not find me such a child. He found out early in my life that I was born in sin, shaped in iniquity and that folly was bound up in my heart! Friends and teachers soon perceived in me a natural depravity and, assuredly, I have found it in myself! The sad discovery needed no minute research, for the effect of the evil stared me in the face in my character.

This tradition as to our being born with a holy nature is gaining foothold in the professing church, though contrary to Scripture—and even to the confessions of faith which are still avowedly maintained! Certain preachers hardly dare formulate it as a doctrine, but it is, with them, a kind of chaotic belief that there may be productions of the flesh which are very superior and will serve well enough *without* the new birth of the Spirit. This tacit belief will lead up to birthright membership and that is fatal to any Christian community, wherever it comes to be the rule! Without conversion, in certain fellowships, young people may drift into the church as a matter of course, but the church becomes only a part of the world—with the Christian name affixed to it!

May we never, in our Churches, sink into that condition! That religion which is a mere family appendage is of little worth! The true seed are “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” We have not received our faith by tradition from our parents—and yet, some of us, if true faith could be so received, would certainly have thus received it, for if we are not Hebrews of the Hebrews, but, according to our family tree, we are Puritans of the Puritans, descended throughout many generations of Believers. Of this we make small account before God, though we are not ashamed of it before men. We have no father in our spiritual life but the Lord, Himself, and we have not received that life, or the Gospel, by any carnal parentage, but of the Lord alone!

Brothers, we have not received the Gospel, nor do we now receive it, *because of the teaching of any man, or set of men*. Do you receive anything because *Calvin* taught it? If so, you had need look to your foundations. Do you believe a doctrine because *John Wesley* preached it? If so, you have reason to mind what you are doing. God’s way, by which we are to receive

the Truth of God, is to receive it by the Holy Spirit! It is helpful to me to know what such-and-such a minister believed. The judgment of a holy, godly, clear-sighted, gifted Divine is not to be despised—it deserves to have due weight with us. He is as likely to be right as we are and we should differ from a Grace-taught man with some hesitancy. But it is a very different thing to say, “I believe it on this good man’s authority.”

In our raw state as young Christians, it may not be injurious to receive the Truth of God from pastors and parents, and so on, but if we are to become men in Christ Jesus, and teachers of others, we must quit the childish habit of dependence on others and search for ourselves! We may now leave the egg and get rid of the pieces of shell as quickly as may be. It is our duty to search the Scriptures to see whether these things are so—and more—it is our wisdom to cry for Grace to appropriate each Truth and let it dwell in our inmost nature. It is time that we should be able to say, “This Truth of God is now as personally my own as if I had never heard it from lips of man! I receive it because it has been written on my own heart by the Lord, Himself. Its coming to me is not after men.”

There is an opinion current in certain circles that you must not receive anything unless it is taught you of men—the word, “men,” being swallowed up and hidden away, but being there, after all, under the term—“*the church.*” The church is set up as the great authority! If she has sanctioned it, you dare not question it! If she decrees, it is yours to obey! But this is to receive a gospel “after man” with a vengeance. And the process involved is a strange one. You must trace a dogma as coming through a continuous visible church and this will lead you through the *Cloaca Maxima* of old Rome. Though the Truth of God is manifestly clear and pure and proves itself to be the Water of Life to you, yet you must not accept it—you must take yourself to the muddied stream which can be traced through the foul channel of a continuous church, which for ages has apostatized!

My dear Brethren, a doctrine’s being believed by what may, in courtesy, be called “the church,” is no voucher for it! The most of us would almost regard it as being a question to be raised whether teaching can be true which has been vouched for by those great worldly corporations which have usurped the name of churches of Christ. Several sects claim Apostolic succession and if any possess it, the Baptists are the most likely, since they practice the ordinances as they were delivered. But we do not even care to trace our pedigree through the long line of martyrs and of men abhorred by ecclesiastics. If we could do this without a break, the result would be of no value in our eyes, for the rag of “Apostolic succession” is not worth warehouse-room! Those who contend for the fiction may monopolize it if they will. We do *not* receive the Revelation of God because it has been received by a succession of fathers, monks, abbots and bishops! We are right glad when we perceive that certain of them saw the Truth of God and taught it—but that fact does not make it the Truth of God to us.

We would, each one, say, "I make known to you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man." We never think of quoting the community of men called "the church" as the ultimate authority with conscience. "We have not so learned Christ."

Furthermore, I hope I shall speak for all of you here when I say that *we have received the Truth of God personally by the revelation of it to our own souls by the Spirit of the Lord*. Albeit that in so large a company as this I fear there may be a Judas, and the, "Lord, is it I?" may well be passed round with holy self-suspicion, yet we can all say, unless fearfully deceived, that we have received the Truth of God which we preach by the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit. Let us turn to our diaries, though the dates are now far away in the long-ago. We remember when the Light of God broke in and revealed our lost estate and thus began the groundwork of our teaching. Ah, Friends, the darker doctrines which make up the foil of the priceless jewels of the Gospel—do you not remember when you received them with power? That I was guilty, I believed, for I was so taught—but then and there I *knew* in my soul that it was so! Oh, how I knew it! Guilty before God, "condemned already," and lying under the present curse of a broken Law, I was sorely dismayed. I had heard the Law of God preached and I had trembled as I heard it, but now I felt an inward conviction of personal guilt of the most piercing character. I saw myself a *sinner*—and what a sight is that! Fearfulness took hold upon me and shame and dread. *Then* I saw how true was the doctrine of the sinfulness of sin—and what a punishment it must involve. That doctrine I no longer received of men!

The precious doctrine of peace through the precious blood of Jesus we also know by inward personal teaching. We used to hear and sing of the great Sacrifice and of the love of Him who bore our sins in His own body on the tree. But now we stood at the foot of the Cross—for ourselves we beheld that dear face and gazed into the eyes so full of pity—and saw the hands and feet that were fastened to the wood for our sakes. Oh, when we saw the Lord Jesus, as our Surety, smarting for our offense, *then* we received the Truths of Redemption and Atonement in a way that was "not after man"!

Yes, those gracious men who have gone to Heaven did preach the Gospel to us fully and earnestly—and they labored to make known Christ to us! But to reveal the Son of God in us was beyond their power! They could as easily have created a world as have made these Truths of God vital to us! We say, therefore, each one from his inmost soul, "I make known to you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man," so far as the way by which we have come to know and feel it within our own souls!

Since our first days we have experienced a gradual opening up of the Gospel to our understanding, but in all that process, our real progress has been of *God*—not of men. Brethren, you read commentators—that is

to say, if your own comments are worth hearing you read the books of godly men—that is to say, if you, yourselves, ever say anything worth reading, yet your spiritual learning, if it is true and real, is of the Lord's imparting. Do we learn anything, in the most emphatic sense of learning, unless we are taught of the Lord? Is it not essential that God the Spirit should lay home the Truth of God which has been spoken to you, even by the ablest instructor? You have continued to be students ever since you left College, but your Tutor has been the Holy Spirit. By no other method can our spirits learn the Truth of God but by the teaching of the Spirit of God. We can receive the shell and the outer form of theology, but the real Word of the Lord, itself, comes by the Holy Spirit who leads us into all Truth.

How sweetly the Spirit has taught us *in meditation!* Have you not often been surprised and overcome with delight as Holy Scripture has opened up as if the gates of the Golden City had been set back for you to enter? I am sure that you did not, then, gather your knowledge from men, because it was all fresh to you as you sat alone with no book before you but the Bible and yourself receptive, scarcely thinking out matters, but drinking them in as the Lord brought them to you! A few minutes' silent openness of soul before the Lord has brought us in more treasure of Truth than hours of learned research! The Truth of God is something like those stalactite caverns and grottoes of which we have heard, which you must enter and see for yourself if you would really know their wonders. If you should venture there without light or guide, you would run great risks, but with blazing torch and an instructed leader, your entrance is full of interest. Look! Your guide has taken you through a narrow winding passage where you have to creep, or go on bended knees! At last he has brought you out into a magnificent hall and when the torches are held aloft, the far-off roof sparkles and flashes back the light as from countless jewels of every hue!

You now behold Nature's architecture and cathedrals are, therefore, toys to you. As you stand in that vast pillared and jeweled palace, you feel how much you owe to your guide and to his flaming torch. Thus the Holy Spirit leads us into all Truth and sheds the Light of God on the eternal and the mysterious! This He does in certain cases very personally. Then He fills us with complete forgetfulness of all our immediate surroundings and we commune only with the Truth of God. I can well understand how philosophers, while working out an absorbing problem, have seemed lost and oblivious to all the world besides. Have you never felt a holy absorption in the Truth while the Spirit has filled you with its glorious vision? It has been so with many of the saints while taught of God. They are not likely to give up to popular clamor what they have thus received!

How often has the Lord taught His servants His own Truth *in the school of tribulation!* We speak well of meditation—it is as silver—but tribulation is as much fine gold! Tribulation not only works patience, but patience

brings experience and, in experience, there is a deep and intimate knowledge of the things of God which comes by no other means. Do you know what it is to be in such pain that you could not bear one more turn of the screw? And have you, then, in faintness fallen back upon your pillow and felt that even then you could not be more happy unless you were caught up to the third Heaven? Then has it been verified to some of us that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. While lying in passive peace, it may be you have seen a Scripture come forth like a star between the clouds of a tempest, and it has shone with such luster as only the Lord God could have given to it. Depression of spirit and torture of body have been forgotten while the bright promise has made your soul full of light!

There is a place in the far-back desert which you can never forget. There grows a bush. A very unpromising object is a bush—but it is sacred to you—for there the Lord revealed Himself to you and the bush burned with fire, but was not consumed. You will never unlearn the lesson of the burning bush! Do we know any Truth of God till the Holy Spirit burns it into us—and engraves it on our soul as with an iron pen and with the point of a diamond? There are ways of learning for which we are very grateful, but the surest way of learning Divine Truth is by having the Word of God engrafted so as to take living hold upon the soul! Then we do not only *believe* it—we give our *life* to it—it lives in us and, at the same time, we live upon it! Such Truth throbs in every pulse, for it lives in us and colors our being. The devil insinuates questions, but we are not accountable for what he pleases to do, and we care the less, because he now whispers into a deaf ear. When once the soul, itself, has received the Truth of God, and it has come to permeate the entire being, we are not accessible to those doubts which before pierced us like poisoned arrows!

I may add, concerning many of the Truths of God and the whole Gospel system, that we have learned the Truth, thereof, *in the field of sacrifice and service with our Lord*, so that to us it is not after man. If you do not believe in human depravity, accept a pastorate in this wicked London and if you are true to your commission, you will doubt no more! If you do not believe in the necessity of the Holy Spirit to regenerate, take charge over a cultured and polished congregation that will hear all your rhetoric, and will remain as worldly and as frivolous as it was before! If you do not believe in the power of the atoning blood, never go and see Believers die, for you will find that they trust in nothing else! A dying Christ is the last resort of the Believer—

***“When every earthly prop gives way,
He, then, is all my strength and stay.”***

If you do not believe in the election of Grace, live where multitudes of men come under your notice and persons most unlikely are called out from among them in surprising ways—and it will grow upon you! Here comes one who says, “I have neither father, mother, brother, sister, nor

friend who ever enters a place of worship.” “How came *you* to believe?” “I heard a word in the street, Sir, quite by accident, that brought me to tremble before God.” Here is the election of Grace! Here comes another, dark in mind, troubled in soul and she is a member of a family—all of them members of your Church—all happy and rejoicing in the Lord. And yet this poor creature cannot lay hold upon Christ by faith. To your great joy, you set before her Christ in all His fullness of Grace and she becomes the brightest of the whole circle, for they never knew the darkness as she did, and they can never rejoice in the Light of God as she delights in it! To find a greatly-loving saint you must find one who has had much *forgiven*.

The woman that was a sinner is the only one that will wash Christ's feet. There is raw material in a Publican which you seldom find in a Pharisee. A Pharisee may polish up into an ordinary Christian, but somehow there is a charming touch about the pardoned sinner which is lacking in the other. There is an election of Grace and you cannot help noticing, as you go about, how certain Believers enter into the inner circle, while others linger in the outer courts. The Lord is Sovereign in His gifts and does as He wills—and we are called to bow before His scepter within the Church as well as at its portal. The longer I live, the more sure I am that salvation is all of Grace and that the Lord gives that Grace according to His own will and purpose.

Once more, some of us have received the Gospel because of *the wonderful unction that has gone with it at times to our souls*. I hope that none of us will ever fall into the snare of following the guidance of impressions made upon us by texts which happen to come prominently before our minds. You have judgements and you must not lay them aside to be guided by impressions. But for all that and at the back of all that, there is not a man here that has led an eventful, useful life but must confess that certain of those acts of his life, upon which his whole history has hinged, are connected with influences upon his mind which were produced, as he believes, by supernatural agency! A passage of Holy Writ, which we have read a hundred times before, took us captive and became the master of every thought. We steered by it as men trust the polestar and we found that our voyage was made easy thereby. Certain texts are, to our memory, sweet as wafers made with honey, for we know what they once did for us and the recollection is refreshing. We have been revived from a fainting fit, nerved for a desperate effort, or fired for a sacrifice by a Scripture which became no longer a word in a book, but the very voice of God to our soul—even that voice of the Lord which is full of majesty!

Have you not noticed how a turn of a word in a text has made it seem all the more fitted for you? It looked a very small point, but it was essential to its effect, just as a small notch in a key may be the exact form which makes it fit the lock. How much may hang on what seems, to the unspiritual, to be nothing more than a slight verbal distinction, or an unimportant turn of expression! A thought of primary importance may turn

upon the singular of plural of a word. If it is the Greek word, itself, the importance cannot be overestimated, but in an English word, in the translation, there may be well-near equal force according as the Word is true to the original. The many, who can only read our marvelous English Bible, come to prize its words because the Lord has blessed them to their souls. A simple Welsh friend believed that our Lord must have been a Welshman, because, he said, he always speaks *to me* in Welsh.

To me it has often seemed as if the Well-Beloved of my soul had been born in my native village, had gone to my school and had passed through all my personal experiences, for He knows me better than I know myself. Although I know He was of Bethlehem and Judea, yet He seems like one of London, or of Surrey. No, more—I see in Him more than manhood could have made Him—I discern in Him a Nature more than that of man, for He enters the inmost recesses of my soul, He reads me like an open page, He comforts me as one brought up with me, He dives into my deepest griefs and attends me in my highest joys! I have secrets in my heart which only He knows. Would God His secret were with me as mine is with Him up to the measure of my capacity! It is because of that wonderful power which the Lord Jesus has over us through His sacred Word that we receive that Word from Him and receive it as not of man.

What is unction, my Brothers? I fear that no one can help me by a definition. Who can define it? But yet we know where it is and we certainly feel where it is not. When that unction perfumes the Word of God, it is its own interpreter, it is its own apologist, it is its own confirmation and proof to the regenerate mind. Then the Word of God deals with us as no word of man ever did or could! We have not received it, therefore, of men. Constantly receiving the Divine Word as we do, it comes to us with an energy always fresh and forcible. It comes to us, especially, with a sanctifying power which is the very best proof of its coming from the thrice-holy God. Philosophers' words may teach us what holiness is, but God's Word makes us holy! We hear our Brethren exhort us to aspire to high degrees of Grace, but God's Word lifts us up to them! The Word is not merely an instrument of good, but the Holy Spirit makes it an active energy within the soul to purge the heart from sin so that it can be said, "You are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you." When thus cleansed, you know that the Word is true. You are sure of it and you no longer need, even, the most powerful book of evidences. You have the witness in yourself, the evidence of things not seen, the seal of eternal verity.

I have taken all this time upon how we receive the Gospel and, therefore, I must be brief upon a further point.

II. TO US THE TRUTH ITSELF IS NOT AFTER MEN. I desire to assert this plainly. If any man thinks that the Gospel is only one of many religions, let him candidly compare the Scripture of God with other pretended revelations. Have you ever done so? I have made it a College exercise with our Brothers. I have said—We will read a chapter of the Koran. This is the

Muslim's holy book. A man must have a strange mind who should mistake that rubbish for the utterances of Inspiration! If he is at all familiar with the Old and New Testaments, when he hears an extract from the Koran, he feels that he has met with a foreign author—the God who gave us the Pentateuch could have had no hand in many portions of the Koran!

One of the most modern pretenders to inspiration is the Book of Mormon. I could not blame you should you laugh outright while I read aloud a page from that conglomeration. Perhaps you are familiar with the apocryphal New Testament books. It would be an insult to the judgement of the least in the Kingdom of Heaven to suppose that he could mistake the language of these forgeries for the language of the Holy Spirit! I have had several pretended revelations submitted to me by their several authors, for we have more of the prophetic clan about than most people know of, but not one of them has ever left on my mind the slightest suspicion of his sharing the Inspiration of John, or Paul. There is no mistaking the Inspired Books if you have any spiritual discernment! Once let the Divine Light dawn in the soul and you perceive a coloring and a fashion in the product of Inspiration which are not possible to mere men. Would one who doubts this write us a fifth Gospel? Would anyone among our poets attempt to write a new Psalm which could be mistaken for a Psalm of David? I do not see *why* he could not, but I am sure he *cannot*. You can give us new psalmody, for it is an instinct of the Christian life to sing the praises of God, but you cannot match the glory of Divinely-inspired songs. Therefore we receive the Scripture and, consequently, the Gospel as not after man.

You say, perhaps, "You are comparing books and forgetting that your theme is the Gospel." But this is only in appearance. I do not care to waste your time by asking you to compare the gospels of men. There is not another gospel that I know of that is worth the comparison for a single minute. Oh, but, they say, there is a gospel that is much wider than yours. Yes, I know that it is much wider than mine, but to what does it lead? They say that what is nicknamed Calvinism has a very narrow door. There is a word in Scripture about a strait gate and a narrow way and, therefore, I am not alarmed by the accusation. But then there are rich pastures when you enter within and this renders it worth while to enter in by the strait gate! Certain other systems have very wide doors—but they lead you into small privileges—and those of a precarious tenure. I hear certain invitations which might run as follows—"Come you disconsolate! But if you come, you will still be disconsolate, for there will be no *eternal* life made sure to you and you must preserve your own souls, or perish after all." But I shall not enter into any comparisons, for they are odious in this case.

The Gospel, *our Gospel*, is beyond the strain and reach of human thought. When men have exercised themselves to the very highest in original conceptions, they have never yet thought out the true Gospel. If it is

such a commonplace thing as the critics would have us believe, why did it not arise in the minds of the Egyptians or Chinese? Great minds often run in the same grooves—why did not other great minds run in the same grooves as those of Moses, or Isaiah, or Paul? I think it is a fair thing to say that if it is such a commonplace form of teaching, it might have arisen among the Persians or Hindus, or, surely, we might have found something like it among the great teachers of Greece! Did any of these think out the doctrine of free and Sovereign Grace? Did they guess at the Incarnation and Sacrifice of the Son of God? No, even with the aid of our Inspired Book, no Muslim, to my knowledge, has taught a system of Grace in which God is glorified as to His justice, His love and His sovereignty. That sect has grasped a certain sort of predestination which it has defaced into blind faith, but even with that to help them, and the unity of the Godhead as a powerful light to aid them, they have never thought out a plan of salvation so just to God and so pacifying to the troubled conscience as the method of redemption by the substitution of our Lord Jesus!

I will give you another proof, which, to my mind, is conclusive that our Gospel is not after men, and it is this—that *it is immutable and nothing that man produces can be so called*. If man makes a gospel—and he is very fond of doing it, like children making toys—what does he do? He is very pleased with it for a few moments and then he pulls it to pieces and makes it up in another way—and this continually! The religions of modern thought are as changeable as the mists on the mountains! Look how often science has altered its very basis! Science is notorious for being most scientific in destruction of all the science that has gone before it! I have sometimes indulged myself, in leisure moments, in reading ancient natural history—and nothing can be more comic. Yet this is by no means an abstruse science. In 20 years' time, some of us may probably find great amusement in the serious scientific teaching of the present hour, even as we do now in the systems of the last century. It may happen that in a little time the doctrine of evolution will be the standing jest of schoolboys. The same is true of the modern divinity which bows its knee in blind idolatry of so-called science.

Now, we say, and do so with all our heart, that the Gospel which we preached 40 years ago, we will still preach in 40 years' time if we are alive. [Less than two years later, Brother Spurgeon began eternity in the Presence of his Master—EO.] And, what is more, that the Gospel which was taught of our Lord and His Apostles is the only Gospel now on the face of the earth! Ecclesiastics have altered the Gospel and if it had not been of God, it would have been stifled by falsehood long ago. But because the Lord has made it, it abides forever! Everything human is, before long, moon-struck, so that it shifts with every phase of the lunar orb. But the Word of the Lord is not after men, for it is the same yesterday, today and forever.

It cannot be after men, again, because *it is so opposed to human pride*. Other systems flatter men, but this speaks the Truth of God. Hear the dreamers of today cry up the dignity of human nature! How sublime is man! But point me to a single syllable in which the Word of God sets itself to the extolling of man. On the contrary, it lays him in the very dust and reveals his condemnation! Where is boasting, then? It is excluded—the door is shut in its face. The self-glorification of human nature is foreign to Scripture which has for its grand object the Glory of God! God is *everything* in the Gospel which I preach and I believe that He is All in All in your ministry, also. There *is* a gospel in which the work and the glory are divided between God and man—and salvation is not altogether of Grace—but in our Gospel, salvation is of the Lord! Man never could nor would have invented and devised a Gospel which would lay him low and secure to the Lord God all the honor and praise. This seems to me to be clear beyond all question and, therefore, our Gospel is not after men.

Again, it is not after men, because *it does not give sin any quarter*. I have heard that an Englishman has professed himself a Muslim because he is charmed by the polygamy which the Arabian Prophet allows his followers. No doubt the prospect of four wives would win converts who would not be attracted by spiritual considerations. If you preach a gospel which makes allowances for human nature and treats sin as if it were a mistake rather than a crime, you will find willing hearers. If you can provide absolution at small cost and can ease conscience by a little self-denial, it will not be amazing if your religion becomes fashionable. But our Gospel declares that the wages of sin is death and that we can only have eternal life as the *gift* of God—and that this gift always brings with it sorrow for sin, a hatred towards it and an avoidance of it!

Our Gospel tells a man that he must be born again and that without the new birth he will be eternally lost, while with it he will obtain everlasting salvation! Our Gospel offers no excuse or cloak for sin, but utterly condemns it. It presents no pardon except through the great Atonement and it will give that man no security who tries to harbor any sin in his bosom. Christ died for sin—and we must die *to* sin, or die eternally. If we preach the Gospel faithfully, we must preach the Law of God. You cannot fully preach salvation by Christ without setting Sinai at the back of the picture and Calvary in the front! Men must be made to feel the evil of sin before they will prize the great Sacrifice which is the head and front of our Gospel. This is not to the taste of this or any other age and, therefore, I am sure man did not invent it.

We know that the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is not of men because *our Gospel is so suitable for the poor and illiterate*. The poor, according to the usual fashion of men, are overlooked. Parliament has enclosed all the commons so that a poor man cannot keep a goose! I doubt not that, if it were likely to be effectual, we should soon hear of a bill for distributing freeholds of the stars among certain sky-lords! It is evident that

a fine property in the celestial regions is, at the present time, unregistered in any of our courts. Well, they may sooner enclose and assign the sun, moon and stars than the Gospel of our Lord Jesus! This is the poor man's common. "The poor have the Gospel preached to them." Yet there are not a few, nowadays, who despise a Gospel which the common people can hear and understand! And we may be sure that a plain Gospel never came from *them*, for their taste does not lie in that direction. They want something abstruse, or, as they say, thoughtful. Do we not hear this sort of remark, "We are an intellectual people and need a cultured ministry. Those evangelistic preachers are all very well for popular assemblies, but we have always been select and require that preaching which is abreast of the times"?

Yes, yes, and their man will be one who will not preach the Gospel unless it is in a clouded manner, for if he does declare the Gospel of Jesus, the poor will be sure to intrude themselves and shock my lords and ladies! Brothers, our Gospel does not know anything about high and low, rich and poor, black and white, cultured and uncultured! If it makes any difference, it prefers the poor and down-trodden. The great Founder of it says, "I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because You have hid these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them unto babes." We praise God that He has chosen the base things and things that are despised! I hear it boasted of a man's ministry, although it gradually diminishes the congregation, that it is doing a great work among thoughtful young men. I confess that I am not a believer in the existence of these thoughtful young men—those who mistake themselves for such I have generally found to be more conceited than thoughtful. Young men are all very well and so are young women, and old women, also, but I am sent to preach the Gospel to *every creature* and I cannot limit myself to thoughtful young men! I make known to you that the Gospel which I have preached is not after men, for it knows nothing of selection and exclusiveness, but it values the soul of a sweep or a dustman at the same price as that of the Lord Mayor, or her Majesty!

Lastly, we are sure that the Gospel we have preached is not after men, because *men do not take to it*. It is opposed, even to this day. If anything is hated bitterly, it is the out-and-out Gospel of the Grace of God, especially if that hateful word, *Sovereignty* is mentioned with it! Dare to say, "He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion," and furious critics will revile you without stint! The modern religionist not only hates the doctrine of Sovereign Grace, but he raves and rages at the mention of it! He would sooner hear you blaspheme than preach Election by the Father, Atonement by the Son, or Regeneration by the Spirit. If you want to see a man worked up till the Satanic is clearly uppermost, let some of the new divines hear you preach a Free-Grace sermon! A gospel which is after men will be welcomed by men—but it needs a Divine operation upon the heart and mind to

make a man willing to receive into his utmost soul this distasteful Gospel of the Grace of God!

My dear Brothers, do not try to make it tasteful to carnal minds! Hide not the offense of the Cross lest you make it of no effect. The angles and corners of the Gospel are its *strength*—to pare them off is to deprive it of power! Toning down is not the increase of strength, but the death of it. Why, even among the sects, you must have noticed that their distinguishing points are the horns of their power—and when these are practically omitted, the sect is effete. Learn, then, that if you take Christ out of Christianity, Christianity is dead! If you remove Grace out of the Gospel, the Gospel is gone! If the people do not like the Doctrines of Grace, give them all the more of them! Whenever its enemies rail at a certain kind of gun, a wise military power will provide more of such artillery. A great general, going in before his king, stumbled over his own sword. “I see, said the king, your sword in is the way.” The warrior answered, “Your Majesty’s enemies have often felt the same.” That our Gospel offends the King’s enemies is no regret to us!

Dear Friends, if it is so that we have not received the Gospel from man, but from God, *let us continue to receive the Truth of God by the Divinely-appointed channel of faith*. Are you sure that you always will, to the fullest, *understand* the Truth of God? With most of us, the understanding is like a narrow rear gate to the city of Mansoul, and the great things of God cannot be so cut down as to be brought in by that entrance. The door is not wide enough! But our city has a great gate called *faith*, through which even the infinite and eternal may be admitted. Give over the hopeless effort of dragging into the mind by efforts of reason, that which can so readily dwell in you by the Holy Spirit through faith! We that speak against rationalism are, ourselves, apt to reason too much—and there is nothing so unreasonable as to hope to receive the things of God by reasoning them out! Let us believe them upon the Divine testimony—and when they try us and even when they seem to grate upon the sensibilities of humanity—let us receive them, none the less, for all that. We are not to be judges of what God’s Truth *ought* to be—we are to accept it as the Lord reveals it.

Next, let us, each one, expect opposition if he receives the Truth from the Lord, and especially opposition from one person who is both near and dear to him—namely, *himself*. There is a certain old man who is yet alive and he is no lover of the Truth of God, but, on the contrary, he is a partisan of falsehood. I heard a gracious policeman say that when he stood in Trafalgar Square and fellows of the baser sort kicked him and the other police, he felt a bone of the old man stirring within him. Ah, we have felt that bone, too often! The carnal nature opposes the Truth of God, for it is not reconciled to God, neither, indeed, can be! Let us pray the Lord to conquer our pride, that His Truth may dominate us, despite our evil hearts! As to the outside world opposing, we are not at all alarmed by *that* fact, for it is exactly what we were taught to expect. We are now unmoved

by opposition. The captain of a ship minds not if a little spray breaks over him.

Remember that if you did not receive the Truth except through the power of the Spirit of God, you cannot expect others to do so. They will not believe your report unless the arm of the Lord is revealed to them. But then, if faith is the Holy Spirit's work, we need not fear that men can destroy it. Those who attempt to change our belief may well be a little dubious as to their success in the task they have undertaken. If faith is a Divine work within our souls, we may defy all sophistries, flatteries, temptations and threats. We shall be divinely obstinate—those who would pervert us will have to give us up! Possibly they will call us bigots, or hard-shells, or even idiots—but this, too, also signifies little if our names are written in Heaven!

Let us also conclude from our subject that *if these things come to us from God, we can safely rest our all upon them.* If they came to us of men, they would probably fail us in a crisis. Did you ever trust men and not rue the day before the sun was down? Did you ever rely on an arm of flesh without discovering that the best of men are men at the best? But if these things come of God, they are eternal and all sufficient! We can both live and die upon the everlasting Gospel! Let us deal more and more with God and with Him, only. If we have obtained Light from Him, there is more of blessing to be had. Let us go to that same Teacher, that we may learn more of the deep things of God. Let us bravely believe in the success of the Gospel which we have received. We believe *in* it—let us believe *for* it. We will not despair though the whole visible Church should apostatize!

When invaders had surrounded Rome and all the country lay at their mercy, a piece of land was to be sold and a Roman bought it at a fair value. The enemy was there, but he would not be dislodged. The enemy might destroy the Roman State. Let him try it! Be you of the same mind! The God of Jacob is our Refuge and none can stand against His eternal power and Godhead. The everlasting Gospel is our banner and, with Jehovah to maintain it, our standard never shall be lowered! In the power of the Holy Spirit, the Truth of God is invincible! Come on, you hosts of Hell and armies of the aliens! Let craft and criticism, rationalism and priest-craft do their best! The Word of the Lord endures forever—even that Word which, by the Gospel, is preached unto men!

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 Corinthians 4.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:

[Please note this letter is inserted in Volume 37, 1891. The sermon was preached in 1890.—EOD]

TO MY READERS AND FRIENDS—If you accept the great Truths set forth in this “Manifesto,” please circulate it widely. I could not make the sermon shorter, so as to bring it into a single number, or I should have had to leave out some important point. It is a common saying with the opponents of the old faith, that Mr. Spurgeon is a “pessimist,” and takes gloomy views of things. Nothing can be more untrue—and this sermon may help to show that I am full of hope and confidence. The days are evil, but the Lord is good. Men forsake the faith, but God is still faithful!

I hope soon to be lifting up my voice again. Refreshed and rested, I look up to the Lord, who can nerve my arm for the conflict, which every day demands more faith and decision. “The Church of the Future,” vainly so called, threatens to overthrow the Church of the living God! It is to run a theater and a public-house and include atheists in its membership. It is well to know where the age is driving. With its theater and public-house, it carries on its back two of the greatest instruments of evil yet known.

We have no weapon against this monster, with the double tower on its back, but the Gospel of the Grace of God! It is a sharp sword with two edges, if it is preached as it was delivered at the first. Advices to adapt it to the age are temptations to destroy its forge—and to these we can have no respect. Should I conceal those parts of Divine Truth which are obnoxious to the carnal mind, I should be unfaithful to God, untrue to my calling and guilty of the blood of souls!

Brethren, pray for me and all who are faithful to the Truth of God, that we may be upheld in our steadfastness! The Truth will conquer, for God makes it His banner—and His holy arm upholds it! And the end is not yet, unless, indeed, our Lord should suddenly appear!

Yours in waiting hope,

C. H. Spurgeon.

Mentone, Jan. 15, 1891.

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“IT PLEASED GOD”

NO. 3202

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 1910.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 19, 1862.**

*“It pleased God.”
Galatians 1:15.*

WE will read the whole verse from which our text is taken—“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His Grace.” You will perceive, I think, in these words, that the Divine plan of salvation is very clearly laid down. It begins, you see, in the will and pleasure of God—“when it pleased God.” The foundation of salvation is not laid in the will of man. “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” It does not begin with man’s obedience and then proceed onward to the purpose of God—but here is its commencement, here the fountainhead from which the Living Waters flow—“It pleased God.” Next to the Sovereign will and good pleasure of God comes the act of separation, commonly known by the name of *election*. This act is said, in the text, to take place even in the mother’s womb, by which we are taught that it took place before our birth when as yet we could have done nothing whatever to win it or to merit it! God separated us from the earliest part and time of our being! And, indeed, long before that, when as yet the mountains and hills were not piled and the oceans were not formed by His creative power, He had, in His eternal purpose, set us apart for Himself. Then, after this act of separation came the effectual calling—“and called me by His Grace.” The calling does not cause the election—the election, springing from the Divine purpose, causes the calling! The calling comes as a *consequence* of the Divine purpose and the Divine separation, and you will note how the obedience follows the calling. The Apostle does not begin to be a preacher, according to the purpose and will of God, until first of all the Spirit of God has called him out of his state of nature into a state of Grace. So the whole process runs thus—first the sacred, Sovereign purpose of God, then the distinct and definite election or separation, then the effectual and irresistible calling and then afterwards, the obedience unto life, and the sweet fruits of the Spirit which spring from there. They err, not knowing the Scriptures, who put any of these processes before the others, out of the Scriptural order. They who put man’s will first, know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm, for it is not of the will of man, says the

Apostle in the most peremptory and positive manner—the salvation of any soul is a display of the eternal purpose and Sovereign will of God!

And, Beloved, by this test may we know the certainty of our election, if we have obediently yielded to the call of God. If the Divine calling has produced in us the fruit of obedience, then we may assuredly believe that we were separated unto God before time began, and that this separation was according to the eternal purpose and will of God! Like golden links of a chain, any one of these will draw on the others. Am I justified? Then I was called by God’s Grace. Am I called? Then I was predestined to be called and, on the other hand, if I was predestined, then I shall be called, being called, I shall be justified, being justified, I shall be glorified! I think I have used this illustration before. On that bank of the great river of time is the massive pillar of Divine Foreknowledge and Predestination, and on the other side of the river is the equally massive pillar of Glorification. How are we to bridge these two? Both of these pillars are in the mists and clouds of eternity, but these stupendous chains stretch right across the intervening chasm—“Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” If I want to know what my relation is to Predestination way over yonder in the past, I think of my calling, for I have been called, and so I am linked with the past! And if I want to know whether I shall be glorified, I know that, also, by the fact that I am today justified. So, as I stand here, I am linked with both the past and the future—linked so perfectly that neither time, nor life, nor death, nor Hell shall ever be able to break the bonds that bind me equally to the Predestination in the past and the Glorification in the future! You see then, dear Friends, that from this verse, as a whole, we learn the Divine plan of salvation! And by it we may judge as to our own interest in it. But now, leaving the rest of the verse, let us consider the three words that form our text. “It pleased God.”

I. First, we have here THE FOUNDATION OF DIVINE GRACE.

The reason why Paul was saved was this—“It pleased God.” And the only reason why you or I will ever enter Heaven must be this—“It pleased God.” You can clearly perceive, in the Apostle’s case, that *there could be no other reason*. It could not be because of any merit of his that he was saved, for what was he? A blasphemer, he says, and a persecutor—so thirsty for the blood of saints that even in his younger days, he guarded the clothes of the murderers who stoned Stephen. Afterwards, he hated men and women, and committed them to prison, and compelled them to blaspheme, “and being”—to use his own expressive words—“exceedingly mad against them,” he “persecuted them even unto strange cities.” There could be nothing in that persecuting Jew, whose very breath was full of threats, and whose heart was like a furnace of fury against the saints—

there could be nothing in him which could be a reason why God should save him! If saved, it must be because “it pleased God.”

And, most decidedly, *there was no co-action of the Apostle’s will tending to his conversion.* You remember the scene. I see him there, upon his proud charger, riding onward toward Damascus. He has in his possession letters which he treasures more than gold, for they give him the permission of the high priest to seize the saints at Damascus and carry them bound to Jerusalem. He rides on proudly, yonder is the city glittering in the sun, and he is meditating upon the deeds of blood and fury he will perform there—who can stop that man? But at midday God arrests him! “A light from Heaven, above the brightness of the sun,” shines upon him. The men that are with him see the light, but they know not what it is. He falls to the ground and a Voice cries to him from Heaven, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” He enquires, “Who are You, Lord?” The answer comes, “I am Jesus whom you persecute: it is hard for you to kick against the pricks,” like an ox kicking against the sharp goad. He rises blind, yet seeing more than he ever saw before! He goes into Damascus, not to hunt Christ’s disciples, but to learn from Ananias the Good News that Christ’s pardon may be given even to him! In three days’ time, he is converted, baptized into the name of Christ, comes forth to tell the little Church at Damascus what God has done for his soul and in the synagogues preaches that Christ is the Son of God! What reason can there be why this persecutor of the saints should have been saved but this—“It pleased God”?

Do not imagine that this is an exceptional experience. On the contrary, such cases occur every day! Many come into this place of worship as skeptics and go out sincere Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Some have I known who have come here only to laugh and scoff, but they have remained to pray. No thought was further from their mind than that they should ever become the followers of the Lamb—but the Divine power, which was not necessarily connected with the preacher—carried the Word into their hearts, arrested them on the spot, changed their natures, made them new creatures in Christ Jesus and sent them on their way rejoicing in their newly-found Savior! And I am sure that all such persons will bear their willing witness that they can see no reason but for the Grace which was bestowed on them but this —“It pleased God.”

There are some whose lives have proved how sinful their nature was, for their sin has taken the form of open and gross vice. They are like that woman in the city who was a sinner. And as they resemble her in their sin, I trust that they will also resemble her in their love and be ready to wash the Savior’s feet with their tears, and wipe them with the hairs of their heads! There may be some who are now truly converted, who have sinned as deeply as even Saul of Tarsus did. Then let them acknowledge, as he did, that their conversion was due to the undeserved favor of God! John Bradford’s saying has often been quoted, but it will bear repeating

again and again. He lived in a house past which people used to be taken on the way to Tyburn to be hanged. And in those cruel times there were many poor wretches thus hurried out of existence—some of them for crimes which are far more leniently punished now. As the honest preacher saw them pass his house, he said, "There goes John Bradford but for the Grace of God." He felt that he was, by nature, capable of doing just what they had done, and that only Divine Grace had made him to differ from them. And when I hear or read of some atrocious sinner, I say to myself, "That man is what I might have been if God had left me to take my own course, for by nature I am no better than he is. I might not have fallen into his special form of sin, for the bent of my constitution may not be in that particular direction, but I might have committed some other sin which would have been quite as bad as his." One vessel may leak at the bow and another may leak at the stern, but it does not much matter where the leak is—in either case the vessel will sink.

And those of you who have been converted as the result of a regular attendance at the House of Prayer, when you come to remember how many others who are still unregenerate, who have been sitting side by side with you, you can only say, as you think who caused you to differ from them—"It pleased God." How often one is taken and the other left! Two women come up to worship at the same time and sit under the sound of the same message—one retires impenitent, the other's heart is broken. As we note the contrast between them, we can only stand and, holding up our hands in wonder, say, "What is the reason for this difference, Lord? There can be none except that so it seemed good in Your sight."

I know that there are many who the moment they hear this Doctrine proclaimed, begin to quibble at it and quarrel with it. They do not think that God should thus do as He pleases in the work of salvation! But let me tell them that it is because they care not for God that they feel as they do in this matter. Opposition to Divine Sovereignty is essentially atheism. Men have no objection to a god who is really no God! I mean by this, a god who shall be the subject of their fancy, who shall be a lackey to their will, who shall be under their control—they have no objection to such a being as that! But a God who speaks and it is done! Who commands and it stands fast! A God who has no respect for their persons, but does as He wills among the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of this lower world—such a God as this they cannot endure! And yet, is it not essential to the very Being of God that He should be absolute and supreme? Certainly, to the Scriptural conception of God, Sovereignty is an absolute necessity!

Let me say, then, to those who quarrel with the Lord for doing as He pleases in the conversion of sinners that first, He has the right to do so through His own inherent Sovereignty. He made men and He has the right to do with them just as He pleases. "Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, and another

unto dishonor?” If any man says to God, “Why have You made me thus?” The only answer is, “No, but, O man, who are you that replies against God?” Dread, mysterious and profound as the Doctrine of Divine Sovereignty is, yet it certainly must be acknowledged that He who is God has an absolute and inherent right to do as He wills with all those whom He has, Himself, created—

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

But some of your animosity to this Doctrine may perhaps be melted if you recollect that God’s Sovereignty is never displayed apart from His righteousness! To entrust a man with absolute power would be most dangerous, for he is fallible. But to entrust absolute Holiness and Righteousness with absolute power is the safest way of governing the whole universe. God cannot do an unrighteous thing, therefore let Him do whatever He wills! Who would wish to limit One whose acts must be from the very Character that is essential to His Being, just and true? No man who is lost will ever be able to blame God’s Sovereignty for it. The man that perishes shall justly perish because of his sins. And in Hell, this shall be to him the pang of pangs—that he cannot reproach God, but that his damnation lies at his own door since he incensed the Justice of God, which must punish him for his sin. And in like manner, the saints in Heaven, though saved as the result of Divine Sovereignty, may boast that that Sovereignty never violated Justice, for, before God would bring one of them to Heaven, He gave His Son to bleed and die that the demands of Justice might be fully met before the sinner was saved!

I will venture to go even further than this and to say that the Sovereignty of God is never exercised apart from His mercy and His benevolence. We know that “God is Love,” and who would limit love? As “God is Love,” let Him be absolute, for He will assuredly do that which, on the whole, is the best for all His creatures, as well as most for the Glory of His own perfect Character. Then, as this is the case, how ought we to delight to think that God is free and bound by no law but His own will, which is the fountain of all law, and constrained by no necessity but the carrying out of His own eternal purpose of love and mercy!

I feel sure that much of the opposition to the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty springs from a misunderstanding of God. I know that some misrepresent this Truth of God as though God were an almighty tyrant, but Scripture gives no warrant for such a caricature. And I again enter, as I have already often entered, my earnest protest against such an insult to my God! When any man perishes, lay not his blood at God’s door. If any man is lost, his ruin is caused by himself and not to be laid to the charge of our ever-gracious God. Yet remember, at the same time, that if any are *saved*, the glory of their salvation must be ascribed to God! I am often asked, “How do you make those two statements consistent with one

another?” But that question does not perplex me, for I do not see how they are inconsistent with each other. Someone says, “But I do not understand this Doctrine.” Perhaps not, but remember that while we are bound to tell you the Truths of God, we are not bound to give you the power to understand them. And besides, this is not a subject for understanding—it is a matter for *believing* because it is revealed in the Word of God! It is one of the axioms of theology that if a man is lost, God must not be blamed for it. And it is also an axiom of theology that if a man is saved, God must have all the glory of it. That “salvation is of the Lord” is as plainly revealed in Scripture as anything that we see in nature! And that destruction is of man, is equally plain, both from the nature of things and from the teaching of Scripture! Hold the two Truths of God—do not try to run to the extreme, either of the Hyper-Calvinist or of the ultra-Arminian. There is some truth in Calvinism and some in Arminianism, and he who would hold the whole Truth of God must neither be cramped by the one system nor bound by the other, but take Truth wherever he can find it in the Bible—and leave it to the God of Truth to show him, when he gets into another world, anything that is beyond his comprehension now. At all events, I have laid this down very plainly and I think every converted person must agree with it, that if any of us are saved, the explanation of our conversion is the same as the explanation of Paul’s—“It pleased God.”

II. Now, secondly, I shall use the text in another way. We have, here, **FOUNDATIONS FOR HUMILITY.**

Paul was a preacher, but why was he a preacher? Because “it pleased God.” You are a deacon, or you are an elder, or you are a minister—is there any ground for boasting here? Who made you what you are? “It pleased God.” That is the only possible explanation! Had God willed it, you might have been sweeping a crossing. You might have been at this moment in some tavern groveling in drunkenness. You might have been a miserable wretch in prison. Any honorable office that you hold in the Church is the result, not of your meriting it, but of God’s graciousness towards you in having put you where you are. The angels in Heaven are humble because they remember who made them and kept them angels, for they would have been devils in Hell if God had not preserved them in their first estate. In like manner, office in the Church is a ground for humility, not for boasting! If we are thus favored, it is because “it pleased God.” The Apostle was also a great laborer. He could truthfully say, “I labored more abundantly than they all.” What then? Was that a reason for boasting? By no means, for he added, “yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.” Are you passionately zealous for the conversion of men? Do you labor both by night and by day to propagate the Truth of God and to bring sinners to the Cross of Christ? Then continue in your noble employment, but do not plume yourself upon this as though you deserved some praise from God for it! Remember that every virtue you

possess, everything about you that is pure, and lovely, and of good report, has come to you because “it pleased God.”

Paul was, moreover, a most successful preacher. Thousands acknowledged him as their spiritual father. Through a great part of Asia, through Greece and Italy, probably onward through Spain and, perhaps, even in Great Britain, there were found traces of the victorious march of this great soldier of the Cross! Wherever he went, he confounded the reasoner, put to silence the boaster, made the heathen feel that one had come among them who would hurl their idols from their pedestals! He came like John the Baptist, casting down the high hills and filling up the valleys to make straight a highway for his God, yet I never find him boasting of all this, but, laying all his honors at Jehovah’s feet, he said, “By the Grace of God I am what I am,” or, in the words of our text, “It pleased God.”

There are some people in the world who are constantly warning some of us against pride and we are duly thankful for their warnings—they are, no doubt, greatly needed—and it is very generous on their part to bestow them upon us, especially as some of them sorely need the warnings themselves! I remember some time ago receiving a warning against pride from a Christian woman who told me that she would pray that I might be kept humble. I thanked her and told her that I should do the same for her, whereupon she said that she did not require it, for she had no temptation to be proud, she had nothing to be proud of and, therefore, she was quite sure she would never be proud. Then I told her gently but decidedly, that I thought she was already proud, or else she would not have uttered such a speech as that! I added that God had His own way of keeping humble those whom He calls to stand in conspicuous places—and His usual way was by chastening them in private when their people knew nothing about it. And I also said that it was quite as easy to be proud and to do nothing as to be proud and to do much. Oh, dear, the lay ministers that I have seen who seemed to have had their backs made of cast iron—idle preachers who would scarcely bring one soul to Christ in a century! Yet they were so dignified and maintained “the dignity of their profession” with such vigor that there seemed to be every reason to expect that they would die of dignity one of these days, like the Spanish monarch who perished because his chair was too near the fire! It was not according to court etiquette that he should move it, himself, or that he should ring the bell for anybody else to do it and, therefore, he sat still till he brought on a fever by which he afterwards lost his life. If we have nothing, we should be humble because of our poverty—and if we have much, we ought to be humble because we are so much in debt to God! A man who owes £10,000 has no cause to crow over his fellow debtor who owes far less than he does. He would be foolish if he said, “I have more to be proud of than you have, for I owe £10,000, but you only owe £100.” Why, that would be the reason why he should hang his head down still

lower! And so should it be with the man whom God greatly honors. This should be the reason for keeping himself very humble because he knows—and God will make him remember it, too—that if there is any difference between him and other men, it is only because “it pleased God.”

III. Now I am going to use our text in a third way as A REASON FOR COURAGE.

I should like to see more of this virtue than we see nowadays. We live in an age which needs to have a large infusion of the heroic martyr spirit which enabled our forefathers to go boldly to the block or to the stake for Christ’s sake. We may well blush as we see how many professors are ashamed of the religion which they are supposed to have received. If they are called to do some work for Christ, how often do they stop and parley, and question, and hesitate and, at last, when they have summoned up enough courage to come forward, it is only with an apology upon their lips for daring to do something for Jesus! I heard one say of a certain preacher, “I greatly admired him, for he commenced his sermon by saying, ‘Permit a young man to address you.’” I said, “That is not the way God’s servants ought to talk. If God has given them anything to say for Him, they have not to ask anybody’s permission to say it, nor should they apologize to anybody for saying it as God enables them to say it.” Apologies are out of place in the pulpit! The man whom God sends to speak for Him is God’s ambassador—he has no right to apologize for delivering his Lord’s message! He who professes to be sent of God either is or is not God’s ambassador. If he is not, let him at once take himself off the pulpit! If he is his Master’s accredited representative, he needs no excuse and should make none.

I think it will make us courageous and help us to do exploits for God if we can feel that we do our work because it pleases God. I have never approved of the warfare of the old Commonwealth days. I do not believe that, after all, England gained much by fighting. Under Cromwell, she gained liberty for a time, but it was soon lost again, as liberty always must be if it is only won by the sword. But mark you, I must say this—that which made Cromwell so mighty was the firm conviction that “it pleased God” to make him the leader of the Ironsides! And that which made his soldiers victorious on so many hard-fought fields was that they also felt that “it pleased God.” To them it was not a question as to whether it was lawful to fight—they had made up their minds about that matter. Taking out their little soldiers’ Bible, they read some fiery Psalm. And having read it, their blood boiled and, as the old Crusaders cried, “Deus vult,”—“God wills it”—they shouted their battle cry, “The Lord of Hosts,” and dashed into the fight! And they were victorious because they felt that “it pleased God.” And now, today, battling inch by inch, and contending hour by hour against the leaguered hosts of sin, you and I can never be mighty if we only stand in our own strength and question our call to be soldiers of the Cross! But if we felt that each blow that we strike pleases God—and if in every advance we make into the enemy’s territory we can

say, “It pleases God,” and if our war cry as we dash to the conflict is, “It pleases God”—then we shall feel the earth shake again beneath the tramp of the heroes’ feet and we shall see the Church of God as she should be—“fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.” Why, even the power of the Crusaders arose from the fact that they thought the Crusaders “pleased God.”

Brothers and Sisters, we must get back this old enthusiasm if ever our land is to be swept clear of Popery! If ever Europe is to become free with God’s freedom, if ever Africa is to have the light of the Truth of God driving away her dense darkness, if ever Asia, America and Australia are to be won for the Lord Jesus Christ, they whom God has called to the conflict must fight because it pleases God! Surely none of you who profess to be Christ’s will be content unless you do something to help toward this great end because it pleases God! As you come to the Communion Table, realize that God is within you, making your body His Throne and enabling you to carry out your great life purpose of glorifying God in your body and in your spirit which are His. Do all that you do because it pleases God! If His Spirit shall help you to feel and act thus, blessed shall it be both for the Church and for the world!

My time has gone, yet I am not nearly done, so I must give you the rest in brief. Here is AN ARGUMENT FOR PATIENCE. “It pleased God.” The cup is bitter, the knife is sharp, the bit is hard, the bereavement is sore, but as it pleases God, we kiss the rod and patiently bow to our Father’s will.

Then, next, we have here A SUGGESTION FOR HOPE. If it pleased God to save Saul of Tarsus—and if the only reason why He should save him was because He pleased to do it—then why cannot He save you? Have you been a drunkard? Have you dived into the foul slough of lust? Have you defiled yourself by dishonesty? Still, if it pleases God, He can save you! Now I know it pleases God to save everyone who trusts in Christ. Then if you trust in Christ, you are saved! Awake, O man! Awake, O woman and let this be your language—“I am the chief of sinners, but it pleased God to save another who called himself the chief of sinners, so—

***‘I’ll to the gracious King approach,
Whose scepter pardon gives.
Perhaps He may command my touch,
And then the suppliant lives.’”***

If you will thus cast yourself upon the Sovereign mercy of God in Christ Jesus, it will please God and you shall be saved!

And then, last of all, our text is A MOTIVE FOR HOLINESS AND ZEAL. If “it pleased God” and, therefore, He saved me when there was no reason in me why I should be saved. If He loved me when I was filthy—now that I have been washed I would be filthy no more—and in holiness I will seek to show my gratitude to Him! If He loved me when I was dead, now that He has made me alive I will not be lifeless and cold, but full of zeal and fire for Him! I do not know how to press this last point unless I get back

to the one I was urging upon you just now. If you feel that God has willed that you should be saved and that God wills that you should be the means of saving others—that God wills that you should become a spiritual father or mother in Israel—then I know that your heart will boil over with holy zeal and that you will go forth as a conqueror who has the certainty of victory already in his heart! God shall be with you and you shall go on conquering and to conquer! The Lord add His blessing for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
GALATIANS 1:11-24; 2.**

Galatians 1:11-17. *But I make known to you, brethren, that the Gospel that was preached by me is not after man. For I neither received it from man, neither was I taught it but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in my own nation, being more exceedingly jealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His Grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them who were Apostles before me; but I went up to Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.* Paul was intensely desirous that the Galatian Christians should understand that he was no mere repeater of other men’s doctrines, but that what he taught he had received directly from God by supernatural Revelation. They knew that he had been a most determined opposer of the Gospel. Indeed, he was a man of such great determination that whatever he did, he did with all his might! So, no sooner did God reveal Christ to him, so that he knew Jesus to be the Messiah, than he earnestly sought to learn yet more of the Truth of God, not by going up to the Apostles at Jerusalem, to borrow from them, but by getting alone in the waste places of Arabia! There, by thought and meditation upon the Word, and by communion with God, to learn yet more concerning the Divine mysteries.

18-24. *Then after three years I went to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But others of the Apostles I saw none, save James, the Lord’s brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; and was unknown by face unto the Churches of Judaea which were in Christ: but they had heard only that he which persecuted us in times past now preaches the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me.*

Galatians 2:1, 2. *Then fourteen years later, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation—he was sent by the Church at Antioch, but the Church there was*

guided by Revelation, so that Paul is correct in saying, “I went up by revelation”—

2-4. *And communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privately to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.* There were always some among the Jewish converts who insisted that the Gentiles should come under the seal of the Old Covenant if they were to be partakers of the blessings of the Gospel. But to this Paul would never consent—

5. *To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you.* It is impossible for us to estimate how much we owe to the Apostle Paul! Of all who have ever lived, we who are Gentiles owe more to him than to any other man! See how he fought our battles for us. When our Jewish brethren would have excluded us because we were not of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, how bravely did he contend that if we were partakers of the same faith—Abraham is the father of all the faithful, that he was loved of God and the Covenant was made with him, not in circumcision, but before he was circumcised—then we are partakers of that Covenant!

6-10. *But of these who seemed to be something, (whatever they were, it makes no matter to me: God shows personal favoritism to no man) for they who seemed to be something added nothing to me: but on the contrary, when they saw that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the Gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter, (for He worked effectually in Peter to the Apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty to me toward the Gentiles), and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the Grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.* [See Sermon #99, Volume 2—THE DUTY OF REMEMBERING THE POOR—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] One of the first things he did, when there was a famine in Judaea, was to make a collection for the saints in other places, that he might aid the poor Christians.

11-14. *But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed. For before certain men came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas, also, was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If you, being a Jew, live after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compel you the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? It*

must have been very painful to Paul’s feelings to come into conflict with Peter, whom he greatly esteemed. But for the Truth’s sake, he knew no persons, and he had to withstand even a beloved Brother when he saw that he was likely to pervert the simplicity of the Gospel and rob the Gentiles of their Christian liberty! For this we ought to be very grateful to our gracious God who raised up this brave champion, this beloved Apostle of the Gentiles!

15, 16. *We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law: for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified. No mere man can keep the Law of God—no mere man has ever done so. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God! And as an absolutely perfect obedience is demanded by the Law, which knows nothing of mercy, we fly from the Law to obtain salvation by the Grace of God in Christ Jesus!*

17. *But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid! That would not be caused by the Gospel, but by our disregard of it.*

18, 19. *For I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God. “Through my sight of the Law, which I have seen to be so stern that all it can do is to condemn me for my shortcomings, I am driven away from it and led to come and live in Christ Jesus under the rule of Grace—not under the law of Moses.”*

20, 21. *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. I do not frustrate the Grace of God: for if righteousness comes by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain.* [See Sermons #781, Volume 13—CHRISTOS ET EGO; #2370, Volume 40—“CHRIST FIRST, ME LAST—NOTHING BETWEEN BUT LOVE”; #1534, Volume 26—SALVATION BY WORKS, A CRIMINAL DOCTRINE—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

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

PRECEDING GRACE

NO. 656

[This sermon was originally titled "Prevenient Grace."]

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

*"When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's
womb and called me,
by His Grace, to reveal His Son in me."
Galatians 1:15.*

You all know the story of the Apostle Paul. He had been a persecutor and went armed with letters to Damascus to hail men and women and drag them to prison. On the road there he saw a light exceedingly bright—above the brightness of the sun—and a voice spoke out of Heaven to him saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" By this miraculous interposition he was converted—three days he spent in darkness. But when Ananias came to tell him of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there fell from his eyes, as it were, scales. He was baptized, became the most mighty of all Christian teachers, and could truly say that he was not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles.

Paul's conversion is generally considered so very remarkable for its suddenness and distinctness and truly it is. Yet, at the same time, it is no exception to the general rule of conversions, but is rather a type, or model, or pattern of the way in which God shows forth His long-suffering to them that are led to believe on Him. It appears from my text, however, that there is another part of Paul's history which deserves our attention quite as much as the suddenness of his conversion, namely, the fact that although he was suddenly converted, yet God had had thoughts of mercy towards him from his very birth.

God did not begin to work with him when he was on the road to Damascus. That was not the first occasion on which eyes of love had darted upon this chief of sinners. Paul declares that God had separated him and set him apart even from his mother's womb that he might, by-and-by, be called by Grace and have Jesus Christ revealed in him! I selected this text, not so much for its own sake as to give me an opportunity for saying a little this evening upon a doctrine not often touched upon, namely, that of PRECEDING GRACE, or the Grace which comes *before* regeneration and conversion.

I think we sometimes overlook it. We do not attach enough importance to the Grace of God in its dealings with men before He actually brings them to Himself. Paul says that God had designs of love towards him even before He had called him out of the dead world into spiritual life.

I. To begin, then, let us talk for a little while upon THE PURPOSE OF GOD PRECEDING SAVING GRACE AS IT MAY CLEARLY BE SEEN DEVELOPING ITSELF IN HUMAN HISTORY. You generally judge what a

man's purpose is by his actions. If you saw a man very carefully making molds in the sand, then watched him take several pieces of iron and melt them down. And if you further noticed him pouring the melted iron into the molds, you might not know precisely what class of machine he was making, but you would very justly conclude that he was making some part of an engine or other machinery. Perhaps you might guess a beam, or a lever, or a crank, or a wheel—and according to what you saw the molds in the sand to be you would form your idea of what the man was intending to make.

Now, when I look at the life of a man, even before conversion, I think I can discover something of God's molding and fashioning in him even before regenerating Grace comes into his heart. Let me give you an illustration of my course of thought. When God created man—we are told in the book of Genesis—He made him "out of the dust of the earth." Mark him beneath his Maker's hand, the framework of a man, the tabernacle for an immortal soul—a man made of clay, fully made I suppose, and perfect in all respects excepting one and that soon followed—for after God had formed him out of the dust, then He breathed into his nostrils the breath of Life and man became a living soul.

Now it strikes me that during the early part of the history of the people whom God means to save, though they have not received into their hearts any spiritual life, nor experienced any of the work of regeneration, yet their life before conversion is really a working of them in the clay. Let us endeavor to bring this out more distinctly. Can you not perceive God's purpose in the Apostle Paul when you think of the singular gifts with which he was endowed? Here was a man, a rhetorician so noble that there are in his works passages of eloquence not to be equaled, much less excelled, by Demosthenes and Cicero.

As a logician his arguments are most conclusive as well as profound. Never had man such eagle eyes to pierce into the depths of a matter! Never had man such eagle wings to mount up into its sublimities! He argues out questions so difficult to understand that at all times they have been the battlegrounds of controversies! And yet he seems to perceive them clearly and distinctly and to unfold and expound them with a precision of language not to be misunderstood. All Apostles of Jesus Christ put together are not equal to Paul in the way of teaching. Truly he might have said of them all, "You are but as children compared with me."

Peter dashes, and dashes gloriously against the adversary! But Peter cannot build up, nor instruct like the great Apostle of the Gentiles. He has to say of Paul's writings that they, "contain some things hard to be understood." Peter can confirm, but scarcely can he understand Paul—for where intellect is concerned, Paul is far, far above him. Paul seems to have been endowed by God with one of the most intelligent brains that ever filled human cranium and to have been gifted with an intellect which towered far above anything that we find elsewhere.

Had Paul been merely a natural man, I do not doubt but what he would take the place either of Milton among the poets, or of Bacon among the philosophers. He was, in deed and in truth, a mastermind. Now, when I see such a man as this cast by God in the mold of Nature, I ask myself—

“What is God’s purpose? What is He doing here?” As every man has a purpose, so also has God, and I think I see in all this that God foreknew that such a man was necessary to be raised up as a vessel through whom He might convey to the world the hidden treasures of the Gospel. Such a man was needed so that God might speak His great things by him!

You will say, probably, that God reveals great things by fools. I beg your pardon. God did once permit an ass to speak, but it was a very small thing that he said—for *any* ass might readily have said it. Whenever there is a *wise* thing to be said, a wise *man* is always chosen to say it. Look the whole Bible through and you will find that the Revelation is always congruous to the person to whom it is given. You do not find Ezekiel blessed with a Revelation like that of Isaiah. Ezekiel is all imagination, therefore he must soar on the eagle’s wings. Isaiah is all affection and boldness and therefore he must speak with evangelical fullness.

God does not give Nahum’s Revelation to the herdsman Amos—the herdsman Amos cannot speak like Nahum, nor can Nahum speak like Amos. Each man is after his own order and a man of this masterly order of mind, like the Apostle Paul, must have been created, it seems to me, for no other end than to be the appropriate means of revealing to us the fullness and the blessing of the Gospel of peace! Mark, again, the Apostle’s education. Paul was a Jew, not half Greek and half Jew, but a pure Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, speaking the Jews’ native tongue and not a stranger to the ancient speech of Israel.

There was nothing in the traditions of the Jews which Paul did not know and understand. He was educated at the feet of Gamaliel. The best master of the age is selected to be the master of the hopeful young scholar and the school in which he is placed must be a Rabinnical one. Now, just observe in this the purpose of God. Paul’s life-long struggle was to be with Jewish superstition. In Iconium, in Lystra, in Derbe, in Athens, in Corinth, in Rome he must always be confronting the Judaizing spirit. And it was well that he should know all about it—that he should be well schooled in it. And it does strike me that God separated him from his mother’s womb on purpose that he might go forth to proclaim the Gospel instead of Law and shut the mouths of those who were constantly abiding by the traditions of the fathers, instead of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

All this, remember, was going on while as yet he was unconverted, though he was even then, as we see, being prepared for his work. Then observe the spiritual struggles through which Paul passed. I take it that mental struggles are often a more important part of education than what a man learns from his schoolmaster. What is learned here in my heart is often of more use to me than what can be put into my head by another. Paul seems to have had a mind bent upon carrying out what he believed to be right. To serve God appears to have been the great ambition, the one object of the Apostle’s life.

Even when he was a persecutor, he says he thought he was doing God service. He was no seeker after wealth—never in his whole lifetime was Paul a Mammonite. He was no mere seeker after learning—never! He was learned, but it was all held and used subject to what he deemed far more highly—the indwelling Grace of God. Even before he knew Christ he had a

sort of religion and an attachment, and an earnest attachment, too, to the God of his fathers, though it was a zeal not according to knowledge. He had his inward fights and fears and struggles and difficulties and all these were educating him to come out and talk to his fellow sinners and lead them up out of the darkness of Judaism into the light of Christianity.

And then, what I like in Paul and that which leads me to see the purpose of God in him, is the singular formation of his mind. Even as a sinner, Paul was great. He was “the chief of sinners,” just as he afterwards became, “not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles.” There are some of us who are such little men that the world will never see us. The old proverb about the chips in porridge giving one pleasure either way, might apply to a great many people, but never to Paul. If there was anything to be done, Paul would do it—yes, and if it came to the stoning of Stephen, he says he gave his vote against him—and though he was not one of the actual executioners, yet we are told that “the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul.”

He would do all that was to be done and was a thoroughgoing man everywhere. Believing a thing to be right, Paul never consulted with flesh and blood, but girded up his loins and worked with all the powers of his being—and that was no mean force—as his enemies felt to their cost. Why, as I see him riding to Damascus, I picture him with his eyes flashing with fanatic hate against the disciples of the Man whom he thought to be an impostor—and his heart beat high with the determination to crush the followers of the Nazarene!

He is a man all energy and all determination. And when he is converted, he is only lifted into a *higher* life—but unchanged as to temperament, nature and force of character. He seems to have been naturally constituted a thorough-going, thorough-hearted man in order that when Grace did come to him, he might be just as earnest, just as dauntless and fearless, in the defense of what he believed to be right. Yes, and such a man was needed to lead the vanguard in the great crusade against the god of this world. No other could have stood forward as Paul did, for no other had the same firmness, boldness and decision that he possessed.

“But,” I hear someone say, “was not Peter as bold?” Yes, he was. But Peter, you remember, always had the failing of being just where he ought not to be when he was needed. Peter was unstable to the very last, I think. Certainly, in Paul’s day, Paul had to withstand him. He was a great and good man, but not fitted to be the foremost. Perhaps you say, “But there is John—would not John do?” No. We cannot speak in too high terms of John, but John is too full of affection. John is the plane to smooth the timber, but not the axe to cut it down. John is too gentle, too meek. He is the Phillip Melancthon. Paul must be the Luther and Calvin rolled into one! Such a man was needed—and I say that from his very birth, God was fitting him for this position. And before he was converted, preceding Grace was engaged fashioning, molding, and preparing the man in order that by-and-by there might be put into his nostrils the breath of Life.

Now what is the drift of all this? A practical one. And to show you what it is, we will linger a minute here before we go on to anything else. Some of

the good fathers among us are mourning very bitterly just now over their sons. Your children have not turned out as you wish they would. They are getting skeptical, some of them, and they are also falling into sin. Well, dear Friends, it is yours to mourn. It is enough to make you weep bitterly! But let me whisper a word into your ears. Do not sorrow as those who are without hope, for God may have very great designs to be answered, even by these very young men who seem to be running so altogether in the wrong direction!

I do not think I could go so far as John Bunyan did, when he said he was sure God would have some eminent saints in the next generation because the young men in his day were such gross sinners! He thought they would make fine saints. And when the Lord came and saved them, by His mercy—they would love Him much—because they had had so much forgiven. I can hardly say as much as that, but I do believe that sometimes in the inscrutable wisdom of God—when some of those who have been skeptical come to see the Truth—they are the very best men that could possibly be found to do battle against the enemy.

Some of those who have fallen into error, after having passed through it and happily come up through its deep ditch, are just the men to stand and warn others against it. I cannot conceive that Luther would ever have been so mighty a preacher of the faith if he had not, himself, struggled up and down Pilate's staircase on his knees when trying to get to Heaven by his penances and his good works. O let us have hope! We do not know but that God may be intending to call them and bless them! Who can tell, there may be a young man here tonight who will one day be the herald of the Cross in China, in Hindustan, in Africa and in the islands of the sea!

Remember John Williams wishing to keep an appointment with another young man who committed a certain sin. He wanted to know what time it was and so stepped into Moorefield's Chapel. Someone saw him so he did not want to leave, and the Word, preached by Mr. Timothy East who still survives among us, fell on his ears and the young sinner was made a saint! And you all know how he afterwards perished as a martyr on the shores of Erromanga. Why may there not be another such a case tonight? There may be some young man here who has been receiving a first class education—he has no idea what for! He has been learning a multitude of things—perhaps a great deal which it would be much better if he did not know—but the Lord is meaning to make something of him.

I do not know where you are, young Man, but O, I wish I could fire you tonight with a high ambition to serve God! What is the good of my being made at all if I do not serve my Maker? What is the use of my being here if I do not bring any glory to Him who put me and keeps me here? Why, I had better have been a piece of rotten dung strewn upon the field and bringing forth something for the farmer's use than to have been a mere consumer of bread and meat and to have breathed the air and lived upon God's bounty and yet to have done nothing for Him! O young Man! If such an army of you as we have tonight could *all* be led by Divine Grace to say with the Apostle Paul, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," why, there would be hope for Old England yet!

We would yet fling Popery back to the seven hills from where it came. Oh that God would grant us this blessing! But if He should not be pleased to call all of us by His Grace, yet may some here live to prove that they were separated from their mother's womb to God's work and set apart that they might have the Son of God revealed in them and might proclaim His Gospel with power! We will now leave this point, but shall continue the same subject in another form.

II. You would, perhaps, say that all I have talked about as yet has been Providence rather than Grace. Very likely, but I think that Providence and Grace are very near akin. At any rate, if Providence is the wheel, Grace is the hand which turns and guides it.

But I am now about to speak of GRACE PRECEDING, CALLING IN ANOTHER SENSE. It strikes me that it is impossible to say, concerning the elect, when the Grace of God begins to deal with them. You can tell when the quickening Grace comes, but not when the Grace, itself, comes. For know, in one sense, Grace was exercised upon the chosen—

***“Before the daystar knew its place,
Or planets ran their round.”***

I should say that is what I cannot call by any other name than *formative* Grace exercised upon the vessels of mercy at their very birth. It seems to me to be no small mercy that some of us were born of such parents as we were and that we were born where we were. Some of us began right and were surrounded by many advantages. We were cradled upon the lap of piety and dandled upon the knee of holiness.

There are some children who are born with a constitution which cannot escape sin, and which at the same time seems as if it inevitably led them to it. Who can deny that there are some whose passions seem naturally to be so violent that, notwithstanding almost any and every restraint, they run headlong into sin? And often those failings may be distinctly traced to their parents! It is no small blessing when we can look back and thank God, that if no blue-blood of nobility flows in our veins, yet from our very childhood we have not heard the voice of blasphemy, nor strayed into the haunts of vice—but that in the very formation of our character—Divine Grace has ever been present with us!

This formative Grace, many of you, I have no doubt, can trace in the examples and influences which have followed you from the cradle through life. Why, what a blessing to have had such a Sunday school teacher as some of you had! Other children went to schools but they had not such a teacher, or such a class as yours. What a privilege to have had such a minister as some of you had, though perhaps he has fallen asleep now! You know there were others who went to places where there was no earnestness, no life—but that good man who was blessed to you was full of anxiety for your soul—and at the very first, before you were converted, his preaching helped to form your character!

Why, it strikes me that every word I heard and everything I saw while I was yet a child or a youth, had a part in the formation of my later life. Oh, what a mercy it is to be placed where a holy example and godly conversation tend to form the man in a godly mold! All this may be, you know, without Divine Grace. I am not speaking, now, of the work of

effectual calling, but of that *preceding* Grace which is too much forgotten, though it so richly deserves to be remembered.

Think, too, of the prayers which brought tears to our eyes and the teaching that would not let us sin so deeply as others. Think of the light which glowed in us, even in our childhood, and seems to have dispelled something of our natural darkness. Think of that earnest face that used to look so steadily on us when we did wrong and of that mother's tear which seemed as if it would burn itself into our hearts when there had been something amiss that made Mother anxious. All this—though it did not *convert* us—yet it helped to make us what we now are and unto God let us give the Glory!

Furthermore, while there was this *formative* Grace, there seems to me to have gone with it very much of *preventive* Grace. How many saints fall into sins which they have to regret even *after* conversion, while others are saved from leaving the path of morality to wander in the morass of lust and crime! Why, some of us were, by God's Grace, placed in positions where we could not well have been guilty of any gross acts of immorality even if we had tried! We were so hedged about by guardian care—so watched and tended on every side—that we would have been dashing our heads against a stone wall if we had run into any great or open sin.

Oh, what a mercy to be prevented from sinning—when God puts chains across the road, digs ditches, makes hedges, builds walls and says to us, "No, you shall not go that way, I will not let you. You shall never have that to regret. You may desire it, but I will hedge up your way with thorns. You may wish it, but it never shall be yours." Beloved, I have thanked God a thousand times in my life that before my conversion when I had evil desires I had no opportunities! And on the other hand, that when I had opportunities I had no desires—for when desires and opportunities come together like the flint and steel—they make the spark that kindles the fire. But neither the one nor the other, though they may both be dangerous, can bring about any great amount of evil so long as they are kept apart! Let us, then, look back and if this has been our experience let us bless the preventing Grace of God.

Again, there is another form of Grace I must mention, namely, *restraining* Grace. Here, you see, I am making a distinction. There are many who *did* go into sin. They were not wholly prevented from it, but they could not go as far into it as they wanted to do. There is a young man here tonight—he will ask how I know—well, I do know—there is a young man here tonight who wants to commit a certain sin, but he cannot. Oh, how he wishes to do it, but he cannot! He is placed in such a position of poverty that he cannot play the fine gentleman he would like.

There is another! He wants to be dancing at such-and-such a place, but thank God he is lame! There is another, who, if he had had his wish would have lost his soul—but since his blindness has come upon him there is some hope for him. Oh how often God has thrown a man on a sick bed to make him well! He would have been such as he was even unto death if he had been well—but God has made him sick—and that sickness has restrained him from sin! It is a mercy for some men that they cannot

do what they would and though “to will is present” with them, yet even in sin, “how to perform that which they would, they find not.”

Ah, my fine Fellow, if you could have had your own way you would have been at the top of the mountain by now! So you think, but no—you would have been over the precipice long before this if God had you climb at all—and so He has kept you in the valley because He has designs of love towards you and because you shall not sin as others sin. Divine Grace has its hand upon the bridle of your horse. Or perhaps it is a woman and you may speak bitter words against that wife, that sister, or that mother whom God has put there to hold you back. But you cannot go on, you *shall not* go on. Another inch forward and you will be over the precipice and lost, and therefore God has put that hand there to throw your horse back on its haunches and make you pause and think—and turn from the error of your ways. What a mercy it is that when God’s people go into sin to any extent, He speaks and says, “To this point shall you go, but no further. Here shall your proud sins be stopped!” There is, then, restraining Grace.

We shall get still further into the subject when we come to what Dr. John Owen calls the *preparatory* work of Grace. Have you ever noticed that parable about the different sorts of ground and the sower of the seeds? A sower went forth to sow and some of the seed fell on stony ground. You can understand that, because all men have stones in their hearts. Some fell on the thorns and thistles. You can comprehend that, because men are so given to worldly care. Another part of the seed fell on the beaten path. You can understand that—men are so occupied with worldliness.

But how about the “good ground”? “Good ground”! Is there such a thing as “good ground” by nature? One of the evangelists says that it was “honest and good ground.” Now, is there such a difference between hearts and hearts? Are not all men depraved by nature? Yes, he who doubts human depravity had better begin to study himself. Question—If all hearts are bad, how are some hearts good? Reply—They are good *comparatively*. They are good in a *certain sense*. It is not meant in the parable that the good ground was so good that it never would have produced a harvest without the sowing of the seed—but that it had been prepared by Providential influences upon it to *receive* the seed and in *that* sense it may be said to have been “good ground.”

Now let me show you how God’s Grace does come to work on the human heart so as to make it good soil before the living seed is cast into it—so that before *quicken*ing Grace visits it, the heart may be called a good heart—because it is prepared to receive that Grace. I think this takes place thus—first of all, before quickening Grace comes, God often gives an attentive ear and makes a man willing to listen to the Word. Not only does he like to listen to it, but he wants to know the meaning of it. There is a little excitement in his mind to know what the Gospel tidings really are. He is not saved as yet, but it is always a hopeful sign when a man is willing to listen to the Truth and is anxious to understand it.

This is one thing which *preceding* Grace does in making the soul good. In Ezekiel’s vision, as you will recall, before the Breath came from the four

winds, the bones began to stir and they came together bone to his bone. So, before the Spirit of God comes to a man in effectual calling, God's Grace often comes to make a stir in the man's mind so that he is no longer indifferent to the Truth but is anxious to understand what it means.

The next mark of this gracious work is an honest heart. Some persons will not hear you, or if they do, they are always picking holes and finding fault—they are not honest and good ground. But there are others who say, "I will give the man a fair and an honest hearing. I will read the Bible. I will read it honestly. I will really see whether it is the Word of God or not. I will come to it without any prejudices, or, if I have any prejudices I will throw them aside." Now, all this is a blessed work of preparatory Grace making the heart ready to receive effectual calling.

Then, when this willingness and honesty are attended with a tender conscience, as they are in some unconverted people, this is another great blessing. Some of you are not converted, but you would not do wrong. You are not saints, but you would not tell a lie for the world! I thank God that there are some of you so excellent in morals that if you were proposed to us for Church membership, we could not raise any objection to you on that ground, at any rate. You are as honest as the day is long. As for the things of God, you are outwardly as attentive to them and as diligent in them as the most earnest and indefatigable Christians.

Now, this is because your conscience is tender. When you do wrong you cannot sleep at night. And you do not feel at all easy in being without a Savior—I know some of you do not. You have not come to any decision. The Grace of God has not really made you feel your thoroughly blind state—still you are not quite easy. In fact, to go farther, your affections, though not weaned altogether from earth, yet begin to tremble a little as though they would go heavenward. You want to be a Christian—when the communion table is spread, you dare not come downstairs—but I see you looking from the gallery and you wish you were with us.

You know you have not believed in Jesus Christ, and the world keeps you back from doing so—but still there is a kind of twitching in your conscience. You do not know what it is, but there is a something in you that makes you say at times, "O God, let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his." Yes, and you even go farther than this and ask to live the righteous man's life, too. Now, remember, this will not save you—"You must be born again." But for all this the Church of God should feel deeply grateful—for they have seen in themselves that this is often God's preparatory work—clearing away the rubbish and rubble and digging out the foundations, that Jesus Christ might be laid there, the Cornerstone of future hope and of future happiness!

Another work of Grace is the creation of dissatisfaction with their present state. How many men we have known who were consciously "without God and without hope in the world"! The apples of Sodom had turned to ashes and bitterness in their mouth, though at one time all was fair and sweet to their taste. The mirage of life with them has been dispelled, and instead of the green fields and waving trees and rippling waters which their fevered imagination had conjured up in the desert,

they can see now nothing but the arid sand and waste of desolation which appall their fainting spirits and promise nothing! No, not even a grave to cover their whited bones which shall remain a bleached memorial that, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

Multitudes have been brought to see the deluge of sin which has covered even the high places of the earth! They find no rest for the sole of their feet, but as yet they know not of an ark, nor of a loving hand prepared to pull them in as did Noah the dove in olden times! Look at the life of St. Augustine, how wearily he wanders here and there with a death-thirst in his soul that no fount of philosophy, or scholastic argument, or heretical teaching could ever satisfy! He was aware of his unhappy estate and turned his eye round the circle of the universe looking for peace—not fully conscious of what he wanted—though feeling an aching void the world could never fill. He had not found the center, fixed and steadfast, around which all else revolved in ceaseless change.

Now, all this appetite, this hunger and thirst I look upon as not of the devil, nor of the human heart alone—it was of God! He strips us of all our earthly joy and peace, that, shivering in the cold blast, we might flee, when drawn by His Spirit, to the "Man who is as a hiding place from the storm, a cover from the tempest, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Of course, I have not gone fully into this doctrine of preceding Grace, but I trust I have said just enough to waken the gratitude of all the saints who have experienced it and to make them sing with greater emotion than they have ever done before—

***"Determined to save, He watched over my path
When, Satan's blind slave, I sported with death."***

III. And now we come to the last point, which is, PAUL'S ACTUAL CALLING BY DIVINE GRACE. All preparatory work of which we have spoken was not the source or origin of the vital godliness which afterwards distinguished that renowned servant of God—that came to him *suddenly*.

Beloved, there may be some here tonight who cannot discern anything in themselves of God's work of Grace at all. I do not wonder at this. I do not suppose that the Apostle could discern it in himself, or even thought of looking for it! He was as careless of Christ as is the butterfly of the honey in the flowers. He lived with no thought of honoring Jesus and no desire to magnify Him—but with the very *reverse* passion glowing like a hot coal within his soul. And yet in a moment he was turned from an enemy into a friend! Oh, what a mercy it would be if some here tonight were turned from enemies into friends in a moment—and we are not without hope but that this will be the case!

You have hated Christ, my Friend. You have hated Him boldly and decidedly. You have not been a sneaking sort of adversary, but have opposed Him frankly and openly. Now, why did you do it? I am sorry for your sin, but I like your honesty. What is there in the Person of Christ for you to hate? Men hated Him while He was on earth and yet He died for them! Can you hate Him for that? He came into this world to gain no honor for Himself—He had honor enough in Heaven—but He gave it up for the sake of men. When He died He had not amassed a fortune, nor

gathered about Him a troop of soldiers—nor had He conquered provinces—and He died naked on the Cross!

Nothing brought Him here but disinterested affection. And when He came He spent His life in deeds of holiness and good. For which of these things can you hate Him? The amazing loving-kindness of Christ Jesus towards sinners should, in itself, disarm your animosity and turn your hatred of Him to love. Alas! I know that this thought of itself will not do it—but the Spirit of God can. If the Spirit of God once comes in contact with your souls and shows you that Christ died for you, your enmity towards Christ will be over!

Dr. Gifford once went to see a woman in prison who had been a very gross offender. She was such a hardened reprobate that the doctor began by discoursing with her about the judgments of God and the punishments of Hell. But she only laughed him to scorn and called him opprobrious names. The doctor burst into tears, and said, “And yet, poor Soul, there is mercy for you, even for such as you are, though you have laughed in the face of Him who would do you good. Christ is able to forgive you, hard though you are. And I hope that He will yet take you to dwell with Him at His right hand.”

In a moment the woman stopped her laughing, sat down quietly, burst into tears and said, “Don’t talk to me in that way! I have always been told that I should be damned and I made up my mind to be! I knew there was no chance and so I have gone on from one sin to another—but oh, if there is a hope of mercy for *me*, that is another thing! If there is a possibility of my being forgiven, that is another thing!” The doctor at once opened his Bible and began to read to her these words, “The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, cleanses us from all sin.” The greatest brokenness of heart followed.

In subsequent visits the doctor was gratified to find that she was brought to Christ. And though she had to undergo a sentence for many years at the time, yet years later the godly man saw her walking honestly and uprightly as a Believer in Jesus Christ. Sinner, I wish that thought would bring *you* to Christ! O that you would know that He has chosen *you*, that He has separated *you* for Himself, and to be His—even from your mother’s womb! Ah, you have played the harlot, but He will bring you back! You have sinned very greatly, but you shall one day be clothed in the white robe and wear the everlasting crown!

Oh, blush and be ashamed that you should ever have sinned as you have done! You have been a thief and a drunkard. You have brought your mother’s gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, but her prayers are going up even now to Heaven and you shall be brought in yet. O stubborn Sinner, my Master means to have you! Run as you will, you wandering sheep, the Shepherd is after you—yield, yield, yield now! O Prodigal, your Father’s heart is open! Arise! Go to your Father! You are ashamed to go, are you? Oh, let that shame make you go faster! Let it not keep you back! Jesus bled, Jesus wept, Jesus lives in Heaven. “Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters. And he that has no money, let him buy wine and milk, without money and without price.” “Whoever will, let him come and take of the Water of Life freely.”

There is no sinner too black to be forgiven! There are no iniquities that can damn you if you believe in Jesus! All manner of sin and iniquity shall be forgiven him who puts his trust in the shadow of Jehovah-Jesus. Look to Him! He dies! He lives! Look, He rises, He pleads above! "Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else." I trust that the whole of your past mysterious life, my dear fellow Sinner, will be explained to you tonight by your believing in Jesus. That will be the golden key which will open the secret and you will say, "Now I see it. I could not tell what that mysterious hand was that kept me back from doing a certain thing. I could not understand why I was led into such a path, but now I know that it was to take me to the feet of the blessed Savior where I might be happy forever."

As you look back and think of all the dealings of Divine Grace and Providence with you throughout your life, you will sing—

***"Ah, who am I, that God has saved
Me from the doom I did desire,
And crossed the lot myself did crave,
To set me even higher?"***

I must give one word of warning to those who are afflicting themselves with a notion that in order to a true, real, conversion they must have a long course of agonizing soul-conflict. You must mark that I am NOT teaching this! The new birth was instantaneous—at once! Saul of Tarsus calls Him Lord and it is only three days that darkness rests upon him. This is the longest case recorded in the Bible—and how short a time in darkness and anguish that is—compared with the experience of some whom you are regarding as models on which God must act in your case.

Remember that God is not the God of uniformity—though He is of union and peace. He may lead you at once into joy and peace, as Nathanael, who said as soon as he saw Christ, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel." God may, and doubtless has been, blessing you through His Grace from your birth. But He needs not to plunge you many days in the cold dark waters of conviction to wash away your sin—the blood of Christ at *once* can cleanse from all sin if you confide your soul to Him. Believe, therefore, and you are at once justified and at peace with God. May the Lord bless you all, for Jesus' sake.

[This sermon was originally titled "Prevenient Grace."]

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

GOD-GUIDED MEN

NO. 3078

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1908.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 15, 1874.**

***“I conferred not with flesh and blood.”
Galatians 1:16.***

THE conversion of Paul is one of the evidences of the truth of our holy religion. So far as this life was concerned, he had nothing to gain, but everything to lose by becoming a Christian. From being a great Rabbi he came to be the companion of poor fishermen who themselves were the followers of One who was poorer even than they! It is clear that he was no fanatic and not at all likely to be carried away by any sudden impulse. He was clear-headed, thoughtful, logical and his conversion must have been worked by some very extraordinary power—there must have been, to him at least, overwhelming evidence of the truth of what he believed and of that form of faith to which he devoted his whole after life.

In addition to supplying us with valuable evidence of the truth of Christianity, Paul has left to us a most remarkable example of its force in his own person. Never was there a man more fully possessed with the Spirit of Christ than he was. He was no feeble saint with just enough Grace to enable him to go limping into Heaven—he was a spiritual athlete, wrestling with the powers of darkness, running with endurance the race set before him and “filled with all the fullness of God.” He was one who was indeed “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” He threw himself, with all his natural zeal, into the cause of Christ—that natural zeal being so sanctified by the Spirit of God as to make him a mighty and valiant servant of the Lord. I pray that we, also, Beloved, may be what Paul was. I will not even deny his bonds! He did so when he said to king Agrippa, “I would to God that not only you, but also all that hear me this day were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.” But we might be willing even to wear his bonds if we might but have such a character as his fully developed within us!

Paul—being converted through Christ appearing to him out of Heaven, and speaking personally to him, being deeply repentant for the past and believing fully in Jesus as his Lord and Savior—had no sooner been baptized than he struck out at once an independent path for himself. He did not need to receive any commission from men, for he had received his commission direct from Heaven and, therefore, “straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.”

In our text Paul says, “I conferred not with flesh and blood.” He did not consult with good men as to what he ought to do! Why should he?

Why should he ask them to countersign his commission when he had Christ's name at the bottom of it? He did not consult his relatives, for he knew very well what they would say. They would think him ten thousand fools in one to throw up all his prospects of advancement to become the follower of what they thought to be the meanest of all superstitions. He did not consult even with his own flesh and blood, with himself. As I have already reminded you, he had everything to lose and nothing to gain by becoming a Christian—but he willingly descended from being a student of Gamaliel and a member of the Sanhedrim, to earn his living as a tentmaker and to be a simple itinerant preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He descended from comparative ease and luxury to poverty and stern toil—from safety and peace to bitter persecution! And at last to death by martyrdom. And while knowing that he could never be a gainer as to temporal things, he nevertheless calmly and deliberately gave himself up to be the bondservant of that Christ who had spoken to him out of Heaven and called him into His service.

I want to show you, first, that *faith needs no warrant for its action but the command of God*. If it gets that, it need not consult with flesh and blood. I shall try to show you, in the second place, *the range of application of this principle to ourselves practically*. And then I shall show you, in the last place, that *the principle is a grand one and commends itself to our best judgment*.

I. First, FAITH NEEDS NO WARRANT FOR ITS ACTION BUT THE COMMAND OF GOD.

Believers have no need to consult with flesh and blood. I may refer you in illustration of this Truth of God to good men in all ages. There is Noah, for instance. He is commanded by God to build an ark of gopher wood—an ark large enough to hold himself and his family and some of all beasts, birds and creeping things that were upon the face of the earth! Was it not an absurd idea to build so huge an ark upon dry land? Yet Noah did not consult with any of the people who were then living—we read, “Thus did Noah: according to all that God commanded him, so did he.”

Then, think of Abraham. He was commanded by God to leave his country, his kindred and his father's house and to go unto a land that God would show him.” And we read, “So Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken unto him.” Further on—in his life there was that very memorable occasion when God commanded him to offer up his son Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham did not consult with Sarah. He knew the mother's feelings far too well to wish to lacerate them, and she might have said, “No, my Husband, such a deed as that must not be done.” So he did not ask her, but he rose up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, prepared the wood and set out on the three days' journey to the place of which God had told him. He did not even consult Isaac, who was, apparently, thus to die. And when Isaac said to him, “Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” his father replied, almost choking, I think, as he said it—“My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.” He consulted not with his own flesh

and blood, else had the father been too strong for the Believer, but as God had commanded him to offer his son as a sacrifice, he unsheathed the knife to slay his beloved Isaac—a glorious instance of what faith can dare to do without asking the advice or the approval of men!

Remember, too, how Moses obeyed the Divine command to lead Israel out of the house of bondage. He certainly did not consult with his own flesh and blood, for the riches of Egypt were at his feet! Perhaps Pharaoh's throne would have been occupied by him before long had he not counted "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt," and he gave up glittering prospects to go forth into the wilderness with the despised people of God.

Remember David, too. He had those who wished to give him counsel, when he twice stood over his sleeping foe, the despot Saul. On the second occasion Abishai said to David, "Let me smite him, I pray you, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time." But David said to him, "Destroy him not; for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?" He knew right well that it is not for good men to do ill actions, even though they think the best results might follow from them. So he consulted not with flesh and blood and he would not let the son of Zerniah lead him into sin. Think too, of Daniel. When the royal edict was signed that none should ask a petition of anyone except King Darius for thirty days, did he confer with flesh and blood as to what he should do under the circumstances? Did he consult with himself or with others as to how he might satisfy his conscience and yet, at the same time, save his life? Not he—he went into his house, where his windows were open towards Jerusalem, and there he prayed to God three times a day, as he had done aforetime, although the lions' den awaited him! And think, also, of those three brave young men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. When Nebuchadnezzar told them that they must worship his golden image or be cast into the burning fiery furnace, they replied, "We are not careful to answer you in this matter." Their only care was to do as God bade them—regardless of all consequences! They did not consult with flesh and blood, but obeyed the command of their God!

This has been faith's rule all through the ages. It was the rule of the martyrs in the old days of the Roman persecution. They knew that they might be put to death in the Coliseum—"butchered to make a Roman holiday"—yet, knowing that, they dared to confess that they were Christians. This was the glory of our Protestant ancestors in the days of Queen Mary. They went joyfully to Smithfield to be burnt for the sake of Christ and, as one of the pastors significantly said, "the young people went to see the others burn—and to learn the way when it should come to their turn." They did learn the way, too, to stand there, not consulting with flesh and blood, but being ready to be burned to ashes rather than worship the beast, or receive his mark on their foreheads! This is still the spirit that animates true faith. God's command is her sufficient warrant. She consults not with flesh and blood.

I would have you also remember that *if we do ask for something over and above God's plain command, we are virtually casting the command, itself, behind our backs.* God tells you to do a certain thing, but you say that you must first consult your advisers and friends. Then has it come to this—that a mortal man is to tell you whether you are to obey God or not? That would be making man your god and rejecting the living and true God! Suppose that in such a consultation you should be advised not to do the right thing? And if you should obey that advice, would you be relieved of your responsibility? Certainly not! It would still rest upon you. To you comes the Divine command and it is for you to obey it, whether you are advised by others to do so or not. Even to ask for such advice is to trifle with the authority of God. To hesitate to do right because of self-interest is rebellion against God. Suppose you say, "That is plainly my duty but it would involve me in a loss"? Well, then, which shall it be—will you suffer the loss or will you commit the sin? If you choose to commit the sin, you do distinctly make your own gain to be your god, for that which has the highest place in your soul is, after all, your god. What right have you to ask, "Will such a course pay me? Will it answer my purpose? What will be the good of it to me"? Such questions contain the very essence of rebellion against the Most High! What if you are no gainer by obeying your God? He who bids you do it is your Maker and Preserver! What if you should lose everything through obeying Him? Would it not be better to lose the whole world than to lose your own soul, for what will you give in exchange for your soul? The very thought of weighing self-interest against the authority of God should be revolting to all right-minded men!

Further, *to consult with flesh and blood is diametrically opposed to the Character of Christ.* Flesh and blood, in the person of Peter, rebuked Him when He talked of suffering and being killed. But the Lord said to him, "Get you behind Me, Satan: you are an offense unto Me, for you savor not the things that are of God, but those that are of men." When Jesus said to His disciples, on one occasion, "Let us go into Judaea again," they said to Him, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone You; and go You there again?" Yet bravely did He go where He felt that He had a commission to go. His life was one of self-denial and self-sacrifice—His rule was not, "spare yourself," but this was His rule, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit." He knew that without the sacrifice of Himself, He could not glorify God. So, if you would be like your Master, you must not be making provision for the flesh to gratify the ease and the lusts thereof—but you must be willing, like He, to suffer! Like He you must be willing to be reproached—and like He, even to die, if so it must be for the Glory of God!

I have generally found that *when men do consult with flesh and blood, the consultation usually leads to the neglect of duty and the forsaking of the Lord.* Had Paul conferred with flesh and blood he would probably never have been an Apostle. I pray that you, Beloved, may have the Grace to say, "My Master's command is my only Law. My Master bids me

do such-and-such—this is my reason if men say that I play the fool by doing it, if they charge me with throwing prudence to the winds—and even if they thrust me into prison and lead me forth to death. Sooner let the sun refuse to shine at the Almighty's bidding! Sooner let the earth refuse to revolve upon her axis, or any longer to traverse her orbit! Sooner let all Nature revolt against the laws of its Maker, than ever a man of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ, should dare to refuse to obey Him, let Him command whatever He may."

There I leave the grand and searching principle that faith needs no warrant for its action but the command of God!

II. Now secondly, I am going to show you THE RANGE OF ITS PRACTICAL APPLICATION TO OURSELVES.

I judge that, first of all, *it applies to all our known duties*. I am not now speaking to unconverted people—I am speaking to you who profess to be converted. You say that you are saved and that you do not trust in your own works. That is well. I have preached to you the Scriptural Doctrine of Salvation by Grace, but now I am going to give you a practical principle that is inseparably associated with that Doctrine. It is this—It is the duty of every Christian to forsake every known sin, whatever it may be, and, in doing so, he is *not* to consult with flesh and blood. Many professors say, "This course is wrong, judging by the Scriptural standard. But then, society has long tolerated it. No, it has even decreed it to be right." But will society judge you at the Last Great Day? If you are cast into Hell as a deceitful professor, will society fetch you out of the bottomless pit? If you are found at last outside the gates of Heaven, will society recompense you for your eternal loss? What have you, O man of God, to do with society? Christians are to come out from among the ungodly to daily take up their cross and follow Christ—to go outside the camp, bearing His reproach. The friend of the world is the enemy of Christ. What have you to do with doing as the world does?

The same principle applies to the duty of consecration to Christ. Every Christian should live for Christ alone. All that we are and have belongs to Christ. Even Paul wrote, "You are not your own, for you are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Well then, do not consult with flesh and blood to find out how far other Christians obey that command, for the pulse of the professing Christian is in a sickly state at this time and Christianity is sadly adulterated. But what have I to do with what my fellow Christians do? If they are not what they should be, is not that a reason why I should be the more consecrated to Christ? If I see others put into the scales of the sanctuary and found wanting, is that a reason why I, too, should be found wanting? I charge you people of God who are here present to try how near you can get to complete consecration to the Lord Jesus Christ! Never say, "I am as good as my minister." You had need be much better than I am! Never say, "I am as good as such-and-such a Christian." O Sirs, if you compare yourselves among yourselves, you are not wise! The only model for Christians is Christ Himself!

This principle of not consulting flesh and blood also applies to *our service for Christ*. We have known ministers whose “call” to a place always depended upon the size of the salary. We have heard of others whose work for Christ depends upon whether it is to be done in respectable society and whether it is a tolerably light and easy task. If they find that it is Ragged School work, or if they will have to labor among very poor people and get no credit for it, they do not care for that kind of service—and if it involves a great deal of toil, they do not feel that they could manage it. The real difficulty is that it is not pleasing to flesh and blood! O soldiers of the Cross, has it come to this, that you must have an easy place, or you will not fight for your King? Soldiers of the Queen do not wait to ask whether it will be hot or cold in the lands to which they are ordered to go—but away they go at the royal command. And so it must be with Christians! We must not be such featherbed soldiers that we can only go where we shall be easy and comfortable. No, but in the name of Him who bought us with His blood, let us ask, “Is this my proper sphere of service for Christ? Then I will occupy it, by His Grace, cost what it may.”

Perhaps I am addressing some Brother or Sister here who says, “I feel that I am called to service for Christ, but I am going to consult my friends to see whether they are with me or not.” That will probably put an end to your service before it begins! Nothing good will be done by a man who will not attempt it until everybody thinks it is wise. If God has called you to any work for Him, go at it at once with all your might, for if you stop to consult even good people, it is very likely that they have not the faith that you have—or if they have, they will frankly tell you that they are not judges of your call. I cannot decide whether it is a call from God to you—you must yourself be the judge as to that. And if you feel that God has called you to any work, go and do it!

“Oh, but Christian people throw cold water over my plans!” Yes, that is a common practice, but it ought not to stop you from doing the Lord’s work! Remember how David’s brother, Eliab, said to him, “I know your pride and the naughtiness of your heart; for you are come down that you might see the battle”? I have always admired the modesty of David’s reply, “What have I now done? Is there not a cause?” He had been sent down to the camp by his father and he had a further justification, a little later, when he stood before Saul with the giant’s gory head in his hand! If God bids you do any work for Him, go and do it in His strength without consulting with flesh and blood. Many a noble purpose has been strangled by a committee! Many a glorious project that might have been the means of carrying the Gospel to the utmost ends of the earth has been crushed by timid counselors who said that it was not practicable! Whereas, had it been attempted, God would have worked with the worker and great would have been the result. So go, O man of God, to the work He has called you to do—and consult not with flesh and blood!

In the next place, this principle applies to *all necessary sacrifices*. There are sacrifices which we must make for Christ and His cause. For instance, there are persons who, if they are converted to God, must make

sacrifices in their business. There are here tonight one or two men who used to be publicans. But when they became converted, they took the very first opportunity of getting out of that business, although it meant a considerable sacrifice. They have cheerfully borne the loss and they are now sitting here with clear consciences as they could not have been if they had not done what they believed to be right. There are others here who used to get a living by their Sunday trade, but they willingly gave it up for Christ's sake when they became His. I do not think they have ever got back as much money as they gave up, but they have great peace of mind and they feel perfect satisfaction at the loss because they believe it to be right. Every Christian is bound to act thus, not considering for a moment the profit or loss of the matter. As God is God, He is to be served at all costs!

Sometimes, however, the following of Christ involves the loss of more than money—the loss of friendships. There are separations still made in the world because of devotion to Christ. Ungodly parents drive away from them their converted children. Close friendships have been snapped and situations of influence and usefulness have had to be given up for Christ's sake and the Gospel's. "What am I to do?" asks one who is threatened with grievous loss if he will not give up Christ. Be willing to let father and mother, or husband or wife and all else go rather than let Him go upon whom your eternal interest depends! Remember that He said, "If any man comes to Me and hates not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters; yes, and his own life, also, he cannot be My disciple." Some persons feel that if they become followers of Christ, they will lose prestige and position—and that is more than they can endure. There have been some who, when they had joined this Church, have henceforth had the cold shoulder in the aristocratic circles to which they belonged. And they have come to me and said, "Our former friends no longer call upon us, nor ask us to their houses." And I have replied, "Thank God! Then you will be out of the way of the temptation to which you might be exposed from their idle chat." They have said, by-and-by, that it was even so and that it was well. But at the first it was hard to bear. Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, always do what is right! Whatever may come of it, be out-and-out for Christ. Verily I say unto you—there is no man who shall be a loser by Christ at the last! Great shall be his gain who, for Christ's sake, can give up even all that he has!

I want you to further notice that this principle also applies to *the confession of your faith*, if you have been converted to Christ. Very often some of those who really do believe in Jesus neglect to avow their faith in the Lord's appointed way. Nothing is more plainly taught in the New Testament than that it is the duty of every Believer in Christ to be baptized. It is the duty of every Christian, having first given himself to Christ, afterwards to give himself to Christ's Church, according to the will of God. Now, my dear Friend, do your Master's will and consult not with flesh and blood!

Do not consult with yourself about this matter, for if you do, Self will say, "Why need you go through that trouble? You will bring a great deal of unnecessary notice upon yourself if you do. And perhaps you will not be able to hold out to the end—you may fall into sin and bring disgrace upon the name of Christ!" Self will reason in this way, but what have you to do with such reasoning? Is it not your bounden duty to do as your Master bids you? If soldiers, in the day of battle, are commanded to charge the enemy at the point of the bayonet, they must not stop to consider the danger of such a course, or to ask why their commander gave such an order. And so it must be with all the soldiers of King Jesus! And so surely it will be with every true Christian. Are you a Christian and does your Lord bid you confess your faith in Him? Then come forward and say, "According to His will, I with confess with my mouth, because with my heart I have believed in His name." Possibly someone says, "If I were to do that, I should grieve my parents." Do not needlessly grieve anybody, but if it is necessary for Christ's sake, grieve *everybody*—and grieve *yourself* most that they should be grieved because you do what is right!

Another says, "My position would become very uncomfortable if I were to be baptized." Then find your comfort in the Presence of Christ with you in uncomfortable circumstances! "But," says one, "I don't see how I could be baptized at present." Is it your duty? Then remember that the Apostle says, "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." When I preached in the country, before I came to London, I used to have a hearer who professed to have been a Christian for many years. Whenever I spoke to him about joining the Church, he always said, "He that believes shall not make haste," to which I replied, "Well, if you come at once, you certainly will not have made haste." Then I tried to explain to him that the haste referred to there was the haste of fear and cowardice. And I said that a much more appropriate text was this one, "I made haste, and delayed not to keep Your commandments."

"Well," says one, "I don't wish to put off joining the Church. At the same time, I cannot quite give up the world." Then, do not join the Church! We do not want in the Church those whose hearts are still in the world, so injurious both to the world and to the Church are those who try to join the two together! If you are Christ's, you must give up the world—but why should you hesitate about doing that? What is there in the world but vanity and vexation of spirit? You will find Christ to be infinitely preferable to the world, for in Him you will have—

"Solid joys and lasting treasure."

III. I see that my time has gone, but I need not dwell upon the last point— that THIS PRINCIPLE COMMENDS ITSELF TO OUR BEST JUDGMENT.

It is *the judgment we exercise upon others*. We do not like to see half-and-half people, do we? And if we see people who are willing to suffer for their principles, we respect and honor them. Well then, let us so act that others may be able, in their inmost hearts, to respect and honor us!

This principle will commend itself to us when we come to die. I never heard of a Nonconformist father, when he was dying, saying to his son, “My Boy, you know that I was a Dissenter and I lost my farm for that reason. I advise you to go to the State church and get into the good books of the parson and the squire.” I never heard of a Christian, when dying, saying to his wife, “My Dear, the shutting up of our shop on the Sabbath has meant a great loss to us and I have all the less to leave you—and I regret now that we were so unwise.” No, no! I never heard and never dreamed of hearing of anyone saying such a thing as that! I never heard a dying Christian say, “I gave too much to the Lord’s cause. I worked too hard in Christ’s service. I did not really exercise sufficient prudence and look out for myself as I ought to have done.” Oh, no! Their regrets always are all the other way! Those who have denied themselves most always wish that they had done more, given more and been privileged to even *suffer* more for Christ’s sake!

And finally, *this will be our judgment at the Last Great Day.* We shall account that to have followed Christ and to have suffered loss for Christ was the right thing—but for anyone to have gotten off cheaply through consulting with flesh and blood will then seem to us to have been the meanest thing that was ever heard of—treason against the King of Love, treachery against the Christ who died! Those who have been faithful to Christ on earth shall share His Glory in Heaven and dwell with Him there forever and ever! So, if you believe in Him, come out boldly and confess that you do.

If you love not the Lord Jesus Christ, take heed that He should come against you with His rod of iron and utterly destroy you. May He, by His gracious Spirit, give to all of us faith in Him and loyalty to Him for His dear name’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: JOHN 14.

Verse 1. *Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me.* [See Sermons #730, Volume 13—LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED; #1741, Volume 29—“LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED” and #3076, Volume 54—THE CAUSE AND EFFECT OF HEART TROUBLE—the Sermon to which this Exposition belongs—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Here is a troubled company of disciples, very much cast down, so their Divine Master, full of infinite tenderness, talks to them in this gentle manner, “Let not your heart be troubled.” He does not like to see them troubled, for when they are, He is also troubled. Our Lord here prescribes faith as the only remedy for heart trouble. If you, poor troubled soul, can believe, you will leave off fretting. Twice our Lord uses the word, “believe.” He seems to say to His disciples, “Take another dose of faith—it will take away from you this faintness of heart from which you are suffering. ‘You believe in God, believe also in Me.’” And then He seeks to make them forget their heart trouble by talking most sweetly to them about His Father and His Father’s dwelling

place. It is a great thing to divert the mind, when it is troubled, from that which bores into it and threatens to destroy it.

2. *In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you.* “You have all My heart, so I have no secrets from you. ‘If it were not so, I would have told you.’ Even in going away from you, I am going away for your good.”

2. *I go to prepare a place for you.* [See Sermon #2751, Volume 47—“A PREPARED PLACE FOR A PREPARED PEOPLE”—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] “I am all yours, and always yours, and everywhere yours—and I am doing everything for you.”

3. *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.* “I will not send an angel to fetch you, but I will Myself come for you. If you die, I will come for you in that way. But if you live on until my Second Advent, ‘I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.’”

3. *That where I am, there you may be also.* “So do not be troubled because I am going away from you. I am going first in order that you may follow afterwards. I am going as the Pioneer into that blessed state where you shall dwell with Me forever! So do not be troubled at My departure.” How tenderly and lovingly this is all put!

4. *And where I go, you know, and the way you know.* “I am not going to take a leap into the dark—you know where I am going, and you also know the road along which I am going.” Ah, but sometimes sorrow forgets what it knows and thus creates a cloud of unnecessary ignorance which darkens and increases the sorrow!

5. *Thomas said unto Him, Lord, we know not where You go; and how can we know the way?* It was a pity that Thomas had such a thought as this in his mind, but as it was there, it is a great mercy that he told his Lord of it. Sometimes to put your trouble down in black and white is a quick way to get rid of it—but to bring it to your Lord in prayer is a still better plan!

6. *Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by Me.* [See Sermons #245, Volume 5—THE WAY TO GOD and #942, Volume 16—THE WAY—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] How impossible it is to fully describe our Lord in human language! He is going away, yet He is, Himself, the way! And He is, Himself, the beginning and the end—He is everything to His people—“the way, the truth, and the life.” We are obliged to have mixed metaphors when we talk of Christ, for He is the mixture of everything that is delightful and precious. All over glorious is our Lord—there is no way of setting Him forth to the full in our poor halting speech.

7. *If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also: and from henceforth you know Him, and have seen Him.* It cheers the children of God to talk to them about their Father, and about their Father's house, so that is what the Elder Brother did in His great kindness to His disciples—He talked to them about their Father and His Heaven.

8-10. *Philip said unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us. Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long a time with you, and yet have you not known Me, Philip? He that has seen Me has seen the Father; then how can you say, Show us the Father? Do you not believe I am in the*

Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwells in Me, He does the works. Christ and the Father are indissolubly One. Even when He was here in His humiliation, He was not separated from His Father except in that dread hour when He was bearing His people's sins upon the Cross. Now He is visibly One with His Father on the Throne of Glory!

11, 12. *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. "I am going away from you; but be not dismayed, for I shall not take away My power from you—that will remain with you."*

12. *And greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father. "My very absence will let loose a greater power than you could have experienced while I was here! You will need more power when I am gone from you, and you shall have more. Therefore, 'let not your heart be troubled.' Besides, you will still be able to pray, and prayer will bring you greater blessings than any that I ever gave you."*

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. Every word in this address of Christ was full of comfort to His disciples.*

15, 16. *If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever. There was the One who would enable the disciples to meet every trial—that other Comforter [See Sermons #4, Volume 1—THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT; #5, Volume 1—THE COMFORTER; #1074, Volume 18—THE PARACLETE and #2074, Volume 35—INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] whom Christ promised to them! Their trouble was that their Lord was going away from them. That other Comforter made amends for that and He will make amends to you, Believer, for every form of trial to which you may be exposed. Is it bodily weakness? Is it the infirmity of old age? Is it depression of spirit? Is it losses and crosses at home? Is it crooked things that cannot be made straight? Well, Christ's promise still stands good, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever."*

7. *Even the Spirit of Truth: whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him: but you know Him. "You are on familiar terms with Him. You are intimate with Him. You know Him."*

17-20. *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. At that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. These are the three wonderful mysteries of the union between God, and Christ, and His people—"I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you."*

21, 22. *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. Judas said unto Him, not Iscariot,*

Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself unto us, and not unto the world? “Perhaps if You did manifest Yourself to the world, the world would bow down before You and worship You.” But Christ’s plan was to manifest Himself to the inner circle of His own chosen ones.

23-27. *Jesus answered and said unto 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. 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.* [See Sermons #247, Volume 5—THE BEST OF MASTERS and #300, Volume 6—SPIRITUAL PEACE—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] He had given them peace while He was with them. His Divine Presence had been their continual comfort. But now, although He was going away from them, He would leave His peace behind Him as the most precious legacy that He could bequeath to them—“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.”

27, 28. *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—. “I know that you do love Me, but if you really acted as if you loved Me, you would rejoice.”*

28. *Because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I. The Lord Jesus, though equal with the Father, had voluntarily laid aside His Glory and taken the form and place of a Man, making Himself of no reputation, so His disciples ought to have rejoiced that He was going back to His primitive Glory!*

29, 30. *And now I have told you, before it comes to pass, that when it is comes 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. Still Christ would have enough to do to meet that arch-enemy and to endure all that would come upon Him during that dread encounter.*

31. *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, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307*

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THE DUTY OF REMEMBERING THE POOR

NO. 99

A SERMON DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 25, 1856,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK

PREACHED ON BEHALF OF THE AGED PILGRIMS' FRIEND SOCIETY.

*“Only they would that we should remember the poor;
the same which I also was forward to do.”*
Galatians 2:10.

POVERTY is no virtue. Wealth is no sin. On the other hand, wealth is not morally good and poverty is not morally evil. A man may be a good man and a rich man. It is quite certain that very frequently good men are poor men. Virtue is a plant which depends not upon the atmosphere which surrounds it, but upon the hand which waters it and upon the Divine Grace which sustains it. We draw no support for Grace from our circumstances whether they are good or evil. Our circumstances may sometimes militate against the gracious work in our breast, but it is quite certain that no position in life is a sustaining cause of the life of Grace in the soul. That must always be maintained by Divine Power which can work as well in poverty as in riches—for we see some of the finest specimens of the full development of Christianity in those who are the very meanest in temporal circumstances—far outshining those whom we would have imagined, from their position in society, would have had many things to assist their virtues and sustain their Graces. Grace is a plant which draws no nourishment from the wilderness in which it grows. It finds nothing to feed upon in the heart of man—all it lives upon, it receives *supernaturally*. It sends all its roots upwards, none downwards. It draws no support from poverty and none from riches. Gold cannot sustain Grace—on the other hand—rags cannot make it flourish. Grace is a plant which derives the whole of its support from God, the Holy Spirit, and is, therefore, entirely independent of the circumstances of man. But yet, mark you—it is an undeniable fact that God has been pleased, for the most part, to plant His Grace in the soil of poverty. He has not chosen many great, nor many mighty men of this world but He has “chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the Kingdom of God.” We should wonder why, were we not quite sure that God is wise in His choice! We cannot dispute a fact which Scripture

teaches and which our own observation supports, that the Lord's people are, to a very large extent, the poor of this world! Very few of them wear crowns. Very few ride in carriages. Only a proportion of them have a competence. A very large multitude of His family are destitute, afflicted, tormented and are kept leaning, day by day, upon the daily provisions of God and trusting Him from meal to meal, believing that He will supply their needs out of the riches of His fullness.

Now, tonight, we shall, first of all, mention *the fact* that God *has a poor people*. Secondly, the duty—*we should remember the poor*. And then, thirdly, *the obligation for us to perform this duty*—for there are sundry reasons why we ought to be especially mindful of the poor of the Lord's flock.

I. First, then, THE LORD HAS A POOR PEOPLE—a fact notorious to us all—which daily observation confirms. Why does the Lord have a poor people? This is a question that might suggest itself to us and we might not, at all times, find it easy to answer if we were poor, ourselves. God could make them all rich if He pleased. He could lay bags of gold at their doors. He could send whole rivers of supplies where now it is a desert! He could scatter round their houses abundance of provisions—as once He made the quails lie in very heaps round the camp of Israel—so now He could rain bread out of Heaven to feed them! There is no necessity that they should be poor, only as it pleases His own Sovereign Will. “The cattle upon a thousand hills are His,” He could supply them. He could make the rich men of this world give up all their wealth, if He so pleased to turn their minds. He could make the richest, the greatest and the mightiest bring all their power and riches to the feet of His children, for the hearts of all men are in His control! But He does not choose to do so. He allows them to suffer need. He allows them to pine in penury and obscurity. Why is this? I believe that is a question we should not find easy to answer, if we were in the circumstances, but seeing that many of us are out of the affliction, we may, perhaps, hint at one or two reasons why the Lord God has had—has and always will have—a poor people in this world!

I. I think one reason is to teach us *how grateful we should be for all the comforts He bestows on many of us*. One of the sweetest meals I think I have ever eaten was after beholding a spectacle of penury which had made me weep. When we see others needing daily bread, does not our loaf at once taste very sweet? It may have been very dry—but we saw someone begging for bread in the streets—and we thanked God for what we had that day, when we knew that others wanted. When we take our

walks abroad and see the poor, he must be but a very poor Christian who does not lift up his eyes to Heaven and thank his God thus—

***“Not more than others I deserve,
But God has given me more.”***

If we were all made rich, alike, if God had given us all abundance, we would never know the value of His mercies—but He puts the poor side by side with us—to make their trials, like a dark shadow, set forth the brightness which He is pleased to give to us in temporal matters. Oh, you would never thank God half as much if you did not see your cause for thankfulness by marking the needs of others! Oh, you dainty ones who can scarcely eat the food that is put before you, it would do you good if you could sit down at the table of the poor! Oh, you discontented ones who are always murmuring at your households because all kinds of delicacies are not provided for you—it would do you good if you could sit down for a while to workhouse fare and sometimes eat a little less than that and fast a day or two, to find your appetites! Yes, you who never sing a song of praise to God, it would be no small benefit to you if you were, for once, made to need His bounties! Then you might be led to thank God for all His abundant supplies. Even Christians need a spur to their thankfulness. God gives us a great many mercies we never thank Him for. Day by day His mercies come, but day by day we forget them! His mercies lie—

***“Forgotten in unthankfulness,
And without praises die.”***

Put you out in the cold some winter’s night and would you not thank God for the fire, afterwards? Make you thirst for a little while and how grateful would be the cup of water! Now, if God has not exposed us in this way, it is at least an instance of His wisdom that He has placed others in that position, to teach those of His family who are more highly favored in temporal matters how thankful they ought to be for the gifts of His Providence!

2. That, however, I take it, is but a very low view of the matter. There are other and higher and better reasons! God is pleased to always have a poor people, *that He may display His Sovereignty* in all He does. If there were no poor saints, we would not so strongly believe the Doctrine of the Sovereignty of God. Or, at least, if the saints believed it as they always must and will, yet the wicked and those who despise it would not have so clear an evidence of it. Then they would not sin against such great Light of God which shines upon their poor, dark, blind eyeballs from evident displays of Sovereignty in salvation! Those who deny Divine Sovereignty, deny it in the face of all testimony—certainly in the teeth of Scripture, for

it is positively affirmed there! And God, in order that there may be something besides Scripture, has made His Providence bear out the written Word and has caused many of His children to be the despised among the people. "I take whom I please," says God. "You would have Me choose kings and queens, first—I choose their humble servants in their kitchens before I choose their masters and mistresses in their banqueting halls! You would have Me take the counselor and the wise man—I take the fool, first, that I may teach you to despise the wisdom of man! I take the poor before the rich, that I may humble all your pride and teach you there is nothing in man that makes Me choose him—but that it is My Sovereign Will, alone, which creates men, heirs of Grace." I bless God that there are poor saints, for they teach me this lesson—that God will do as He pleases with His own. They show me manifestly that however much men may deny the Sovereignty of God, they cannot rob Him of it—that He will still exert it to the very last—as long as this earth shall stand and may find ways of exerting it, even in future ages! Certainly the existence of a poor people in the world is proof positive in the mind of the saint and a plain and bold affirmation to the most obtuse intellect of the sinner, that there is a Sovereignty of God in the choice of men.

3. Again—God has a poor people, I take it, *that He may display more the power of His comforting promises and the supports of the Gospel.* If all God's saints were well-to-do in this world and never lacked, we would scarcely realize the value of the Gospel half as much, Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, when we find some that have not where to lay their heads, who yet can say, "Still will I trust in the Lord." When we see some who have nothing but bread and water who still glory in Jesus—when we see them "wondering where the scene shall end," seeing that, "every day new straits attend," and yet having faith in Christ, oh, what honor it reflects on the Gospel! Let my rich friend, there, stand up and say, "I have faith in God for tomorrow with regard to my daily bread." You would say, "My dear Friend, I do not at all wonder at it, for you have plenty of money at home to buy your bread with and a salary coming in on such a day. There is not much opportunity for faith in your case." But when some poor Habakkuk rises and exclaims, "although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall there be fruit in the vine," and so on, "Yet will I trust in the Lord." Ah, then that shows the power of all-supporting Grace! You know we hear of a great many different inventions that will never stand a trial. One man advertises a swimming belt. A fine thing it would be for dry land, but when it is tried at sea, I fear it will not exactly answer the purpose and really we cannot know the value of an invention

unless we test it and put it through all the trials which it is supposed to be able to endure. Now, Grace is tested in the poverty of Believers—that they are still, in a great degree, an uncomplaining and unmurmuring race—that they bear up under every discouragement, believing that all things work together for their good and that out of all their apparent evils, some good shall ultimately spring! That their God will either speedily work a deliverance for them, or most assuredly support them in the trouble, as long as He is pleased to keep them there. Beloved, this is, no doubt, one reason why God puts His people in poor circumstances. “There,” says the architect, “this building is strong.” Yes, Sir, but it must be tested! Let the wind blow against it. There is a lighthouse out at sea—it is a calm night—I cannot tell whether the edifice is firm. The tempest must howl about it and *then* I shall know whether it will stand. So with religion. If it were not, on many occasions, surrounded with tempestuous waters, we would not know that the ship was strong. If the winds did not blow upon it, as they do on our poor tried Brothers and Sisters, we would not know how firm and secure it is. The masterworks of God are those that stand in the midst of difficulties—when all things oppose them, yet maintain their stand. These are His all-glorious works and so His best children, those who honor Him the most, are those who have Grace to sustain them amidst the heaviest load of tribulations and trials. God puts His people into such circumstances, then, to show us the power of His Divine Grace.

4. Then, again—God often allows His people to be a tried and a poor people, just *to plague the devil*. The devil was never more plagued in his life, I think, than he was with Job. As long as Job was rich, Job caused much envy in Satan—but he never made him so angry as when he was poor! It was then that Satan was the most incensed against him because, after all his trials, he would not curse God and die. You know, if a man thinks he can do a thing, he will always wrap himself up in his self-complacency till he tries to do it and then fails. So Satan thinks he may overthrow one or other of God’s children. “Now, Satan,” says God, “I will give you an opportunity of trying your skill. One of My children is very poor. I will cut off his bread and water. I will give him the water of affliction to drink and the bread of bitterness to eat. He shall be exceedingly tried. Take him, Satan, drag him through fire and water and see what you can do with him.” So Satan tries to starve out the Divine Life from his soul—but he cannot do it—and he finds, after all he has done, that he is defeated and he goes away plagued, vexed and feeling another Hell within himself, though miserable enough before, because he was foiled in all his attempts to tread out the spark of life in the heart of

God's child. God often allows Satan to test the Lord's work. It is marvelous that the crafty devil should continue to work when it all tends to the Glory of God, after all. But he is a devil all over and will always continue so. He always will keep on meddling with God's children—he will persevere even to the last moment—till every saint is safe across the Jordan, he will still be plaguing and vexing God's beloved children. Ah, then let us rejoice! God will deliver us and bring us off safe at last, yes, "more than conquerors, through Him that loved us."

5. Furthermore, the design of our heavenly Father in allowing a poor people in this world and keeping His people poor, when He might make them rich, is possibly *to give us some living glimpse of Christ*. A poor man is the image of Jesus Christ, if he is a Christian. All Christians are the image of Jesus Christ, for the sanctifying influence of Christ exerted on them has made them, in some degree, like their Master. But the poor man is like his Master not only in his character, but in his circumstances, too. When you look on a poor saint, you have a better picture of Jesus than you have in a rich saint. The rich saint is a member of Christ. He has the image of his Master stamped upon him and that image shall be perfected when he shall arrive in Heaven. But the poor saint has something else—he has not only the most prominent feature—but the background and the foreground all in the picture! He has the circumstances of it! Look at his brown hands, hardened by toil—such were his Savior's once. Look at his weary feet, blistered with his journeying—such were his Savior's many a time. He sits upon a well from weariness, as his Lord once did. He has nowhere to rest, nor had his Master—foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but He had nowhere to lay His head. He is fed by charity, so was his Master—others supplied His needs. Look! He sits down at an invited table, so did his Master—He had not one of His own! You see Christ, then. You see as much of Christ as you will see just yet—until you are taken up where you shall be like He is—and see Him as He is. He would have us always remember the Savior's poverty—"How He was rich and yet, for our sakes, became poor." And just as, on some memorable day, they strike medals which bear the impress of its hero, so I look upon every poor saint as being a medal struck from the Divine Mint, to be a memento of the existence of our Lord Jesus Christ! He is to make me remember my Lord, to bid me meditate upon that wondrous depth of poverty into which He stooped, that He might lift me up to light and Glory. Oh, Blessed Jesus, this is wise, for we often forget You—wise that You have given us some opportunity to remember You!

6. But now one more reason and I have done with this part of the subject. The Lord has a poor people in the midst of us for this reason—that He *determines to give us opportunities of showing our love to Him*. Now we show our love to Christ when we sing of Him and when we pray to Him. But if there were no poor people in the world, we would often say within ourselves, “Oh, how I wish there were one of Christ’s Brethren that I could help. I should like to give Christ something. I should like to show my Master that I love Him, not by words, only, but by deeds, too.” But if all the poor saints were taken clean away and we were all well-to-do and had abundance, there would be none to require any assistance. And then, I think, we might begin to weep because there were no poor saints to help. It is one of the most healthy things in the world to help a saint! It is a great blessing to our own souls. It is a healthy exercise of the mind to visit the poor of the Lord’s flock and distribute, as we are able, of our substance to their necessities. Let us look upon it not as a mere duty but as a delight and privilege—for if we were not able to give something of our substance to Christ, we would have to go down on our knees to ask Him to give us some opportunity of showing our love to Him. Take away the saints and one channel wherein our love might flow is withdrawn at once! But that shall never be, for the poor we always shall have with us and these are some of the reasons why we will always have them.

II. The second thing we shall endeavor to speak of is THE DUTY here alluded to—“*They would that we should remember the poor.*” “Remember the poor.” That word, “remember,” is a very comprehensive word.

We ought to remember the poor in our *prayers*. I need not remind you to offer supplication for the rich, but remember the poor. Remember them and pray that God would comfort and cheer them in all the trials of their penury, that He would supply their needs out of the riches of His fullness! Let the angel touch you on the arm when you have nearly finished your prayers and say, “Remember the poor. Remember the poor of the flock.” Let your prayers always go up to Heaven for them.

Remember the poor, too, in your *conversation*. It is remarkable that all of us remember the rich. We talk about all men being equal, but I do not believe there is an Englishman who is not silly enough to boast if he has happened to be with a lord in his lifetime! To have seen a live lord is a most marvelous thing and there is scarcely one of us that could resist the temptation of talking about it! We may say what we like about believing in the equality of mankind—so we do, till we happen to get a little elevated—then we don’t believe it any longer! We are all ready enough to pull others down when we are in humble circumstances—but

when we get a little elevated—we foolishly think it only a child's fancy that we indulged in and that, after all, there are more differences than we imagined. We always remember the rich. You see a respectable man in Church. You always know him, don't you? You are on the exchange, or walking down the street—you never find any difficulty in recognizing him! Somehow or other, your memory is very treacherous in remembering the poor, but very strong in remembering a rich man. Let me remind you to, "Remember the poor." It is singular enough that there is no command to remember the rich. I suppose because there is no necessity for it, for we usually remember them. But there is a command for us to remember the poor! Now the next time you see a poor Brother coal miner, bricklayer, herdsman, or whatever he may be, talk to him, if you please. And if you see him in all his dirty garments—still talk to him! Do not forget him. Try and remember him. Next Sacrament Sunday look him in the face as though you remembered him—for the last 20 times you have seen him, you have appeared as if you did not remember him and the poor man's mind has been hurt as much as if it were some slight on your part because he was a poor Brother! I will not say that it was so, but I am rather afraid it was, in some degree. Now, when you see him in the street, say, "Well, Brother, I know you." And if he comes up to speak to you, do not think it will lower you to be seen speaking to him in the street. If he is your Brother, acknowledge him! If he is not, tell no lie about it, but leave the Church and make no false professions. But if you believe it, carry it out.

Now, often, when you are walking home from the House of God, you do not remember the poor, do you? If they should require to speak to you, however important their errand, they would not get attended to very frequently. If Mr. So-and-So, who is a respectable gentleman, wanted you, "Oh, yes, Sir, I can stop a moment and have a little conversation with you." But if a poor person wants you, "Oh, I am in such a hurry. I must go home." And you are sure to go off at once! Now, in the future, just reverse your habit—when you see a rich man, do just what you like about attending to him. I know what you will like to do. But when you see a poor man, just make it a point of conscience that you attend to him. I was very much pleased with the conduct of a Brother who is here. He may remember the circumstance and bless God that He gave him Grace to act as he did. A short time ago there stood in the aisle near his pew door a gentleman and a poor fellow in a smock frock. I thought to myself, "He will let one in, I know, but I wonder which it will be?" I did not wait long before out he came and in went the smock frock! He thought very rightly, that the gentlemen would stand a chance of getting

a seat out of some of you but he thought it best to remember the poor. And it was likely that the poor man was the most tired, for he had, no doubt, had a hard week's work and probably a long walk, for there are not many smock frocks near London! Therefore he gave in reality to the most needy. I say, again, "Remember the poor." There is no necessity to tell you to remember the rich—to be very respectful and to speak very kindly and lovingly to those who are above you—you will take care of yourselves on that point—but it is the poor you are disposed not to attend to and, therefore, I will press on you this commandment—that you remember the poor.

But this especially means, I think, that *in the provision for their necessities*, we ought to remember the poor. Some of us have pretty good need to remember the poor. I am sure I have, for I have about ten times as many poor people come to me every day as I can possibly relieve. If I were as rich as the Mayor of London, or Her Majesty the Queen, I could scarcely accede to the immense requests sometimes made to me! There is scarcely a poor man that is hard run by his creditors, or a poor woman that cannot make up her rent, but they write to the minister. All the poor souls come to him. And I think to myself, "What can I do with you? I have really done as much as I can and here are three or four more coming." So I am obliged to send them away and can only pity—but cannot assist—and this will be the case, unless someone shot a wagon load of gold before my door! Still, we must "remember the poor." Some think it very hard to have so many calls on them. I do not. I only think it hard when I cannot help them. If I could, I would think it a great blessing to assist them all. If I were put in possession of great wealth, I do not say what I would do, for very frequently people's hearts get smaller when their means get greater. But where God has given us wealth—and where there are needy children of God—we ought to remember them directly! How much of the superfluities might be given to their necessities! How many of our lavished luxuries might be bestowed on that which they crave for their very existence! You know not how poor this world is. You ride through one part of this magnificent city and you say, "Talk of poverty—there is no such thing!" You ride through another part and you say, "Talk of riches—here is no such thing! The world is poor." Some of you should, now and then, go and search out poverty. Place you above it and your movements in life seldom bring you into contact with it. If you would have your hearts enlarged, visit the poor! Follow them into their dens, for they are but little better in some cases. Go up their creaking staircases. See the straw in the corner of the room where they sleep, yes, see worse than that—see a chair whereon a man has been for the last

five years, not able to sit without being propped, obliged to be fed by others and yet living on four or five shillings a week—with nothing to support him properly—or give him sufficient bodily nutriment. Go and see such cases and if you do not put your hands in your pockets and help the aged pilgrims, I am afraid there is not much Christianity in you! Or if you do not help the one that you see has the greatest need, I am afraid the love of God dwells not in you! It is a duty we owe to the poor of the Lord's flock—and we reap many advantages we would not have if we had not to remember the poor!

III. Now, allow me to press home THIS OBLIGATION—*why should we remember the poor?* I shall not urge it upon the ground of common philanthropy and charity—that were a too mean and low way of addressing Christians, although even they, perhaps, might be benefited by it. I shall urge it in another way.

“Remember the poor,” because they are your Lord's Brethren. What? Do you not feel, like David, that you would do anything for Jonathan's sake? And if he has some poor sick son, some Mephibosheth, lame in his feet, will you not seat him at your table, or give him a maintenance, if you can, seeing that Jonathan's blood is in his veins? Remember, Beloved, the *blood of Jesus* runs in the veins of poor saints! They are His relatives! They are His friends and if that moves you not, remember they are your friends, too! They are your Brethren if you are a child of God. They are allied to you. If they are sons of God, so are you, and they are Brethren of yours. What? Let your Brother starve? If you can, will you not relieve your Brother's necessity, not shield him from the cold, not ward off hunger, not provide for his needs? Oh, I know you love Jesus. I know you love the friends of Jesus and I know you love your own family and, therefore, you will love your poor Brethren, will you not? I know you will, you will relieve them. Remember, too, that you, yourself, may be like your poor Brother before long. Therefore take heed that you despise him not, for someone will despise you. Oh, remember that all you have, God has lent you! He may take it all from you if He pleases. And if He sees that you make an ill use of it, perhaps He will take it from you now! Full many a man has lost his wealth by God's righteous judgment for his misuse of it. You are God's steward, will you cheat Him? He has given you His wealth to distribute to the poor. Will you not supply their needs out of what He has given you? Yes, surely you will! I cannot believe you will turn them away, as long as you have anything wherewith to relieve them, but will share what you have with them. Remember, if you do not relieve them, you give great and grave suspicion that you love not Christ! If you love not Christ's people, how can it be that you are His disciples,

since it is the mark, “By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you love one another”? And how can you love, when you have and give not where God has made you rich and yet you do not bestow? Gravely you give cause to doubt that the love of God is in you, if the love of the Brethren is not in you, also! Oh, remember, when you give, God can give you more. You have lost nothing! You have put it in another purse and God may hand it back to you in larger measure, yet. Men lose nothing by what they give to God’s saints. It would often be a heavenly investment if they bestowed it upon God’s family. But if they retain it, God has other means to make them poor, if they will not give to His cause.

John Bunyan tells of a man who had a roll of cloth and the more he cut from it, the more he had. And he says, in his rhyming way—

***“A man there was, though some did count him mad,
The more he cast away, the more he had.”***

He was not much of a madman, after all, if he had more, the more he gave away! But that is a very selfish view. Remember, if you never get it back, it is no small honor to give it to Christ! And remember, what you give to His children, you put into His palm. If Christ, Himself, should stand at the door as you pass the plate—how you would put your money in to please Him! Remember, His poor believing family are His hand—give into His hand, then, as you can, at all times and seasons! Remember the poor—you shall always have the poor to remember.

Well, now, I beg leave to commend to your attention and notice tonight the Aged Pilgrims’ Friend Society as being an especially excellent institution because it will enable you to remember the poor! Those who are relieved by it are, in the first place, all Christians, as far as man can judge. They are all examined beforehand as to their experience of a change of heart and the existence of a Divine Life within them. And none are received into the society but those who are really the members of Christ’s mystical body and give evidence of the work of Grace in their hearts. In the next place, the funds which are given to them are distributed by Christian men who visit them once a month. And when they visit them, I do not suppose they leave them without praying with them and endeavoring to cheer their hearts. I know they do. They often spend a season of prayer and have a kind conversation with them concerning their souls. And, last of all, they are all over sixty. They have a double claim on us because they are the Lord’s aged people, as well as the Lord’s poor people. And none of them have anything without they absolutely and really require it. I will just read you this very short paper to tell you what they have done—

“The Society was established in 1807 for the relief of the aged Christian poor, above 60 years, irrespective of denominational distinction, both male and female in town and country. It has extended its valuable aid to 1650 aged disciples of the Lord Jesus, among whom have been distributed upwards of £50,000. The following is a brief account of its present state, in reference both to the number relieved and the amount of income and expenditure. There are—45 Pensioners who receive 10 guineas per annum, or 17s. 6d. per month. 245 ditto 5 ditto or 8s. 9d. ditto. 130 Approved Candidates who receive 4s. per month. Total 420 among whom are distributed, monthly, at their own habitations, £172.

“The income arising from Annual Subscriptions, etc., does not exceed £1550 while the expenditure is upwards of £2000, leaving a deficiency, annually, of £450 and upwards, which the Committee has to make up by obtaining collections in various Churches and Chapels, wherever they can. Donations and Annual Subscriptions will be thankfully received by the Treasurers or Secretaries at any time. Every department is filled *gratuitously*. Also, legacies will, at any time, be very thankfully received.”

Our friends had no business to have said anything about legacies, for we do not wish you to die just yet. We always wish to have your subscriptions! We are very thankful to receive legacies, but do not keep the money to leave us in the shape of legacies. We would rather have your annual subscriptions for ten years—for then we would have your living prayers, your living sympathy and your living help! Well, if you do not think this a good Society, do not give anything. But if you do, just put it on its merits. People very often give to an object just what others give, because there is a collection. But just put this upon its own merits and your ability—and give as you think the Society deserves to receive and as you believe yourselves able to bestow. May God give a blessing to you in remembering the poor!

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

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

EVERYDAY RELIGION

NO. 1599

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 22, 1881,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.”
Galatians 2:20.

I am not about to preach from this whole verse, for I have done that before—this single sentence will suffice me. I shall not attempt to enter into the fullness of the spiritual meaning of this very deep and fruitful passage. I am merely going to bring out one thought from it and to try to work that out, I trust, to practical ends. It has sometimes been objected, of the preaching of the Gospel, that we exhort men to live for another sphere and do not teach them to live well in the present life. Nothing can be more untrue than this! I venture to say that more practical moral teaching is given by ministers of the Gospel than by all the philosophers, lecturers and moralists put together! While we count ourselves to be ordained to speak of something higher than mere morals, we nevertheless, no, for *that very reason*, we inculcate the purest code of duty and lay down the most sound rules of conduct.

It would be a great pity, dear Brothers and Sisters, if in the process of being qualified for the next life we became disqualified for this! But it is not so. It would be a very strange thing if, in order to be fit for the company of angels, we should grow *unfit* to associate with *men*! But it is not so. It would be a singular circumstance if those who speak of Heaven had nothing to say concerning the way there. But it is not so. The calumny is almost too stale to need a new denial. My Brethren, true religion has as much to do with this world as with the world to come—it is always urging us onward to the higher and better life! But it does so by processes and precepts which fit us worthily to spend our days while here below.

Godliness prepares us for the life which follows the laying down of this mortal flesh. But as Paul tells us in the text, it molds the life which we now live in the flesh. Faith is a principle for present use. Look how it has triumphed in ordinary life according to the record of the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Godliness with contentment is great gain—it has the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come. The sphere of faith is earth *and* Heaven, time *and* eternity—the sweep of its circle takes in the whole of our being—spirit, soul and body. It comprehends the past and the future and it certainly does not omit the present.

The faith of Christians has to do with the things that now are and it is concerning the life that we now live in the flesh that I shall now speak, trying, by the help of God's Spirit, to show the influence which faith has upon it. There are seven points in which faith in Him who loved us and gave Himself for us will have a distinct influence upon the life which we now live in the flesh.

I. To begin—FAITH INCLINES A MAN TO AN INDUSTRIOUS LIFE. It suggests *activity*. I will venture to say of any lazy man that he has little or no faith in God, for faith always works—“works by love.” I lay it down as a thesis which shall be proven by observation that a *believing* man becomes an *active* man, or else it is because he cannot act and, therefore, what would have been activity runs into the channel of patience and he endures with resignation the will of the Most High. He who *does nothing believes* nothing—that is to say, in reality and in truth. Faith is but an empty show if it produces no result upon the life. If a professor manifests no energy, no industry, no zeal, no perseverance, no endeavor to serve God—there is grave cause to question whether he is a Believer at all.

It is a mark of faith that whenever it comes into the soul, even in its lowest degree, it suggests activity. Look at the prodigal and note his early desires. The life of Grace begins to gleam into his spirit and its first effect is the confession of sin. He cries, “Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before you and am no more worthy to be called your son.” But what is the second effect? He desires to be doing something! “Make me as one of your hired servants.” Having nothing to do had helped to make him the prodigal he was. He had wasted his substance in riotous idleness, seeking enjoyment without employment. He had plunged into the foulest vices because he was master of money but not master of himself.

It was not an evil thing for him when he was sent into the fields to feed swine—the company which he met with at the swine trough was better than that which he had kept at his banquets! One of the signs of the return of his soul’s sanity was his willingness to work, although it might be only as a menial servant in his father’s house. In actual history, observe how Saul of Tarsus, even before he had found peaceful faith in Christ, cried, “Lord, what will You have me to do?” Faith awakens the soul to action! It is the first question of believing anxiety, “Sirs, what must I *do* to be saved?”

Hence faith is such a useful thing to men in the labor and travail of this mortal life because it puts them into motion and supplies them with a motive for work. Faith does not permit men to lie upon the bed of the sluggard—listless, frivolous, idle—but it makes life to appear real and earnest and so girds the loins for the race. Everyone should follow an honorable vocation. It was a rule of the first Church and it ought to be one of the present—“If any man will not work neither let him eat.” It is good for us all to have something to do and plenty of it.

When man was perfect, God placed him in a paradise, but not in a dormitory. He set him in the Garden to “dress it and to keep it.” It would not have been a happy place for Adam if he had had nothing to do but to smell the roses and gaze at the flowers! Work was as essential to the perfect man as it is to us, though it was not of the kind which brings sweat to the face or weariness to the limbs. In the Garden of Grace, Faith is set to a happy service and never wishes to be otherwise than occupied for her Lord. The text says, “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.” Doesn’t faith in the Son of God, who loved him and gave Himself for him, suggest to the redeemed man that he should be industrious and active? Assuredly it does, for it sets the Divine Savior before

him as an example and where was there ever One who worked as Jesus did?

In His early youth He said, “Know you not that I must be about My Father’s business?” He was no loitering heir of a gentleman, but the toiling Son of a carpenter! In later life it was His meat and His drink to do the will of Him that sent Him. He says, “My Father works hitherto and I work.” His was stern labor and sore travail—the zeal of God’s House did eat Him up and the intensity of love consumed Him. He worked on until He could say, “I have finished the work which You gave Me to do.” Now, it is no small thing for a man to be excited by such an Example and to be made a partaker of such a spirit! True faith in Him who loved us and gave Himself for us also seeks direction of the Lord as to the sphere of its action and waits upon Him to be guided by Him in the choice of a calling.

This part of our discourse may be useful to young persons who have not settled upon what they are to do in life. Faith is a great service to us here. Much depends upon the choice of our pursuits. Very grievous mistakes have been made here—as grievous mistakes as if a bird in the air should have undertaken the pursuits of a fish, or a laboring ox should have entered into competition with a race horse. Some people, ambitious beyond their line, are trying to do what they were never made for. This is a grievous evil. There should, therefore, be a seeking unto God for guidance and direction—and faith leads us to such seeking.

This prayer may be used in many senses—“Show me what You would have me to do.” In the choice of a calling, faith helps a Christian to refuse that which is the most lucrative if it is attended with a questionable morality. If the Christian could have huge purses of that gold which is coined out of drunkenness, lust, or the ungodliness of men, he would scorn to put them among his stores! Trades which are injurious to men’s minds and hearts are not lawful callings before God! Dishonest gain is awful loss. Gold gained by deceit or oppression shall burn into the soul of its owner as the fire of Hell. “Make money,” said the worldling to his son. “Make it honestly if you can, but *make money*.” Faith abhors this precept of Mammon and, having God’s Providence for its inheritance, it scorns the devil’s bribe!

Choose no calling over which you cannot ask God’s blessing, or you will be acting contrary to the law of faith. If you cannot conceive of the Lord Jesus wishing you success in a certain line of trade, do not touch it! If it is not possible to think of your Lord as smiling upon you in your daily calling, then your calling is not fit for a Christian to follow! Callings should be deliberately chosen with a view to our own suitableness for them. Faith watches the design of God and desires to act according to His intent. It had been ill for David to have lived in retirement, or for the Prophet Nathan to have aspired to the throne. The Law of the Kingdom is—“Every man in his own order,” or, in other words, “Every man according to his ability.”

If the Lord has given us one talent, let us use it in its own market. Or if two, or five, let us trade with them where they can be most profitably employed so that we may be found faithful servants in the day of the Master’s coming. We should, also, by faith, desire such a calling as Providence

evidently has arranged and intended for us. Some persons have never had a free choice of what vocation they would follow, for from their birth, by position, surroundings and connections they are set in a certain line of things, like carriages on the tram lines—and they must follow on the appointed track or stand still. Faith expects to hear the voice behind it saying, “This is the way, walk in it.” Trusting to our own judgment often means following our own whims, but Faith seeks direction from Infallible Wisdom and so she is led in a right way.

God knows your capacity better than you do! Entreat Him to choose your inheritance for you. If the flowers were to revolt against the gardener and each one should select its own soil, most of them would die through their unsuitable position, but he who has studied their nature knows that this flower needs shade and damp and another needs sunlight and a light soil. And so he puts his plants where they are most likely to flourish. God does the same with us! He has made some to be kings, though few of those plants flourish. He has made many to be poor and the soil of poverty, though damp and cold, has produced many a glorious harvest for the great Reaper. The Lord has set some in places of peril—places from which they would gladly escape—but they are there preserved by His hands! He has planted many others in the quiet shade of obscurity and they blossom to the praise of the great Husbandman.

So, then, you see, faith has much to do with the force and direction of our life in the flesh. It provides impetus by giving a man something to live for. It shows him the far-reaching influences of the thoughts and deeds of today and how they issue in eternal results. And faith also takes the helm and steers the vessel along a safe channel towards the haven of holy rest. Happy are they who, in the early days of their youth, believe in Him who loved them and gave Himself for them and so begin their life walk with Jesus! Blessed be God for converting some of us while we were yet boys and girls! O happy young people who begin life with the early dew of Grace upon them!

No prince of eastern empires was ever so richly bejeweled! You will not, in later days, have to lament scores of years spent in error, or half a life wasted in sin, or a whole 70 years frittered away in idleness! O that you who are yet young, who have the world before you, may now be led by the Spirit to follow Christ who pleased not Himself but did the will of His Father! So shall the life that you live in the flesh be lived by the faith of the Son of God who loved you and gave Himself for you.

II. Secondly, FAITH LEADS A MAN TO LOOK TO GOD FOR HELP IN HIS ORDINARY AVOCATION. Here, again, it has a great influence over him. A Believer may seek of God the qualifications for his particular calling. “What?” you ask, “May we pray about such things?” Yes. The laborer may appeal to God for strength. The artisan may ask God for skill. The student may seek God for help to quicken his intelligence. David was a great warrior and he attributed his valor to God who taught his hands to war and his fingers to fight. We read of Bezaleel and of the women that were wise-hearted, that God had taught them so that they made all manner of embroidery and metal work for the House of the Lord. In those days they used to reckon skill and invention to be the gifts of God—this

wretched century has grown too wise to honor any god but its own idolized self!

If you pray over your work, I am persuaded you will be helped in it. If for your calling you are as yet but slenderly qualified, you may every morning pray God to help you that you may be careful and observant as an apprentice or a beginner, for has He not promised that as your day your strength shall be? A mind which is trusting in the Lord is in the best condition for acquiring knowledge and getting understanding! As to your behavior in your work, there is room for faith and prayer. For, O Brethren, whether qualified or not for any particular offices of this life, our *conduct* is the most important matter! It is well to be clever, but it is essential to be pure! I would have you masters of your trades, but I am even more earnest that you should be honest, truthful and holy!

About this we may confidently go to God and ask Him to lead us in a plain path and to hold up our goings that we slip not. He can and will help us to behave ourselves wisely. "Lead us not into temptation" is one sentence of our daily prayer and we may further ask that when we *are* in the temptation, we may be delivered from the evil. We need prudence and faith remembers that if any lack wisdom he may ask of God. Godliness teaches the young prudence, the babies knowledge and discretion. See how Joseph prospered in Egypt because the Lord was with him. He was placed in very difficult positions—on one occasion in a position of the most terrible danger—but he escaped by saying, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

A sense of God's Presence preserved him then and at all other times. He was set over all the house of Potiphar because God was with him. And so, dear Friends, engaged in service or in business, you may go to your heavenly Father and ask Him to guide you with His counsel and you may rest assured that He will order all your ways, so that your daily calling shall not hinder your heavenly calling, nor your conduct belie your profession! Faith bids you seek help from God as to the success of your daily calling. Know you not what David says?—"Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so He gives His beloved sleep."

It is a most pleasant thing to be able, by faith, to consult the holy Oracle about everything, whether it arises in trade, or in the family, or in the Church. We may say with Abraham's servant, "O Lord, I pray You send me good speed this day." You may expect success if you thus seek it! And perhaps some of you would have prospered more if you had more believingly sought the Lord. I say, "perhaps," because God does not always prosper even His own people in outward things, since it is sometimes better for their souls that they should be in adversity—and then the highest prosperity is a *need* of prosperity. Faith quiets the heart in this matter by enabling us to leave results in the hands of God.

Faith acts, also, in reference to our surroundings. We are all very much influenced by those about us. God can raise us up friends who will be eminently helpful to us and we may pray to Him to do so. He can put us into a circle of society in which we shall find much assistance in this life's affairs and also in our progress towards Heaven. And concerning this, we

know, "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord." Faith will keep you clear of evil company and constrain you to seek the society of the excellent of this earth and thus it will color your whole life. If there are no friends to help him, the Believer's dependence is so fixed upon God that he goes forward in cheerful confidence knowing that the Lord, alone, is sufficient for him. Yet, if he is encouraged and assisted by friends, he looks upon it as God's doing as much as when David was strengthened by those who came to him in the cave.

Do you ask, "We see the connection of this with faith, but how with faith upon the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us?" I answer—Our Savior, as the Object of our faith is also the Object of our imitation and you know, Brothers and Sisters, how in all things He rested upon God. Whenever He undertook a great enterprise, you find Him spending a night in prayer. If *anybody* could have dispensed with prayer it was our Lord Jesus—if any man that ever lived could have found his own way without heavenly guidance, it was Christ, the Son of God. If, then, He was much in prayer and exercised faith in the great Father, much more should you and I bring everything before God! We should live in the flesh expecting that the Lord Jesus will be with us even to the end and that we shall be upheld and comforted by His sympathetic love and tenderness.

Faith enables us to follow Jesus as the great Shepherd of the sheep and to expect to be led in a right way and daily upheld and sustained until the Redeemer shall come to receive us unto Himself.

III. Thirdly, faith exercises a power over a man's life of a remarkable kind because IT LEADS HIM TO SERVE GOD IN HIS DAILY CALLING. Never is life more ennobled than when we do all things as unto God. This makes drudgery sublime and links the poorest menial with the brightest angel! Seraphs serve God in Heaven and you and I may serve Him in the pulpit or in the kitchen and be as accepted as they are! Brethren, Christian men are helped by faith to serve God in their calling by obedience to God's commands and by endeavoring to order everything according to the rules of love to God and love to men. In such a case integrity and uprightness preserve the man and his business becomes true worship.

Though there is no straining after eccentric unworldliness and superstitious singularity, yet in doing that which is right and just, the common tradesman is separated unto the service of the Lord. Jesus says, "If any man serves Me, let him follow Me," as much as to say that *obedience* to the Divine Command is the true mode of showing love to Jesus. If you wish to do something great for God, be greatly careful to obey His commands, for, "to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams." Godly men exercise faith in God in their callings by trying to manifest a Christian spirit in all that they do. The spirit which actuates us may seem to be a small matter so long as we are outwardly right, but it is, in reality, the essence of the whole thing. Take away the flavor from the fruit, or the fragrance from the flower and what is left? Such is correct living without the savor of Grace.

The same thing can be done in several ways—you can do a right thing in so wrong a way as to make it wrong. Even in giving to the poor, a fool will trample upon their feelings in the very act of his charity! I have known

others who have been unable to give, who, nevertheless, have expressed their inability in so kindly a form that they have comforted the disappointed applicant. Oh, to act in your trade and your calling as Christ would have acted had He been in your place! Hang that question up in your houses, "What would Jesus do?" And then think of another, "How would Jesus do it?" for what He would do and how He would do it may always stand as the best guide to us. Thus faith puts a man upon serving God by leading him to exhibit the spirit of Christ in what he ordinarily does, showing all courtesy, gentleness, forbearance, charity and love.

Furthermore, in all that we do, we should be aiming at God's Glory. We should do everything as unto God and not unto men. There would be no eye service if we left off being men-pleasers and began to please God. Neither would there be impatience under injustice, for if men do not accept our service when we have done it with all our hearts, we shall comfort ourselves with the reflection that our Master in Heaven knows how little we deserve the unrighteous censure. To live as kings and priests unto God is the cream of living! Then will you be the Lord's free men. Serve God in serving men and serve men by serving God—there is a way of working out those two sentences even to the fullest—and thus rendering life sublime. May God the Holy Spirit teach us to do this.

If we really live to serve God we shall live intensely day by day, allowing no time to waste. Sophia Cook sought Mr. Wesley's counsel as to what she should do in life and he answered, "Live today"—a very short direction, but one that is full of wisdom. "Live today" and tomorrow you may do the same. Plans for the whole term of life many of you may not be able to construct, but mind that you work while it is called today. "Son, go work today in My vineyard" is the great Father's command. How would a man live if he felt that he was specially to live for God this day? Suppose that today there was a vow upon you, or some other bond, by which you felt that this whole day was solemnly consecrated to the Lord—how would you behave yourself? So ought you to behave this day and *every* day—for you belong wholly to Him who loved you and gave Himself for you!

Let the love of Christ constrain us in this matter! Let us put on the yoke of Christ and feel at once that we are His blood-bought possessions and His servants forever because by faith He has become ours and we are His. We ought to live as Christ's men in every little, as well as in every great, matter—whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all to the Glory of God, giving thanks unto God and the Father by Christ Jesus. Thus, you see, faith in Him who gave Himself for us leads us to spend our energies in His service and to do our ordinary work with an eye to His Glory—and so our life is colored and savored by our faith in the Son of God.

IV. Fourthly, faith has a very beneficial influence upon the life that we live in the flesh, for IT RECONCILES A MAN TO THE DISCOMFORTS OF HIS CALLING. It is not every calling that is easy or lucrative, or honored among men. It is a happy circumstance when a man has espoused a business which is so congenial with his tastes that he would not change it for another if he could. But some find their trades irksome to them. This is an evil under the sun. Some employments are despised by the thought-

less and involve much self-denial and, therefore, those who follow them need much faith to enable them to live above the trials of their position. Faith teaches the humble worker to see Jesus in all His lowliness, condescending to take upon Himself the form of a Servant for our sakes.

Faith reads, "Jesus, knowing that He came forth from God and went to God, took a towel and girded Himself, and washed His disciples' feet." That was one of the most menial of employments and if our Lord and Master did not disdain it, why should we be ashamed of the humblest form of service? From now on let no man trouble you, but rejoice because the poor man's Savior was a Servant even as you are and He, too, was "despised and rejected of men." Your faith ought to help you by awakening your gratitude for deliverance from a far worse drudgery. You did for Satan things of which you are now ashamed. Any work for the devil and for his black cause would be dishonorable—to rule an empire for Satan would disgrace us—to wear the crown put on our heads by sinning would be a horrible curse!

But to wash feet for Christ is glorious service. There is no degradation in anything that is done for God. Faith in God sanctifies the man and his calling, too, and makes it pleasant for him to carry the Cross of Christ in his daily labor. There are some who hold their heads high, who, nevertheless, do things that are disgraceful to humanity, but surely you and I ought never to think *anything* a hardship which falls to our lot by the appointment of Divine Providence. Faith is a great teacher of humility, for it bids us think little of ourselves and rest only in God. And because it fosters humility, it renders a man's task pleasant when otherwise it would be irksome.

Pride makes a man stiff in the back—there are some works which he cannot do though he would be happy enough in doing them if he had not such foolish ideas of his own importance! Hard work is no disgrace to any man—it is far more degrading to be leading the life of a fashionable do-nothing! When the Lord makes us feel that we are poor undeserving creatures, we do not mind taking the lowest room, or doing the meanest work, for we feel that as long as we are out of Hell and have a hope of Heaven, the meanest service is an honor to us. We are glad enough to be where God would have us be, seeing Christ has loved us and given Himself for us. Faith also removes discomforts by reminding us that they will not last long. Faith says of trial, "Bear it! The time is short. Soon the Savior comes and the poorest of His followers shall then reign with Him." Toil on, O weary one, for the morning light will put an end to your labor, which lasts only through the hours of darkness. The glory breaks! The night is wearing away and the dawn appears. Therefore patiently wait and quietly hope, for you shall see the salvation of God!

Thus faith takes the thorns from our pillow and makes us learn in whatever state we are, to be content. Do you call this nothing? Has not Jesus done much for us when, by faith in Him, we have learned to endure the ills of life with sweet content?

V. Fifthly, faith has this further influence upon ordinary life—IT CASTS ALL THE BURDEN OF IT UPON THE LORD. Faith is the great remover of yokes and it does this, in part, by making us submissive to God's will.

When we have learned to submit, we cease to repine. Faith teaches us to so believe in God, Infallible Wisdom and perfect Love, that we consent unto the Lord's will and rejoice in it! Faith teaches us to look to the end of every present trial and to know that it works together for good—thus again reconciling us to the passing grief which it causes. Faith teaches us to depend upon the power of God to help us in a trial and through the trial and in this way we are no longer tripped up by afflictions, but rise above them as on eagles' wings.

Brothers and Sisters, if any of you are anxious, worn out and worried, stop not in such a state of mind—it cannot do you any good—and it reflects no honor upon your great Father. Pray for more faith that you may have no back-breaking load to carry, but may transfer it to the great Burden-Bearer. Pray to your great Lord to so strengthen and ease your heart that your only care may be to please Him and that you may be released from all other care. By this means will you be greatly helped, for if the burden is lightened, it comes to much the same thing as if the strength were multiplied. Content with the Divine will is better than increase of riches, or removal of affliction, for with wealth no peace may come and out of prosperity no joy in the Lord may arise—but contentment is peace, itself!

Whatever burden faith finds in her daily avocation she casts it upon God by prayer. We begin with God in the morning, seeking help to do our work and to do it well. At His hands we seek guidance and prosperity from hour to hour. We pray Him to prevent our doing any wrong to others, or suffering any wrong from them and we ask Him to keep our temper and to preserve our spirit while we are with worldly men. We beg that we may not be infected by the evil example of others and that our example may be such as may be safely followed. These are our great concerns in business—we tremble lest in anything we should dishonor God—and we trust in Him to keep us.

A Believer goes to God with the matters of each day and looks for the morning dew to fall upon him. He looks up through the day expecting the Lord to be his constant shield and at night, before he goes to rest, he empties out the gathered troubles of the day and so falls to a happy sleep. Then does a man live sweetly when he lives by the day, trusting his Lord with everything and finding God to be always near. To all this the example of the Savior leads us and His love within our hearts draws us. "He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him," and "was heard in that He feared."

VI. Sixthly, faith has a happy influence upon the present life, for IT MODERATES A MAN'S FEELINGS AS TO THE RESULT OF HIS WORK. Sometimes the result of our work is prosperity and here the Grace of God prevents a dependence on worldly things. There is a keen test of character in prosperity. Everybody longs for it, but it is not every man that can bear it when it comes. True faith forbids our setting great store by worldly goods and pleasures and enjoyments, for it teaches us that our treasure is in *Heaven*. If we begin to idolize the things that are seen, we shall soon degenerate and turn aside from God.

How easily we may spoil a blessing! Two friends gathered each a rose—the one was continually smelling it, touching its leaves and handling it as if he could not hold it too fast—you do not wonder that it was soon withered. The other took his rose, enjoyed its perfume moderately, carried it in his hand for a while and then placed it on the table in water—and hours after it was almost as fresh as when it was plucked from the bush! We may dote on our worldly gear until God becomes jealous of it and sends a blight upon it! And, on the other hand, we may, with holy moderateness, use these things as not abusing them and get from them the utmost good which they are capable of conveying to us.

Many pursue wealth or fame as some eager boy hunts the painted butterfly! At last, after a long and weary run, he dashes it down with his cap and with the stroke he spoils its beauty. Many a man has reached the summit of a life-long ambition and found it to be mere vanity. In gaining all, he has lost all. Wealth has come, but the power to enjoy it has gone—life has been worn out in the pursuit and no strength is left with which to enjoy the gain. It shall not be so with the man who lives by faith, for his chief joys are above and his comfort lies within. To him, *God* is joy so rich that other joy is comparatively flavorless!

But perhaps the result of all our work may be adversity. Some men row very hard and yet their boat makes no headway. When an opportunity presents itself, the tide of trade suddenly turns against them. When they have corn in the mill the wind does not blow. Perhaps they lose all but their character and then it is that Faith comes in to cheer them under the disaster. I am deeply grieved when I hear of persons committing suicide because they were in difficulties—it is a dreadful thing to rush before one's Creator unbidden! Faith sustains the heart and puts aside all thought of such desperate attempts to fly from present griefs by plunging into far more awful woes. We shall bear up and come through our trials triumphantly if we have faith in God.

If our heavenly Father has appointed a bitter cup for us, shall we not drink it? If the fields which we have tilled yield no harvests and the beasts that we have foddered die in the stall, shall we not bow the head and say, "The Lord has done it"? Must it not be right if the Lord ordains it? Let us still bless Him! If not, it will be our *unbelief* which hinders. How many have been happy in poverty—happier than they were in wealth! How often have the saints rejoiced *more* during sickness than in their health! Payson declared that during illness he felt happier than he had ever been, far happier than he had ever expected to be. Though bereavement has come into the family and sickness unto the household, yet Faith has learned to sing in all weathers because her God is still the same!

O Brothers and Sisters, faith is a precious preparative for anything and everything that comes! Mind that you have it always ready for action. Do not leave it at home in time of a storm, as the foolish seaman left his anchor. Faith is not a Grace to be shut up in a closet or fastened to a communion table, or boxed up in a pew! Faith is an everyday Grace which is to be our companion in the shop and in the market; in the parlor and in the kitchen; in the workroom and in the field! Yes, it may go into the workhouse with the poor as well as into the mansion with the rich! It may

either cheer the dreary hours of the infirmary, or sanctify the sunny weeks of holiday.

Faith is for every place in which a good man may lawfully be found. Should fate command you to the utmost verge of the green earth, to rivers unknown to song, yet shall a childlike faith in God find you a home in every clime, under every sky. Oh, to feel the power of it, as to all that comes of our labor, that the life which we live in the flesh may be lived by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us!

VII. Lastly, faith has this sweet influence upon our present life—IT ENABLES A MAN CHEERFULLY TO LEAVE HIS OCCUPATION WHEN THE TIME COMES. A Christian may have to quit a favorite vocation on account of circumstances over which he has no control. He may have to emigrate to a distant land, or altogether to change his mode of living, which may involve many a wrench to his feelings. It is not always easy to leave the old house and all its surroundings and to take a long journey. Nor is it pleasant to change one's settled habits and begin life anew. Yet true faith sets loose by worldly things and is ready to haul up the anchor and make sail at the Divine bidding. The Believer says, "Command my journey, and I go." I am but a tent-dweller and must expect to be on the move.

Like Israel in the desert, we must follow the cloud and journey or rest as the cloud ordains, for here we have no continuing city but we seek one to come. Faith has the same gracious influence upon those who enjoy unbroken prosperity. It keeps them from taking root in the soil of earth and this is a miracle of Divine Grace. Sometimes our vocations have to be given up through weakness or old age. It is a hard pinch to many a busy man when he feels that he has no more strength for business, when he perceives that other and more vigorous minds must be allowed to step into the long occupied position. The workman cannot bear to feel that his hand has lost its cunning—it is a sharp experience.

Faith is of essential service here. It helps a man to say, "My Master, I am one of the vessels of Your house. If You will use me I will be glad. But if You will put me on the shelf, I will be glad, too. It must be best for me to be as You would have me." If faith resigns herself to the supreme Wisdom and Love and goodness of Christ and says, "Do with me even as You will! Use me, or set me aside." Then retirement will be a release from care and no source of distress. The evening of advanced age may be spent as joyfully as the noontide of manhood if the mind is stayed on God. "They shall bring forth fruit in old age" is a promise full often realized by Believers, for all around me are venerable Brothers and Sisters who are more useful and more happy than ever, though the infirmities of years are growing upon them!

And then comes, at last, the leaving of your vocation by death which will arrive in due time to us all. Then faith displays its utmost energy of blessing! Brethren, may we meet death as Moses did, who, when God bade him climb the mountain, for there he must die, uttered no word of sorrow, but like a child, obeyed his Father, went upstairs to bed, looked wistfully out at the window upon the promised land and then fell asleep! How sweet to look upon the goodly land and Lebanon—and then to be

kissed to sleep by his Father's own mouth and to be buried, man knows not where! His work was done and his rest was come!

Beautiful are the departing words of Samuel when, laying down his office, he can challenge all men to bear witness to his character! Happy man, to depart amid universal blessing! O that each one of us may be ready to render in his account before the Judgment Seat of Christ—let the last day come when it may! Our Master, by whose love we have been endowed with faith, has taught us how to die as well as how to live! He could say, "I have finished the work which You gave Me to do," and He would have us say it. Thrice happy is the man who, in laying down the shepherd's crook or the carpenter's plane—in putting aside the ledger or the class book never to open them again, can exclaim—"I have fought a good fight. I have kept the faith; from now on there is laid up for me a crown of life which fades not."

Good old Mede, the Puritan, when he was very old and leaning on his staff, was asked how he was and he answered, "Why, going Home as fast as I can! Just as every honest man ought to do when his day's work is done. And I bless God I have a good Home to go to." Dear aged saints so near Home, does not faith transform death from an enemy into a friend, as it brings Glory so near to you? You will soon be in the Father's House and leave me behind, and yet I cannot tell—I remember that the other disciple did outrun Peter and came first to the sepulcher, and so, perhaps, may I! You have the start of us in years, but I may be called Home before you, for there are last that shall be first.

Let death come when it may—we shall not be afraid, for Jesus, who has loved us and given Himself for us, is the Resurrection and the Life. Living this life in the flesh by faith upon the Son of God, we are waiting for the usher of the black rod to bring a message from the King to summon us to meet Him in the upper House! Why should we be hesitant to go? What is there here that we should wait? What is there on this poor earth to detain a Heaven-born and Heaven-bound spirit? No, let us go, for He is gone in whom is our treasure, whose beauties have engrossed our love! He is not here—why should we desire to linger? He has risen! Let us rise!

Thus, from the beginning to the end of the life that we live in the flesh, faith upon the Son of God answers all things and all its paths drop fatness. O come, Lord Jesus! Come!

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“CHRIST FIRST, ME LAST—NOTHING BETWEEN BUT LOVE”

NO. 2370

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JULY 22, 1894.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 10, 1888.**

***“The faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me,”
Galatians 2:20.***

Paul looks at the matter of salvation from the point of view suggested by Grace. If any man might have said, “The Son of God, whom I have loved, and to whom I have given myself,” it would have been the Apostle. On another occasion, speaking of the Lord, he said, “Whose I am, and whom I serve.” But here he thinks not of himself, or of what he had been led to do for the Lord, but only of what the Lord had done for him! He dug down to the foundation of salvation—he traced the stream of Grace back to the Fountainhead and, therefore, he spoke of “the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

You will not do wrong, my Beloved Friends, if you meditate on what the Grace of God has enabled you to do—if you do it humbly and if you praise God for it. I think that we sometimes forget to give Glory to the Lord for the sanctification we have already received. I have heard persons thank God for their health and for their wealth, but I have not so often heard them express gratitude for Divine Grace. I do not know that I wish to hear them praise God for their virtue, but still, if they have any, and they know that they have, let them praise God for it—for what virtue have they which they have not received? If you have any faith, if you have any hope, if you have any love—if there is any difference between you and your fellow men, if you possess anything by which God is glorified—you ought to thank Him for it and to praise and bless His holy name. Still, there would always be a tendency, in dwelling even on what we have done by the Grace of God, to begin to get unduly exalted and, on the whole, it is far wiser to think of what Christ has done for you than of what you have done for Him!

I say, again, you may think of what you have done for Christ and give God the Glory for it, but it will not be well to dwell upon that thought to any great extent. I am sure it will not do to think upon it in the hour of deep distress of mind, or especially in the prospect of death. Then we gather up all our good works and throw them overboard! We look upon the best things that we have ever worked, even by the power of the Spirit of God, as quite secondary to what Christ has worked out for us and brought in and laid before His Father as the ground of our acceptance with Him.

I like to think of our text and I invite you to think of it in the light of Free Grace. “Who loved me and gave Himself for me.” I cannot preach much at this time, but I can talk to you a little of what I have tasted, handled and felt—and I pray the Holy Spirit to help you—not so much to hear the text explained, as to feel its gracious influence moving over your spirit and awakening in your heart happy memories of gratitude for blessings received.

I. Our first division shall be THE FACT REMEMBERED—“Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

Paul speaks of it as a fact ascertainable and one which he had, himself, ascertained—that Jesus Christ loved him and gave Himself for him. He is not speaking, now, of the love of benevolence which the Lord Jesus Christ has towards all men, or even of that aspect of His work which bears upon every creature under Heaven. He is thinking of that special love, that discriminating Grace which had lighted upon *him*. That is the point around which our thoughts are to gather as we meditate upon Paul’s words, “Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*.” The Apostle knew that Christ had loved him and had given Himself for him. And we, also, may know it. It is not necessary for us to go through life merely hoping and fearing, questioning and enquiring—we may come to the certain knowledge of the fact, if it is a fact, that we have an interest in the special love of Jesus Christ, that we are redeemed from among men, that we are called and separated to be the Lord’s peculiar people, that each of us may be able to say of the Lord Jesus Christ—“Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” I would not distress the mind of anyone who is feeble in faith and who is clinging to Christ, but has never, yet, received full assurance of salvation. But I would encourage such a person never to rest until he gets rid of all questions and is able to say without the slightest trepidation, “Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*.”

Christ died to save sinners—the sinners who are saved by Him are those who trust Him. I trust Him, therefore He has saved me. This is a good, sound argument. “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” I believe on Him, therefore I have everlasting life. This is solid ground to rest upon. “He loved me, and gave Himself for me,” of which the *evidence* is that I *trust* Him. I rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh. To this will be added the evidences of a work of Grace in the heart. “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” “One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see.” We know this, also, by the witness of the Holy Spirit, for, “the Spirit, Himself, bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” And so, at last, we come to say with as much confidence as Paul, himself, could say it, “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Away, then, with all doubts and questions! Be gone, you evil birds that pollute the Sacrifice! By a simple childlike faith we come to Jesus and we take Him to be our Savior. We know that we cannot come to Jesus unless the Father, who sent Him, draws us. Therefore we know that we are drawn by Divine Grace and that He has loved us with an everlasting love, because with loving kindness He has evidently drawn us to Himself. So, you see, Paul is speaking of a fact that is ascertainable, and a fact that, in his own case,

was ascertained. If we do not get to know it for ourselves, we cannot rejoice in it.

Now just think for a few minutes of some well-known but very blessed Truths of God which gather about this fact—“Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” And first, it is *a Divine Love*. Paul speaks of “the Son of God, who loved me.” There are some persons who would be greatly delighted if they heard that some nobleman loved them! And if we were informed that some prince or princess loved us, we might feel ourselves elevated—yet there would be very little in it to make us proud. If we were informed that an angel loved us with all the great heart of an unfallen spirit, we might take comfort from the fact—but the text reminds us that it is the *Son of God* who has loved us! I cannot talk about this Divine Love as it deserves, but I want you to try and feel in your soul, “Jesus Christ *loves* me; not merely feeds me, thinks upon me, is favorably inclined to me, but He *loves* me.”

Love is a grand word, even in its silver use among men and women, but love in its golden use with God in Heaven, what does it *not* mean? Oh, marvelous, indeed, is the love of God towards His people! I say again that I cannot worthily speak of it—words seem such poor things to express the love of God. They break their backs in trying to convey the wondrous weight of meaning. If this love is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit, your heart’s love will best read and understand this wondrous fact that the Divine Being, the Everlasting Father, and His ever-blessed Son, and the sacred Spirit, the great Trinity in Unity, loves you. Oh, delight yourselves in this glorious Truth! It is a sea of sweetness—dive into it and be filled with it!

The language of the text also suggests to me that I should remind you that the love of Jesus was *an ancient love*. It is true that He loves us now, but Paul also truly wrote, “Who *loved* me.” The verb is in the past tense. Jesus loved me upon the Cross. He loved me in the manger of Bethlehem. He loved me before the earth was. There never was a time when Jesus did not love His people! “Before the earth was,” I said just now, and I repeat it—He saw us in the glass of His eternal purposes, He foreknew us, He looked ahead and saw *what* we would be, *who* we would be and His love went forth to us before the day-star ever began to shine! Think of it—“The Lord has appeared of old unto me, saying, Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love.” That He should love us at all is a wonder. That He should have loved us *always* is a wonder of wonders! And this love is a part of His eternal purposes and is as old as His arrangements for the history of the universe. “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Truly, this was an ancient love!

Note further that as this love was Divine and ancient, so it was *a pre-eminently practical love*—“Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Jesus could not give any more than Himself. He not only gave His crown, His Throne, His Manhood, His life, His sufferings, His death, His offices, His excellences, His merits—He gave *Himself*, His Godhead, His Humanity! “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” It is not possible for you to measure the unknown depths of Christ’s sufferings, but if you could, you would not have arrived at, “Himself.” It is not merely that which He did

and said that Jesus gave for us—He gave Himself. It was not simply that which belonged to Him which Jesus handed over for us, but He gave Himself—“Who loved me, and gave *Himself* for me.”

O Beloved, I wish I had the strength and the ability to think and to speak to you upon this practical display of our Lord’s love as it deserves, but I have not. Meditate upon it, I pray you. He gave Himself for you in the Everlasting Covenant when He stood as your Surety and Representative. He gave Himself for you through the long ages in which He waited to come to earth to redeem you. He gave Himself for you when He assumed your nature and became bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh. He gave Himself for you through a life of toil and righteousness. He gave Himself for you as your Substitute when He, “His own self, bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” In the scourging, the shame, the spitting, the bloody sweat, the Crucifixion, He gave Himself for you! Take these blessed words of the Apostle and put them in your mouth—and let them lie there as wafers made with honey till they melt into your very soul—“Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” In all these wondrous senses, keeping back nothing, reserving for Himself nothing, no, not even the name of Himself, He loved me, and gave Himself for me! Truly, this was practical love.

And I may say of it, in the next place, that it was *a love altogether immeasurable*. If you measure a love by its gifts, you have certainly an immeasurable love, here, because it was proven by an immeasurable gift! The Nature of the Lord Jesus Christ is not to be comprehended. The wondrous union of Godhead and Manhood made Him, I was about to say, something more than God, for He had added to all the Infinity of His Godhead, the capacity to suffer as a Man. But He gave Himself at His utmost—the boundless, the inconceivable, the indescribable—He gave Himself for me! There is a limit to everything else, but not to the love of God. You say to the sea, “To here shall you come, but no farther,” but you cannot say that to this boundless sea of Divine Love! You do not know by experience how much God loves you—you have only drunk a little of the sweetness of this wondrous well of Living Water—but you cannot tell the depth of it. There is no bottom to it! You cannot exhaust its supply—you may drink, and drink, and drink again, through a long life, yes, and *throughout eternity* you may go on receiving of this love, but you will never measure its heights, depths, lengths and breadths. That is quite beyond your power. You can only love, dear Mother, to a certain degree, though you love your child to the death. You can only love, dear Husband, up to a certain point, though you are willing to lay down your life to raise your spouse from a sick bed. But God stops nowhere in His love—it is as boundless and infinite as He is, Himself!

Our Lord Jesus Christ cannot possibly or conceivably be limited in His love. I want you to try to get hold of this thought. Notice it. HE loved me! Such a one as He is, He loved *me*—

“Christ first, me last—nothing between but love.”

Those words are very sweet to me. I read them somewhere and they cling to my memory. “Who loved me,” the first word is, “who.” The last word is, “me,” and there is “nothing between but love.” Oh, that is a blessed posi-

tion for anyone to be in! Christ shall be first—I will be glad to be anywhere, to be *nothing*, to be *last*—so long as there shall be this sweet link of love between my soul and my Savior—“Who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

[As the sermon is shorter than usual, we insert the verses referred to by Mr. Spurgeon, from which the title of the discourse has been selected. The lines can be obtained from Messrs. Penman and Co., 33 Furnival Street, London, 6d. per dozen, or 3s. per 100, post free.]

“WHO LOVED ME”

GALATIANS 2:20

*Three blessed sunbeams, guiding all I see.
 Three tender chords, each full of melody.
 Three healing leaves, balm for my agony.
 HE loved me—the Father’s only Son,
 He gave Himself—the precious, Spotless One—
 He shed His blood and thus the work was done!
 HE LOVED, not merely pitied. Here I rest.
 Sorrow may come, I to His heart am pressed—
 What should I fear while sheltered on His breast?
 Wonder of wonders! Jesus loved me!
 A wretch! Lost, ruined, sunk in misery!
 He sought me, bound me, raised me, set me free!
 My soul the order of the words approve
 Christ first, me last—nothing between but love.
 Lord, keep me always down—Yourself above!
 Trusting to You—not struggling restlessly
 So shall I daily gain the victory.
 “I”—“yet not I, but Christ,”—WHO LOVED ME!*

Let us reflect yet a moment further that this love is *an abiding love*—“Who loved me.” But He is unchanging, so that He still loves me! He cannot love me more, He will not love me less. He has loved me at no period more than He loves me, now, and if just now I may be groaning because of my imperfections, and mourning because of my tribulations, yet He loved me so as to give Himself for me—and He has never abated from that love and He never will! It is a very fine thing, no doubt, to have worldly substance, but it melts like the hoar frost in the sun. It is a very great mercy to have bodily health, but how small a thing soon takes it away and turns the joy of life into the shadow of death! But if you get this love of Christ, you have a treasure which can never be lost, a blessing that will never be exhausted. “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me!” Sit down, dear child of God, and say to yourself, “Here I have something which I shall never lose. It cannot be taken from me. Oh, that by Grace I may be enabled to rejoice in it and to return the love of my poor heart to Him who ceases not to love me!”

There is a great deal that might be said of such a Savior as this, but I feel a consolation in my heart in being unable to say any new and fresh thing, tonight, for the subject, in itself, ought to be to you full of joy. And if your heart is right, it will be. If your heart is not right with God, you will be craving for fine expressions and pretty phrases. Judge your own spiritual condition, then, by this test—does this theme, in itself, touch

you? “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me!” I will use it as a thermometer and drop it into your heart to see the warmth of your affection to Christ. If you are as you should be, full of a devout attachment to Him, you will say, “Yes, that is all I need to feel and know—He loved me, and gave Himself for me!”

So much, then, upon the fact remembered.

II. Now, secondly, Beloved Friends, let me speak to you for just a few minutes on THE FAITH CONFESSED. Paul says, “I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

Observe, first, that the faith which made Paul live was *faith in a Person*—“the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Possibly, some of you are trying to get faith and yet you do not know what *saving faith* is. You have heard a great deal about it, but it is an astonishing thing that the best definition of faith in the world does not make men see what faith is! The gas may be very bright, but a man who is blind does not see any better because of the brilliance of the light. The eyes of our soul must be opened if we are to see what faith is.

Now, saving faith is faith in a Person, faith in the living, loving Lord who gave Himself for us. Do you believe in Jesus Christ? I do not merely mean, do you believe in His *teachings*? You *must* believe in them. But to be saved you must believe in *Him*, “who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” There He stands—my faith seems to see Him, even now, at the right hand of God, risen from the dead and gone into Glory—and I come and trust Him and take Him to be my Savior. If He is my Savior, it is His business to save me. I am not to save myself. I put myself into His hands that He may keep me. I bring my foul self to Him, that He may cleanse me—my dead self to Him, that He may quicken me—my naked self to Him, that He may clothe me. I bring my good-for-nothing self to Him that He may be precious to me and that I may be *made* precious in Him! He is to be everything to me! It is not merely what I read about Him that I am to believe, but I am to *trust* Him. Now, Beloved, let those of us who have believed in Jesus long ago exercise that faith afresh in this gracious loving way by now living by faith upon the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us.

This faith, you perceive, is *a faith in a clear and distinct fact*—“the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” To go, again, over the sacred ground on which we trod just now, the Apostle does not say, “I have faith in the Son of God, of whom I hope that He loved me.” He knows it! He is sure of it and there is no comfort to come out of faith until it learns to speak without stammering—and to say of the Lord Jesus, “who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” This either is a fact, or it is not, and if it is a fact, full of every consolation, why should I not know it? Ought you to give sleep to your eyes until you know that He loves you and that you are His? This can be proven, as I have already shown you. He that believes in Jesus has the sure token of Divine Love. If you trust Him, trust Him wholly and alone, then He loved you and gave Himself for you—for you the manger at Bethlehem, for you the Cross at Calvary, for you the empty sepulcher, for you His pleading before the eternal

Throne—He loved you, and gave Himself for you, and it is for your faith to learn to speak this great Truth of God plainly!

This faith was, next, *an appropriating faith*—“Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” No faith except a personal faith will save the soul. Another man’s faith will not save me. I must have a Christ of my own. The love that Christ has to others is pleasant to reflect upon, but it cannot give me peace. It must be love which He has to *me* if it is to save *me*—“Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Somebody says that such a desire as that is selfish. I answer that it is nonsense to talk so! A wife is not thought to be selfish because she rejoices in her husband’s love. A child is not selfish because he is happy in his father’s love. How, dear Friends, can I take any joy in the love of Christ to men in general, if I have no sense, whatever, of His love to me? Of what use could it be to me? In order that I may love my fellow men, I must first come to know that Christ loves me. How can I have a blessing in the saving of the souls of others if my own soul is not, first, saved? Let your religion begin at home—and when you make sure of its presence there, then you may sing—

**“Now will I tell to sinners round
What a dear Savior I have found.”**

It would be a poor occupation to go out and tell them of a dear Savior that you had *not* found, to tell them of manna that you had never gathered and of waters of which you had never drunk! No, in order to be truly useful in the Lord’s service, you must, first of all, know in your own experience the truth of Paul’s words, “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Our text is the language of faith. Unbelief says, “Yes, Christ is very loving,” but if you have true faith, you will say, “He loved me.” Unbelief says, “I know that Christ loves His people, but I am afraid that He would never love me.” Such talk as this is mistrustful and ruinous to the soul! But Faith, as soon as it opens its mouth, begins to make a personal appropriation of the blessings of the Grace of God. What do you do when you come to the Communion Table? Do you come there to see other people eat bread and drink wine? No, but in Communion, you, each of you, eat, and each of you drink—that is the very essence of Communion. So must each of you take Christ to be yours, personally, and say, “He loved me, and gave Himself for me.” This is the faith which is mentioned by the Apostle—an appropriating faith.

And as I read the text, it looks to me as if it was *a faith full of wonderment*. Though the Apostle speaks of it as a matter of fact, yet he seems to be much astonished, as he says, “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” I am sure that if the Lord will put into your soul a sense of the love of Christ, it will ravish your heart and it will carry you away with astonishment. You will go home and say to yourself, “The greatest wonder in the two worlds of Heaven and earth is this, that He loved me, and gave Himself for me!” And in consequence you will be filled with holy joy and rejoicing. “He loved me, and gave Himself for me,” will ring like marriage bells in your heart! Not all the harps of Heaven can sound out sweeter music than this text when the Holy Spirit speaks it to our soul, “the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

III. I must not tarry longer on this sweet theme, but must finish with this point—THIS FAVOR ENJOYED. There is a certain power that lies in this fact, remembered, and that grows out of this faith, confessed. Paul says that he lived by the faith of the Son of God who loved Him, and gave Himself for him.

Beloved Friends, a sense of the love of Christ to you, personally, *will affect your whole life*. It will change it, at first, but it will *keep* it changed ever afterwards, and it will go on increasing in its power over you till, when you fully know it, every thought, every word and every action will seem to be set in the key of love—“who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” That religion which does not affect the whole life is a dead and worthless religion, but this essence of our holy faith, “who loved me, and gave Himself for me,” is Divinely operative upon the entire man. Alone, or with others in the family, or in the business, whatever his calling is, this will tincture it all with a heavenly sweetness, “who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

And this will be particularly seen in *the relieving of your griefs*. Full of pain, you will say to yourself, “Yet He loved me. He has not sent this pain for nothing. He does not afflict willingly, for He loved me and gave Himself for me.” If you are very poor, you will say to yourself, “He gave the riches to Dives, but Lazarus lay in His bosom. He loved me, and gave Himself for me, and that is better than wealth.” And if ever you come to be despised for His sake, and men cast out your name as evil, you will say, “I do not mind it at all. I can even rejoice in it, for He loved me, and gave Himself for me! And I may well give up myself, my reputation and everything else for Him.” Sorrow ceases to be sorrow when once there is in the heart a sweet sense of the infinite love of Christ!

This thought will also help *you in your labor*. When you have something to do for Jesus that rather tries you. When you feel disappointed and baffled and the devil tempts you to give it all up and run away, you will say to yourself, “How can I? He loved me, and gave Himself for me.” By Gethsemane and Calvary you will bind yourself to the sternest labor for His dear sake. Nothing is too hot or too heavy for a man whose heart is on fire with Divine Love! When the torrents of love sweep through the soul, then every obstacle is overcome. I can go as a missionary to the Congo and joyfully die in that malarious climate when I know that He loved me, and gave Himself for me! I can try to preach in the streets of London amid the jeers and the noise of the passers-by when I know that He loved me, and gave Himself for me! You will go cheerfully to the slums, you will visit the lodging houses, you will teach the ignorant, you will look after the foul and the depraved when you get this Truth of God impressed on your heart—“He loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

And, Beloved Friends, *this will help you in prayer*. When you are at the Mercy Seat, tremblingly asking for some great favor, tempted to fear that you will not receive it—your faith will become very strong when you hear the whisper, “who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” He that spared not Himself, how shall He not give me all things? We ask with great confidence and assurance when we feel the force of this blessed Truth of God.

By-and-by we shall come to die. I am constantly reminded of this fact. During the last two or three weeks we have lost more friends than I remember being taken away in a similar period at almost any other time. We are getting old, together, and so there are more dying than there used to be when the young people first joined the Church. Well, I shall soon be going and so will you, but we shall not dread the grave, for Jesus loved us, and gave Himself for us! Will He not be with me even in my last moments? Certainly He will! I shall not dread the terrors of the Great Judgment Day, for, “He loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Who is He that condemns, now that Christ has died, and risen again, and sits at the right hand of God to plead for us? The terrors of the world to come, the quivering earth, the burning sky, the falling stars—all these will cause no perturbation of mind when we are fully assured that He loved us, and gave Himself for us.

Thinking of this sublime passage, one seems to feel his wings growing and is ready to take flight to the upper sky, for what, even in Heaven, is there brighter or more blessed than this Jesus, “who loved me, and gave Himself for me”? Is not this Heaven’s own song, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood”?

O my dear Hearers, I stand here and try to talk to you in my feeble way about these great Truths of God, but do you know them yourselves? If you do, you know more than Solomon ever knew! If you know this love of Christ, you know more than all the Greek philosophers put together! You need not be ashamed in any company—the knowledge of the love of Christ is the most excellent of all the sciences—there is none that can be compared with it. But if you do not know it, I pray my Lord, in His infinite mercy, to disturb and disquiet you until you do know it! What right have you to rest without faith in Jesus? You have no safety—indeed, you have no hope! Without God, without Christ, you will die without forgiveness or hope of Heaven! God bring you to seek His face tonight, before another sun has risen! Seek Him. Seek Him! Trust in the Savior’s finished work and I hope we shall yet see you, again, as you come forward and say, “Yes, He loved me, and gave Himself for me, and here am I to confess it to the glory of His Grace.” God grant it, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—116 (SONG II), 248, 731.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
*Galatians 2:16-21; 3.***

Galatians 2:16. *Knowing that a man is not justified by the work of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law: for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.* This is the primary Truth of God to be proclaimed by the Christian ministry. It is the foundation stone of all Gospel preaching and yet, somehow or other, such is the hardness of the human heart, that it is the most difficult thing to induce our hearers to build on this foundation. Many of them are always trying to lean upon their own works and so struggling to

get back under the old legal dispensation, instead of rejoicing in the liberty of the dispensation of Grace. One objection to the Doctrines of Grace rather than the Doctrine of Law is this, that some think it will lead to sin. The Apostle puts it thus—

17. *But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are also found sinners, is, therefore, Christ the minister of sin? God forbid!* For the tendency of the Gospel of Grace is to excite *gratitude* in those who receive it. If I am freely pardoned, then I must love Him who has thus generously forgiven me. Gratitude is the root of true virtue and the mainspring of all holiness. If there are base-minded men who can suck poison out of this honeycomb, is Christ to be blamed for their evil doing? God forbid! But if, on the other hand, you and I go back to trusting in works, then we are, indeed, guilty in the sight of God.

18. *For if I build, again, the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.* If I once said I would not trust in my good works and now go back to trust in them, I have already, whatever may be my outward conduct, perpetrated a great sin!

19, 20. *For I, through the Law, am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.* I do not know a better epitome of Christian experience than this. This is the daily walk of a true child of God. If he lives after any other sort, then he lives not a Christian's life at all! Christ living in us, ourselves living upon Christ and our union to Christ being visibly maintained by an act of simple faith in Him—this is the true Christian's life.

21. *I do not frustrate the Grace of God: for if righteousness comes by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain.* If a man can be saved by his own works, and willings, and doings, then Christ's death was an unnecessary piece of torture and, instead of being the most glorious manifestation of Divine Love, it was a shameful waste, putting upon Christ a terrible burden of suffering which was totally unnecessary.

Galatians 3:1. *O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the Truth of God, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you?* These Galatians thought that they were very philosophical and very intellectual, but the Apostle says, “O foolish Galatians!” They thought that they had been led by reason and guided by the learning of their teachers—but Paul calls it witchery—“Who has bewitched you?” he asks, as if anything which led a man to trust in his own works should be as much abhorred as the incantations of a witch! “Who has bewitched you?” It is a dangerous state, it is a devilish snare to be brought into—to be led to trust to frames, feelings, experiences, works, prayers, or to anything else but Christ! It is a strange thing that those who have seen Christ should ever go back to these things! Lord, keep us every day, among our other sins, from our own self-righteous nature! Now the Apostle is going to reason with the Galatians against their self-righteousness.

2. *This, only, would I learn of you, Received you the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?* “You know that the Spirit of God is

necessary to salvation. You have received that. Did you get the Spirit through the works of the Law, or by simply hearing the Gospel and believing it?” The answer comes at once if we have received the Spirit! It was by the hearing of faith and not by the works of the Law.

3. *Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?* Surely, the way in which the Christian life begins is the method in which it is to be sustained. “As you have received Christ Jesus, the Lord,” the Apostle says in another place, “so walk in Him.” If you have begun in the flesh, go on in the flesh, but if you really know that your beginning was in the Spirit, then do not go back to the flesh.

4. *Have you suffered so many things in vain? If it is yet in vain.* This is another pertinent question.

5. *He, therefore, that ministers to you the Spirit, and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?* They had miraculous gifts among them as a Church and the Apostle asks them whether these were works of the Law, or whether they were not exercised as the result of faith. The answer is clear. It was the believing man who worked the miracle, not the self-righteous man! Paul is now going to take the Galatians far back in Jewish history.

6. *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.* He was not saved by his works, but by his faith. His faith was the means of the imputation to him of the righteousness of the Savior who was yet to come.

7. *Know you, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.* He was called the father of the faithful, therefore the faithful, those who believe as he did, and are full of his faith, are his children.

8-10. *And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In you shall all nations be blessed. So, then, they which are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* Now, if everyone who has once violated God’s Law is cursed forever, how mad are those who hope to enter Heaven by that very Law which is the gate to shut them out! How dare they confide in that which is their worst enemy—which is sworn to curse them in time and in eternity!

11. *But that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.* Scripture lays it down as a rule that justified men live by faith! If this is the rule, then certainly *they* should not live by works.

12. *And the Law is not of faith: but, The man that does them shall live in them.* So that the justified man is not justified by the Law, but by faith. He stands before God, not in what he does, not even in what the Spirit enables him to do! His own prayers, tears, communings with Christ. His own labors, his earnest and indefatigable attempts to extend the Kingdom of Christ—all count for nothing in the matter of his justification! He hangs them all upon the Cross of Christ and relies only upon the Cross, looking in no manner, whatever, to anything which comes of himself.

13, 14. *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. We were all under the curse of the Law, but Christ voluntarily took our place and was made a curse for us, so that the blessing might be ours.*

15, 16. *Brethren, I speak after the manner of men. Though it is but a man’s covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no man disannuls, or adds thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He says not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to your seed, which is Christ. Notice how important a single letter of the Scriptures may be! If vital Doctrine may depend upon the use of a singular or plural noun, therefore let us jealously guard the smallest jot or tittle of the Inspired Word of God.*

17-19. *And this I say, that the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot disannul the Covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, the Law, that it should make the promise of no effect. Or if the inheritance is of the Law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. What purpose, then, does the Law serve? Some might argue that as the Law cannot justify, it is useless, but, on the contrary, it serves a very definite purpose, as Paul goes on to show.*

19-22. *It was added because of transgressions till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the Law, then, against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a Law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law. But the Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. Paul constantly comes back to this point, that salvation is all of Grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*

23-25. *But before faith came, we were kept under the Law, shut up under the faith which should afterward be revealed. Therefore the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. The Apostle is not speaking of a schoolmaster as we understand that word, but of the slave or servant who took the boys to school, watched over them in school and out, and even used the rod if occasion demanded.*

26. *For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. The Fatherhood of God is common to all Believers—but there is no universal fatherhood, as many teach it in these days.*

27-29. *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise. May this be true of all of us, for Christ’s sake! Amen.*

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CHRISTUS ET EGO

NO. 781

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 17, 1867,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”
Galatians 2:20.***

IN great ranges of mountains there are lofty peaks which pierce the clouds, but, on the other hand, there are, here and there, lower parts of the range which are crossed by travelers. They become national highways and afford passages for commerce from land to land. My text rises before my contemplation like a lofty range of mountains, a very Andes for elevation! I shall not attempt, this morning, to climb the summits of its sublimity—we have not the time and we fear we have not the skill for such work—but I shall, to the best of my ability, conduct you over one or two practical Truths of God which may be serviceable to us this morning, and introduce us to sunny fields of contemplation.

I. At once to our work! I call upon you to observe very carefully, in the first place, THE PERSONALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION as it is exhibited in the text before us. How many personal pronouns of the first person are there in this verse? Are there not as many as eight? It swarms with “I” and “me.” The text deals not with the plural at all. It does not mention someone else, nor a third party far away, but the Apostle treats of *himself*—his own inner life, his own spiritual death—the love of Christ to him, and the great sacrifice which Christ made for him. “Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*.”

This is instructive, for it is a distinguishing mark of the Christian religion that it brings out a man's individuality. It does not make us selfish. On the contrary it cures us of that evil, but still it does manifest in us a selfhood by which we become conscious of our personal individuality in an eminent degree. In the nocturnal heavens there had long been observed bright masses of light—the astronomers called them “nebulae”—they supposed them to be stores of shapeless chaotic matter until the telescope of Herschell resolved them into distinct stars. What the telescope did for stars the religion of Christ, when received into the heart, does for men!

Men think of themselves as mixed up with the race, or swamped in the community, or absorbed in universal manhood. They have a very indistinct idea of their separate obligations to God and their personal relations to His government. But the Gospel, like a telescope, brings man out to himself. It makes him see himself as a separate existence and compels him to meditate upon his own sin, his own salvation, and his own personal doom unless saved by Divine Grace. In the broad road there are so many travelers that as one takes a bird's eye view of it, it appears to be filled with a vast mob of men moving without order—but in the straight

and narrow way which leads to eternal life every traveler is distinct—he attracts your notice and he is a marked man.

Having to go against the general current of the times, the Believer is an individual upon whom observant eyes are fixed. He is a distinct individual, both to himself and the rest of his kind. You will very readily see how the religion of Jesus Christ brings out a man's individuality in its very dawn. It reveals to him his own personal sin and consequent danger. You know nothing about conversion if you merely believe in human depravity and human ruin but have never felt that *you* are depraved, and that *you* yourself are ruined! Over and above all the general woes of the race there will be one particular woe of your own. If you have been convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit, you will cry like that shrill-voiced Prophet of Jerusalem in the days of the siege, "Woe unto myself also!"

You will feel as if the arrows of God were mainly aimed at you and as if the curses of the Law would surely fall upon you if upon none else. Certainly, beloved Hearer, you know nothing about salvation unless you have personally looked with your own eye to Jesus Christ! There must be a personal reception of the Lord Jesus into the arms of your faith and into the bosom of your love. And, if you have not trusted in the Crucified while standing alone in contemplation at the foot of the Cross you have not believed unto life eternal.

Then, in consequence of a separate *personal* faith, the Believer enjoys a personal peace. He feels that if the earth were all at arms he would still find rest in Christ, that rest being peculiarly his own, independently of his fellows. He may talk of that peace to others, but he cannot communicate it. Others cannot give it to him, nor can they take it from him. Wherever the Christian religion is truly in the Son, it soon leads to a personal consecration to God. The man comes to the altar of Christ and he cries, "Here I am! O most glorious Lord, I feel it to be my reasonable service to give spirit, soul, and body unto You. Let others do as they will. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

The renewed man feels that the work of others does not exonerate him from service, and the general lukewarmness of the Christian Church cannot be an excuse for his own indifference. He stands out against error, if need be, as a lone protestor, like Athanasius, crying, "I, Athanasius, against the whole world." Or he works for God in the building up of Jerusalem, like Nehemiah, being content to work alone if others will not assist him. He has discovered himself to have been *personally* lost, and to have been *personally* saved and now his prayer is, "Lord, show me what You would have me do. Here am I, send me."

I believe that in proportion as our piety is definitely in the first person singular, it will be strong and vigorous. I believe, moreover, that in proportion as we fully realize our personal responsibility to God shall we be likely to discharge it. But, if we have not really understood it, we are very likely to dream of work for God by *proxy*—to pay the priest or the minister to be useful for us—and act as if we could shift our responsibility from our own shoulders to the back of a society or a Church. From its dawn up to its noonday glory the personality of true godliness is most observable. All the teaching of our holy faith bears in this direction. We preach *personal* election, *personal* calling, *personal* regeneration, *personal* perseverance, *per-*

sonal holiness and we know nothing of any work of Divine Grace which is not *personal* to the professor of it.

There is no doctrine in Scripture which teaches that one man can be saved by the godliness of another. I cannot discover anything like salvation by sponsorship, except in the one case of the sponsorship of the Lord Jesus Christ. I find no human being placed in the place of another so as to be able to take another's burden of sin or perform another's duty. I do find that we are to bear one another's burdens in respect of *sympathy*, but not in the sense of *substitution*. Every man must bear his own burden and give an account for himself before God.

Moreover, the ordinances of the Christian religion teach us the same. When a man is typically buried with Christ by the public act of Baptism, he cannot be dead for another or buried for another—nor can he rise again instead of another. There is the *personal* act of immersion to show forth our personal death to the world, personal burial with Christ, and personal resurrection with Him. So also, in the Supper of the Lord, the distinct act of each man eating and drinking for *himself* most manifestly sets forth that we stand as individuals before the Lord our God in our connection with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I feel earnestly that nothing should ever spoil the effect of this Truth of God upon our minds. It is such a simple Truth that when I make the statement, you, perhaps, wonder that I should repeat it so often. But simple as it is, it is constantly being forgotten. How many Church members shelter themselves behind the vigorous action of the entire community? The *Church* is being increased. The *Church* opens schools. The *Church* builds new Houses of Prayer—and so the Church member flatters himself that *he* is doing something—whereas that very man may not have, either by his contributions, his prayers, or his personal teachings done anything at all!

O idle Church member, I beseech you shake yourself from the dust! Be not so mean as to appropriate other men's labors! Before your own Master you shall stand or fall upon your own *individual* service or neglect, and if you bring forth no fruit yourself, all the fruit upon the other boughs shall not help you. "Every tree which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." "Every branch in Me that bears not fruit He takes away." Common enough is it, also, for persons to shelter themselves behind a *society*. A small annual contribution has often been a cloak for gross indifference to holy *effort*.

Somebody else is paid to be a missionary and to do your mission-work—is this the Lord's way? Is this the path of obedience? Does not our Lord say to me, "As my Father has sent Me, even so I send you"? Now the Father did not send Christ that He might procure a proxy and be a nominal Redeemer. Jesus gave Himself for us in *Personal* service and sacrifice—even so does Jesus send us forth to suffer and to serve. It is well to support the minister. It is well to pay the city missionary that he may have his time to give to necessary work. It is well to assist the Bible-woman that she may go from house to house. But remember, when all the societies have done all that is possible they cannot exonerate you from your own peculiar calling—and however large your contributions to assist others to serve the Master—they cannot discharge on your behalf one single particle of what was due from you *personally* to your Lord.

Let me pray you, Brothers and Sisters, if you have ever sheltered behind the work of others, stand forth in your own proper character and remember that before God you must be estimated by what you have *felt*, what you have *known*, what you have *learned*, and what you have *DONE*! The worst form of the mischief is when persons imagine that family piety and national religion can ever be available in lieu of individual repentance and faith. Absurd as it may seem, yet a very common thing it is for people to say, "Oh, yes, we are all Christians—of course, we are all Christians—every Englishman is a Christian. We do not belong to the Brahmins or Mahometans—we are all Christians."

What grosser lie can a man invent than that? Is a man a Christian because he *lives* in England? Is a rat a horse because it lives in a stable? That is just as good reasoning! A man must be born again, or he is no child of God. A man must have living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, or else he is no Christian and he does but mock the name of Christian when he takes it upon himself without having part or lot in the matter. Others say, "My mother and my father always professed such a religion, therefore I am bound to do the same." Glorious reasoning, fit most surely for idiots!

Have you never heard of that old Pagan monarch who professed conversion and was about to step into the baptismal font, when, turning round to the bishop, he said, "Where did my father go when he died, before your religion came here, and where did his father go, and all the kings that were before me who worshipped Woden and Thor? Where did they go when they died? Tell me at once!" The bishop shook his head and looked very sorrowful, and said he was afraid they were gone to a very dark place. "Ah, then," said he, "I will not be separated from them." Back he went and remained an unwashed heathen.

You suppose that this folly expired in the dark ages? It survives and flourishes in the present. We have known persons impressed under the Gospel who have, nevertheless, clung to the false hopes of superstition or human merit and have excused themselves by saying, "You see, I have always been brought up to it." Does a man think because his mother was poor, or his father a pauper, that he himself must necessarily remain a beggar? If my parent was blind, am I bound to put out my own eyes to be like he? No, but if I have beheld the light of the Truth of Jesus Christ, let me follow it and not be drawn aside by the idea that hereditary superstition is any the less dangerous or erroneous because a dozen generations have been deluded by it. You must appear before God, my dear Friend, on your own feet, and neither mother nor father can stand in your place. Therefore judge for yourself! Seek for yourself eternal life! Lift up your eyes to Christ's Cross for yourself, and let it be your own earnest endeavor that you yourself may be able to say, "He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*."

We are all born alone—we come as sorrowful pilgrims into this world to traverse a path which only our own feet can tread. To a great extent we go through the world alone, for all our companions are but vessels sailing with us side by side—vessels distinct and each one bearing its own flag. Into the depth of our hearts no man can dive. There are cabinets in the chamber of the soul which no man can open but the individual himself. We must die alone. Friends may surround the bed, but the departing spirit must take its flight by itself. We shall hear no tramp of thousands as we descend into the dark river. We shall be solitary travelers into the

unknown land. We expect to stand before the Judgment Seat in the midst of a great assembly—but still to be judged as if no other man were there. If all that multitude is condemned, and we are in Christ, we shall be saved. And if they should all be saved, and we are found wanting, we shall be cast away.

In the balances we shall each be placed alone. There is a crucible for every ingot of gold, a furnace for every bar of silver. In the Resurrection every seed shall receive his own body. There shall be an individuality about the frame that shall be raised in that day of wonders, an individuality most marked and manifest. If I am condemned at the last, no man can be damned for my spirit. No soul can enter the chambers of fire on my behalf to endure for me the unutterable anguish. And, blessed hope, if I am saved, it will be I who shall see the King in His beauty! My eyes shall behold Him and not another in my place. The joys of Heaven shall not be *proxy* joys, but the *personal* enjoyments of those who have had personal union with Christ.

You all know this, and therefore, I pray you, let the weighty Truth abide with you. No man in his senses thinks that another can eat for him, or drink for him, or be clothed for him, or sleep for him, or wake for him. No man is content, nowadays, with a second person's owning money for him, or possessing an estate for him. Men long to have riches *themselves*! They wish to be *personally* happy, to be *personally* honored! They do not care that the good things of this life shall be nominally theirs while other men grasp the reality. They wish to have a real grasp and grip of all temporal goods. O let us not play the fool with *eternal* things, but let us desire to have a *personal* interest in Christ, and then let us aspire to give to Him, who deserves it so well, our personal service, rendering spirit, soul, and body unto His cause.

II. Secondly, our text very plainly TEACHES US THE INTERWEAVING OF OUR OWN PROPER PERSONALITY WITH THAT OF JESUS CHRIST. Read the text over again. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Here is the man, but here is the Son of God quite as conspicuously, and the two personalities are singularly interwoven.

I think I see two trees before me. They are distinct plants growing side by side, but as I follow them downward I observe that the roots are so interlaced and intertwined that no one can trace the separate trees and allot the members of each to its proper whole. Such are Christ and the Believer. I think I see before me a vine. Yonder is a branch, distinct and perfect as a branch. It is not to be mistaken for any other—it is a branch, a whole and perfect branch—yet how perfectly is it joined to the stem and how completely is its individuality merged in the one vine of which it is a member!

Now so is it with the believer in Christ. There was one parent man who threw his shadow across our path and from whose influence we never could escape. From all other men we might have struggled away and claimed to be separate, but this one man was part of ourselves and we part of him—Adam the first. In his fallen state we are fallen with him, and are broken in pieces in his ruin. And now, glory be to God, as the shadow of the first man has been uplifted from us, there appears a second Man,

the Lord from Heaven! And across our path there falls the light of His glory and His excellence from which also, blessed be God, we who have believed in Him cannot escape. In the light of that Man, the second Adam, the heavenly federal Head of all His people—in His light we rejoice. Interwoven with our history and personality is the history and Personality of the man Christ Jesus, and we are forever one with Him.

Observe the points of contact. First Paul says, I am “crucified with Christ.” What does he mean? He means a great many more things than I can tell you this morning. But briefly, he means this—he believed in the representation of Christ on the Cross—he held that when Jesus Christ hung upon the tree He did not hang there as a private Person, but as the *Representative* of all His chosen people. As the burgess in the House of Commons votes not for himself, alone, but in the name of the township which has sent him to Parliament, so the Lord Jesus Christ acted in what He did as a great public representative Person. And the dying of Jesus Christ upon the tree was the virtual dying of all His people.

Then all His saints entered unto justice what was due and made an expiation to Divine vengeance for all their sins. “I am crucified with Christ.” The Apostle of the Gentiles delighted to think that as one of Christ’s chosen people, *he died upon the tree in Christ*. He did more than believe this doctrinally, however—he accepted it confidently—resting his hope upon it. He believed that by virtue of Jesus Christ’s death, he had *himself* paid the Law its due, satisfied Divine justice, and found reconciliation with God! Beloved, what a blessed thing it is when the soul can, as it were, stretch itself upon the Cross of Christ and feel, “I am dead. The Law has killed me, cursed me, slain me, and I am therefore free from its power, because in my Surety I have borne the curse, and in the Person of my Substitute all that the Law could do, by way of condemnation, has been executed upon me, for I am crucified with Christ.”

Oh, how blessed it is when the Cross of Christ is laid upon us! How it quickens us! Just as the aged Prophet went up and stretched himself upon the dead child—put his mouth upon the child’s mouth, and his hands upon the child’s hands, and his feet upon the child’s feet and then the child was quickened—so when the Cross is laid upon my soul it puts life, power, warmth, and comfort into me! Union with the suffering, bleeding Savior, and faith in the merit of the Redeemer are soul-cheering things! O for more enjoyment of them!

Paul meant even more than this. He not only believed in Christ’s death and trusted in it, but he actually *felt* its power in himself in causing the crucifixion of his old corrupt nature. If you conceive of yourself as a man executed, you at once perceive that being executed by the Law, the Law has no further claim upon you. You resolve, moreover, that having once proven the curse of sin by the sentence passed upon you, you will not fall into that same offense again but henceforth, being miraculously delivered from the death into which the Law brought you, you will live in newness of life. You *must* feel so if you feel rightly.

Thus did Paul view himself as a criminal upon whom the sentence of the Law had been fulfilled. When he saw the pleasures of sin, he said, “I cannot enjoy these. I am dead to them. I once had a life in which these were very sweet to me, but I have been crucified with Christ. Consequently, as a dead man can have no delight in the joys which once were

delights to him, so neither can I." When Paul looked upon the carnal things of the world, he said, "I once allowed these things to reign over me. What shall I eat? What shall I drink? And with what shall I be clothed? These were a trinity of questions of the utmost importance—they are of no importance now because I am dead to these things—I cast my care upon God with regard to them. They are not my life. I am crucified to them."

If any passion, if any motive, if any design should come into our mind short of the Cross of Christ, we should exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory in any of these things! I am a dead man. Come, world, with all your witchery. Come, pleasure, with all your charms. Come, wealth, with all your temptations. Come, all you tempters that have seduced so many! What can you do with a crucified man? How can you tempt one who is dead to you?" Now it is a blessed state of mind when a man can feel that through having received Christ, he is, to this world, as one who is utterly dead! Neither does he yield his strength to its purposes, nor his soul to its customs, nor his judgment to its maxims, nor his heart to its affections, for he is a crucified man through Jesus Christ! The world is crucified unto him, and he unto the world. This is what the Apostle meant.

Notice next another point of contact. He says, "Nevertheless I live." But then he corrects himself, "yet not I, but Christ lives in me." You have seen the dead side of a Believer: he is deaf, and dumb, and blind, and without feeling to the sinful world, yet he adds, "Nevertheless I live." He explains what his life is—his life is produced in him by virtue of Christ's being in him and his being in Christ. Jesus is the source of the Christian's life! The sap in the vine lives even in the smallest of the tendrils. No matter how minute may be the nerve, the anatomist will tell you that the brain-life lives in its most distant extremity.

So in every Christian. Though the Christian may be insignificant and possessed of little Divine Grace, yet still, if he is truly a Believer, Jesus lives in him! The life which keeps his faith, his hope, his love in existence comes from Jesus Christ, and from Him alone. We should cease to be living saints if we did not daily receive Divine Grace from our Covenant Head. As the strength of our life comes from the Son of God, so is He the ruler and moving power within us. How can he be a Christian who is ruled by any but Christ? If you call Christ, "Master and Lord," you must be His servant. Nor can you yield obedience to any rival power, for no man can serve two masters. There must be a master spirit in the heart—and unless Jesus Christ is such a Master Spirit to us we are not saved at all. The life of the Christian is a life which springs from Christ, and it is controlled by His will.

Beloved, do you know anything about this? I am afraid it is dry talking to you about it unless you feel it. Has your life been such during the past week? Has the life which you have lived been Christ's living in you? Have you been like a book printed in plain letters in which men might read a new edition of the life of Jesus Christ? A Christian ought to be a living photograph of the Lord Jesus, a striking likeness of his Lord! When men look at him they should see not only what the Christian is, but what the Christian's *Master* is for he should be like his Master. Do you ever see and know that within your soul Christ looks out of *your* eyes regarding poor sinners and considering how you may help them? That Christ throbs in

your *heart*, feeling for the perishing, trembling for those who will not tremble for themselves?

Do you ever feel Christ opening your hands in liberal charity to help those who cannot help themselves? Have you ever felt that a something more than yourself was in you—a Spirit which sometimes struggles with yourself—and holds it by the throat and threatens to destroy its sinful selfishness—a noble Spirit which puts its foot upon the neck of covetousness? A brave Spirit that dashes to the ground your pride? An active fervent Spirit that burns up your sloth? Have you ever felt this? Truly, we that live unto God feel the life of God within and desire to be more and more subdued under the dominant Spirit of Christ, that our manhood may be a palace for the Well-Beloved!

That is another point of contact. Further on, the Apostle says—and I hope you will keep your Bibles open to follow the text—“The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.” Every moment the life of the Christian is to be a life of faith. We make a mistake when we try to walk by feeling or by sight. I dreamed the other night, while musing upon the life of the Believer, that I was passing along a road which a Divine call had appointed for me. The ordained pathway which I was called to traverse was thick darkness, unmingled with a ray of light. As I stood in the awful gloom, unable to perceive a single inch before me, I heard a voice which said, “Let your feet go right on. Fear not, but advance in the name of God.”

So on I went, putting down foot after foot with trembling. After a little while the path through the darkness became easy and smooth from use and experience. Just then I perceived that the path turned. It was of no use my endeavoring to proceed as I had done before. The way was tortuous and the road was rough and stony—but I remembered what was said, that I was to advance as I could—and so on I went. Then there came another twist, and yet another, and another, and another, and I wondered why till I understood that if ever the path remained long the same I should grow accustomed to it—and so would walk by *feeling*. And I learned that the whole of the way would constantly be such as to compel me to *depend* upon the guiding voice and exercise faith in the unseen One who had called me!

All of a sudden it appeared to me as though there was nothing beneath my foot when I put it down, yet I thrust it out into the darkness in confident daring, and lo, a firm step was reached, and another and another as I walked down a staircase which descended deep, down, down, down. Onward I passed, not seeing an inch before me but believing that all was well although I could hear around me the dash of falling men and women who had walked by the light of their own lanterns and missed their foothold. I heard the cries and shrieks of men as they fell from this dreadful staircase. But I was commanded to go right on, and I went straight on, resolved to be obedient even if the way should descend into the nethermost Hell.

By-and-by the dreadful ladder was ended and I found a solid rock beneath my feet. And I walked straight on upon a paved causeway with a railing on either hand. I understood this to be the experience which I had gained, which now could guide and help me, and I leaned on this rail and walked on right confidently till, in a moment, my causeway ended and my

feet sank in the mire! And as for my other comforts, I groped for them but they were gone! Still I was to know that I must go in dependence upon my unseen Friend, and the road would always be such that no experience could serve me instead of *dependence upon God*. Forward I plunged through mire and filth and suffocating smoke, and a smell as of death, for it was the way, and I had been commanded to walk there.

Again the pathway changed, though all was midnight still—up went the path, and up, and up, and up, with nothing upon which I could lean! I ascended wearily innumerable stairs, not one of which I could see, although the very thought of their height might make my brain reel. All of a sudden my pathway burst into light as I woke from my reverie, and when I looked down upon it, I saw it all to be safe, but such a road that if I had seen it, I never could have trod it. It was only in the darkness that I could have performed my mysterious journey. It was only in child-like confidence upon the Lord. The Lord will guide us if we are willing to do just as He bids us. Lean upon Him, then.

I have painted a poor picture, but still one, which, if you can understand it, it will be grand to look upon. To walk straight on—believing in Christ every moment, believing your sins to be forgiven even when you see their vileness—believing that you are safe in Christ even when you seem in the utmost danger—believing that you are glorified when you feel as if you were cast out from God's Presence—this is the life of faith.

Furthermore, Paul notes other points of unity. "Who loved me." Blessed be God, before the mountains uplifted their snow-crowned heads to the clouds, Christ had set His heart upon us! His "delights were with the sons of men." In His "book all our members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Believer, get a hold of the precious Truth that Christ loved you *eternally*—the all-glorious Son of God chose you and espoused you unto Himself that you might be His bride throughout eternity! Here is a blessed Truth, indeed!

Observe the next, "and gave Himself for me." Not only gave all that He had, but gave Himself! Not merely laid aside His glory and His splendor, and His life, but yielded up His very *Self*. O heir of Heaven, Jesus is yours at this moment! Having given Himself once for you upon the tree to put your sin away, at this moment He gives Himself to you to be your life, your crown, your joy, your portion, your All in All!

You have found out yourself to be a separate personality and individuality, but that personality is linked with the Person of Christ Jesus, so that you are *in Christ*, and *Christ is in you*! By a blessed indissoluble union you are knit together forever and ever!

III. Lastly, the text describes THE LIFE WHICH RESULTS FROM THIS BLENDED PERSONALITY. If you will have patience with me, I will be as brief as I can while I go over the text again, word by word. Brethren, when a man finds and knows himself to be linked with Christ, his life is altogether a new life. I gather that from the expression, "I am crucified, nevertheless I live." Crucified, then dead. Crucified, then the old life is put away—whatever life a crucified man has must be new life.

So is it with you. Upon your old life, Believer, sentence of death has been pronounced. The carnal mind, which is enmity against God, is doomed to die. You can say, "I die daily." Would to God the old nature were completely dead! But whatever you have of *life* was not given you till

you came into union with Christ. It is a new thing, as new as though you had been actually dead and rotted in the tomb and then had started up at the sound of the trumpet to live again. You have received a life from above, a life which the Holy Spirit worked in you in regeneration. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, but your Grace-life did not come from yourself—you have been born again from above.

Your life is a very strange one—"I am crucified, nevertheless I live." What a contradiction! The Christian's life is a matchless riddle. No worldling can comprehend it! Even the Believer himself cannot understand it. He knows it, but as to solving all its enigmas he feels that to be an impossible task. Dead, yet alive! Crucified with Christ, and yet at the same time risen with Christ in newness of life! Do not expect the world to understand you, Christian. It did not understand your Master. When your actions are misrepresented and your motives are ridiculed, do not be surprised. "If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

If you belonged to the village the dogs would not bark at you. If men could read you they would not wonder. It is because you are written in a celestial language that men cannot comprehend you and think you worthless. Your life is new. Your life is strange. This wonderful life, resulting in the blended personality of the Believer and the Son of God, is a true life. This is expressed in the text, "Nevertheless I live"—yes, live as I never lived before! When the Apostle declares himself to be dead to the world he would not have us imagine that he was dead in the highest and best sense. No, he *lived* with a new force and vigor of life. It seemed to me, Brothers and Sisters, when I woke up to know Christ, that I was just like the fly newly burst from the chrysalis—I then began *really* to live.

When a soul is startled by the thunderclaps of conviction and afterwards receives pardon in Christ, it begins to live! The worldling says he wants to see life and therefore plunges into sin! Fool that he is, he peers into the sepulcher to discover immortality! The man who truly lives is the Believer. Shall I become less active because I am a Christian? God forbid! Become less industrious? Find less opportunities for the manifestation of my natural and spiritual energies? God forbid! If ever a man should be as a sword too sharp for the scabbard with an edge which cannot be turned it should be the Christian! He should be like flames of fire burning his way! Live while you live but there is no driveling and frittering away of time. Live so as to demonstrate that you possess the noblest form of life!

Clear is it, also, that the new life which Christ brings to us is a life of self-abnegation, for Paul adds, "I live, yet not I." Lowliness of mind is part and parcel of godliness. He who can take any credit to himself knows not the spirit of our holy faith. The Believer, when he prays best, says, "Yet not I, but the Spirit of God interceded in me." If he has won any souls to Christ, he says, "Yet not I. It was the Gospel—the Lord Jesus worked in me mightily." "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name be all the praise." Self-humiliation is the native spirit of the true-born child of God.

Further, the life which Christ works in us is a life of one idea. Is the Believer's soul ruled by *two* things? No, he knows but one. Christ lives in me! Two tenants in the chamber of my soul? No, one Lord and Master I serve. "Christ lives in me." An old Divine desired that he might eat and

drink and sleep eternal life. Do you thus live! Alas, I mourn that I live too much in the old life, and too little does Jesus live in me. But the Christian, if he should ever come to perfection, and God grant we each may come as near to it as possible even *now*, will find that the old, "I live," is kept under, and the new Christ-life reigns supreme.

Christ must be the *one* thought, the *one* idea, the *one* master-thought in the Believer's soul! When he wakes in the morning the healthy Believer enquires, "What can I do for Christ?" When he goes about his business he asks, "How shall I serve my Lord in all my actions?" When he makes money he questions himself, "How can I use my talents for Christ?" If he acquires education, the enquiry is, "How can I spend my knowledge for Christ?" To sum up much in little, the child of God has within him the Christ-life. But how shall I describe that? Christ's life on earth was the Divine mingled with the human—such is the life of the Christian. There is something Divine about it—it is a living, incorruptible seed which abides forever.

We are made partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust, yet our life is a *thoroughly* human life. The Christian is a man among men. In all that is manly he labors to excel, yet he is not as other men are but wears a hidden nature which no mere worldling understands. Picture the life of Christ on earth, Beloved, and that is what the life of God in us ought to be—and *will* be in proportion as we are subject to the power of the Holy Spirit.

Notice again, keeping close to the text, that the life which God works in us is still the life of a man. "The life that I now live in the flesh," says the Apostle. Those monks and nuns who run away from the world for fear its temptations should overcome them, and seclude themselves for the sake of greater holiness, are as excellent soldiers as those who retire to the camp for fear of being defeated! Of what service are such soldiers in the battle, or such persons in the warfare of life? Christ did not come to make monks of us! He came to make *men* of us! He meant that we should learn how to live in the flesh. We are neither to give up business nor society, nor in any right sense to give up life.

"The life I live in the flesh," says the Apostle. Look at him busy at his tent-making. What? An Apostle making tents? What do you say, Brothers and Sisters, to the Archbishop of Canterbury stitching away for his living? It is too low for a State bishop, certainly! But not too low for Paul. I do not think the Apostle was ever more apostolic than when he picked up sticks. When Paul and his companions were shipwrecked at Melita, the Apostle was of more service than all the Pan-Anglican synod with their silk aprons, for he set to work like other people to gather fuel for the fire. He wanted to warm himself as other men, and therefore he took his share at the toil.

Even so you and I must take our turn at the wheel. We must not think of keeping ourselves aloof from our fellow men as though we should be degraded by mingling with them. The salt of the earth should be well rubbed into the meat, and so the Christian should mingle with his fellow men, seeking their good for edification. We are men, and whatever men may lawfully do, we do. Wherever they may go, we may go. Our religion makes us neither more nor less than human, though it brings us into the family of God.

Yet the Christian life is a life of *faith*. “The life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.” Faith is not a piece of confectionery to be put upon drawing room tables, or a garment to be worn on Sundays. It is a *working* principle to be used in the barn and in the field, in the shop and on the exchange. It is a Grace for the housewife and the servant. It is for the House of Commons and for the poorest workshop. “The life which I live in the flesh, I live by faith.” I would have the believing cobbler mend shoes religiously, and the tailor make garments by faith! And I would have every Christian buy and sell by faith. Whatever your trades may be, *faith* is to be taken into your daily callings, and that is, alone, the truly living faith which will bear the practical test. You are not to stop at the shop door and take off your coat and say, “Farewell to Christianity till I put up the shutters again.” That is hypocrisy! The genuine life of the Christian is the life which we live in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God.

To conclude. The life which comes out of the blended personality of the Believer and Christ is a life of perfect *love*. “He gave Himself for me.” My question is, therefore, What can I do for Him? The new life is a life of holy *security*, for, if Christ loved me, who can destroy me? It is a life of holy *wealth*, for, if Christ gave His infinite Self to me, what can I need? It is a life of holy *joy*, for, if Christ is mine, I have a well of holy joy within my soul! It is the life of *Heaven*, for, if I have Christ, I have that which is the *essence* and soul of Heaven!

I have talked mysteries of which some of you have not understood so much as a sentence. God give you understanding that you may know the Truth. But if you have not understood it, let this fact convince you—you know not the Truth because you have not the Spirit of God—for the spiritual mind alone understands spiritual things. When we talk about the inner life, we seem like those that dote and dream to those who understand us not. But if you have understood me, Believer, go home and live out the Truth of God! Practice that which is practicable. Feed upon that which is full of savor. Rejoice in Christ Jesus that you are one with Him, and then, in your own proper person, go out and *serve* your Master with might and main, and the Lord send you His abundant blessing. Amen and Amen.

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SALVATION BY WORKS— A CRIMINAL DOCTRINE NO. 1534

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 18, 1880,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“I do not frustrate the Grace of God: for if righteousness comes by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain.”
Galatians 2:21.***

THE idea of salvation by the merit of our own works is exceedingly insinuating. It matters not how often it is refuted, it asserts itself again and again and when it gains the least foothold it soon makes great advances. Hence Paul, who was determined to show it no quarter, opposed everything which bore its likeness. He was determined not to permit the thin end of the wedge to be introduced into the Church, for well he knew that willing hands would soon be driving it home! Therefore when Peter sided with the Judaizing party and seemed to favor those who demanded that the Gentiles should be circumcised, our brave Apostle withstood him to his face. He always fought for salvation by Grace through faith and contended strenuously against all thought of righteousness by obedience to the precepts of the ceremonial or the moral Law.

No one could be more explicit than he upon the doctrine that we are not justified or saved by works in any degree, but solely by the Grace of God. His trumpet gave forth no uncertain sound, but gave forth the clear note—“By Grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Grace meant Grace with Paul and he could not endure any tampering with the matter, or any frittering away of its meaning. So fascinating is the doctrine of legal righteousness that the only way to deal with it is Paul’s way—stamp it out! Cry war to the knife against it! Never yield to it! And remember the Apostle’s firmness and how stoutly he held his ground—“To whom,” he says, “we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour.”

The error of salvation by works is exceedingly plausible. You will constantly hear it stated as a self-evident truth and vindicated on account of its supposed practical usefulness, while the Gospel doctrine of Salvation by Faith is railed at and accused of evil consequences. It is affirmed that if we preach salvation by good works we shall encourage virtue—and so it might seem in *theory*—but history proves, by many instances, that as a matter of fact where such doctrine has been preached virtue has become singularly uncommon and that in proportion as the merit of works has been cried up, morality has gone down!

On the other hand, where Justification by Faith has been preached, conversions have followed and purity of life has been produced even in the worst of men. Those who lead godly and gracious lives are ready to confess that the cause of their zeal for holiness lies in their faith in Christ Je-

sus. Where will you meet with a devout and upright man who glories in his own works? Self-righteousness is natural to our fallen humanity and, therefore, it is the essence of all false religions. Be they what they may, they all agree in seeking salvation by our own deeds. He who worships his idols will torture his body, will fast, will perform long pilgrimages and do or endure *anything* in order to merit salvation! The Roman Catholic church holds up continually before the eyes of its votaries the prize to be earned by self-denial, by penance, by prayers, by sacraments or by some other performances of man. Go where you may, the natural religion of fallen man is salvation by his own merits.

An old Divine has well said every man is born a heretic upon this point and he naturally gravitates towards this heresy in one form or another. Self-salvation, either by his personal worthiness, by his repentance or by his resolves is a hope ingrained in human nature and very hard to remove. This foolishness is bound up in the heart of every child and who shall get it out of him? This erroneous idea arises partly from ignorance, for men are ignorant of the Law of God and of what holiness really is. If they knew that even an evil *thought* is a breach of the Law and that the Law once broken in any point is altogether violated, they would be at once convinced that there can be no righteousness by the Law to those who have already offended against it.

They are also in great ignorance concerning themselves, for those very persons who talk about self-righteousness are, as a rule, openly chargeable with fault. And if not, were they to sit down and really look at their own lives, they would soon perceive, even in their best works, such impurity of motive beforehand, or such pride and self-congratulation afterwards, that they would see the gloss taken off from all their performances and they would be utterly ashamed of them! Nor is it only ignorance which leads men to self-righteousness—they are also deceived by *pride*. Man cannot endure to be saved on the footing of mercy—he hates to plead guilty and throw himself on the favor of the great King—he cannot stand to be treated as a pauper and blessed as a matter of charity!

He desires to have a finger in his own salvation and claim at least a little credit for it. Proud man will not have Heaven, itself, upon terms of Grace! As long as he can, he sets up one plea or another and holds to his own righteousness as though it were his life. This self-confidence also arises from wicked unbelief, for through his self-conceit, man will not believe God. Nothing is more plainly revealed in Scripture than this—that by the works of the Law shall no man be justified—yet men, in some shape or other, stick to the hope of legal righteousness! They will have it that they must *prepare* for Grace, or *assist* mercy, or in some degree *deserve* eternal life. They prefer their own flattering prejudices to the declaration of the heart-searching God! The Testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning the deceitfulness of the heart is cast aside and the declaration of God that there is none that does good, no, not one, is altogether denied. Is not this a great evil?

Self-righteousness is also much promoted by the almost universal spirit of trifling which is now abroad. Only while men trifle with themselves can they entertain the idea of personal merit before God. He who comes to se-

rious thought and begins to understand the Character of God, before whom the heavens are not pure and the angels are charged with folly—he, I say, that comes to serious thought and beholds a true vision of God, abhors himself in dust and ashes and is forever silenced as to any thought of self-justification! It is because we do not seriously examine our condition that we think ourselves rich and increased in goods. A man may fancy that he is prospering in business and yet he may be going back in the world. If he does not face his books or take stock, he may be living in a fool's paradise, spending largely when on the verge of bankruptcy.

Many think well of themselves because they never think seriously. They do not look below the surface and, therefore, they are deceived by appearances. The most troublesome business to many men is thought—and the last thing they will do is to weigh their actions, or test their motives, or ponder their ways to see whether things are right with them. Self-righteousness, being supported by ignorance, by pride, by unbelief and by the natural superficiality of the human mind, is strongly entrenched and cannot readily be driven out of men. Self-righteousness is evidently evil, for it makes light of sin! It talks of merit in the case of one who has already transgressed and boasts of excellence in reference to a fallen and depraved creature. It prattles of little faults, small failures and slight omissions and so makes sin to be a venial error which may be readily overlooked. Not so faith in God, for though it recognizes pardon, yet that pardon is seen to come in a way which proves sin to be exceedingly sinful.

On the other hand, the doctrine of salvation by works has not a word of comfort in it for the fallen. It gives to the elder son all that his proud heart can claim, but for the prodigal it has no welcome. The Law has no invitation for the sinner, for it knows nothing of mercy. If salvation is by the works of the Law, what must become of the guilty and the fallen and the abandoned? By what hopes can these be recalled? This unmerciful doctrine bars the door of hope and hands over the lost ones to the executioner in order that the proud Pharisee may air his boastful righteousness and thank God that he is not as other men are!

It is the intense selfishness of this doctrine which condemns it as an evil thing. It naturally exalts self. If a man conceives that he will be saved by his own works, he thinks himself something and glories in the dignity of human nature! When he has been attentive to religious exercises he rubs his hands and feels that he *deserves* well of his Maker—he goes home to repeat his prayers and before he falls asleep he wonders how he can have grown to be so good and so much superior to those around him. When he walks abroad he feels as if he dwelt apart in native excellence, a person much distinguished from “the vulgar herd,” a being whom to *know* is to admire. All the while he considers himself to be very humble and is often amazed at his own condescension.

What is this but a most hateful spirit? God, who sees the heart, loathes it! He will accept the humble and the contrite, but He puts far from Him those who glory in themselves. Indeed, my Brothers and Sisters, what have we to glory in? Is not every boast a lie? What is this self-hood but a peacock feather, fit only for the cap of a fool? May God deliver us from exalting self! And yet, we cannot be delivered from so doing if we hold, in

any degree, the doctrine of salvation by our own good works. At this time I desire to shoot at the very heart of that soul-destroying doctrine, while I show you, in the first place, that two great crimes are contained in the idea of self-justification. When I have brought forth that indictment, I shall further endeavor to show that these two great crimes are committed by many and then, thirdly, it will be a delight to assert that the true Believer does not fall into these crimes. May God, the Holy Spirit, help us while meditating upon this important theme.

I. First, then, **TWO GREAT CRIMES ARE CONTAINED IN SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.** These high crimes and misdemeanors are frustrating the Grace of God and making Christ to have died in vain. The first is the frustration of the Grace of God. The word here translated, “frustrate,” means to make void, to reject, to refuse, to regard as needless. Now, he that hopes to be saved by his own righteousness rejects the Grace, or free favor, of God! He regards it as useless and in that sense frustrates it. It is clear, first, that if righteousness comes by the Law, the Grace of God is no longer required. If we can be saved by our own merits, we need *justice*, but we certainly do not need *mercy*.

If we can keep the Law and claim to be accepted as a matter of debt, it is plain that we need not turn suppliants and crave for mercy. Grace is a superfluity where merit can be proven. A man who can go into court with a clear case and a bold countenance asks not for mercy of the judge and the offer of it would insult him. “Give me justice,” he says! “Give me my rights” and he stands up for them as a brave Englishman should do. It is only when a man feels that the law condemns him that he puts in a plea for mercy. Nobody ever dreamed of recommending an innocent man to mercy. I say, then, that the man who believes that by keeping the Law, or by practicing ceremonies, or by undergoing religious performances he can make himself acceptable before God, most decidedly puts the Grace of God on one side as a superfluous thing as far as he is concerned! Is it not clearly so? And is not this a crimson crime—this frustration of the Grace of God?

Next, he makes the Grace of God to be at least a secondary thing which is only a lower degree of the same error. Many think that they are to merit as much as they can by their own exertions and *then* the Grace of God will make up for the rest. The theory is that we are to keep the Law as far as we can and this imperfect obedience is to stand good—as a sort of compromise—say a shilling in the pound, or fifteen shillings in the pound—according as man judges his own excellence. And then, what is required over and above our own hard-earned money, the Grace of God will supply—in short, the plan is every man is his own savior and Jesus Christ and His Grace just make up for our deficiencies.

Whether men see it or not, this mixture of Law and Grace is most dishonoring to the salvation of Jesus Christ. It makes the Savior’s work to be incomplete, though on the Cross He cried, “It is finished.” Yes, it even treats it as being utterly ineffectual since it appears to be of no use at all until man’s works are added to it. According to this notion, we are redeemed as much by our own doing as by the ransom price of Jesus’ blood—man and Christ go shares, both in the work and in the glory! This

is an intense form of arrogant treason against the majesty of Divine Mercy! This is a capital crime which will condemn all who continue in it. May God deliver us from thus insulting the Throne of Grace by bringing a purchase price in our own hands as if we could deserve such peerless gifts of love!

More than that, he who trusts in himself, his feelings, his works, his prayers, or in *anything* except the Grace of God virtually gives up trusting in the Grace of God altogether! Don't you know that God's Grace will never share the work with man's merit? As oil will not combine with water, so neither will human merit and heavenly mercy mix together! The Apostle says in Romans 11:6, "If by Grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it is of works, then is it no more Grace: otherwise work is no more work." You must either have salvation wholly because you deserve it, or wholly because God graciously bestows it, though you do *not* deserve it! You must receive salvation at the Lord's hands either as a debt or as a charity—there can be no mingling of the ideas. That which is a pure gift of favor cannot also be a reward of personal merit! A combination of the two principles of Law and Grace is utterly impossible. Trusting in our own works in *any* degree effectually shuts us out from all hope of salvation by Grace—and so it frustrates the Grace of God.

There is another form of this crime, that when men preach up human works, sufferings, feelings, or emotions as the ground of salvation, they deny the sinner confidence in Christ, for as long as a man can maintain any hope in himself, he will never look to the Redeemer. We may preach forever and ever, but as long as there remains latent in any one bosom a hope that he can effectually clear himself from sin and win the favor of God by his own works, that man will never accept the proclamation of free pardon through the blood of Christ! We know that we cannot frustrate the Grace of God—it will have its way and the eternal purpose shall be fulfilled. But as the tendency of all teaching which mixes up works with Grace is to take men away from believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, its tendency is to frustrate the Grace of God and every act is to be judged by its tendency even if the Lord's Divine power prevents its working out its natural result.

No man can lay another Foundation than that which is laid, but inasmuch as they *try* to do so they are guilty of despising the Foundation of God as much as those builders of the olden times who rejected the stone which God had chosen to be the head of the corner. May the Grace of God keep us from such a crime as this, lest the blood of other men's souls should crimson our garments. This hoping to be saved by our own righteousness robs God of His Glory. It is as good as saying, "We do not need Grace. We need no free favor." It reads of the New Covenant, which Infinite Love has made, but by clinging to the Old Covenant it puts dishonor upon it. In its heart it murmurs, "What need of this Covenant of Grace? The Covenant of Works answers every purpose for us."

It reads of the great gift of Grace in the Person of Jesus Christ and it does despite thereto by the secret thought that human works are as good as the life and death of the Son of God! It cries, "We will not have this Man

to save us.” A self-righteous hope casts a slur upon the Glory of God since it is clear that if a man could be saved by his own works, he would naturally have the honor of it. But if a man is saved by the free Grace of God, then God is glorified. Woe unto those who teach a doctrine which would pluck the royal Crown from the head of our Sovereign Lord and disgrace the Throne of His glory! God help us to be clear of this rank offense against high Heaven. I grow warm upon such a subject as this, for my indignation rises against that which does dishonor to my Lord and frustrates His Grace.

This is a sin so gross that even the heathen cannot commit it! They have never heard of the Grace of God and therefore they cannot put a slight upon it—when they perish it will be with a far lighter doom than those who have been told that God is gracious and ready to pardon and yet turn on their heels and wickedly boast of innocence and pretend to be clean in the sight of God! This is a sin which devils cannot commit. With all the obstinacy of their rebellion, they can never reach to this! They have never had the sweet notes of Free Grace and dying love ringing in their ears and, therefore, they have never refused the heavenly invitation. What has never been presented to their acceptance cannot be the object of their rejection. Thus, my Hearer, if you should fall into this deep ditch, you will sink lower than the heathen, lower than Sodom and Gomorrah and lower than the devil, himself! Wake up, I pray, and do not dare to frustrate the Grace of God!

The second great crime which self-justification commits is making Christ to be dead in vain. This is plain enough. If salvation can be by the works of the Law, why did our Lord Jesus die to save us? O, You bleeding Lamb of God, Your Incarnation is a marvel, but Your death upon the accursed tree is such a miracle of mercy as fills all Heaven with astonishment! Will any dare to say that Your death, O Incarnate God, was a superfluity, a wanton waste of suffering? Do they dare think You a generous but unwise enthusiast whose death was needless? Can there be any who think Your Cross a vain thing? Yes, thousands virtually do this and, in fact, *all* do who make it out that men might have been saved in some other way, or may now be saved by their own works and doings! They who say that the death of Christ goes only part of the way and that man must *do* something in order to merit eternal life—these, I say, make this death of Christ to be only partially effective and, in yet clearer terms, *ineffectual* in and of itself!

If it is even *hinted* that the blood of Jesus is not price enough till man adds his silver or his gold, then His blood is not our redemption at all and Christ is no Redeemer! If it is taught that our Lord’s bearing of sin for us did not make a perfect Atonement and that it is ineffectual till we either do or suffer something to complete it—then in the supplemental work lies the *real* virtue and Christ’s work, is in itself, insufficient! His death cry of, “It is finished,” must have been all a mistake if it is still not finished! And if a believer in Christ is not completely saved by what Christ has done, but must do something, himself, to complete it, then salvation was *not* finished and the Savior’s work remains imperfect till we, poor sinners, lend a hand to make up for His deficiencies! What blasphemy lies in such a sup-

position that Christ, on Calvary, made a needless and a useless offering of Himself and any man among you can be saved by the works of the Law!

This spirit also rejects the Covenant which was sealed with Christ's death. For if we can be saved by the old Covenant of Works, then the New Covenant was not required. In God's wisdom the New Covenant was brought in because the first had grown old and was void by transgression. But if it is *not* void, then the New Covenant is an idle innovation and the Sacrifice of Jesus ratified a foolish transaction! I loathe the words while I pronounce them! No one ever was saved under the Covenant of Works nor ever will be—the New Covenant is introduced for that reason—but if there is salvation by the first, then what need was there of the second? Self-righteousness, as far as it can, disannuls the Covenant, breaks its seal and does despite to the *blood* of Jesus Christ which is the substance, the certificate and the seal of that Covenant.

If you hold that a man can be saved by his own good works, you pour contempt upon the Testament of Love which the death of Jesus has put in force, for there is no need to receive as a legacy of love that which can be earned as the wage of work! O Sirs, this is a sin against each Person of the sacred Trinity! It is a sin against the Father. How could He be wise and good and yet give His only Son to die on yonder tree in anguish if man's salvation could be worked by some other means? It is a sin against the Son of God—you dare to say that our redemption price could have been paid another way and, therefore, His death was not absolutely necessary for the redemption of the world. Or, if necessary, yet not effectual, for it requires something to be *added* to it before it can effect its purpose.

It is a sin against the Holy Spirit and beware how you sin against Him, for such sins are fatal! The Holy Spirit bears witness to the glorious perfection and unconquerable power of the Redeemer's work and woe to those who reject that witness! He has come into the world, on purpose, that He may convict men of the sin of not believing in Jesus Christ and, therefore, if we *think* that we can be saved apart from Christ we do despite to the Spirit of His Grace. The doctrine of salvation by works is a sin against all the fallen sons of Adam, for if men cannot be saved except by their own works, what hope is left for any transgressor? You shut the gates of Mercy on mankind! You condemn the guilty to die without the possibility of remission! You deny all hope of welcome to the returning prodigal, all prospect of Paradise to the dying thief! If Heaven is by works, thousands of us will never see its gates. I know that I never shall. You fine fellows may rejoice in *your* prospects, but what is to become of us? You ruin us all by your boastful scheme!

Nor is this all. It is a sin against the saints, for none of them have any other hope except in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Remove the doctrine of the atoning blood and you have taken all away! Our foundation is gone! If you speak thus you offend the whole generation of godly men. I go further—work-mongering is a sin against the perfect ones above! The doctrine of salvation by works would silence the hallelujahs of Heaven. Hush, you choristers, what meaning is there in your song? You are chanting, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." But why do you sing so? If salvation is by works, your ascrip-

tions of praise are empty flatteries. You ought to sing, “Unto *ourselves* who kept our garments clean, to us be glory forever and ever!” Or at least, “unto ourselves whose acts made the Redeemer’s work effectual be a full share of praise.”

But a self-lauding note was never heard in Heaven and, therefore, we feel sure that the doctrine of self-justification is not of God. I charge you—renounce it as the foe of God and man! This proud system is a sin of deepest dye against my Master, Jesus Christ! I cannot endure to think of the insult which it puts upon our dying Lord! If you have made Christ to live in vain, that is bad enough, but to represent Him as having died in vain? What shall be said of this? That Christ came to earth for *nothing* is a most horrible statement, but that He became obedient to the death of the Cross without result is profanity at its worst!

II. I will say no more concerning the nature of these sins, but in the second place proceed to the solemn fact that THESE TWO GREAT CRIMES ARE COMMITTED BY MANY PEOPLE. I am afraid they are committed by some who hear me this day. Let everyone search himself and see if these accursed things are not hidden in his heart and if they are, let him cry unto God for deliverance from them! Assuredly these crimes are chargeable on those who trifle with the Gospel! Here is the greatest discovery that was ever made—the most wonderful piece of knowledge that ever was revealed and yet you do not think it worth a thought! You come now and then to hear a sermon, but you hear without heart. You read the Scriptures occasionally, but you do not search them as for hidden treasure.

It is not your first objective in life to thoroughly understand and heartily to receive the Gospel which God has proclaimed—yet such ought to be the case. What, my Friend? Does your indifference say that the Grace of God is of no great value in your esteem? You do not think it worth the trouble of prayer, of Bible-reading and attention? The death of Christ is nothing to you—a very beautiful fact, no doubt—you know the story well, but you do not care enough about it to wish to be a partaker in its benefits? His blood may have power to cleanse from sin, but you do not need remission? His death may be the life of men, but you do not long to live by Him? To be saved by the atoning blood does not strike you as being half as important as to carry on your business at a profit and acquire a fortune for your family? By thus trifling with these precious things, you do, as far as you can, frustrate the Grace of God and make Christ to die in vain!

Another set of people who do this are those who have no sense of guilt. Perhaps they are naturally amiable, civil, honest and generous people and they think that these natural virtues are all that is needed. We have many such in whom there is much that is lovely, but the one thing necessary is lacking—they are not conscious that they ever did anything very wrong! They think themselves certainly as good as others and in some respects rather better. It is highly probable that you are as good as others and even better than others, but still, do you not see, my dear Friend, if I am addressing one such person, that if you are so good that you are to be saved by your goodness, you put the Grace of God out of court and make it

vain? The whole have no need of the Physician—only they that are sick require His skill and, therefore, it was needless that Christ should die for such as you because you, in your own opinion, have done nothing worthy of death.

You claim that you have done nothing very bad and yet there is one thing in which you have grievously transgressed and I beg you not to be angry when I charge you with it. You are very bad because you are so proud as to think yourself righteous, though God has said that there is none righteous, no, not one! You tell your God that He is a liar! His Word accuses you and His Law condemns you but you will not believe Him and actually *boast* of having a righteousness of your own! This is high presumption and arrogant pride and may the Lord purge you from it! Will you lay this to heart and remember that if you have never been guilty of anything else, this is sin enough to make you mourn before the Lord day and night? You have, as far as you could, by your proud opinion of yourself made void the Grace of God and declared that Christ died in vain. Hide your face for shame and entreat for mercy for this glaring offense!

Another sort of people may fancy that they shall escape but we must now come home to *them*. Those who despair will often cry, “I know I cannot be saved except by Grace, for I am such a great sinner! But, alas, I am too great a sinner to be saved at all! I am too black for Christ to wash out my sins.” Ah, my dear Friend, though you know it not, you are making void the Grace of God by denying its power and limiting its might! You doubt the efficacy of the Redeemer’s blood and the power of the Father’s Grace. What? The Grace of God not able to save? Is not the Father of our Lord Jesus able to forgive sin? We joyfully sing—

**“Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who has Grace so rich and free?”**

And you dare say He cannot forgive you and this in the teeth of His many promises of mercy? He says, “All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” “Come now and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

You say that this is not true! Thus you frustrate the Grace of God and you make out that Christ died in vain, at least for you, for you say that He cannot cleanse you. Oh do not say this! Let not your unbelief give the lie to God. Oh, believe that He is able to save even *you* and freely, at this very moment, and put all your sin away and to accept you in Christ Jesus! Take heed of despondency, for if you do not trust Him, you will make void His Grace. And those, I think, commit this sin in a large measure, who make a mangle-mangle of the Gospel. I mean this—when we preach the Gospel we have only to say, “Sinners, you are guilty! You never can be anything else but guilty in and of yourselves—if that sin of yours is pardoned, it must be through an act of Sovereign Grace and not because of anything in you, or that can be done by you. Grace must be given to you because Jesus died and for no other reason and the way by which you can have that Grace is simply by trusting Christ. By faith in Jesus Christ you shall obtain full forgiveness.” This is pure Gospel.

If the man turns round and enquires, “Why do I have a right to believe in Christ?” If I tell him that he is warranted to believe in Christ because

he feels a law-work within, or because he has holy desires, I have made a mess of it—I have put something of the man into the question and marred the glory of Grace. My answer is, “Man, your right to believe in Christ lies not in what you *are* or *feel*, but in God’s *command* to you *to believe* and in God’s *promise* which is made to every creature under Heaven that whoever believes in Jesus Christ shall be saved.” This is our commission, “Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.”

If you are a creature, we preach that Gospel to you! Trust Christ and you are saved. Not because you are a sensible sinner, or a penitent sinner, or anything else, but simply because God, of His Free Grace, with no consideration rendered to Him on your part, but gratis and for nothing, freely forgives all your debts for the sake of Jesus Christ. Now I have not mangled the Gospel—there it is with nothing of the creature about it but the man’s faith and even that is the Holy Spirit’s gift! Those who mingle their, “ifs,” and, “buts,” and insist upon, “you must *do* this and *feel* that before you may accept Christ,” frustrate the Grace of God, in a measure, and do damage to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.

And so, once more, to those who apostatize. Do I speak to any here who were once professors of religion—who once used to offer prayer in the assembly—who once walked as saints but now have gone back, breaking the Sabbath, forsaking the house of God and living in sin? You, my Friend, say by your course of life—“I had the Grace of God, but I do not care about it! It is worth nothing. I have rejected it, I have given it up! I have made it void! I have gone back to the world.” You do as good as say, “I did once trust in Jesus Christ, but He is not worth trusting.”

You have denied Him—you have sold your Lord and Master! I will not now go into the question as to whether you ever *were* sincere, though I believe you never were. But on your own showing such is your case. Take heed lest these two terrible crimes should rest upon you—that you do frustrate the Grace of God and make Christ to be dead in vain.

III. On my third point I shall carry with me the deep convictions and the joyful confidences of all true Believers. It is this, that NO TRUE BELIEVER WILL BE GUILTY OF THESE CRIMES. In his very soul he loathes these infamous sins. First of all, no believer in Christ can bear to think of frustrating of the Grace of God or the making it void. Come, now, honest hearts, I speak to you! Do you trust in Grace alone, or do you, in some measure, rest in yourselves? Do you, even in a small degree, depend upon your own feelings, your own faithfulness, your own repentance? I know you abhor the very thought! You have not even the shadow of a hope nor the semblance of a confidence in anything you ever were, or ever can be, or ever hope to be! You fling this away as a foul rag full of filth which you would hurl out of the universe if you could.

I acknowledge that though I have preached the Gospel with all my heart and glory in it, yet I cast my preaching away as dross and dung if I think of them as a ground of reliance! And though I have brought many souls to Christ, blessed be His name, I never dare, for one moment, to put the slightest confidence in that fact as to my own salvation, for I know that I, after having preached to others, may yet be a castaway. I cannot rest in a

successful ministry, or an edified Church, but I repose alone in my Redeemer! What I say of myself I know that each one of you will say for himself. Your almsgivings, your prayers, your tears, your suffering persecution, your gifts to the Church, your earnest work in the Sunday school or elsewhere—did you ever *think* of putting these side by side with the *blood* of Christ as your hope?

No, you never dreamed of it! I am sure you never did and the mention of it is utterly loathsome to you, is it not? Grace, Grace, Grace is your only hope. Moreover, you have not only renounced all confidence in works, but you renounce it this day more heartily than ever before. The older you are and the more holy you become, the less do you think of trusting in yourself! The more we grow in Grace the more we grow in love with Grace—the more we search into our hearts and the more we know of the holy Law of God, the deeper is our sense of unworthiness and consequently the higher is our delight in rich, free, unmerited mercy—the free gift of the royal heart of God!

Tell me, does not your heart leap within you when you hear the Doctrines of Grace? I know there are some who never felt themselves to be sinners, who shift about as if they were sitting on thorns when I am preaching Grace and nothing else but Grace—but it is not so with you who are resting in Christ. “Oh, no,” you say, “ring that bell again, Sir! Ring that bell again! There is no music like it. Touch that string again, it is our favorite note!” When you get down in spirits and depressed, what sort of book do you like to read? Is it not a Book about the Grace of God? What do you turn to in the Scriptures? Do you not turn to the promises made to the guilty, the ungodly, the sinner? And do you not find that only in the Grace of God and only at the foot of the Cross is there any rest for you? I know it is so! Then you can rise up and say with Paul, “I do not frustrate the Grace of God. Some may, if they like, but God forbid that I should ever make it void, for it is all my salvation and all my desire.”

The true Believer is also free from the second crime—he does not make Christ to be dead in vain. No, no, no! He trusts in the death of Christ! He puts his sole and entire reliance upon the great Substitute who loved and lived and died for him! He does not dare to associate with the bleeding Sacrifice his poor bleeding heart, or his prayers, or his sanctification, or anything else. “None but Christ, none but Christ,” is his soul’s cry. He detests every proposal to mix anything of ceremony or of legal action with the finished work of Jesus Christ. The longer we live, I trust, dear Brothers and Sisters, the more we see the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! We are struck with admiration at the wisdom of the way by which the Substitute was introduced—that God might smite sin and yet spare the sinner—we are lost in admiration at the matchless love of God, that He spared not His own Son!

We are filled with reverent adoration at the love of Christ, that when He knew the price of pardon was His blood, His pity never withdrew. What is more, we not only joy in Christ, but we feel an increasing oneness with Him. We did not know it at first, but we know it now, that we were crucified with Him, that we were buried with Him, that we rose again with Him! We are not going to have Moses for a ruler, or Aaron for a priest, for Jesus

is both King and Priest to us! Christ is in us and we are in Christ and we are complete in Him and nothing can be tolerated as an aid to the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ our Lord! We are one with Him and being one with Him we realize more, every day, that He did NOT die in vain! His death has bought us real life! His death has already set us free from the bondage of sin and has even now brought us deliverance from the fear of eternal wrath.

His death has bought us eternal life, has bought us sonship and all the blessings that go with it which the Fatherhood of God takes care to bestow! The death of Christ has shut the gates of Hell for us and opened the gates of Heaven! The death of Christ has worked mercies for us—not visionary or imaginary but real and true—which this very day we enjoy and so we are in no danger of thinking that Christ died in vain. It is our joy to hold two great principles which I will leave with you, hoping that you will suck marrow and fatness out of them. These are the two principles. The Grace of God *cannot* be frustrated and Jesus Christ died not in vain. These two principles, I think, lie at the bottom of all sound doctrine. The Grace of God cannot be frustrated! Its eternal purpose will be fulfilled, its Sacrifice and seal shall be effectual—the chosen ones of Grace shall be brought to Glory!

There shall be no failures as to God's plan in any point whatever! At the last, when all shall be summed up, it shall be seen that Grace reigned through righteousness unto eternal life and the top stone shall be brought out with shouts of "Grace, Grace unto it." And as Grace cannot be frustrated, so Christ did not die in vain! Some seem to think that there were purposes in Christ's heart which will never be accomplished. We have not so learned Christ. What He died to do shall be done—those He bought, He will have—those He redeemed shall be free. There shall be no failure of reward for Christ's wondrous work! He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.

On these two principles I throw back my soul to rest. Believing in His Grace that Grace shall never fail me. "My Grace is sufficient for you," says the Lord and so shall it be. Believing in Jesus Christ, His death must save me. It cannot be, O Calvary, that you should fail! O Gethsemane, that your bloody sweat should be in vain. Through Divine Grace, resting in our Savior's precious blood, we must be saved! Joy and rejoice with me and go your way to tell it to others! God bless you in so doing, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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MEN BEWITCHED

NO. 1546

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

***“O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you?”
Galatians 3:1.***

WITH very great enthusiasm the Galatians received the Gospel when Paul preached it to them. They seem to have been a very warm-hearted but fickle people and Paul found to his great grief that while he was away from them, certain false teachers came in and turned them aside from the Gospel which he had delivered to them. He spoke out very plainly about the matter. In this verse he uses very strong terms, while he says to them—“O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth?” I do not know that any such witchery has fallen upon any of you, but I do know that, being men, we are all subject to the same dangers and I know, also, that there is a witchery in the very air at this time so that many are to be found throughout the Churches of this land to whom these words might be justly spoken.

We can only hope to escape this evil which Paul so severely condemns by the use of right cautionary means. It is only, in fact, as the Holy Spirit shall keep us that we shall be preserved from the fascinations of error and kept true to the grand old Gospel of the blessed God. At this time I shall very briefly speak, in the first place, upon the subtle danger which is hinted at here—“Who has bewitched you?” Secondly, at more length I shall speak upon the blessed preservative—there is no way of being kept from this witchery like having Christ Jesus, evidently crucified, set forth among us. And, thirdly, a few words, in closing, upon the supreme folly of any who, having tried this Divine preservative, nevertheless become bewitched by error.

I. First, then, let us think of THE SUBTLE DANGER which is always around us. It was hard work to preach the Gospel, at first, among the heathen. Men had to lay down their lives to do it. They had to propound new things which the heathen mind did not readily receive. But, by the power of the Spirit of God, converts were made and Churches were formed. And now came another difficulty. Even those that were converted,

or appeared to be so, became suddenly, as it were, bewitched with error of one kind or another, just as in families children are suddenly taken ill with certain complaints which seem incidental to childhood. If parents had never heard of such things before, they would be astonished! They would suppose that they must lose their children when such unaccountable diseases suddenly appeared in them and yet they survive.

In the family of Christ certain epidemics break out at times. We cannot tell why they come when they do and, at first, perhaps, we are puzzled and perplexed to think that such diseases should come at all. But they do come and, therefore, it is well to be on our guard against them. Paul calls it being *bewitched* because these people fell into strange error—error which had no argument to back it—error surprising and startling. He seems to say, “I cannot make it out. I cannot understand how you should be thus misled.” In Paul’s day the error was generally that of Judaism. They wanted to go back to circumcision and to the old sacrifices of the Law. Paul was indignant enough about this. “I testify,” he said, “to everyone of you, that if he is circumcised, he is a debtor to keep the whole Law and he has fallen from Grace. If you go back to the old beggarly elements of Judaism, you are leaving Christ and rejecting Christ and imperiling your souls.”

He declares that he could not understand how they should wish to do it. He calls it witchery, for in his day it was believed that men could cast an evil spell upon one another and thus work evil upon their fellow men. It seemed to Paul to be something like that—as if the devil, himself, were in it and came and turned men away from Christ Jesus to go back to trusting in the Law and its obsolete ceremonies. And it was not long before Paul found another kind of error in the Church. There came in among the most humble Believers certain men of education who thought themselves highly intelligent—men who knew something about Socrates and Plato—and they said, “These doctrines are too plain. The poor people understand them and they come into the Church, but no doubt they have a deeper meaning intended only for the initiated.”

So they began to spiritualize everything and, in the process, they spirited away the very Gospel itself! Paul could not endure it. He said that though he or an angel from Heaven should preach any other Gospel than that which he had preached, it would be a cursed deed! Whether it were Judaism, or Gnosticism, he smote it heavily and said to those who fell into it, “Who has bewitched you?” You who read Church history know that in later ages the Church fell into Arianism. There were great disputes about the Deity of Christ and the air, for a long time, was full of that deadly plague. When that battle was over and such men as Athanasius had settled the question of our Redeemer’s Godhead, then came up all the

superstitions of Rome—that awful midnight, black with murky clouds, which covered the Church for ages.

Indeed, if we look back on history, it seems like a witchcraft, that men who had the Gospel preached among them in all its glorious simplicity, should, after all, submit their minds to such debasing falsehoods as those of old Rome. They prostrated themselves before images of wood and stone after the heathen manner, even as their pagan forefathers did! At this present time it is a marvel to some of us how the Churches have been bewitched again. When I was a boy, I recollect hearing Mr. Jay say, “Puseyism is a lie!” I remember the words coming just like that from his reverend lips and everybody, or nearly everybody, fought with him. It was an amazing event if a high Church or ritualistic place was set up. Everybody was astonished at it and, if you said, “This is the Church of England and this is according to her Prayer-Book,” everybody said you were uncharitable and that it was not so. They pitied our fears and said that a dozen men were going towards Rome and that was all.

Look now, Sirs—these things are openly done! Our parish Churches are commonly turned into mass houses and the Church of England is slightly to be distinguished, in many parishes, from the Church of Rome! And yet nobody is astonished! And, if we make a remark about it, we are set down as bigoted. Who has bewitched this Protestant land? With Smithfield scarcely yet swept of the ashes of her martyrs, they set up the crucifix again! What would Oliver Cromwell say if he and his Ironsides could come back to see what they are making of this land? I know some strong things he would say and, as I cannot speak such vigorous words as he would have uttered, I leave the subject with words borrowed from Paul which well suit the case—“O foolish Englishmen, who has bewitched you, that you should thus turn aside?”

Nor is this all. You see this witchery in another way among our *dissenting* Churches. At a time not yet forgotten Unitarianism and Socinianism gradually crept into Non-conforming congregations and the pulpits lost their testimony for Christ. The Meeting Houses were deserted and true religion seemed dying out of the land. Then came Whitefield and Wesley and all their troop of Methodists and the blessed flame that was almost quenched burned up again and we, of this generation, have said one to another, “That experiment will never be repeated—the Non-conformist Churches will never go in that direction again—they know better! They see the ill-effect of this modern teaching and they will now stick to the grand old Gospel.”

So I dreamed! But I dream in that way no longer, for scarcely do I look anywhere but I find the Gospel of Christ diluted, the milk of the Word adulterated and the grand Gospel, as Luther and Calvin would have thun-

dered it out, seldom enough to be heard! O foolish Non-conformists, who has bewitched *you* that you should not obey the Truth of God, but should seek after this novelty and the other—this refinement and the other—and let your God and Savior go? As for us, if we stand alone, God forbid that we should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! This is the peril.

II. Our second head is THE ONLY PRESERVATIVE. The Apostle says that the Galatians had had Christ set forth before their eyes crucified among them. Well then, if you want to be kept right and sound in the faith, the first thing is to get the right Subject fixed in the center of your hearts—Jesus Christ Crucified! Paul says that he preached that. He set Jesus forth. Whatever else he might not have made clear, he did set forth the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Beloved, settle this in your soul, that your *only* hope and the main Subject of your meditation shall always be Jesus Christ! Whatever I do not know, O my Lord, help me to know You! Whatever I do not believe, enable me to believe You and to trust You and to take Your every Word as the very Truth of God which it is!

Beloved, away with the religion that has little of Christ in it. Christ must be Alpha and Omega, First and Last. The religion that is made up of our works and our feelings and our willings is a lie! Our religion must have Christ for the Foundation, Christ as the Cornerstone, Christ as the Top Stone! And if we are not based and bottomed, grounded and settled upon Him, our religion is in vain. Paul wonders that any to whom Christ has been the chief thing should ever have been bewitched and I think that if Christ is really such to *your* souls, you will not turn aside through error, but Christ Crucified will hold you fast.

But Paul says not only that he had preached Christ to them, but that he had set Him forth, by which I understand that he had taken pains to make everything about Christ clear to them. He had preached His Person as Man and God. He had preached His work as the atoning Sacrifice. He had preached Him as risen and pleading before the Throne of God. He had preached Him as our Substitute. He had made this the main doctrine—that if we are saved, we are saved by the Righteousness of Christ and our sin is put away because Christ bore it in our place and suffered the penalty due for it that the Justice of God might be satisfied and we might be saved. That is what He means by Christ Crucified.

He had gone into details on this point and set forth the glorious doctrines which cluster about the Cross. Brothers and Sisters, if you want to be kept from the modern witcheries, think much of Christ and go into detail about Him. Be familiar with His Divine Person. Be well acquainted with His relationships and His offices—know what He is in the Covenant of Grace, what He is to the Father, what He is to you! Oh seek to know

Him! He yet surpasses knowledge, but be students of Christ! Do not have a mere superficial knowledge of Him, but seek to know Christ and to be found in Him. This will keep you free from error.

When the Apostle says that He set Christ forth, he means, next, that he had done it with great plainness. The Greek word has to do with a program or a proclamation. It is as good as to say, "I have set Christ before you as plainly as if I had printed a great bill and stuck it up before your eyes. I have put the letters down in capitals, as a King, when he makes a proclamation, puts it on the walls and calls attention to it. So," says Paul, "I have set forth Christ before you. I have not talked of Him in a mystical way, so that you did not know what I meant, but I have set Him forth. I have said of Him that He suffered in our place and was made a curse for us, as it is written, 'Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.'" Paul set forth Jesus plainly.

Now, you know the way in which Jesus Christ is preached by some. It was well described by old Dr. Duncan when he said, "They preach that the death of Christ, in some way or other, had some sort of connection, in some way or other, with the salvation of men." Yes, that is it—misty, cloudy, foggy—a bottle of smoke! We do not preach Christ in that way, but we just say this, "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." And because He was oppressed and He was afflicted in our place, therefore does God most freely remit the sin of Believers and bid them go their way. Substitution—may we never stammer over *that*—Christ in the sinner's place!

Beloved, if you will get a hold of that Truth and get it well worked into your soul, you will be more than a match for the ritualism or rationalism of this age. Give up that doctrine? The man who has once drunk it in and knows its sweetness cannot give it up, for he gets to feel that, having once believed it, it acts in him as a detector by which he discovers what is false doctrine and it gives him a taste which makes false doctrine loathsome to him so that he cries, "Away with it!" If anything contrary to this comes before him, he does not timidly say, "Everybody has a right to his opinion." No! He says, "Yes, they may have a right to their opinion and so have I to mine and my opinion is that any opinion which takes away from the glory of Christ's substitutionary Sacrifice is a detestable opinion." Get the real Atonement of Christ thoroughly into your soul and you will not be bewitched!

Nor is this all. Paul says that Christ was set forth crucified visibly among them. Did you ever see Christ in this way? I do not ask whether you ever saw a *vision*. Who wishes for that? I do not ask whether your imagination was so worked upon that you *thought* you saw the Savior. There would be no particular use in that, for thousands *did* actually see Him on the Cross and they thrust out their tongues at Him and perished

in their sins! But let me tell you that it is one of the most strengthening things to our piety to get to feel, by *faith*, as though we did behold the Savior! We do not expect to see Him until He comes, yet when we have been alone in our chamber we have as much realized His Presence without the use of our eyes as if we had literally seen Him.

He has been certainly *sensibly* crucified before us, for this is the point. He says that he had set forth Christ with such vividness—he had word-painted so thoroughly well, he had spoken so plainly and so simply—that they seemed to say, “We see it! Christ in our place! Christ bleeding for our sin!” They seemed to see Him as if He were before them in their midst. My dear Friends, do not say, “Christ died on Calvary. That is thousands of miles off.” I know that He did, but what does it matter where He died as to locality? He loved you and gave Himself for you. Let Him be to you as though He were crucified at Newington—and as though His Cross were in the middle of this Tabernacle!

“Oh, but He died 1900 years ago.” I know He did, but the efficacy of His death is a thing of today! “He died unto sin once”—and that once pours the splendor of its efficacy all down the ages and the thing for you to do is to feel as if you saw Him dying *now*, on the Cross *now*—with you standing at the foot of the Cross and looking up and seeing Him looking down from that Cross and saying, “I did all this for *you*.” Cannot you ask the Lord to make it as vivid as that to you? I need, while I am looking upon this great throng, to forget you all and to see Jesus standing here with the nail prints! Oh, if I could see Him, how humbly I would throw myself at His feet! With what love would I embrace Him! With what reverence would I adore Him!

But, my Master, I am so sure of the fact that You *did* die in my place and that my sins were laid on You, that even now I see You discharging all my debt and bearing all my curse. Though You are gone to Glory, yet I vividly realize that You were here. This has become a fact to me. Whenever you get into company where they are talking about the Doctrines of Grace and sneering about them and whenever you get into another class of company where they say, “Away with your simple worship of God! You must have priests and incense and altars and all”—do not argue with them. Get alone and ask to see Jesus Christ over again. See if there is anything of popish finery about Him! See if there is anything of this philosophy, falsely so called, about Him!

You will determine as soon as you have seen Him that you will call everything else vanity and lies and bind His Gospel to your heart! The Cross is the school of orthodoxy. Endeavor to stay there! While I have been alone on the Continent I have, in my quiet moments, had realizations of my Master’s Presence and then I have wished that I could borrow the wings of

a dove, so that I might, then and there, stand up and talk to you. I have been very sick and full of pain and depressed in spirit and I have judged myself to be, of all men, most unworthy and I judged truly. I still stand to that judgment. I felt myself only worthy to be shaken like dust from off the feet of my Lord and cast into the bottomless pit forever.

Then it was that my Substitute was my hope and in my lonely chamber at Mentone I clung to His dear garment! I looked into His wounds! I trusted myself with Him, again, and I know that I am a saved man! I tell you there is no salvation in any other, but only in Jesus! You will not be led away to any other doctrine if you will return continually to this Truth of God. Some men want a sound pummeling with affliction to get them to love Christ. And some old professors need a touch of poverty, sometimes, or a little affliction, or a rack of rheumatism and that brings them to their bearings and they begin to cry out after realities and get rid of whims and fancies!

When it comes to close dealings between God and your soul—and death stares you in the face—nothing will do but a crucified Redeemer and no confidence will do but a sinner's childlike reliance upon the finished work of Him who suffered in our place! I speak strongly, but I feel a thousand times more strongly than I can speak.

III. The last point is THE SUPREME FOLLY of those who would leave Jesus for anything else. Suppose that a man should once have simply trusted in Jesus Christ and have realized the death of Christ and have come into real contact with the dying, bleeding Master. And suppose that, after that, he should begin to put his confidence in priests and sacraments. Or, suppose that he should, after that, put on his lavender kid gloves and become a philosopher—what would he be? Now, do not tell anybody, I pray you. Keep it to yourselves! The Apostle Paul did not affect the manners of a gentleman, but he spoke very plainly, indeed. Do not tell your learned neighbors that I said it, because I did not say it—it is Paul that said it! He says that a man who should do that would be A FOOL!

“Oh, *foolish* Galatians!” What are you saying, Paul? They have only been decorating their service—surely you cannot object to that! Don't you know, Paul, that the old Jewish priest used to wear a splendid breastplate worked with jewels and he had an ephod adorned with bells and pomegranates? Surely in the worship of God *we* ought to do things decorously and properly! And on this plea these Galatians have exceedingly decked themselves out. “They are foolish Galatians!” Paul says. Very rude of him, mark you—very rude of him! But I shall not attempt to excuse him, for I fully endorse his verdict.

But here is a gentleman who has been reading Plato and, after reading Plato, he has been reading the words of Jesus Christ and he says that

they do not mean what the common people think they mean—he says there is a very mysterious *philosophical* sense hidden within them. For instance, when Jesus Christ says, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment,” it does not mean at all what the words say! It means that they shall ultimately be restored. Now, Paul, this gentleman is a philosopher—what do *you* say of him? He says, “He is foolish!” That is all he says and all that he needs to say, for learned folly is folly at its height! “Oh, foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?”

Why do we think these people foolish? Because we should be foolish, ourselves, if we were to do the same! A good many years ago, when I was about 15 or 16 years of age, I needed a Savior and I heard the Gospel preached by a poor man who said, in the name of Jesus—“Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” It was very plain English and I understood it and obeyed it and found rest! I owe all my happiness, since then, to the same plain doctrine. Now, suppose that I were to say, “I have read a great many books and there are a great many people willing to hear me. I really could not preach such a commonplace Gospel as I did at the first. I must put it in a sophisticated way so that none but the elite can understand me”?

I would be—what would I be? I would be a FOOL, written in large capital letters! I would be *worse* than that—I should be a traitor to my God, for if I was saved by a simple Gospel, then I am bound to preach that same simple Gospel till I die so that others, too, may be saved by it! When I cease to preach salvation by faith in Jesus, put me into a lunatic asylum, for you may be sure that my mind is gone. There are hundreds of you who feel perfectly happy in Christ. You believe that all your sins are washed away, that you are justified by the Righteousness of Christ and accepted in the Beloved. Now, suppose that you give that up and say, “Instead of believing in Christ’s dying once and making an Atonement, I am going to believe in the perpetual sacrifice offered by a human being in the ‘mass’”?

You would be very foolish! Suppose that, instead of trusting in Jesus Christ for perfect pardon and justification, so that you know that there is no condemnation to you because you are in Christ Jesus, you go back to works and say, “I am going to work out my own salvation by my own good works”? You would be foolish to the last degree and you would soon discover the fact by the misery that would come over your spirit. Look again! When you have lived nearest to Christ and trusted most in Him, have you not felt most desire after holiness? Now, tell me, if you have tried the modern views, what state of mind have you been in with regard to your daily walk?

I will tell you. You could, with those modern views, frequent the theater and the music hall and feel quite easy. And you could do a sharp trick in business and feel comfortable. But you know that when you have seen Christ you cannot do anything of the kind! You are sanctified by His Presence. You feel a strong desire after perfect purity. You feel a horror and a dread of sin. You walk tenderly and cautiously and you are bowed down by distress of mind at the thought of your imperfections. Judge, then, which must be the right doctrine—that which makes you most holy must certainly be true! But if you turn away from your Lord, whose very Presence breathes sanctification and communion with Him is sure to bring holiness, you will be a fool! And we shall have to say, “Oh, foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?”

During the last few meetings that we have had here, my dear Brothers Fullerton and Smith have been preaching the Gospel—the straight-out Gospel of Jesus Christ. And at one meeting, held afterwards, there were scores of persons who rose up to tell of what that ministry had done for their souls by God the Holy Spirit. There were thieves reclaimed, drunks reclaimed, harlots reclaimed, great sinners reclaimed! Well, now, suppose that, after all, some of you ladies and gentlemen should say, “We see what the Gospel can do, but we are going to try something else”? You would be fools! I am always ready to try a new machine—we will try the electric light one of these days instead of gas when we are sure of it—but suppose that it should all go out and leave us in the dark! I will wait till the invention has been tested!

So it may happen with the new religious lights that men bring up which are like dim rush lights compared with the blazing sun of Gospel Truth—we are *not* going to try anything new to the risk of our souls. We are going to keep to the old, old Gospel until it is worn out. When it gets worn out and will not save any more and will not comfort any more and will not draw us near to God any more, *then* will be the time for us to think of something fresh. But as that has not come to pass, I beg to say that I will drive another nail into my old colors and fasten them anew to the old mast!

What I have preached among you these 26 years I will preach again, for I am determined to know nothing among men but Christ and Him Crucified! And may neither the preacher become a fool, nor any of his hearers become fools, by being bewitched, so that they forsake the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ! Oh that you all knew its power and were all saved by it! God grant that you may be, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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THE HEARING OF FAITH

NO. 1705

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 11, 1883,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“This only would I learn of you, did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?”
Galatians 3:2.*

A GREAT delusion is upon the heart of man as to his salvation. His ways are perverse. He does not love the Law of God, no, his mind is opposed to it and yet he sets up to be its advocate. When he understands the spirituality and severity of the Law, he reckons it to be a sore burden and yet, when the Gospel is preached and set forth as the gift of Sovereign Grace and he is bid, simply, to accept it by an act of faith in Christ Jesus, the man professes great concern about the Law, lest it should be made void by the freeness of Grace! He takes the broken pieces of the two tables of the Law and hurls them at the Cross! It is not that man loves the Law of God, but that he does not love the God of the Law! Hence he will resort to any pretense to oppose that way of salvation which God has appointed.

Doubtless, if it had been possible for the Lord to have set forth another way of salvation, man would have opposed that, also, for he is determined to walk contrary to God. Be that as it may, there is a constant animosity in the minds of unregenerate men against the way of salvation by faith in Christ—and to oppose it, they set up the pretense of salvation by the works of the Law. Brothers and Sisters, in all our hearts there is this natural enmity to God and to the sovereignty of His Grace. Therefore it is that Believers have often to complain of the difficulties of faith. Faith in itself is, or ought to be, the easiest thing in the world, for a creature to believe in its Creator, for a child to believe in his father, ought to be the simplest and most natural thing in the world! But by reason of the corruption that remains, even, in the regenerate, there is always a struggling against this simple way of faith.

There are times with the best man, when, in recollection of his many sins, Conscience says, “How can you believe that you are justified and accepted while so much of evil is found in you?” Unless we cleave to the promise of God and to His free mercy in Christ Jesus it will, then, go hard with us. The soul of the most sincere and upright man may be driven to despair by a sight of his own imperfections unless he clings to that righteousness by which sinners are justified through faith in Christ Jesus. Beloved, if this warfare is discovered, even, in the minds of those who are born-again, we must not wonder that it rages in the unregenerate!

One would have thought that the moment we preached salvation by faith every sinner would have leaped up and accepted it. It is so simple, so easy, that surely every man would wish in this way to be forgiven and justified! Instead of which, all the reasoning, all the thoughtfulness, yes, all

the *cunning* of unregenerate human nature is stirred up to fight against the method of deliverance by faith in Christ Jesus. "It is too good to be true," says one. Another cries, "If this is preached, it will lead men to think little of moral excellence." A third finds, in the Doctrines of Grace, inducements to inaction and so on, without end. These quibblings take hundreds of shapes, but, after all, they come to this—proud sinners must dictate to their offended Lord and be forgiven on their own terms.

It would appear that God does not know the best way of saving men and men are so wise that they amend His methods! Is not this a refinement of blasphemy? It is a hideous farce to see a rebellious sinner suddenly become jealous about good works and greatly concerned for public morality! Does it not make laughter in Hell to see licentious men censuring the pure Gospel of the Lord Jesus and quibbling at free forgiveness because it might make men less mindful of purity? It makes one sick to see the hypocrisy of legalists! The reason of this contention lies in the fact that man is not only poor, but proud. He is not only guilty, but conceited, so that he will not humble himself to be saved upon terms of Divine charity. He will not consent to believe God—he prefers to believe in the proud falsehoods of his own heart—which delude him into the flattering hope that he may *merit* eternal life!

Against this wicked spirit our text enters the fight. Let us see how it conducts the combat. The argument of the text is a very plain and powerful one. Paul puts it thus—"The Holy Spirit has been received by you Galatians. How did you receive the Holy Spirit—by the works of the Law or by the hearing of faith?" They were bound to admit, each one for himself, that they received the Holy Spirit by faith and by no other means! Now, the Holy Spirit is the choicest of all the gifts of God which are received into the soul—it is by the Spirit the work of the Lord Jesus is known and received! The Holy Spirit is, Himself, the seal of Divine favor and the token that we are at peace with God. I might almost say that the reception of the Holy Spirit is salvation—for when He enters into us, we are saved from death in sin, from the love of sin, from the power of sin and from the terror of sin!

When He reigns in the heart, all the Divine Graces of a perfect character attend upon Him as courtiers upon a king. He becomes the source of life, light, love and liberty to our souls—and He even sanctifies our bodies. Know you not that your bodies are the temples of God when the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in them? To whom, then, the Holy Spirit is given, salvation is given in the highest sense! But how is that Holy Spirit received? The question is soon answered. He is not received by the works of the Law, but by the *hearing of faith*. I am going to handle this fact, first, as an argument of experience for all the people of God and, secondly, as an argument, at least, of observation for those who are seeking after Christ. May the Holy Spirit graciously aid us in our discourse.

I. First, then, here is AN ARGUMENT OF EXPERIENCE FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD. Before I dwell upon the personal experience of Believers who are here present, I would remind you of the experience of the Church of God as it is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. The book of the Acts of

the Apostles is a confirmation of the correct answer to my text. The disciples were met together after our Lord's ascension and the Holy Spirit descended upon them—but in what way? Simply by their obeying the command of the Lord Jesus, “who commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, says He, you have heard of Me.”

The gift was received by the hearing of faith, which led them to united prayer and waiting. They performed no ceremonies and entered upon no labors—the watchword was, “Tarry you till you are endowed with power from on high.” The power came that they might work and not because they *had* worked! The gift of the Spirit came according to promise and *not* according to works! Very speedily the Spirit of God fell upon the people and 3,000 of them were converted and baptized. How came the Spirit of God upon Parthians, Medes, Elamites, the dwellers in Mesopotamia and so forth? Was it by the works of the Law?

No, Beloved! Peter thus preached (Acts 2:38)—“Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” When the thousands believed in Christ Jesus and confessed their faith by Baptism, the Holy Spirit was given them. So was it also in Samaria—“When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” And then we read that the Apostle Peter went to them and these Believers received the Holy Spirit—certainly not by the works of the Law, but by the hearing of faith were they thus blessed! Turn to the story of Cornelius. That good man had abounded in almsgiving and prayer—and yet the Holy Spirit fell not upon him.

But, when the “hearing of faith” came, and they were assembled in the house with one accord to listen to Peter, then the Holy Spirit fell upon all them that heard the Word of God. “And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles, also, was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit! For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered Peter, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?”

Was it not the same when Paul went out and preached among the Gentiles? It was, indeed, so—startlingly so—that the news came to the Hebrew Christians who were at Jerusalem and no small dissension and disputation was the consequence! Here had been no circumcision, no proselyting to Judaism, no observation of any part of the Mosaic ritual and yet they heard that the Holy Spirit had fallen upon the Gentiles—and they had not even *known* the Law, much less fulfilled it! It needed all of Peter's influence to stem the flood. Hear how he puts it—“God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the Word of the Gospel and believe. And God, which knows the hearts, bore them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us.” The Holy Spirit was received by believing Gentiles in every place where Paul had preached and, therefore, he could refer to these Galatians and use their experience to correct their

errors. The fact that the Holy Spirit is given to the hearing of faith and not as a *reward* of works, runs like a silver thread through the whole of the Acts of the Apostles! Why, then, should men look to the works of the Law for that which was never given except to faith? What an infatuation to look to the mirage when a real well is open at their feet!

Now I come to your own experience. You, beloved Friends, if you are, indeed, in Christ Jesus, have received the Holy Spirit! But how? Let us go over the list of His operations upon your minds. You received enlightenment by His means, by which you were led to understand the way of salvation and to behold the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Did you attain to that enlightenment by the works of the Law? Was it so in any one case? It has been my privilege to know many of you and to remember your confessions of faith—you told me that when you were seeking salvation by your own works you were blind and saw not the Light of God. The more you strove and the more you struggled, the more intense the midnight grew about you until you well-near despaired!

Light came by a look at the Crucified! It came only by the hearing of faith! After that, you received peace, which peace, I trust, you enjoy this morning—"The peace of God which passes all understanding." But did you receive that peace while you were trusting in ceremonies, in baptism, or in the Lord's Supper, or in your own works? I know you did not, for true peace of conscience comes not in at that door! Did you obtain peace while you tried to repent so much, to weep so much, to feel so much, or to do so much? No, Brothers and Sisters, not an atom of peace ever came to your spirit until you looked away from yourself to the Lord Jesus, of whom you heard that He was able to save even the chief of sinners—and in whom you, therefore, by the Grace of God, believed! When faith came, peace grew out of it as a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Since then, you have received the Holy Spirit to help you in your sanctification, but you have obtained no sanctification apart from believing. If you have reached after sanctification by your own efforts, made in unbelief, you have never succeeded. Unbelief works towards sin and never towards sanctification! Our good works are *fruits* of sanctification, not *causes* of it, and if we put the fruit where the root should be, we greatly err. If you have gone out to fight against a temptation in your own strength, have you ever returned a conqueror? It has been written of all other Believers, "They overcame through the blood of the Lamb," and this is true of you, also. Sanctification does not come to us from self-reliance, but as a work of the Spirit received by faith in Christ. Believing in Him, He is "made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption."

You have had besides, dear Friends, another gift of the Holy Spirit, namely, that of communion with God. But did you ever commune with the holy God on the footing of your own goodness? Never! Abraham never spoke with Jehovah on legal terms, for when he interceded with the Lord, he said, "I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord—I that am but dust and ashes." Yet he spoke with God in wondrous nearness and that is the point of it—to be dust and ashes in your own sight—and yet to com-

mune with God as a friend! This is the daring of faith! This the Lord delights in! David said, "So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before You. Nevertheless I am continually with You: You have held me by my right hand." A beast in his own esteem, and yet upheld by God, Himself, and allowed to live in favored fellowship with Him!

Dear Friends, there is no communion with God except by faith, without which we cannot ever please God. The favorites of Heaven are, in every case, men who believe in God! Faith has the golden key of the ivory palaces. Faith opens the secret chambers of communion to those who love her. The works of the Law bring no nearness to God, in token whereof, none might come near to Sinai and if so much as a *beast* touched the mountain, it must be stoned or thrust through with a dart. And you, dear Friends, have received the Holy Spirit, often, as your Helper in prayer—"The Spirit also helps our infirmity." And I am sure it never was by the works of the Law. When infirmity has stopped your prayers and you could not cry as you would, then you have had no room to boast of good works—and yet then the Spirit has made "intercession for you with groans that could not be uttered." Your infirmity made you feel that it was by Grace, and by Grace, alone, that you were helped in your time of need.

Now, as to the Holy Spirit's office of sealing the soul and working full assurance in the heart—as to the Holy Spirit's being the earnest of the future Glory, the pledge of joys to come—in all these, Grace reigns, and not merit! He that dwells in the least degree upon any phantom merit of his own has no earnest of the inheritance whatever! In fact, for him there is no inheritance, since an inheritance does not come by works. Neither has he that trusts in his works any pledge of joys to come, for he does not know that he has done enough to secure them. Neither can he have any comfortable rest in God, for his work is not finished and, therefore, he cannot rest. You know it, you that have toiled to save yourselves! Every Christian here must confess, "It is even so—we have received everything by faith and nothing by merit."

Well, then, the inference is this—do not pump a dry well! If there is a fountain that is always flowing and overflowing, keep to it. Do not commit the double evil of forsaking the fountain of Living Water and hewing out for yourselves broken cisterns. Wait at that door which you have received everything as yet and do not go where you have received nothing except conviction and condemnation! Look not to Moses to bring you into Canaan—that can only be done by Joshua Jesus. Now, mark this inference—let every child of God ponder it—keep to "the hearing of faith." When you are under a sense of backsliding; when you feel unworthy to be called God's child; when you have erred and strayed from His ways like a lost sheep, do not rush like a madman to the Law, for that would be to leap into the fire! But say, "Lord, I believe in You. As a sinner I trust the sinner's Substitute."

Whether you did truly come to Christ at the first, or not, is a point which you need not discuss, but begin again! Take with you, words, and come, by faith, to Jesus, and say, "Heal my backsliding. Receive me graciously and love me freely." By faith we can be restored, but never by

doubting and despairing. We can only come to Christ by faith at first, and we can only return to Him in the same way! If you begin to doubt the mercy and love of God to you, you will backslide more and more! Your hope lies in holding on to this—"Be I what I may, yet God has not changed and there is still forgiveness with Him, that He may be feared. Therefore I will go with the language of the 51st Psalm upon my tongue and the penitence of David in my heart, and I will say, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.'"

Stick to your faith in Christ! Do not think that the greatness of your sin exceeds His atoning merit! Do not doubt but that He will still cleanse you and love you as before! Suppose you have not backslidden, but yet you are in the presence of a tremendous inward conflict. I will suppose that you are led to question whether you are the children of God at all, and persuaded to doubt your sonship. Now, be resolved to hold on to your faith in your heavenly Father! The devil is saying to you, "*If* you are the son of God." Do not yield to his "if." This is the way in which he attacked your Savior in the wilderness! A question about our sonship is the very point of the devil's sword and it is dipped in deadly poison—therefore guard yourself with that Word of God, "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on His name."

Say, "I believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, who died for the ungodly, and in Him I am assured of being a child of God." You cannot resist temptation by doubting! Doubting is weakness—in *believing* is your might. "How can I believe," asks one. The elect of God believe—those who are born from above believe their Father's Word. If you can believe, you shall win great victories, but if you cast away your confidence, the battle is already lost. Above all, or over all, carry the shield of faith! Be sure to do this in the evil day when sin prevails. Is this too hard for you? What? Has it come to this, that when you feel you are a saint you can *then* trust to Christ? That is, you can trust Him when you can do without Him! Poor sham of faith! The genuine faith is a *sinner's* faith which trusts the Savior when signs, evidences and marks are all hidden—and sin and temptation hold the upper seats.

To believe that I, a sinner, am forgiven by the free Grace of God—that I, a poor, imperfect being, am yet accepted of God—this is faith! May we have power to trust the Lord Jesus in earnest; to trust Him with real sin and real unworthiness. Do this, dear Friends, with regard to the whole of your life's struggle. Some begin their religious life in the Spirit by faith, but they fancy that the rest of their spiritual life will have to be by works. They forget that the just shall *live* by faith. Those who say that though they are children of God, they may perish, after all, have not the true Gospel ring about them. If they are children of God, can they perish? How? Why? "Well, we must be watchful and prayerful." Precisely so! But is there no provision made to secure that you shall be watchful and prayerful? If not, then I tell you, Brothers and Sisters, you will never get to Heaven!

You will fail in this watchfulness of yours and then where are you? My hope of Heaven lies in the belief that the Lord Jesus has redeemed me and will keep me! He will make me watchful and prayerful and work in me, by His Spirit, all else that is essential to my safety. "I know whom I have believed," and I am not afraid to add, "I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him until that day." Brothers and Sisters, it is by such faith that we receive the Spirit—not by legal works and fears. At this present moment you are saved by faith, alone, are you not? Yes. Then I would persuade you to extend that faith over the whole area of your life. Believe for *final* preservation. Believe for *complete* salvation. Is it not written "He that believes on Him has *everlasting life*"? Can that life which is *everlasting* come to an end? Can eternal life expire? "Faithful is He that has called you, who also will do it."

"Oh," you say, "I am half afraid to believe so bravely, for it might make me careless." This is a mistake—faith works by love, it never tends to sloth. My dear Friend, if you look to yourself in any degree your foot is beginning to slip. Put the future where you put the past, namely, into the hands of Him that is able to keep you from falling! Believe in Jesus for a life as well as for an hour, and He will keep you with spotless garments to the end! Stand on the sure rock of the Lord's finished work and not on the dubious ground of your own carefulness. Works done by the efforts of our own strength are poor things, but the work of the Grace of God upon our spirit is precious. Let all be of Grace and nothing of self! The two will no more go together than oil and water will mix. Do not try to trust partly in Christ and partly in self—as well yoke an archangel with an ant, or a cherub with a cricket! Salvation is of the Lord, alone, from first to last!

Brothers and Sisters, let us keep in this condition when we are comparing ourselves with other saints of God. I sometimes read biographies which make me cover my face for shame because I fall so far short of the attainments of certain Believers. This humbling is good for us. What ought we to do when we feel it? To begin to doubt the Lord and imagine that the Lord Jesus cannot or will not save us? Far from it! Faith should *rise* by observing what the Lord has done for other poor sinners like ourselves, for He is able to do the same for us. Remember that the safety of the weak and of the strong Believer rests upon the same foundation!

This may be seen in a figure. On board one of the fine steamboats which flit between England and America I see a strong, hardy, vigorous man. Will he get to America safely? Yes, if the *ship* does. But look, yonder is a little child which cannot walk and has to be carried in its mother's arms. Will it reach America safely? Yes, if the *ship* does. Both the robust man and the little infant, all being well, will reach their journey's end—if *the ship does*. Their safety lies in the same place. Their *condition* does not affect their transit. But is there no difference between the child and the man? Assuredly, a great deal of difference as to many things—but there is no difference about the fact that their passage across the ocean depends upon the *steamboat*, rather than upon themselves!

So, if you meet with a great saint, say to yourself, "My honored Brother will get to Heaven through Jesus Christ. And I, a poor babe in Grace, shall

get to Heaven in the same way.” I want you children of God to feel this. Are you on board the Covenant transport? Does the blood-red flag fly at the masthead? Then, if the weakest Believer is not safely carried into port, neither will the strongest child of God reach the fair havens! If that ship of Free Grace goes down, Peter and Paul must sink as well as ourselves, for we are at sea in the same vessel! Our confidence is in no measure or sense in what *we* are, but altogether in what *Christ* is on our behalf! We depend on Jesus and rest in Jesus by a simple faith and the brightest of martyrs and Apostles has no surer ground to rest on!

When you come to die, do not look upon death through the glass of the Law, for if so, it will be terrible for you! But believe this—that to die by faith is to enter into life! I hardly like to use the word, *death* in such a connection, for it is not dying at all, but “departing out of this world unto the Father.” By faith, to die is such sweet work as you, poor Despondency, and you, Much-Afraid, will be able to accomplish as safely as Valiant-for-Truth, or Great-Heart himself! By faith we swallow up death in victory! They that have served God for 50 years faithfully and without fault, when they come to die, have, in every case gathered up their feet in the bed and said, “Into Your hands I commit my spirit.” But never has one of them died pleading his own religiousness and claiming a reward as due to his works! Trusting in Jesus is the universal spirit of the most praiseworthy Believers!

Well, if they flung every other hope away except that which was presented to them in Christ, you, dear Friend, need not hesitate to do the same! And as they were secure and triumphant, even so shall you be! This is the argument, then—you have obtained nothing except by the hearing of faith—therefore, keep to the way of faith even to your last hour, for wisdom teaches you to do so.

II. But now I want to throw all my strength into the second part of the sermon, which is this—I want to use this AS AN ARGUMENT DERIVED FROM OBSERVATION FOR THE USE OF SEEKERS. I say “observation,” but in part, it might be called an argument from *experience*, for, at any rate, on the negative side it is so. Listen, dear Hearer, you have not yet found rest, you are not yet saved—and so far you have obtained no advantage by the works of the Law. By your own honesty, generosity and righteousness, you have not been justified, nor have you received a new heart, or any other gift of the Spirit. Why continue at this unprofitable business?

Some try Church attendance, Chapel attendance, Bible-reading, sacraments, forms of prayer and the like—but nothing comes of it. Hear how they repeat their Ave Marias and their Pater Nosters! And not only Romanists, but so-called Protestants are puffed up with the hope that by formal worship they will be saved! But they make no headway and are still without salvation! Let me ask you work-trusters, have you any rest? Are you prepared to die? Would you be willing to die at once? No! Your position is one of unrest, fear and dread! Why not abandon this vain method of building, for “unless the Lord builds the house they labor in vain that build it!” Instead of following out your own way of salvation by the works of the Law, why not try the Lord’s appointed way of the hearing of faith?

Has He not said, "Hear and your soul shall live"? Are willing to let me explain it? The "hearing of faith"—this is the way by which the Spirit of God comes to men. "What kind of hearing," asks one, "is that?" Well, to begin with, it is *personal* hearing, listening to the Word of God for *yourself*. I have heard of one who had a dream in which he thought he stood at the gates of Heaven and his wife with him. She went in, but the pointer shut him out, saying, "The other day you said to your wife, 'Mistress, you may go to Church and pray for us both,' and now she shall go to Heaven for you both, and you must stay outside." Is not that just? There must be a *personal* hearing! I pray you, do not absent yourselves from the hearing of the Word of God, for, "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

That last sentence reminds me that the hearing must be the hearing of the *Gospel*. I wish people were more careful upon that point. You will not receive the Holy Spirit by merely hearing a man talk. He may be eloquent, he may be clever and he may be pious, but mark you, if he does not preach the Gospel, saving faith cannot come of your hearing it! Too many people go to that place of worship which is nearest to their houses and never mind what is preached so long as there is an attractive service. Oh, Sirs, do not thus play the fool with yourselves! The faith that saves you cannot come to you by hearing anything which comes first—it only comes by hearing the testimony of the Spirit to the appointed Savior!

The right kind of hearing is an attentive hearing. There is a great difference between hearing and hearing. If I were to say, "There is a ship going to sail next Tuesday for New Zealand," the most of you would hear it and think no more of it. But suppose there should be a person here who is in great haste to reach New Zealand? He will catch at my words and be round in the vestry to make further enquiries. This is the kind of hearing which the Gospel requires! You are in one of our great stations and you hear a person say, "That train is for Exeter." The information is lost upon you, for you are bound for Oxford and it is as though you heard it not. But suppose you were bound for Exeter? You would catch at the sound and make use of the news!

Now, I am talking about the salvation of man from the power of sin; the salvation of man from the guilt of sin; the preparation of man for a holy life on earth and an eternal life of bliss in Heaven—if you have the hearing of faith, you will feel that this subject is one which concerns yourself—you will be anxious to know more about it and you will give your mind to its consideration! This is the sort of hearing by which faith comes. Do not lend your ears to others, but hear for yourself! Go where the Gospel is preached and hear it with both your ears. Drink it in as an ox drinks at the stream. Treasure up every word as the ants store up grain. Test all as goldsmiths test gold—and then receive the Truth of God as babes drink in milk from the breast. This is "the hearing of faith."

"But what is this faith," asks one, "this 'hearing of faith?'" I will try to work out the idea. You begin with hearing the Gospel and believing that it comes from God. I suppose nearly everybody here believes the Bible to be the Word of God. Very well, when you hear that teaching which is consis-

tent with Scripture, the hearing of faith is to accept it as God's Word and, therefore, true and worthy of your reverent attention. The Gospel is the voice of God and it comes by the Spirit of God—a belief of this Truth of God will help you to hear it reverently—and it will prepare your mind to receive it. Then remember, if it is God's Word, a genuine faith in God knows of no difficulties whatever! A man who believes the Bible to be Inspired, just as readily believes that the whale swallowed Jonah, or that Joshua stopped the sun, as he believes that Abraham interceded for Sodom, or that Paul was a prisoner at Rome.

Knowing the Gospel to be God's Testimony, we believe it all! That is the way in which to hear the Gospel. Say to yourself, "This is God's Gospel. It is wonderfully grand and good, and it is not, therefore, a matter of doubt. That I may be saved in one single minute by believing in Jesus; that every sin I have ever committed, however black, may all be washed away as the clock ticks again—these are wonderful things and I believe them because the Lord has said so. It is not mine to quibble, question, or argue—if there are any difficulties in these great promises, those difficulties belong to God—not to me. Let the Lord promise what He pleases, I am ready to believe it because He is able to perform His own word."

Then, "the hearing of faith" signifies, further, that we venture our eternal interests upon the truth of what we hear. I use the word, "venture," advisedly. One of our hymns puts it—

***"Venture on Him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude."***

I have heard critics object that it is no venture, but a *certainty*, when men trust in Christ. But I venture to assert that when a man is in trouble of spirit, faith is a venture to him—it appears to him to be the greatest venture possible! He that says, "This Gospel which I have heard is true and I will venture my soul upon the truth of it," he is the man who has given to the Gospel "the hearing of faith"! Let me try to set forth faith yet again—this bridge is strong enough to carry me over the stream, therefore I am going over the stream upon it. That is real faith. Faith is a most practical principle in daily life. The most of trade hangs on trust. When a man sows wheat, he has to scatter it into the furrows and lose it. He does so because he has faith that God will send a harvest.

When the sailor loses sight of the shore, he has to sail by faith—believing in his compass, he feels safe though he may not see land for weeks! Faith is the hand which receives what God presents to us and, therefore, it is a simple child-like thing. When a child has an apple offered to him, the child may know nothing about the orchard in which the apple grew, and he may know nothing of the mechanism of his hand and arm, but it is quite enough for him to take the apple. Faith does the most effectual thing for the soul when it takes what God gives! All the rest may be or may not be, *faith* is the main thing. When God holds out to me, salvation by Christ Jesus, I need not ask anything further about it, but just take it to myself and be at once saved, for by faith the Spirit of God is received.

Once more, "the hearing of faith" is when a man hears and accepts the Gospel and then holds to it under opposition. When conscience reminds

you that you are a guilty man, you must still hold to peace by the blood of Jesus. What says the Word of God? It tells you that he that believes in Jesus is not condemned and you must believe that, whatever your own judgment and feelings may say. When the devil, as the accuser of the Brethren, howls out, "You cannot be saved! Look at your imperfections and transgressions!" then reply, "But I *am* saved, whatever my imperfections and my sins may be, for it is written, 'He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.' I have obeyed both precepts and, therefore, I shall be saved, despite your rage."

Poor Sinner, have you not seen that this is the way the Holy Spirit has come to others? Your Christian friends have all told you that this is the way they obtained mercy. Will you not make an attempt in the same way, and hear and believe as a little child? Believe God's Word! Do not wish to *be* anything or to *do* anything—just trust in what Jesus is and did. You shall have the Holy Spirit and you shall feel as you have never felt before, if you will have "the hearing of faith." I need your attention for a minute while I mention some of the points in the Gospel out of which this "hearing of faith" generally comes. What truth is it which men most readily believe? The first is this. A man says, "I cannot believe," but he can *hear*, and he hears that God has sent forth His Son Jesus Christ to be the Savior of men. "God has sent Him," he says, "the offended God has appointed a Mediator. Christ does not come as an amateur, but as an Ambassador authorized of Heaven." "Then," he says, "I will trust Him whom God has ordained to be a Savior."

Next, while listening to the Gospel, the man hears about the Person of the Lord and sees who He is, namely, that He is God's only-begotten Son, equal and co-eternal with the Father and yet, He is, in the fullest sense, Man, in our nature. I have known many a soul say, "I can trust Jesus, since He is God and *able* to save me, and Man, and thus *willing* to save me." By that celestial lamp many have seen their way to faith. Oh, that faith may come to you while you are hearing me! Another very blessed nail on which faith loves to hang all its weight is the sufferings of Christ—for, being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross. See Him languishing upon the cruel tree, bleeding out His life for unworthy men, His enemies, that they might live through Him!

Many and many a time that sight has turned a doubter into a Believer. Thousands have seen the Cross and felt that they must believe. Another nail of which many have learned to hang all their hope has been Christ's risen power. They have heard of Him, that He is now in Glory, at the right hand of God, making intercession for transgressors—and this has been the star of hope to the desponding. Is it not a joy that God also has highly exalted Him, so that He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him? Myriads of tremblers have felt faith leap up from their hearts like the water from the rock in the wilderness, when Christ has been set before them as exalted to be a Prince and a Savior, giving both repentance and remission of sins. They have been trying to believe, before, but now they believe without trying!

Trying to believe is a very stupid operation—you cannot do it! Minds work not so. But when a man sees a thing to be true, he believes it as a matter of course. He is convinced by the blessed fact of Christ's Resurrection and Ascension that He is able to save, and so he trusts Him to save him. Thus he receives the Spirit. I have known many that have been led to believe by hearing of the work and Grace of the Holy Spirit. They have heard the preacher say that the Holy Spirit can raise men from their death in sin; that He can renew the heart; that He can change the will and conquer the passions. They have said, "Is it so? Is God, Himself, willing to work with me to make me holy? Then I will trust Him." Thus faith comes.

Sometimes, also, when we have preached free forgiveness, full redemption, irreversible acceptance, infinite love, boundless Grace, unchallengeable justification—when we have declared that the Lord's mercy endures forever and that men have but to look to Jesus and then and there find eternal life—then faith has dropped on men's minds as dew upon the grass! Our Hearers have felt that such tidings must be true, for nobody could have invented them! The Gospel has the stamp of Deity upon it and this commends it to man's heart. Free Grace and dying love are worthy of faith and they win faith! I pray that all of you who are seekers may give up all trying to *feel*, trying to *work*, trying to *be*, and may just come and put your trust in Jesus! Then shall you be saved and then you may work, feel and do as much as you like.

Then shall you abound in good works and the more the merrier! Then you shall fight with sin and overcome it! Then shall you set up a high standard and reach it! Then shall you strive after holiness and manifest it. But do not begin where you ought to leave off! Do not put, as the proverb has it, the cart before the horse! Do not place the top of the house where the foundation ought to be! But as you never did obtain anything by the works of the Law, come and try "the hearing of faith," and you shall receive all that you need in Christ Jesus. God grant it, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians 3.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—406, 533, 516.**

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THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

NO. 178

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 5, 1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you
now made perfect by the flesh?”
Galatians 3:3.***

YES, we are just so foolish. Folly is bound up not only in the heart of a child but in the heart of even a child of God. And though the rod may be said to bring folly out of a child, it will take many a repetition of the rod of affliction upon the shoulders of a Christian before that folly is taken out of him. I suppose we are all of us very sound as a matter of theory upon this point. If any should ask us how we hope to have our salvation worked in us we should without the slightest hesitation declare our belief that salvation is of the Lord alone. And we should declare that as the Holy Spirit first of all commenced our piety in us, we look alone to His might to continue and to preserve and at last to perfect the sacred work.

I say we are sound enough on that point as a matter of theory, but we are all of us very heretical and unsound as a matter of practice. For alas, you will not find a Christian who does not have to mourn over his self-righteous tendencies. You will not discover a Believer who has not at certain periods in his life to groan because the spirit of self-confidence has risen in his heart—and prevented him from feeling the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit. He has then put his confidence in the mere strength of nature, the strength of good intentions, the strength of strong resolutions, instead of relying upon the might of God the Holy Spirit alone.

This one thing I know, Brethren, that while as a preacher I can tell you all that the Holy Spirit must work all our works in us and that without Him we can do nothing, yet as a man I find myself tempted to deny my own preaching, not in my words, but to deny them in fact by endeavoring to do deeds without looking first to the Holy Spirit. While I should never be unsound in the didactic part of it, yet in that part which concerns the working of it out in common with all that love the Lord Jesus but who are still subject to the infirmities of flesh and blood, I have to groan that I repeatedly find myself, having begun in the Spirit, seeking to be made perfect in the flesh. Yes, we are just as foolish as that. And, my Brethren, it is well for us if we have a consciousness that we are foolish—for when a man

is foolish and knows it—there is the hope that he will one day be wise, by God’s grace.

To know one’s self to be foolish is to stand upon the doorstep of the temple of wisdom. To understand the wrongness of any position is half way towards amending it. To be quite sure that our self-confidence is a heinous sin and folly and an offense towards God and to have that thought burned into us by God’s Holy Spirit is going a great length towards the throwing of our self-confidence away. This helps bring our souls in practice, as well as in theory, to rely wholly upon the power of God’s Holy Spirit.

This evening, however, I shall run away from my text somewhat. Having just in a few words endeavored to explain the meaning of the whole sentence, I intend only this evening to dwell upon *the doctrine which incidentally the Apostle teaches us*. He teaches us that we begin in the Spirit—“Having begun in the Spirit” I have already illustrated the whole text sufficiently for our understanding if God the Holy Spirit shall enlighten us. And I shall now, I say, confine myself to the thought that Christians begin in the Spirit—that the early part of Christianity is of God’s Spirit and of God’s Spirit only, while it is equally true that all the way through we must lean upon the same power and depend upon the same strength.

And I have selected this text for this reason. We have a very large influx of young Believers, month after month—week after week I may say. Every week we receive a considerable number of additions to the Church. Month after month these hands baptize into a profession of faith of the Lord Jesus many of those who are yet young in the faith of the Gospel. Now I am astonished to find those persons that thus come before me so well instructed in the doctrines of grace. And they are so sound in all the Truths of the Covenant, insomuch that I may think it my boast and glory, in the name of Jesus, that I know not that we have any members whom we have received into the Church who do not give their full assent and consent unto all the doctrines of the Christian religion, commonly called Calvinistic doctrines.

Those which men are likely to laugh at as being high doctrinal points are those which they most readily receive, believe and rejoice in. I find, however, that the greatest deficiency lies in this point—forgetfulness of the work of the Holy Spirit. I find them very easily remembering the work of God the Father. They do not deny the great doctrine of election. They can see clearly the great sentence of justification passed by the Father upon the elect through the vicarious sacrifice and perfect righteousness of Jesus. And they are not backward in understanding the work of Jesus, either. They can see how Christ was the Substitute for His people and stood in their place. Nor do they for one moment impugn any doctrine concern-

ing God's Spirit. But they are not clear upon the point. They can talk upon the other points better than they can upon those which more particularly concern the blessed work of that all adorable Person of the Godhead, God the Holy Spirit.

I thought, therefore, that I would just preach as simply as ever I could upon the work of the Holy Spirit and begin at the beginning. Hoping on succeeding evenings at different times, as God the Holy Spirit shall guide me, to enter more fully into the subject of the work of the Spirit from the beginning even to the end. But let me say, it is no use your expecting me to preach a course of sermons. I know a great deal better than that. I don't believe God the Holy Spirit ever intended men to publish three months before hand, lists of sermons that they were going to preach.

There always will arise changes in Providence and different states of mind both in the preacher and the hearer and he will be a very wise man who has got an Old Moore's Almanac correct enough to let him know what would be the best sort of sermon to preach three months ahead. He had better leave it to his God to give him in the same hour what he shall speak and look for his sermons, as the Israelites looked for the manna, day by day. However, we now commence by endeavoring to narrate the different points of the Spirit's work in the beginning of salvation.

And first, let me start by asserting that **THE COMMENCEMENT OF SALVATION IS THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK**. Salvation is not begun in the soul by *the means of grace* apart from the Holy Spirit. No man in the world is at liberty to neglect the means that God has appointed. If a house is built for prayer, that man must expect no blessing who neglects to tread its floor. If a pulpit is erected for the ministration of the Word, no man must expect (although we do sometimes get more than we expect) to be saved except by the hearing of the Word. If the Bible is printed in our own native language and we can read it, He who neglects Holy Scripture and ceases from its study, has lost one great and grand opportunity of being blessed.

There are many means of grace and let us speak as highly of them as ever we can. We would be far from depreciating them. They are of the highest value. Blessed are the people who have them. Happy is the nation which is blessed with the means of grace. But my Brethren, no man was ever saved by the means of grace apart from the Holy Spirit. You may hear the sermons of the man whom God delights to honor. You may select from all your Puritanical divines the writings of the man whom God did bless with a double portion of His Holy Spirit. You may attend every meeting for prayer. You may turn over the leaves of this blessed Book. But in all this, there is no life for the soul apart from the breath of the Divine Spirit.

Use these means. We exhort you to use them and use them diligently. But recollect that in none of these means is there anything that can benefit you unless God the Holy Spirit shall own and crown them. These are like the conduit pipes of the market place—when the fountain head flows with water then they are full and we derive a blessing from them. But if the stream are stopped, if the fountain head does cease to give forth its current, then these are wells without water, clouds without rain. And you may go to ordinances as an Arab turns to his skin bottle when it is dry and with your parched lips you may suck the wind and drink the whirlwind but receive neither comfort, nor blessing nor instruction, from the means of grace.

Nor is the salvation of any sinner commenced in him by *a minister or by a priest*. God forgive the man that ever called himself a priest, or suffered anyone else to call him so since the days of our Lord Jesus. The other morning at family prayer I read the case of King Uzziah, who, having the kingly office, thrust himself into the tabernacle of the Lord and took the place of the priests. You remember how the priests withstood him and said, “This is not your portion, O Uzziah.” And you remember how he seized the censer and would burn incense as a priest before the Lord God. And while they yet spoke, lo, the leprosy did rise in his face and he went out a leper, as white as snow, from the house of God.

Ah, my Brethren, it is no mean offense against God for any man to call himself a priest. Remember that all the saints have a priestly office through Christ Jesus. But when any man puts to the idea a specialty as applicable to himself above his fellows and claims to be a priest among men, he commits a sin before God. A sin which, even though it is a sin of ignorance, is indeed great and grievous and leads unto many great and deadly errors—the guilt of which must lie partly upon the head of the man who gave foothold for those errors by allowing the title to be applied to himself.

Well, there is no man—call him priest if you like, by way of ill courtesy—that can begin the work with us—no, not in the use of the ceremony. The Papist may tell us and the Papist masked—the devil in white, the Puseyite—may tell us that grace begins in the heart at the dropping of the water upon the child’s brow. But he tells a lie, a lie before God, that has not even so much as the shadow of truth to justify the liar. There is no power in man, though he were ordained by one who could most assuredly claim succession from the Apostles—though he were endowed with miraculous gifts, though he were the Apostle Paul himself—if he did assert that he had in himself power to convert, power to regenerate, let him be accursed! He has denied the truth and Paul himself would have declared him anathema, for having departed from the everlasting Gospel,

one cardinal point of which is regeneration, the work of God the Holy Spirit—the new birth—a thing that is from above.

And, my Brethren, it is quite certain that *no man ever begins the new birth himself*. The work of salvation never was commenced by any man. God the Holy Spirit must commence it. Now, the reasons why no man ever commenced the work of grace in his own heart is very plain and palpable. First, because he cannot. Secondly, because he won't. The best reason of all is because he cannot—he is dead. Well, the dead may be made alive, but the dead cannot make *themselves* alive, for the dead can do nothing. Besides, the new thing to be created as yet has no being. The uncreated cannot create.

“No,” but you say, “that man can create.” Yes, can Hell create Heaven? Then sin may create grace. What? Will you tell me that fallen human nature that has come almost to a level with the brutes is competent to rival God? That it can emulate the Divinity in working as great marvels and in imparting as Divine a life as even God Himself can give? It cannot. Besides, it is a creation. We are *created* anew in Christ Jesus. Let any man create a fly and afterwards let him create a new heart in himself. Until he has done the less he cannot do the greater. Besides, no man will.

If any man could convert himself, there is no man that would. If any man says he would, if that is true, he is already converted. For the will to be converted is in great part conversion. The will to love God, the desire to be in unison with Christ is not to be found in any man who has not already been brought to be reconciled with God through the death of His Son. There may be a false desire, a desire grounded upon a misrepresentation of the truth. But a true desire after true salvation by the true Spirit is a certain index that the salvation already is there in the germ and in the bud and only needs time and grace to develop itself. But certain it is that man neither can nor will—being on the one hand utterly impotent and dead and on the other hand utterly depraved and unwilling—hating the change when he sees it in others and most of all despising it in himself. Be certain, therefore, that God the Holy Spirit must begin, since none else can.

And now, my Brethren, I must just enter into the subject very briefly, by showing what the Holy Spirit does in the beginning. Permit me to say that in describing the work, the true work of salvation in the soul, you must not expect me to exhibit any critical nicety of judgment. We have heard of an assembly of Divines who once debated whether men did repent first or believe first. And after a long discussion, someone wiser than the rest suggested another question, whether in the new-born child the lungs did first heave, or the blood did first circulate. “Now,” said he, “when you shall ascertain the one, you may be able to ascertain the other.” You

shall not know which comes first. They are, very likely, begotten in us at the same moment. We are not able, when we mention these things in order, exactly to declare and testify that these do all happen according to the order in which we mention them. But we only, according to the judgment of men, according to our own experience, seek now to set forth what is the usual way of acting with God the Holy Spirit in the work of salvation.

The first thing, then, that God the Holy Spirit does in the soul is to *regenerate it*. We must always learn to distinguish between regeneration and conversion. A man may be converted a great many times in his life, but regenerated only once. Conversion is a thing which is caused by regeneration, but regeneration is the very first act of God the Spirit in the soul. "What?" you say, "Does regeneration come before conviction of sin?" Most certainly. There could be no conviction in the dead sinner. Now, regeneration quickens the sinner and makes him live. He is not competent to have true spiritual conviction worked in him until, first of all, he has received life.

It is true that one of the earliest developments of life is conviction of sin. But before any man can see his need of a Savior he must be a living man. Before he can really, I mean, in a spiritual position, in a saving, effectual manner understand his own deep depravity, he must have eyes with which to see the depravity. He must have ears with which to hear the sentence of the Law. He must have been quickened and made alive—otherwise he could not be capable of feeling, or seeing, or discerning at all. I believe, then, the first thing the Spirit does is this—He finds the sinner dead in sin, just where Adam left him. He breathes into him a Divine influence. The sinner knows nothing about how it is done, nor do any of us understand it. "You understand not the wind—it blows where it lists." But we see its effects.

Now, none of us can tell how the Holy Spirit works in men. I doubt not there have been some who have sat in these pews and in the middle of a sermon or in prayer, or singing—they knew not how it was—the Spirit of God was in their hearts. He had entered into their souls. They were no longer dead in sin, no longer without thought, without hope, without spiritual capacity—they had begun to live. And I believe this work of regeneration, when it is done effectually—and God the Spirit would not do it without doing it effectually—is done mysteriously, often suddenly and it is done in many manners. But still it has always this mark about it—that the man, although he may not understand how it is done, feels that something is done. The what, the how, he does not know. But he knows that something is done. And he now begins to think thoughts he never thought before. He begins to feel as he never felt before. He is brought into a new

state, there is a change wrought in him—as if a dead post standing in the street were on a sudden to find itself possessed of a soul and did hear the sound of the passing carriages and listen to the words of the passengers. There is something quite new about it.

The fact is, the man has got a Spirit. He never had one before. He was nothing but a body and a soul. But now, God has breathed into him the third great principle, the new life, the Spirit and he has become a spiritual man. Now he is not only capable of mental exercise, but of spiritual exercise. Having a soul *before*, he could repent—he could believe as a mere mental exercise. He could think thoughts of God and have some desires after Him. But he could not have one *spiritual* thought, nor one spiritual wish or desire, for he had no powers that could educe these things. But now, in regeneration, he has got something given to him and being given, you soon see its effects.

The man begins to feel that he is a sinner. Why did he not feel that before? Ah, my Brethren, he could not, he was not in a state to feel. He was a dead sinner. And though he used to tell you and tell God, by way of compliment, that he was a sinner, he did not know anything about it. He said he was a sinner. Yes, but he talked about being a sinner just as the blind man talks about the stars that he has never seen, as he talks about the light, the existence of which he would not know unless he were told of it. But now it is a deep reality. You may laugh at him, you who have not been regenerated. But now he has got something that really puts him beyond your laughter. He begins to feel the exceeding weight and evil of transgression. His heart trembles, his very flesh quivers—in some cases the whole frame is affected.

The man is sick by day and night. His flesh creeps on his bones for fear. He cannot eat, his appetite fails him. He cannot bear the sound of melody and mirth. All his animal spirits are dried up. He cannot rejoice, he is unhappy, he is miserably downcast, distressed. In some cases he is almost ready to go mad—though in the majority of cases it takes a lighter phase and there are the gentle whispers of the Spirit. But even then the pangs and pains caused by regeneration, while the new life discovers the sin and evil of the past condition of the man are things that are not to be well described or mentioned without tears. This is all the work of the Spirit.

And having brought the soul thus far, the next thing the Holy Spirit does is, *to teach the soul that it is utterly incapable of saving itself*. It knew that before, maybe, if the man sat under a Gospel ministry. But he only knew it with the ear and understood it with the mind. Now, it has become part of his very life. He *feels* it—it has entered into his soul and he knows it to be true. Once he thought he would be good and thought that would

save him. The Holy Spirit just knocks the brains out of that thought. "Then," he says, "I will try ceremonies and see whether I cannot gain merit so." God the Holy Spirit shoots the arrow right through the heart of that thought and it falls dead before him and he cannot bear the sight of the carcass, so that, like Abraham said of Sarah, he exclaims, "Bury the dead out of my sight." Though once he loved it dearly, now he hates the sight of it.

He thought once that he could believe. He had an Arminian notion in his head that he could believe when he liked and repent when he liked. Now, God the Spirit has brought him in such a condition that he says, "I can do nothing." He begins to discover his own death, now that he is made alive. He did not know anything about it before. He now finds that he has no hand of faith to lift, though the minister tells him to do it. He now discovers, when he is bid to pray, that he would, but cannot pray. He now finds that he is powerless and he dies in the hand of God like clay in the hand of the potter and is made to cry out, "O Lord, my God, unless You save me, I am damned to all eternity. For I cannot lift a finger in this matter until You first of all give me strength."

And if you urge him to do anything he longs to be doing he is so afraid that it should only be fleshly doings and not the doings of the Spirit that he meditates and stops until he groans and cries. And feeling that these groans and cries are the real work of the Spirit and prove that he has spiritual life, he then begins in right earnest to look to Jesus Christ the Savior. But mark, all these things are by the Spirit and none of them can ever be produced in the soul of any man or woman, apart from the Divine influence of God the Holy Spirit.

This being done—the soul being now weaned from all confidence and despairing and brought to its last standing place, yes, laid prostrate on the ground, the rope being about its neck and the ashes and sackcloth on its head—God the Holy Spirit *next applies the blood of Jesus to the soul*. He gives the soul the grace of faith whereby it lays hold of Jesus and gives it an anointing of holy consolation and unction of assurance, whereby, casting itself wholly on the blood and righteousness of Jesus, it receives joy, knows itself to be saved and rejoices in pardon. But mark, that is the work of the Spirit. Some preachers will tell their people, "Believe, only believe."

Yes, it is right they should tell them so. But they should remember it is also right to tell them that even this must be the work of the Spirit. For though we say, "Only believe," that is the greatest "only" in the world. And what some men say is so easy is just what those who want to believe find to be the hardest thing in all the world. It is simple enough for a man that has the Spirit in him to believe when he has the written Word before him

and the witness of the Spirit in him. That is easy enough. But for the poor, tried sinner, who cannot see anything in the Word of God but thunder and threat—for him to believe—ah, my Brethren, it is not such a little matter as some make it to be. It needs the fullness of the power of God's Spirit to bring any man to such faith as that.

Well, when the sinner has thus believed, then the Holy Spirit *brings all the precious things to him*. There is the blood of Jesus. That can never save my soul unless God the Spirit takes that blood and sprinkles it upon my conscience. There is the perfect spotless righteousness of Jesus. It is a robe that will fit me and adorn me from head to foot, but it is no use to me till I have put it on. And I cannot put it on myself—God the Holy Spirit must put the robe of Jesus' righteousness on me. There is the Covenant of Adoption whereby God gives me the privileges of a son. But I cannot rejoice in my adoption until I receive the Spirit of adoption whereby I may be able to cry, "Abba, Father."

So, Beloved, you see—I might enlarge, but my time fails me—you see that every point that is brought out in the experience of the newborn Christian, every point in that part of salvation which we may call its beginning in the soul has to do with God the Holy Spirit. There is no step that can be taken without Him. There is nothing which can be accomplished aright without Him. Yes, though you had the best of means, the most correct of ceremonies, the most orthodox of truths and though you did exercise your minds upon all these things—and though the blood of Jesus Christ were shed for you and God Himself had ordained you from before the foundations of the world to be saved—yet still there must be that one link always inserted in the golden chain of the plan of salvation. For without that it were all incomplete. *You must be quickened by the Spirit*. You must be called out of darkness into light. You must be made a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Now, I wonder how many of you know anything about this. That is the practical part of it. Now my Hearer, do you understand this? Perhaps, Sir, you are exceedingly wise and you turn on your heel with a sneer and you say, "Supernaturalism in one of its phases. These Methodists are always talking about supernatural things." You are very wise, exceeding so, doubtless. But it seems to me that Nicodemus of old had gotten as far as you and you have gotten no farther than he. For he asked, "How could a man be born again when he is old?"

And though every Sunday-School child has had a smile at the expense of Nicodemus's ignorance, you are not wiser. And yet you are a Rabbi, Sir and you would teach us, would you? And you would teach us about these things and yet you sneer about supernaturalism? Well, the day may come—I pray it may come to you before the day of your death and your

doom—when the Christ of the supernaturalists will be the only Christ for you. When you shall come into the floods of death—where you shall need something more than nature—then you will be crying for a work that is supernatural within your heart. And it may be that then, when you first of all awake to know that your wisdom was but one of the methods of madness, you may perhaps have to cry in vain, having for your only answer, “I called and you refused. I stretched out My hands and no man regarded. I also will mock at your calamity and laugh when your fear comes.”

I hear another of you say, “Well, Sir, I know nothing of this work of God the Holy Spirit in my heart. I am just as good as other people. I never make a profession of religion. It is very rarely that I go into a place of worship at all, but I am as good as the saints, any of them. Look at some of them—very fine fellows certainly.” Stop, now, religion is a thing between yourself and your Maker and you have nothing to do with those very fine fellows you have spoken of. Suppose I make a confession that a large number of those who are called saints deserve a great deal more to be called sinners double-dyed and then white-washed—suppose I make a confession of that, what has that to do with you?

Your religion must be for yourself and it must be between you and your God. If all the world were hypocrites that would not exonerate you before your God. When you came before the Master, if you were still at enmity to Him, could you venture to plead such an excuse as this—“All the world was full of hypocrites?” “Well,” He would say, “what had that to do with you? So much the more reason why you should have been an honest man. If you say the Church was thus drifting away upon the quicksand through the evil conduct and folly of the members, so much the more reason why you should have helped to make it sound, if you thought you could have done so.”

Another cries, “Well, I do not see that I need it. I am as moral a man as I can be. I never break the Sabbath. I am one of the most punctilious of Christians—I always go to Church twice a Sabbath. I hear a thoroughly evangelical minister and you would not find fault with him.” Or perhaps says another, “I go to a Baptist Chapel, I am always found there, I am scrupulously correct in my conduct. I am a good father, a good husband. I do not know that any man can find fault with me in business.” Well certainly that is very good and if you will be so good tomorrow morning as to go into Saint Paul’s and wash one of those statues till you make it alive—then you will be saved by your morality.

But since you, even you, are dead in trespasses and sins—without the Spirit you may wash *yourself* ever so clean—but you cannot wash life into yourself any more than those statues. With all your washing those idols

could never be made to walk, or think, or breathe. You must be quickened by the Holy Spirit, for you are dead in trespasses and sins.

Yes, my comely maiden, you that are everything excellent. You that are not to be blamed in anything. You that are affectionate, tender, kind and dutiful—whose very life seems to be so pure that all who see you think you are an angel. Even you, except you be born again, can not see the kingdom of God. The golden gate of Heaven must grind upon its hinges with a doleful sound and shut you out forever unless you are the subject of a Divine change—this knows no exception. And, O you vilest of the vile, you who have wandered farthest from the paths of rectitude, “you must be born again.” You, too, must be quickened by a Divine life. And it is comforting for you to recollect that the very same power which can awaken the *moral* man, which can save the man of rectitude and honesty, is able to work *in you*—is able to change *you*—to turn the lion to a lamb, the raven to a dove.

O my Hearers, ask yourselves—are you the subjects of this change? And if you are, rejoice with joy unspeakable, for happy is that mother’s child and full of glory that can say, “I am born of God.” Blessed is that man—God and the holy angels call him blessed who has received the quickening of the Spirit and is born of God. For him there may be many troubles, but there is “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” to counterbalance all his woe. For him there may be wars and fights. But let him tarry, there are trumpets of victory, there are better wreaths than the laurels of conquerors. There is a crown of immortal glory, there is bliss unfading, there is acceptance in the breast of God forever and perpetual fellowship with Jehovah. But oh, if you are not born again this night I can but tremble for you and lift my heart in prayer to God and pray for you that He may now by His Divine Spirit make you alive, give you to know your need of Him and then direct you to the Cross of Jesus.

But if you know your need of a Savior tonight, if you are this night conscious of your death in sin, hear me preach the Gospel and I have done. The Lord Jesus Christ died for you. Do you know yourself to be guilty? Not as the hypocrite pretends to know it, but do you know it consciously, sensitively—do you weep over it? Do you lament it? Do you feel that you can not save yourself? Are you sick of all fleshly ways of saving? Can you say tonight, “Unless God shall put out the hand of His mercy, I know I deserve to be lost forever and I am”?

Then, as the Lord my God lives, before whom I stand, my Master bought you with His blood and those whom He bought with blood He will have. From the fangs of the lion and the jaws of the bear will He pluck them. He will save you—for you are a part of His bloody purchase. He has taken your sins upon His head. He suffered in your place. He has been

punished for you. You shall not die—“your sins, which are many, are all forgiven.” And I am the Master’s glad herald to tell you tonight what His Word tells you also—that you may rejoice in the fullness of faith—for “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and “this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation.” May the Lord now be pleased to add his blessing for Jesus’ sake.

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A CALL TO THE UNCONVERTED

NO. 174

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, NOVEMBER 8, 1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.”
Galatians 3:10.***

MY Hearer, are you a Believer, or not? According to your answer to that question must be the style in which I shall address you tonight. I would ask you as a great favor to your own soul this evening to divest yourself of the thought that you are sitting in a Chapel and hearing a minister who is preaching to a large congregation. Imagine you are sitting in your own house, in your own chair, and think that I am standing by you, with your hand in mine and am speaking personally to you and to you alone. For that is how I desire to preach this night to each of my hearers—one by one. I want you, then, in the sight of God, to answer me this all-important and solemn question before I begin—are you in Christ, or are you not? Have you fled for refuge to Him who is the only hope for sinners? Or are you yet a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, ignorant of God and of His holy Gospel?

Come—be honest with your own heart and let your conscience say yes, or no—for one of these two things you are tonight—you are either under the wrath of God, or you are delivered from it. You are tonight either an heir of wrath or an inheritor of the kingdom of grace. Which of these two? Make no “ifs” or “ahs” in your answer. Answer straight forward to your own soul. And if there is any doubt whatever about it, I beseech you rest not till that doubt be resolved. Do not take advantage of that doubt to yourself, but rather take a disadvantage from it. Depend upon it—you are more likely to be wrong than you are to be right. Now put yourself in the scale and if you do not kick the beam entirely, but if you hang between the two and you say, “I know not which,” better that you should decide for the worst, though it should grieve yourself, than that you should decide for the better and be deceived and so go on presumptuously until the pit of Hell shall wake you from your self-deception.

Can you, then, with one hand upon God’s holy Word and the other upon your own heart, lift your eye to Heaven and say, “One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. I know that I have passed from death unto life. I am not now what I once was—‘the chief of sinners’—but Jesus died for me. And if I am not awfully deceived, I am this night, a sinner

saved by blood, a monument of grace.” My Brothers and Sisters, God bless you. The blessing of the Most High be with you. My text has no thunders in it for you. Instead of this verse, turn to the 13th verse and there read your inheritance—“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” So Christ was cursed in your place and you are secure—if you are truly converted and really a regenerated child of God.

But my Hearer, I am solemnly convinced that a large proportion of this assembly dare not say so. And you tonight, (for I am speaking personally to you), remember you are one of those who dare not say this, for you are a stranger to the grace of God. You dare not lie before God and your own conscience, therefore you do honestly say, “I know I was never regenerated. I am now what I always was and that is the most I can say.” Now with you I have to deal. I charge you by Him who shall judge the quick and the dead, before whom you and I must soon appear, listen to the words I speak, for they may be the last warning you shall ever hear. And I charge my own soul also, be faithful to these dying men, lest haply on your garment at last should be found the blood of souls and you yourself should be a castaway. O God, make us faithful this night and give the hearing ear and the retentive memory and the conscience touched by the Spirit, for Jesus’ sake.

First, tonight we shall *try the prisoner*. Secondly, we shall *declare his sentence*. And thirdly, if we find him confessing and penitent, we shall *proclaim his deliverance*. But not unless we find him so. First, then, we are about to TRY THE PRISONER. The text says—“Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.” Unconverted man, are you guilty, or not guilty? Have you continued “in all things that are written in the book of the Law to do them?” Methinks you will not dare to plead, “Not guilty.” But I will suppose for one moment that you are bold enough to do so. So then, Sir, you mean to assert that you have continued in “all things which are written in the book of the Law.” Surely the very reading of the Law would be enough to convince you that you are in error. Do you know what the Law is? Why I will give you what I may call the outside of it, but remember that within it there is a broader spirit than the mere words.

Hear you these words of the Law—“*You shall have no other gods before Me.*” What? Have you never loved anything better than God? Have you never made a god of your belly, or of your business, or of your family, or of your own person? Oh, surely you dare not say you are guiltless here. “*You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.*” What? Have you never in your life set up anything in the place of God? If you have not, I have, many times. And I know, if conscience would speak truly, it would say, “Man you have been a mammon

worshipper, you have been a belly worshipper, you have bowed down before gold and silver. You have cast yourself down before honor, you have bowed before pleasure, you have made a god of your drunkenness, a god of your lust, a god of your uncleanness, a god of your pleasures!"

Will you dare to say you have never taken the name of *the Lord your God in vain*? If you have never sworn profanely, yet surely in common conversation you have sometimes made use of God's name when you ought not to have done so. Have you always hallowed that most holy name? Have you never called upon God without necessity? Have you never read His book with a trifling spirit? Have you never heard His Gospel without paying reverence to it? Surely you are guilty here. And as for that Fourth Commandment which relates to the keeping of the Sabbath—"*Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy*"—have you never broken it? Oh, shut your mouth and plead guilty, for these four commandments were enough to condemn you!

"*Honor your father and your mother.*" What? Will you say you have kept that? Have you never been disobedient in your youth? Have you never kicked against a mother's love and striven against a father's rebuke? Turn over a page of your history till you come to your childhood—see if you cannot find it written there. Yes and your manhood, too, may confess that you have not always spoken to your parents as you should, or always treated them with that honor they deserved and which God commanded you to give unto them. "*You shall not kill.*" You may never have killed any, but have you never been angry? He that is angry with his brother is a murderer—you are guilty here. "*You shall not commit adultery.*" Maybe you have committed unclean things and are here this very day stained with lust. But if you have been ever so chaste, I am sure you have not been quite guiltless, when the Master says, "He that looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery already with her in his heart." Has no lascivious thought crossed your mind?

Has no impurity ever stirred your imagination? Surely if you should dare to say so, you would be brazen-faced with impudence. And have you never stolen? "*You shall not steal.*" You are here in the crowd tonight with the product of your theft perhaps—you have done the deed—you have committed robbery. But if you have been ever so honest, yet surely there have been times in which you have felt an inclination to defraud your neighbor. And there may have been some petty, or perhaps some gross frauds which you have secretly and silently committed on which the law of the land could not lay its hand, but which, nevertheless, was a breach of this Law. And who dares says he has not borne *false witness against his neighbor*? Have we never repeated a story to our neighbor's disadvantage which was untrue? Have we never misconstrued his motives? Have we never misinterpreted his designs? And who among us can dare to say that he is guiltless of the last—"*You shall not covet?*" For we have all desired to

have more than God has given us. And at times our wandering heart has lusted after things which God has not bestowed upon us. Why, to plead not guilty, is to plead your own folly. For verily, my Brethren, the very reading of the Law is enough, when blessed by the Spirit, to make us cry, "Guilty O Lord, guilty."

But one cries, "I shall not plead guilty, for though I am well aware that I have not continued 'in all things which are written in the book of the Law,' yet I have done the best I could." That is a lie—before God a falsehood. You have not! You have not done the best you could. There have been many occasions upon which you might have done better. Will that young man dare to tell me that he is doing the best he can now? That he cannot refrain from laughter in the house of God? It may be possible that it is hard for him to do so, but it is just possible he could, if he pleased, refrain from insulting his Maker to His face. Surely we have none of us done the best we could. At every period and at every time there have been opportunities of escape from temptation. If we had had no freedom to escape from the sin, there might have been some excuse for it. But there have been turning points in our history when we might have decided for right or for wrong—but we have *chosen* the evil and have *eschewed* the good and have turned into that path which leads to Hell.

"Ah, but," says another, "I declare, Sir, that while I have broken that Law without a doubt, I have been no worse than my fellow creatures." And a sorry argument is that, for what good does it do you? To be damned in a crowd is no more comfortable than to be damned alone. It is true, you have been no worse than your fellow creatures but this will be of very poor service to you. When the wicked are cast into Hell it will be very little comfort to you that God shall say, "Depart you cursed" to a thousand with you. Remember, God's curse, when it shall sweep a nation into Hell, shall be as much felt by every individual of the crowd as if there were but that one man to be punished.

God is not like our earthly judges. If their courts were glutted with prisoners, they might be inclined to pass over many a case lightly, but not so with Jehovah. He is so infinite in His mind that the abundance of criminals will not seem to be any difficulty with Him. He will deal with you as severely and as justly as if there were never another sinner in all the world. And besides, what have you to do with other men's sins? You are not responsible for them. God made you to stand or fall by *yourself*. According to your *own deeds* you shall be judged. The harlot's sin may be grosser than yours, but you will not be condemned for her iniquities. The murderer's guilt may far exceed your transgressions, but you will not be damned for the murderer. Religion is a thing between God and your own soul, O Man. And therefore, I do beseech you, do not look upon your neighbor's, but upon your own heart.

“Yes, but,” cries another, “I have very many times striven to keep the Law and I think I have done so for a little.” Hear you the sentence read again—“Cursed is everyone that *continues* not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.” Oh, Sirs! It is not some hectic flush upon the cheek of consumptive irresolution that God counts to be the health of obedience. It is not some slight obedience for an hour that God will accept at the Day of Judgment. He says, “continue.” And unless from my early childhood to the day when my gray hairs descend into the tomb I shall have continued to be obedient to God, I must be condemned. Unless I have from the first dawn of reason, when I first began to be responsible, obediently served God, until, like a shock of corn, I am gathered into my Master’s garner—salvation by *works* must be impossible to me and I must—(standing on my own footing,) be condemned. It is not, I say, some slight obedience that will save the soul. You have not continued “in all things which are written in the book of the Law,” and therefore you are condemned.

“But,” says another, “there are many things I have not done, but still I have been very virtuous” Poor excuse that, also. Suppose you have been virtuous! Suppose you have avoided many vices—turn to my text. It is not *my* word, but *God’s*—turn to it—“*all things*.” It does not say “*some things*.” “Cursed is everyone that continues not in *all things* which are written in the book of the Law to do them.” Now, have you performed all virtues? Have you shunned all vices? Do you stand up and plead, “I never was a drunkard?”—Yet shall you be damned, if you have been a fornicator. Do you reply, “I never was unclean!” Yet you have broken the Sabbath. Do you plead guiltless of that charge? Do you declare you have never broken the Sabbath?

You have taken God’s name in vain, have you not? Somewhere or other God’s Law can smite you. It is certain (let your conscience now speak and affirm what I assert)—it is certain you have not continued “in *all things* which are written in the book of the Law.” No, more—I do not believe you have even continued in any *one* Commandment of God to the full—for the Commandment is exceeding broad. It is not the overt act, merely, that will damn a man—it is the thought, the imagination, the conception of sin, that is sufficient to ruin a soul. Remember, my dear Hearers, I am speaking now God’s own Word, not a harsh doctrine of my own. If you had never committed one single act of sin, yet the *thought* of sin, the *imagination* of it would be enough to sweep your soul to Hell forever.

If you had been born in a cell and had never been able to come out into the world, either to commit acts of lasciviousness, murder, or robbery—yet the *thought* of evil in that lone cell might be enough to cast your soul forever from the face of God. Oh, there is no man here that can hope to escape! We must every one of us bow our heads before God and cry, “Guilty, Lord, guilty”—every one of us guilty—“Cursed is *everyone* that

continues not in *all things* which are written in the book of the Law to do them." When I look into your face, O Law, my spirit shudders. When I hear your thunders my heart is melted like wax in the midst of my heart. How can I endure you? If I am to be tried at last for my life, surely I shall need no judge, for I shall be my own swift accuser and my conscience shall be a witness to condemn.

I think I need not enlarge further on this point. O you that are out of Christ and without God, do you not stand condemned before Him? Off with all your masks and away with all excuses. Let everyone of us turn our idle presences to the wind. Unless we have the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ to cover us, we must every one of us acknowledge that this sentence shuts the gates of Heaven against us and only prepares us for the flames of perdition.

II. Thus have I singled out the character and he is found guilty. Now I have to DECLARE THE SENTENCE. God's ministers love not such work as this. I would rather stand in this pulpit and preach twenty sermons on the *love* of Jesus, than one like this. It is very seldom that I meddle with the theme, because I do not know that it is often necessary. But I feel that if these things were kept altogether in the background and the Law were not preached, the Master would not own the Gospel. For He will have both preached in their measure and each must have its proper prominence. Now, therefore, hear me while I sorrowfully tell you what is the sentence passed upon all of you who this night are out of Christ.

Sinner, you are cursed tonight. *You are cursed*, not by some wizard whose fancied spell can only frighten the ignorant. You are cursed—not cursed by some earthly monarch who could turn his troops against you and swallow up your house and your patrimony. Cursed! Oh, what a thing a curse is anyhow! What an awful thing is the curse of a father. We have heard of fathers, driven to madness by the undutiful and ungracious conduct of their children, who have lifted their hands to Heaven and have implored a curse, a withering curse upon their children. We cannot excuse the parent's mad and rash act. God forbid we should exempt him from sin, but oh, a father's curse must be awful. I cannot think what it must be to be cursed by him that did beget me.

Surely, it would put out the sunlight of my history forever, if it were deserved. But to be cursed of God—I have no words with which to tell what that must be. "Oh, no," you say, "that is a thing of the future. We do not care about the curse of God, it does not fall upon us now." Yes, Soul, it does. The wrath of God *abides* on you even now. You have not yet come to know the fullness of that curse, but you are cursed this very hour. You are not yet in Hell, not yet has God been pleased to shut up the heart of His compassion and cast you forever from His presence. But notwithstanding all that, you are cursed. Turn to the passage in the book of Deuteronomy and see how the curse is a present thing upon the sinner.

In the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, at the 15th verse, we read all this as the sentence of the sinner: “Cursed shall you be in the city”—where you carry on your business God will curse you. “Cursed shall you be in the fields”—where you take your recreation—where you walk abroad, there shall the curse reach you. “Cursed shall be your basket and your store. Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the fruit of your land, the increase of your kine and the flocks of your sheep. Cursed shall you be when you come in and cursed shall you be when you go out.” There are some men upon whom this curse is very visible. Whatever they do is cursed. They get riches, but there is God’s curse with the riches. I would not have some men’s gold for all the stars, though they were gold. And if I might have all the wealth of the world, if I must have the miser’s greed with it, I would rather be poor than have it.

There are some men who are visibly cursed. Don’t you see the drunkard? He is cursed, let him go where he may. When he goes into his house, his little children run upstairs to bed, for they are afraid to see their own father. And when they grow a little older, they begin to drink just as he did. And they will stand and imitate him—and they, too, will begin to swear, so that he is cursed in the fruit of his body. He thought it was not so bad for him to be drunk and to swear. But oh, what a pang shoots through the father’s conscience, if he has a conscience at all, when he sees his child following in his footsteps! Drunkenness brings such a curse upon a man that he cannot enjoy what he eats. He is cursed in his basket, cursed in his store.

And truly, though one vice may seem to develop the curse more than others, all sin brings the curse, though we cannot always see it. Oh you that are out of God and out of Christ and a stranger to Jesus, you are cursed where you sit, cursed where you stand! Cursed is the bed you lie on. Cursed is the bread you eat. Cursed is the air you breathe. All is cursed to you. Go where you may, you are a cursed man. Ah, that is a fearful thought! Oh, there are some of you that are cursed tonight! Oh, that a man should say that of his Brethren! But we must say it, or be unfaithful to your poor dying souls. Oh, would to God that some poor soul in this place would say, “Then I am cursed tonight. I am cursed of God and cursed of His holy angels—cursed! Cursed! Cursed!—For I am under the Law.” I do think, God the Spirit blessing it, it wants nothing more to slay our carelessness than that one word—“cursed!” “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.”

But now, my Hearer, you that are in this state, impenitent and unbelieving, I have more work to do before I close. Remember, the curse that men have in this life is as nothing compared with the curse that is to come upon them hereafter. In a few short years, you and I must die. Come, Friend, I will talk to you personally again—young man, we shall

soon grow old, or, perhaps, we shall die before that time and we shall lie upon our bed—the last bed upon which we shall ever sleep—we shall wake from our last slumber to hear the doleful tidings that there is no hope. The physician will feel our pulse and solemnly assure our relatives that it is all over! And we shall lie in that still room, where all is hushed except the ticking of the clock and the weeping of our wife and children. And we must die. Oh, How solemn will be that hour when we must struggle with that enemy, Death!

The death rattle is in our throat—we can scarce articulate—we try to speak, the death-gaze is on the eye. Death has put his fingers on those windows of the body and shut out the light forever. The hands well-near refuse to lift themselves and there we are, close on the borders of the grave! Ah, that moment, when the spirit sees its destiny. That moment, of all moments the most solemn, when the soul looks through the bars of its cage upon the world to come! No, I cannot tell you how the spirit feels, if it is an ungodly spirit, when it sees a fiery throne of judgment and hears the thunders of Almighty wrath, while there is but a moment between it and Hell. I cannot picture to you what must be the fright which men will feel, when they realize what they often heard of!

Ah, it is a fine thing for you to laugh at me tonight! When you go away, it will be a very fine thing to crack a joke concerning what the preacher said, to talk to one another and make merry with all this. But when you are lying on your deathbed, you will not laugh. Now, with the curtain drawn and you cannot see the things of the future it is a very fine thing to be merry. When God has removed that curtain and you learn the solemn reality, you will not find it in your hearts to trifle. Ahab, on his throne laughed at Micaiah. You never read that Ahab laughed at Micaiah when the arrow was sticking between the joints of his harness. In Noah's time, they laughed at the old man. They called him a gray-headed fool, I doubt not, because he told them that God was about to destroy the earth with a flood.

But ah, you Scorners, you did not laugh in that day when the cataracts were falling from Heaven and when God had unloosed the doors of the great deep and bid all the hidden waters leap upon the surface! Then you knew that Noah was right. And when you come to die, perhaps you will not laugh at me. You will say, when you lie there, "I remember such-and-such a night. I strolled into Park Street. I heard a man talk very solemnly. I thought at the time I did not like it, but I knew he was in earnest. I am quite certain that he meant good for me. Oh, that I had listened to his advice! Oh, that I had regarded his words! What I would give to hear him again!"

Ah, it was not long ago that a man who had laughed and mocked at me full many a time, went down one Sabbath day to Brighton, to spend his day in the excursion—he came back that night to die! On Monday morn-

ing, when he was dying, who do you suppose he wanted? He wanted Mr. Spurgeon! The man he had laughed at always. He wanted him to come and tell him the way to Heaven and point Him to the Savior. And although I was glad enough to go, it was doleful work to talk to a man who had just been Sabbath-breaking, spending his time in the service of Satan and had come home to die. And die He did, without a Bible in his house. Without having one prayer offered for him except that prayer which I alone did offer at his bedside.

Ah, it is strange how the sight of a deathbed may be blessed to the stimulating of our zeal. I stood some year or so ago by the bedside of a poor boy, about sixteen years of age, who had been drinking himself to death in a drinking bout, about a week before. And when I talked to him about sin and righteousness and judgment to come, I knew he trembled and I thought that he had laid hold on Jesus. When I came down from those stairs, after praying for him many a time and trying to point him to Jesus and having but a faint hope of his ultimate salvation, I thought to myself, O God! I would that I might preach every hour and every moment of the day, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

For what an awful thing it is to die without a Savior. And then I thought how many a time I had stood in the pulpit and had not preached in earnest as I ought to have done. How I have coldly told the tale of the Savior—when I ought to have wept very showers of tears in overwhelming emotion. I have gone to my bed full many a season and have wept myself to sleep because I have not preached as I have desired and it will be even so tonight. But, oh, the wrath to come! The wrath to come! The wrath to come!

My Hearers, the matters I now talk of are no dreams, no frauds, no whims, no old wives' stories. These are realities and you will soon know them. O Sinner, you that have not continued in all things written in the book of the Law. You that have no Christ. The day is coming when these things will stand before you, as dread, solemn, real things. And then. Ah, then! Ah, then! Ah! Then—what will you do?—"And after death the judgment."—Oh, can you picture—

***"The pomp of that tremendous day,
When Christ with clouds shall come?"***

I think I see that terrible day. The bell of time has tolled the last day. Now comes the funeral of damned souls. Your body has just started up from the grave and you unwind your cerements and you look up. What is that I see? Oh, what is that I hear? I hear one dread, tremendous blast that shakes the pillars of Heaven and makes the firmament reel with fright. The trump, the trump, the trump of the archangel shakes creation's utmost bound. You look and wonder. Suddenly a voice is heard with shrieks for some and songs for others—He comes—HE comes—HE comes! And every eye must see Him. There He is, the Throne is set upon a cloud

which is white as alabaster. There He sits. 'Tis He, the Man that died on Calvary.

I see His pierced hands—but ah, how changed! No crown of thorns now. He stood at Pilate's bar, but now the whole earth must stand at His bar. But hark! The trumpet sounds again. The Judge opens the Book. There is silence in Heaven, solemn silence—the universe is still. "Gather Mine elect together and My redeemed from the four winds of Heaven." Swiftly they are gathered. As with a lightning flash, the angel's wing divides the crowd. Here are the righteous all ingathered. And Sinner, there you are, on the left hand, left out, left to abide the burning sentence of eternal wrath. Hark! The harps of Heaven play sweet melodies. But to you they bring no joy, though the angels are repeating the Savior's welcome to His saints, "Come you blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world."

You have had that moment's respite but now His face is gathering clouds of wrath, the thunder is on His brow. He looks on you that have despised Him, you that scoffed His grace, that scorned His mercy, you that broke His Sabbath, you that mocked His Cross, you that would not have Him to reign over you. And with a voice louder than ten thousand thunders He cries, "Depart, you cursed." And then—No! I will not follow you. I will not tell of quenchless flames—I will not talk of miseries for the body and tortures for the spirit. But Hell is terrible damnation—it is doleful. Oh, escape! Escape! Escape, lest haply, being where you are, you should have to learn what the horrors of eternity must mean in the gulf of everlasting perdition. "Cursed is the man that has not continued in all things that are written in the book of the Law to do them."

III. DELIVERANCE PROCLAIMED. "You have condemned us all," cries one. Yes, but not I—God has done it. Are you condemned? Do you feel you are tonight? Come, again, let me take you by the hand, my Brother. Yes, I can look round upon the whole of this assembly and I can say there is not one now in this place whom I do not love as a brother. If I speak severely unto any of you, it is that you may know right. My heart and my whole spirit are stirred for you. My harshest words are far more full of love than the smooth words of soft-speaking ministers who say, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. Do you think it is any pleasure to me to preach like this? Oh, I had far rather be preaching of Jesus. His sweet, His glorious Person and His all-sufficient righteousness. Now come, we will have a sweet word before we have done. Do you feel you are condemned? Do you say, "O God, I confess You would be just if You should do all this to me"? Do you feel you can never be saved by your own works, but that you are utterly condemned through sin? Do you hate sin? Do you sincerely repent? Then, let me tell you how you may escape.

Brothers and Sisters, Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was crucified, dead and buried. He is now risen and He sits on the right hand of God,

where He also makes intercession for us. He came into this world to save sinners by His death. He saw that poor sinners were cursed—He took the curse on His own shoulders and He delivered us from it. Now, if God has cursed Christ for any man, He will not curse that man again. You ask me then, “Was Christ cursed for me?” Answer me this question and I will tell you—Has God the Spirit taught you that you are accursed? Has He made you feel the bitterness of sin? Has He made you cry, “Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner?” Then, my dear Friend, Christ was cursed for you. And you are not cursed. You are not cursed *now*. Christ was cursed for you.

Be of good cheer. If Christ was cursed for you, you cannot be cursed again. “Oh,” says one, “if I could but think He was cursed for me!” Do you see Him bleeding on the tree? Do you see His hands and feet all dripping gore. Look unto Him, poor Sinner. Look no longer at yourself, nor at your sin. Look unto Him and be saved. All He asks you to do is to look and even that He will help you do. Come to Him, trust Him. Believe on Him. God the Holy Spirit has taught you that you are a condemned sinner. Now, I beseech you, hear this Word and believe it. “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

Oh, can you say, “I believe this Word—it is true—blessed be His dear name. It is true to me, for whatever I may *not* be, I know I am a *sinner*. The sermon of this night convinces me of that, if nothing else. And, good Lord, You know when I say I am a sinner, I do not mean what I used to mean by that word. I mean that I am a *real* sinner. I mean that if You should damn me, I deserve it. If You should cast me from Your presence forever, it is only what I have merited richly. O my Lord I am a sinner! I am a hopeless sinner, unless You save me. I am a helpless sinner, unless You deliver me. I have no hope in my self-righteousness. And Lord, I bless Your name—there is one thing more—I am a sorrowful sinner, for sin grieves me. I cannot rest, I am troubled. Oh, if I could get rid of sin, I would be holy even as God is holy. Lord I believe”?

But I hear an objector cry out, “What, Sir, believe that Christ died for me simply because I am a sinner!” Yes, even so. “No, Sir, but if I had a little righteousness. If I could pray well, I should then think Christ died for me.” No, that would not be faith at all, that would be *self-confidence*. Faith believes in Christ when it sees sin to be black and trusts in Him to remove it all. Now, poor Sinner, with all your sin about you, take this promise in your hands, go home tonight, or if you can, do it before you get home—go home, I say, upstairs, alone, down by the bedside and pour out your heart, “O Lord, it is all true that that man said. I am condemned and Lord, I deserve it. O Lord, I have tried to be better and I have done nothing with it at all, but have only grown worse. O Lord, I have slighted Your grace, I have despised Your Gospel. I wonder You have not damned me

years ago. Lord, I marvel at myself, that You suffer such a base wretch as I am to live at all.

“I have despised a mother’s teaching, I have forgotten a father’s prayers. Lord, I have forgotten You. I have broken Your Sabbath, taken Your name in vain. I have done everything that is wrong and if You condemn me, what can I say? Lord, I am dumb before Your presence. I have nothing to plead. But Lord, I come to tell You tonight, You have said in the Word of God, ‘Him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.’ Lord, I come. My only plea is that You have said, ‘This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.’ Lord, I am a sinner, He came to save me. I trust in it—sink or swim—Lord, this is my only hope. I cast away every other and hate myself to think I ever should have had any other. Lord, I rely on Jesus only.

“Do but save me and though I cannot hope by my future life to blot out my past sin, O Lord, I will ask of You to give me a new heart and a right spirit, that from this time forth even forever, I may run in the way of Your Commandments. For, Lord, I desire nothing so much as to be Your child. You know, O Lord, I would give all, if You would but love me. And I am encouraged to think that You do love me. For my heart feels so. I am guilty, but I should never have known that I was guilty if You had not taught it to me. I am vile, but I never should have known my vileness, unless You had revealed it. Surely, You will not destroy me, O God, after having taught me this. If You do, You are Just, but—

**‘Save a trembling sinner, Lord
Whose hopes still hovering round Your Word,
Would light on some sweet promise there,
Some sure support against despair.’ ”**

If you cannot pray such a long prayer as that, I tell you what to go home and say. Say this, “Lord Jesus, I know I am nothing at all. Be You my precious All in All”

Oh, I trust in God there will be some tonight that will be able to pray like that and if it is so, ring the bells of Heaven! Sing you seraphim! Shout, you redeemed! For the Lord has done it and glory be unto His name, forever and ever! Amen.

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THE CURSE AND THE CURSE FOR US NO. 2093

DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, MAY 26, 1889,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them. But that no one is justified by the Law in the sight of God is evident, for the just shall live by faith. Yet the law is not of faith, but, the man who does them shall live by them. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us for it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”
Galatians 3:10-14.

THE Apostle tells us, in the eighth verse, that the Gospel was preached to Abraham. Very briefly, very tersely but very fully was the Gospel proclaimed to him in those words, “In you shall all families of the earth be blessed.” The true Gospel is no new thing, it is as old as the hills. It was heard in Eden, before man was driven from the garden and it has since been repeated in sundry ways and in many places, even to this day. Oh, that its very antiquity would lead men to venerate it and then to listen to its voice! It is “Gospel,” or good news—the best of news for fallen men. Oh, that they would receive it with gladness!

The Gospel blessing which was thus preached to Abraham and to his seed, came to him by faith. He was justified by his faith, as it is written, “Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” The blessing, which is the soul of Abraham’s Gospel, must come to us in the same way as it did to him, namely, by faith. And if we expect to find it in any other way, we shall be grievously mistaken. There were some in Paul’s day who were “of the works of the Law,” and expected to obtain the blessing through their own doings. But they could not find it. We have many around us who are practically looking for Gospel blessings upon legal principles.

The object of our sermon is to show them their certainty of failure. And, at the same time, to make clear that way of faith by which the curse is rolled away and the blessing comes to the chosen seed.

To begin with—our first head is this—Blessedness comes not to those who are of the works of the Law. And the second head will be, Blessedness comes to those who are of faith. We shall need no other divisions but we shall greatly need the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit that by His Grace these may be plainly and powerfully set forth before our minds. I want so to speak that you shall go with me, not in hearing only, but in *feeling* and in *believing*, practically taking home and feeling the power of the Truth of God.

When a minister is studying a sermon, his best preparation comes through his feeling, himself, the power of his subject. He rehearses his discourse before the little audience of his own heart and conscience. And

in observing the effect produced, he arrives at some idea of how the Word will operate upon others. He that has run the gauntlet of a Truth of God and felt all the heavy blows which it levels at his own conscience is likely to deliver that Truth to others with tender sympathy and full assurance. Such a preparation, I think, I have had—and I pray that you may be benefited by it.

I. Let us learn, at the outset, that BLESSEDNESS COMES NOT TO THOSE WHO ARE OF THE WORKS OF THE LAW.

First, observe the fact, as the Apostle states it very positively—“As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse.” You cannot be under the curse and yet be partakers of the blessing. A man cannot be in darkness and in light at the same moment—he cannot be under the curse of the Law and under the blessing of the Gospel, too. All who are of the works of the Law are under the curse and consequently none of them are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Note well the persons spoken of—“As many as are of the works of the Law”—that is, all of you who hope, by the works of the Law, to commend yourselves to God. We are all “of the works of the Law” by *nature*, because it is our bounden duty, as creatures, to keep the Law of our Creator. He is our Benefactor, our King, our Lord and God, and He has claims upon us which we ought not to disown. He has set forth those claims in the Law of the Ten Commandments and these are binding upon all of us, without exception. Because we have disobeyed that Law and denied to God His just claims, our violation of the Law has brought us under its penalty, which is described as “the curse.”

No man has always kept all the Law and consequently every man that is of the works of the Law has come under the curse and must remain under it unless ransomed in the one appointed fashion. If you read those Ten Commandments through, as you should do very carefully, you will have to pause at each one and say, with solemn truthfulness, “I have broken this.” Especially will this be the case if you remember the truth that the Law is spiritual and deals with thoughts, desires, imaginations, motives—yes, with your nature itself.

Surely you will have to cry, “Guilty! Guilty!” Every way and “guilty” every day. This being the case, you are under the curse. You may have been moral and outwardly commendable. But the heart and intent are what the Lord looks at. And because you have not loved the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength—and have not loved your neighbor as yourself—you have come short of the demands of His righteous Law and you are under the curse.

I beseech you to remember that this is a matter which concerns you *now*. “As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse.” Not only shall you be so in the day when, “Depart, you cursed,” will be the final and hopeless doom of the wicked. But *today* you are under the curse if you are of the works of the Law. If the unsaved could really understand and believe this, they would hardly keep their seats. If you are not by Christ redeemed from the curse of the Law. If you have not, by faith, appropriated His great sacrifice, you are under the present curse of God.

Even the Gospel does not bless you, for, “He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed on the Son of God.” O my Hearer, I could weep to think that you are under the curse. A deathbed is

a dreadful place to an unpardoned sinner. But I am not speaking of a deathbed—I am now talking of the seat where you sit in health and strength. If you are of the works of the Law, that seat now holds a man under the curse. I am not talking now of thieves and murderers and such like. I am speaking of as many as are of the works of the Law and especially of those who believe that they are keeping the Law and are looking for salvation by their obedience.

Those who think that they are not to be numbered with the guilty and need not to be saved by Divine Grace—these are of the works of the Law by their own choice—and they are under the curse. If you come before God in your own self-righteousness, you are, by that very act and deed, proven to be under the curse. The brand of Cain is not on your brow but the curse is working in your heart. As this city of London seemed last night and this morning to lie under a cloud charged with tempest, so does the man who looks to the Law for life abide under a cloud of wrath which may burst upon him at any moment. Oh, that the gloom and oppression of spirit which comes of that cloud of threat would pain you greatly and drive you to Christ for shelter!

That you may no longer abide in false security, I pray that you, for a few moments, weigh those words, “under the curse.” I do not feel as if I could expand them or expound them. But I must simply repeat them—“UNDER THE CURSE!” The Lord make those words to pierce your souls! This is not *my* language, remember. It is not even the word of the Apostle Paul as a man. For he speaks by inspiration when he says, “As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse.” How shall I pronounce these words with sufficient solemnity? When the sermon is printed, in what type shall the printer set up these words, “UNDER THE CURSE”?

“The curse causeless shall not come,” but this is a curse with a cause of overwhelming conclusiveness. It is a curse that was pronounced of old by the authority of the Lord and confirmed by the Amens of assembled Israel. It is, in fact, the essence of all those curses which of old were declared on Mount Ebal, the rolling thunder of threatened wrath. “As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse,” even as the Shorter Catechism puts it, “They have lost communion with God, are under His wrath and curse and so are made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of Hell forever.”

Dare you sleep tonight under the curse? Will you wake tomorrow and go forth to your business under the curse? Can you sport and laugh and frolic under the curse? God grant we may be sufficiently sensible to be filled with anguish at the sound of these dreadful words—“under the curse”!

The Apostle goes on to give a Scriptural confirmation of this fact. He says, “For it is written.” He is writing a part of the New Testament under inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But he turns back to the Old and gives authority to his writing by showing that it always was the mind of the Spirit, “for it is written.” If anything is written by the pen of inspiration, it is true, and we accept it as infallible. I hope you are not among those who trifle with the inspiration of any part of Holy Writ. For if so, this text has no power with you. “It is written” is a thing of omnipotent authority with many of us.

“It is written, Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.” This is the summary of the

whole passage in the twenty-seventh chapter of Deuteronomy and also of the eleventh verse of the seventh chapter of that book.

Attend to each word of the passage quoted. There is no exemption of persons. "Cursed is *everyone* that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the Law." Every offender comes under the curse. Is it the king, the priest, the nobleman?—he is under the curse. Or is it the poorest of the land—the slave, the beggar, the fallen woman?—sin brings them under the curse. Prince or pariah, it is all the same—if the Law is not perfectly continued in, the curse follows. The sentence is sweeping. There are no exceptions to its killing force. You may have kept the Law in many points but if you have broken it in *one*, you are under its curse.

If you want to send a message by the telegraphic wire, it may be perfectly sound for one hundred miles but if it is only broken in one inch, no, if it is simply cut across, you cannot send the message by it. No blessing can come to a man by the Law unless the Law has been perfectly kept. But one single infraction of the Law involves the curse. The possibility of blessing on the footing of justice is gone when sin enters in. Thus, every man of every rank and grade and external character, since he has not continued in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them, has come under the curse.

Observe that there is no limit of time. It says, "continues not." What if a man should have kept the Law, in his own judgment, for many years? His service is not over. Men join our army for a certain number of years and then they are discharged. But a man is under the Law so long as he lives—he cannot escape from under its yoke by the mere lapse of time. And so, if we had accomplished obedience for twenty years, yet still, if in the next year we broke the Law, we should come under its curse. A thief is not excused because he was up to now honest, nor a murderer because at some prior time he had not shed blood.

He that "continues not" comes under the lash. My conscience clearly sees the utter impossibility of my ever obtaining justification by the works of the Law. If, up till now, I had never sinned, which, alas, is very, very far from being the case, yet I should still stand in jeopardy every hour. For, being tempted, I should yet fall and perish if my footing were that of the Law. Even the just could not live by legal principles. Their only hope is to live by *faith*. As for us defiled and polluted sinners, we are, from the beginning, out of the running, if the race is by works—no lapse of time will enable us to start. And if we did start, no time would arrive when we could say, "It is finished."

A Methuselah would be under the Law in his nine hundredth year. Still might the curse fall on him, even though, up till then, he had stood firm. Thus says the Lord, "When the righteous turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall even die thereby." On that footing none of us could hope to remain free from the curse. But the case is worse—for if we are of the works of Law—we are already under the curse.

Observe that there is no indulgence as to certain sins. "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things." What a range these words have! Yet they do not so much concern ceremonial things as the moral conduct of daily life. If you will turn to Deuteronomy 27, from which Paul is quoting, you will find that the works which are mentioned in detail as bringing the curse, are not works of worship, oblation, and ritual—but of *morality* or *immorality*—works which concern the *moral* law. We must continue in

the keeping of the Ten Commandments and abide in the spirit of them in “all things.” Or, if not, it is utterly impossible that the Law can ever save us—all it can do is to put us under its curse.

Once more, here is no narrowing of the demand. It is put, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the Law to do them.” If a man does nothing wrong, yet if he fails to do that which is right, he is guilty. Omission is as truly a defect as commission. He misses the mark who shoots beyond it or falls short of it. If you make a single omission of duty on the footing of Law you are a lost man. If you have omitted, at any time, to love the Lord your God with the whole force and intensity of your nature, if you have omitted in any degree to love your neighbor as yourself, you have committed a breach of the Law.

Not to obey is to disobey. Who can plead innocence, if this is so? How cutting is the sentence, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them”! It is an awful passage! It seems to me to shut up the gate of hope by works—yes, to nail it up tight. I bless God it does fasten this door effectually. For if there seemed to be half a chance of getting through it, we should find men still struggling for entrance.

Salvation by self is man’s darling hope—salvation by doings, feelings, or something or other of their own, is the favorite delusion of sinners. We may bless God that He has rolled a great stone at the mouth of the grave of legal hope. He has dashed in pieces as with a rod of iron the earthen vessel which held the treasures of our conceit. “By the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.”

To complete this, the Apostle gives us a piece of what I must call side evidence. He has stated the fact and confirmed it by Scripture. He now gives side evidence from other Scriptures. Some might say, “There have been just men—men have been justified in the sight of God.” Yes, says Paul, turning to one passage out of very many which he might have quoted from Holy Scripture, the Lord says by His servant Habakkuk, “The just shall live by faith.” The only just men that ever have existed since the Fall have been justified by *faith*. And that their faith was of the essence of their justification is clear, since they *lived* by faith.

It is not said that the just shall rejoice by faith but they shall “*live* by faith.” Their very existence as just men hung upon their faith. They had no life before God except as they believed and lived. The Apostle argues that since the just men of the Old Covenant were justified by faith, it is clear *we* cannot be justified by the Law. For the Law is not of faith, since the Law says nothing of believing but speaks only of *doing*. The Law speaks nothing of Divine Grace, nothing of mercy, but only of justice and merit.

If anything that may be called mercy is due to men, it is clearly not mercy but justice. For all that is due is of justice. The Law speaks not of believing, it speaks only of doing—“The man that does those things shall live in them.” The one teaching of the Law is—“Obey and live. Disobey and die.” Inasmuch as those who did live unto God lived by their *faith*, it is clear it was not by the works of the Law. Thus the Apostle argues, negatively and positively, showing how men were *not* justified and showing how they *were* justified. And thus he makes it plain as a pikestaff that by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God.

My dear Hearers, let us deal faithfully and personally with the solemn Truth of God now before us. I pray that everyone may examine himself to see whether he is of the works of the Law. Are we legal in our feelings? Are we relying upon self and its doings? Does anyone among us feel that there is not in London a more deserving person than himself? Because he attends Church or Chapel regularly, does he think himself accepted of the Lord? Because of confirmation, or Baptism, or attendance of the sacrament, does he hope to be saved? Because of his decent and respectable life, does he reckon himself just?

If such is the hope of anyone of you, you are confessedly, “of the works of the Law,” and it is not *my* word but the Word of the *Lord*, that you are under the curse. Think of this, you who are so very good, so free from fault! There is nothing else for you but the curse. You are not in the same way as those men who are mentioned in the Scriptures as justified. For they lived by *faith* and you hope to live by *works*. As you are not in the same way, neither will you come to the same end. It is a thought which vexes you and possibly even makes you angry—that you should be under the curse. But it will be well for you to know the truth, however black it looks. Nothing remains but a fearful judgment. For where there is even now a curse, what else can there be but fiery indignation at the last?

We will stay no longer upon this most searching Truth of God. Alas, I cannot bring it home to the conscience! It needs a miracle of Divine Grace to get this Truth into the heart of man and to make him feel the full terror of it. It is so repugnant to our proud human nature that we incline to any error which will obscure it. Come, Holy Spirit, with Your Divine light and flash this Truth of God upon the sinner’s eyes in such a way that he must see it!

II. Secondly, THIS BLESSEDNESS COMES TO THOSE WHO ARE OF FAITH, even to those who look for salvation to the Lord Jesus, in whom God declares Himself to be just and the Justifier of him that believes.

On this point I shall run on much the same lines as under the first division of the subject. Here we have a blessed fact—“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law.” If the former tog, that we are under the curse, should make us sit uneasily, this blessed doctrine should make us dance for joy! The ransom is paid. We are free! “Christ has redeemed us.” That is, so many as believe in Him. He has “redeemed us from the curse of the Law.” “He has bought us out from under the curse.” Our deliverance from the curse is by a process similar to that by which slaves are set free, namely, by their being *bought with a price*.

We are not merely delivered from the curse by a moral change *in* us but by a redemptive work *for* us. Christ was slain and has redeemed us to God by His blood. A ransomed captive is by the ransom justly freed and has a right to his freedom which none may question. You that believe in Jesus are freed from the curse of the Law and justly freed from it. The Law cannot curse you, though you have broken it and in your own persons incurred its penalty. Since you are in Christ Jesus, the Law has not a word to say against you. The reason we will show you directly, but the fact is so, and therein you should rejoice. “He that believes in Him is not condemned.”

So far from being condemned, the Believer is, “accepted in the Beloved,” and this is our happy privilege at this hour. Let us rejoice in God and rest in peace, being justified by faith.

But then the Apostle goes on to show the manner of it. The fact is clear—oh, for a grip of it! The manner of our deliverance is this—“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.” I do not understand language at all, unless this means substitution. Christ was made a curse for us. That is to say, in our place He bore our sins and the curse which came of it. The curse of the Law, which otherwise must have fallen upon *us*, fell upon the Anointed of the Lord, who stood Sponsor for us.

Jesus was accursed of men. Oh, how they hated and loathed Him! How clamorously the Jews cried, “Away with Him! Crucify Him, crucify Him!” The curse of men might have been of small account, though it cost our Lord many a sorrow. But His Father hid His face from Him! Do you hear that bitterest of all bitter cries, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Here is the wormwood and the gall, the quintessence of woe. He was All-blessed, yet He was made a curse. In Him was no sin, yet, “He made Him to be sin for us.” He was always in Himself the Beloved of the Father. But when He stood in the sinner’s place, a voice was heard, “Awake, O sword, against My shepherd and against the man that is my Fellow, says the Lord.”

“The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all,” and then, “it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief.” I do not like to use a word of my own, in trying to open up this mystery—I will not even try to explain it but will bid you look down into the depths of it for yourselves. He was “*made a curse for us*”—he was not such by nature. It needed a special arrangement to put Him in that condition. Not only did the curse pass over Him in its results but the word says, “He was *made* a curse.” It is wonderfully expressive. And yet more wonderfully it veils the inexpressible.

“He was made a curse.” O You Divine Son of God! You ever-blessed One, you perfect One! You altogether lovely One, how can such words apply to You? Yet they do apply, for the Holy Spirit speaks of You in this wise. Here is our hope and here our joy, even in this abyss of woe—“He was made a curse for us.” The penal consequences of sin were so visited upon the great Substitute that He vindicated the Law of God in the highest conceivable manner. Remember those words—“Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.”

These are the echo of that Prophetic sentence—“The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” “He bore the sin of many.” “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” He bore our sins that He might bear them away by the fact of bearing them Himself. This is the central doctrine of the Gospel. And although today it is slighted, here I stand, by God’s Grace, to declare it in plain terms while my tongue can move. I know no other hope for lost men but this—that the justice of God has been vindicated by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and it is by faith in Him that men are delivered from the curse of the Law, because He was made a curse for them.

The Apostle, speaking in this second part, as it were, in the same way as in the former portion, goes on to confirm this by Scripture. He says again, “For it is written.” Beloved, that is the nail on which everything must hang—“It is written,” “It is written.” Never let us get away from, “It is written.” May we hold fast to God’s Word, if we give up everything else! “It is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” Read the twenty-third

verse of the twenty-first chapter of Deuteronomy. The instructed in Jewish manners and customs tell us that the usual way of putting to death by the Jews was by stoning and a person who committed murder was stoned to death usually and he was *afterwards* hanged upon a tree.

He was hanged up that men might see that he was taken from the earth and that the curse of God was upon him for his crime. The Law was that he should not remain on the tree after sundown and this Law saved the Jews from that barbarity which once defaced our own country—leaving the body of the hanged in chains year after year. God's Law stipulated a man who had committed murder was to hung up till the sun went down. And then he was buried and, if I remember rightly, they usually buried the tree and the nails and the garments of the criminal, that the memory of him might be put away and the land should not be polluted.

This being the case, it was remarkable that our Lord should die by a death which was evidently intended in the Divine decree to exhibit Him as made a curse. The felon's hanging, the mode of death for slaves, was adopted by the Roman governor, who knew nothing whatever of the Divine purpose but yet carried it out. By the mode of His death our Lord was exhibited as "made a curse for us."

Oh, look you to the Crucified! While the darkness gathers around us on this murky morning, let it remind you of the gloom which gathered around your Savior. Remember the hour when the concentrated essence of darkness and of eternal night gathered about His blessed Person while He hung exposed to death upon the tree. Darkness was the most fit surrounding for the agony which racked His soul. Our Lord endured within Him a darkness greater than that without Him.

The darkness seemed to say that His griefs could not be seen or understood of men. He suffered within the sacred chamber of an impenetrable midday midnight. None could see the heights and depths of what was meant by His being "made a curse"—

***"There my God bore all my guilt
This through Divine Grace can be believed.
But the horrors which He felt
Are too vast to be conceived."***

Notice, furthermore, the consequence of all this—"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." Our Lord Jesus Christ was made a curse for us that He might deliver us from the curse of the Law, and that in consequence we might be blessed. The flood of blessing was ready to flow along its channel but the riverbed was blocked by a huge rock. The stream was dammed up by our iniquity. What was to be done? The hindrance could only be moved by that great Lord, whose hands were pierced and whose feet were nailed to the Cross. He, by His great self-sacrificing act of love, lifted the rock from its place, cast it away and enabled the stream of blessing to flow freely down to us.

This day there is no *curse* for the Believer. But every *blessing* awaits him. All who are in Christ, the great seed of Abraham, are blessed with faithful Abraham. The Covenant may be summed up in this one word—Blessing, blessing, blessing—blessing for the Believer and blessing through him. What was the blessing of Abraham? It was, first, justification. It was "accounted to him for righteousness." God counts them righteous who believe in Jesus. He not only absolves you from sin but He justifies you, accounts you as having kept the Law. Oh, rejoice in this and be glad!

The next blessing to Abraham was the promise. God had given him a great promise of a spiritual inheritance. To us the Holy Spirit is the earnest of that future inheritance—and Christ has so worked for us, “that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Wherever the Spirit of God dwells, the covenant is fulfilled—you have in the Spirit the foretaste of the promised rest, you have the initial stages of the promised perfection—you have the dawn of the promised glory. The Spirit is the earnest of the inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His Glory.

Beloved, see what has come to you, then, through the substitutionary work of Christ! Justification is yours as truly as it was Abraham’s, and you are as assuredly justified as Abraham was. The promise also comes to you even as it did to Abraham. For you are Abraham’s seed in Christ and you are blessed with faithful Abraham. You may rejoice, therefore, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. All this, you observe, is by *faith*—“That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

O dear Hearers, I am very sorry for some of you—for you have no faith and therefore no Grace. Why should not my sorrow be turned into joy? May God the Holy Spirit lead you to believe in Christ Jesus today! My wonder is that *any* believe, from one point of view. And then my next wonder is that anybody should *not* believe. Is it not marvelous that God should give His own dear Son, God, like Himself? And that God should thus come among men and put on human flesh and blood—and that in His wonderfully complex Person He should bear the consequences of our sin?

It is a miracle that God should, by suffering, magnify His own Law and that the Supreme Judge should Himself bear the curse, instead of the culprit, and thus vindicate the principles of eternal rectitude. Even Hell itself could not more fully prove the displeasure of God against evil, nor make the moral government of the universe more honorable. The doctrine of Substitution must be true. It could not have been invented by human wit. *Prima facie* it bears the mark of the Truth of God upon it.

It is the most wonderful story that ever was told—God Himself condescends to suffer in the place of His enemies. He bears the sin of those who are rebels against His Divine authority—and without injury to His justice or taint upon His righteousness—He pardons sin and receives the sinner into favor. Herein is love, indeed! Here is justice truly vindicated and great love glorified. Love both devised the plan and carried it out and this day love makes it effectual in all who believe in Jesus.

O my Hearers, I cannot be content to preach this glorious Truth of God to you. I hunger and thirst that you may receive it! Oh, that you would now look to Jesus and live! Behold Him on the Cross! Behold your God, whom you have offended, clothed in your nature and dying in your place, that you may live! The serpent of brass is on the pole—the serpent has bitten the people, they are ready to die. And lo, on the pole another serpent is uplifted. The curse destroys you. The Lord uplifts Him who was made a curse.

Those who looked to the brazen serpent found life and healing in that look. And even so, there is life from sin by *looking* to Him who was made sin for us. Though the serpent’s poison was deadly, its bites were cured by a *look* at the brazen serpent. And even so, my Lord becomes a man and, as a man, bears our sin in His own body on the tree, that He might from

that tree cry to guilty men, "Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else."

Oh, that you would look to Jesus by faith! I began by lamenting that we are under the curse. But if you will trust in my Lord, I shall conclude by bidding you rejoice that, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law."

I have done when I just say these two or three practical words—Humbly let us own the great evil of sin. What a horrible thing sin must be, that it should compel God to curse His creatures! God is Love but even love curses sin. God is full of pity and compassion. But this very God must curse those who hope to be saved by His Law and yet break that Law. Child of God, do you ever trifle with sin? Cease from that fatal folly. For God does not trifle with it—He curses it.

O Man, see what a polluting thing your sin must be, since there is no removing it except by the blood of the only begotten Son of God! If you have ever had faint views of your own guilt, cease from them at once. Only by the interposition of God Himself could you be saved from guilt. How great that guilt! Lie low before your Lord. Confess your sin with a broken heart. Wonder that your heart is not more broken than it is and that you have not a greater horror of its tremendous, its infinite, evil.

Next, let me say to you, heartily accept the way of salvation by faith in Christ. I cannot make out why men quarrel with justification by faith as they now do. There is an old proverb which says, "It is a pity for any man to quarrel with his bread and butter." But to quarrel with the means of your livelihood is nothing in folly compared with laughing at God's way of salvation. Why do you refuse a method so simple, so just to God, so safe to man? Why do men desire to find fault with it? I am very old-fashioned, so they say. But does their new fashion offer men anything better than the old way?

I am not too old to learn. But I am not so young as willingly to go further and fare worse. I cannot see what there is in the new theology which even pretends to be better than the old. I suppose that eminent Divine is eminently superior to me who is so orthodox as to say that our Lord Jesus Christ by His death did something or other, he does not know what, which in some way or other, he does not quite know how, is connected with the reconciliation of man to God. This is rather a cloudy Gospel. I do not think that such a dim statement would cheer a mouse, much less a broken-hearted, dying sinner.

I do not see that his plan, or want of plan, has any glory over that which I declare to you. But he is orthodox—very many of his Brethren go far further and altogether deny the expiatory sacrifice. I cannot pretend to have fellowship with such—they take from me my hope. I was a broken-hearted sinner, crushed under guilt, crying out in despair and expecting soon to be in Hell. And it was only when I learned that the Lord Jesus suffered in my place that I found peace of conscience.

Substitution is still the rock on which I build and I know of no other on which a man can wisely base his hope for eternity. Comfort in the Cross I have never lost, and I am not going to cast away my confidence in it to please the philosophers of the season. The old farmer would not change his horse, "For," he said, "I have not seen a nag that will carry me better than my own." The doctrine of the Cross has carried me so far without a

stumble and I hope to enter Heaven by its means. I am glad to sing with the children—

***“He knew how wicked we had been,
And knew that God must punish sin—
So, out of pity, Jesus said
He’d bear the punishment instead.”***

Glorious atonement! Accept it, poor Soul! Do not let the devil set you laughing at your only hope. This is the available way of salvation for you, you lost one! You self-condemned one—this is a way which will suit you! If you are so very good and so very wise, I know that this gracious method will not attract you. You will kick at it. This does not make me think any the less of it. For I remember that our Lord is set to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to those who stumble at His Word, being disobedient. If you will not have Him, do not deceive yourselves—we never thought you would.

You do but prove that the Father has hid these things from the wise and prudent and has revealed them unto babes. You come not to Him because you are not of His sheep, as He said unto you. If you were brought low and felt your need of Him, then should we hope that Jesus reckoned you among His redeemed. If you would hear His voice and follow Him, then should we know that you belonged to the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep. But as you disregard Him, you will be driven away with the goats.

Further, let us now gratefully extol our Redeemer. Join all of you to magnify the Lord your Savior. We do not praise Him half as much as we ought. I might even ask, Do we say anything about Him? Six days in the week we talk about all sorts of things and say little or nothing about Him and yet He has redeemed us. The fact of His being made a curse for us ought to fill our mouths with thanksgiving and our tongues with singing all the day long. Blessed be the Redeemer’s name! “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” Extol Him now and evermore—if you have not done so before, begin at once. Get your music ready. “O sing unto the Lord a new song.”

Then go and tell other people about your Lord’s redemption. The theme will win attention if properly set forth. Let no one within fifty miles of you be without a knowledge of this great redemption by Christ’s being made a curse for us. Men try to hide this Truth of God—therefore let us cause it to shine out everywhere. Vindicate the name of your great Lord by telling everybody that He has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.

If I could set you all preaching this blessed doctrine, I should rejoice, indeed. Rest in it and rejoice in it, and then repeat it till others also know and believe it. Even now the day begins to brighten up, the murky darkness is abating—I hope our hearts will rejoice in harmony with the day. The Lord send us out into a world delivered from darkness. May we make it brighter by setting before it this great Truth of God! To our glorious Substitute be glory forever and ever! Amen.

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LIFE BY FAITH

NO. 814

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 7, 1868,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“The just shall live by faith.”
Galatians 3:11.

THE Apostle quotes from the Old Testament, from the second chapter of Habakkuk, at the fourth verse, and thus confirms one Inspired statement by another. Even the just are not justified by their own righteousness, but live by faith. It follows, then, most conclusively, that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God. If the best of men find no justification coming to them through their personal virtues but stand accepted only by faith, how much more such imperfect beings, such frequent sinners as ourselves? Men who are saved by faith become just. The operation of faith upon the human heart is to produce love, and through love, obedience, and obedience to the Divine Law is but another name for morality, or, what is the diviner form of it, holiness!

And wherever this holiness exists we may make sure that the holiness is not the *cause* of spiritual life and safety, but faith is still the wellspring of all. You saw, a few weeks ago, the hawthorn covered with a delicious luxuriance of snow-white flowers, loading the air with fragrance. Now no one among the admiring gazers supposed that those sweet May blossoms caused the hawthorn to live. After awhile you noticed the horse chestnut adorned with its enchanting pyramids of flowers, but none among you foolishly supposed that the horse chestnut was sustained and created by its bloom—you rightly conceived these forms of beauty to be the *products* of life and not the cause of it.

You have here, in nature's emblems, the true doctrine of the inner life. Holiness is the *flower* of the new nature. It is inexpressibly lovely and infinitely desirable—no, it must be produced in its season or we may justly doubt the genuineness of a man's profession—but the fair Graces of holiness do not save, or give spiritual life, or maintain it—these are rills from the fount, and not the fountain itself. The most athletic man in the world does not live by being athletic, but is athletic because he lives and has been trained to a perfection of animal vigor. The most enterprising merchant holds his personal property not on account of his character or merit, but because of his civil rights as a citizen.

A man may cultivate his land up to the highest point of production, but his right to his land does not depend upon the mode of culture, but rather upon his title deeds. So the Christian man should aim after the highest degree of spiritual culture and of heavenly perfection, and yet his *salvation*, as to its justness and security, depends not on his attainments, but rests upon his *faith* in a crucified Redeemer, as it is written in the text, “The just shall live by faith.” Faith is the fruitful root, the inward channel of sap, the great life-Grace in every branch of the vine.

In considering the text, this morning, we shall use it, perhaps somewhat apart from the connection in which it stands, and yet not apart from

the mind of the Spirit, nor apart from the intention of the Apostle, if not here, yet in other places.

I. In the first place, IN THE PUREST SPIRITUAL SENSE IT IS TRUE THAT THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH. It is through faith that a man becomes just, for otherwise, before the Law of God he is convicted of being unjust—being justified by faith he is enrolled among the just ones. It is through faith that he is at first quickened and breathes the air of Heaven, for naturally he was dead in trespasses and sins. Faith is the first sure sign of the spiritual life within the human breast. He repents of sin and looks to Jesus because he believes the testimony of God's Son—and he believes that testimony because he has received a new life.

He depends upon the atoning blood of Jesus because his heart has received the power to do so by the Holy Spirit's *gift* of spiritual life. Ever afterwards you shall judge of the vigor of the man's inner life by the state of his faith—if his faith grows exceedingly, then his life, also, is increasing in power. If his faith diminishes, then depend upon it, the vital spark burns low. Let faith ebb out and the life-floods are ebbing too. Let faith roll in with a mighty sweep, in a floodtide of full assurance, then the secret life-floods within the man are rising and filling the man with sacred energy. Were it possible for faith to die, the spirit-life must die, too. And it is very much because faith is imperishable that the new life is incorruptible.

You shall find men only *live* before God as they *believe* in God and rest in the merit of His dear Son. And in proportion as they do this you shall find they live in closer fellowship with Heaven. Great saints must be great Believers—Little-Faith never can be a matured saint. Observe that this truth proves itself in all the characteristics of spiritual life. The nobility of the inner life—who has not noticed it? A man whose life is hid with Christ in God is one of the aristocrats of this world. He who knows nothing of the inner life is but little above a mere animal, and is by no means comparable to the sons of God—to whom is given the royal priesthood, the saintly inheritance. In proportion as the spiritual life is developed the man grows in dignity, becoming more like the Prince of Glory, yet the very root and source of the dignity of the holy life lies in faith.

Take an instance. The life of Abraham is remarkable for its placid nobility. The man appears at no time to be disturbed. Surrounded by robber bands he dwells in his tent as quietly as in a walled city. Abraham walked with God and does not seem to have quickened or slackened his pace. He maintained a serene, obedient walk, never hastening through fear, nor loitering through sloth. He kept sweet company with his God—and what a noble life was his! The father of the faithful was second to no character in history! He was a kingly man, yes, a conqueror of kings and greater than they. How calm is his usual life! Lot, following his carnal prudence, is robbed in Sodom and at last loses all—Abraham following his *faith* abides as a pilgrim, and is safe. Lot is carried away captive out of a city, but Abraham remains securely in a tent, because he cast himself on God.

When does Abraham fail? When does that mighty eagle suddenly drop as with wounded wing? It is when the arrow of *unbelief* has pierced him—he begins to tremble for Sarah, his wife. She is fair—perhaps the Philistine king will take her from him. Then, in an unbelieving moment, he says, "She is my sister." Ah, Abraham, where is your nobility now? The man who so calmly and confidently walked with God while he believed, de-

grades himself to utter the thing that is not, and so falls to the common level of falsehood.

Even so will you. So shall each of us—strong or weak, noble or fallen—according to our faith. Walking confidently with God and leaning upon the everlasting arm you shall be as a celestial prince surrounded by ministering spirits. Your life shall be happy and holy, and glorious before the Lord! But the moment you distrust your God you will be tempted to follow degrading methods of evil policy and you will pierce yourself through with many sorrows. As the *dignity*, so the *energy* of the spiritual life depends upon *faith*. Spiritual life, when sound, is exceedingly energetic. It can do all things. Take the Apostles, as an instance, and see how over sea and land, under persecutions and sufferings they nevertheless pressed forward in the Holy War and declared Christ throughout all nations.

Wherever the spiritual life fairly pervades man, it is a force which cannot be bound, fettered, or kept under—it is a holy fury, a sacred fire in the bones. Rules, and customs, and proprieties it snaps as fire snaps bonds of tinder. But its energy depends upon God the Holy Spirit—entirely upon the existence and power of *faith*. Let a man be troubled with doubts as to the religion which he has espoused, or concerning his own interest in the privileges which that religion bestows and you will soon find that all the energy of his spiritual life is gone—he will have little more than a name to live—practically he will be powerless.

Take Abraham again. Abraham finds that certain kings from the east have pounced upon the cities of the plain. He cares very little for Sodom or Gomorrah, but among the prisoners his nephew, Lot, has been carried away. Now he has a great affection for his kinsman and resolves to do his duty and rescue him. Without stopping to enquire whether his little band was sufficient, he relies entirely upon the Lord his God—and with his servants and neighbors hastens after the spoilers, nothing doubting, but *expecting* aid from the Most High God. That day did Jehovah, who raised up the righteous man from the east, give his enemies to his sword and as driven stubble to his bow—and the Patriarch returned from the slaughter of the kings laden with the spoil.

He could not but fight while he believed. It was impossible for him to sit still and yet believe in God! But if he had not believed, then had he said, “The matter must go by default. It is a sorrowful misfortune, but my nephew, Lot, must hear it—perhaps God’s Providence will interpose for him.” Faith believes in Providence, but she is full of *activity* and her activity, excited by reliance *upon* Providence leads like wheel within a wheel to the fulfillment of the Providential decree.

My Brethren, it is necessary for us to believe much in God or we shall do but little for Him. Believe that God is with you and you will have an insatiable ambition to extend the Savior’s kingdom! Believe in the power of the Truth of God, and in the power of the Holy Spirit who goes with the Truth, and you will not be content with the paltry schemes of modern Christendom—you will glow and burn with a seraph’s ardor, longing and desiring even to do more than you can do—and practically carrying out with your utmost ability what your heart desires for the glory of the Lord!

Further, it is quite certain that all the *joy* of the spiritual life depends upon faith. You all know that the moment your faith ceases to hang simply upon Jesus, or even if it suffers a little check, your joy evaporates. Joy

is a welcome angel but it will not tarry where faith does not entertain it. Spiritual joy is a bird of paradise which will build its nest only among the boughs of faith. Faith must pipe, or joy will not dance. Unbelieving Jacob finds his days few and evil but believing Abraham dies an old man and full of years.

If you would anoint your head and wash your face—and put away the ashes and the sackcloth—you must trust more firmly in the faithfulness of the Lord your God. Doubts and fears never could strike so much as a spark with which to light the smallest candle to cheer a Christian. But simple trust in Jesus makes the sun to rise in his strength with healing beneath his wings—even upon those that sit in the valley of the shadow of death. In proportion as you lean on Christ—in *that* proportion shall life's burden grow light, Heaven's joys grow real, and your whole being more elevated!

I might thus continue to mention each point in the secret life, but I rather choose to proceed in order to observe only that all our growth in the spiritual life depends upon our faith. True life must grow in its season. You can tell the difference between two stakes which are driven into the ground—the one may happen to have life in it, and if so, before long it sprouts—while the dead one is unchanged. So with the Christian. If he is living he will grow. He must make advances. It is not possible for the Christian to sit still and remain in the same state month after month. If he is to increase in spiritual riches he must of necessity exert a constant and increasing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter cannot walk the waters except he believes—doubting does not help him—it sinks him. I fear that some of my Brothers and Sisters try to grow in spiritual life by adopting methods which are *not of faith*. Some think that they will set themselves rules of self-denial or extra devotion—these plans are lawful but they are not in themselves effective—for vows may be observed mechanically, and rules obeyed formally and yet the *heart* may be drifting away yet further from the Lord. Yes, these vows and rules may be a means of deluding us into the vain belief that all is well, whereas we are nearing spiritual shipwreck.

I have found in my own spiritual life that the more rules I lay down for myself, the more sins I commit. The habit of regular morning and evening prayer is one which is indispensable to a Believer's life, but the prescribing of the *length* of prayer and the constrained remembrance of so many persons and subjects may gender unto *bondage* and *strangle* prayer rather than assist it. To say I will humble myself at such a time, and rejoice at such another season is nearly as much an affectation as when the preacher wrote in the margin of his sermon, "cry here," "smile here." Why, if the man preached his sermon rightly he would be sure to cry in the right place, and to smile at a suitable moment! And when the spiritual life is sound, it produces prayer at the right time—and humiliation of soul and sacred joy spring forth spontaneously—apart from rules and vows.

The kind of religion which makes itself to order by the almanac and turns out its emotions like bricks from a machine—weeping on Good Friday and rejoicing two days afterwards, measuring its motions by the moon—is too artificial to be worthy of your imitation! The liberty of the spiritual life is a grand thing and where that liberty is maintained constantly, and the energy is kept up, you will need much faith for the fading

of faith will be the withering of devotion, liberty will degenerate into license and the energy of your life will drivel into confidence in *yourself*. Let who will, bind himself with rules and regulations in order to (as he may *think*) advance himself in Divine Grace—be it ours, like Abraham, to believe God and it shall be counted us for righteousness—and like Paul to run the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus.

Faith enriches the soil of the heart. Faith fills our treasuries with the choicest gold and loads our tables with the daintiest food for our souls. By faith we shall do valiantly, stopping lions' mouths and quenching violent flames. Faith in Jesus, the Savior, faith in the heavenly Father, faith in the Holy Spirit—this we must have or we perish like foam upon the waters. As the other side of all this, let me notice that some Christians appear to try to live by *experience*. If they *feel* happy today they say they are saved. But if they feel unhappy tomorrow they conclude that they are lost. If they feel at one moment a deep and profound calm overspreading their spirits, then are they greatly elevated. But if the winds blow and the waves beat high, then they suppose that they are none of the Lord's people.

Ah, miserable state of suspense! To live by feeling is a dying life! You know not *where* you are, nor *what* you are if your *feelings* are to be the barometer of your spiritual condition. Beloved, a *simple* faith in Christ will enable you to remain calm even when your feelings are the reverse of happy—to remain confident when your emotions are far from ecstatic. If, indeed, we are saved by Jesus Christ, then the foundation of our salvation does not lie within *us* but in that crucified Man who now reigns in Glory!

When *He* changes, ah, then what changes must occur to us! But since He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, why need we be so soon removed from our steadfastness? Believe in Jesus, dear Heart, when you can not find a spark of Divine Grace within yourself! Cast yourself as a sinner into the Savior's arms when you can not think a good thought, nor uplift a good desire! When your soul feels like a barren wilderness that yields not so much as one green blade of hope, or joy, or love—still look up to the great Farmer who can turn the desert into a garden! Have confident faith in Jesus at all times, for if you believe in Him you are saved and cannot be condemned!

However good or bad your state, this shall not affect the question—you believe, therefore you shall be saved! Give up living from hand to mouth in that poor miserable way of frames and feelings, and wait only upon the Lord from whom comes your salvation. Many *professors* are even worse—they try to live by *experiments*. I am afraid a great many among Dissenters are of that kind. They must have a revival meeting once a week at least! If they do not get a grand display quite so often, they begin to fall dreadfully back and crave an exciting meeting, as drunkards long for spirits. It is a poor spiritual life which hangs on eloquent sermons and such like stimulants! These may be good things and comforting things—be thankful for them—but I pray you, do not let your spiritual life *depend* upon them!

It is very much as though a man should, according to Scriptural language, feed on the wind and snuff up the east wind—for your faith is not to stand in the wisdom of *man*, nor in the excellency of human speech, nor in the earnestness of your fellow Christians—but in your simple faith in Him who is, and was, and is to come, who is the Savior of sinners! A genuine faith in Christ will enable you to live happily even if you are de-

nied the means of Divine Grace. A genuine faith in Christ will make you rejoice on board ship, keep Sabbath on a sick bed, and make your dwelling a temple even if yours is but a log hut in the far West, or a shanty in the bush of Australia. Only have *faith*, and you need not look to these excitements any more than the mountains look to the summer's sun for their stability.

Shall I need further to say, by way of caution, that I am afraid many professors live anyway? I know not how otherwise to describe it! They have not enough caution to look at their inward experience. They have not enough vigor to care about excitement, but they live a kind of listless, dreamy, comatose life. I mean some of *you*. You believe that you were saved years ago. You united yourselves to a Christian Church and were baptized, and you conclude that all is right. You have written your conversion in your spiritual trade-books as a good asset—you consider it as a very clear thing. *I* am afraid it is rather *doubtful*, still *you* think it *sure*.

Since that time you have kept up the habit of prayer. You have been honest. You have subscribed to Church funds, have done your duty outwardly as a Christian—but there has been very little vitality in your godliness—it has been surface work, skin-deep consistency. You have not been grievously exercised about *sin*. You have not been bowed under the weight of inward corruption—neither have you been, on the other hand, exhilarated by a sense of Divine love and a delightful recognition of your interest in it. You have gone on dreamily, as I have heard of soldiers marching when they were asleep. O for a thunderbolt to wake you, for this is dangerous living! Of all modes of living, if you are a Christian, this is one of the most perilous!

And if you are *not* a Christian, it is one of the most seductive—for while the outward sinner may be got at by the preaching of the Gospel, you are almost beyond the reach of Gospel ministry—because you will not admit that warnings are meant for you. You wrap yourselves up and say, “It is well with me,” while you are really naked, and poor, and miserable in the sight of God. Oh, if you could but get back to live by faith!

II. Secondly, “the just shall live by faith”—this means that FAITH IS OPERATIVE IN OUR DAILY LIFE. It is operative in many ways, but three observations will suffice. Faith is the great sustaining energy with the just man under all his trials, difficulties, sufferings, or labors. It is a notion with some that true religion is meant to be kept shut up in Churches and Chapels as a proper thing for Sundays, which ought to be attended to, since a man is not respectable if he does not take a pew *somewhere*, even if he does not need sit in it, or, sitting in it, pays no more attention to the word preached than to a ballad singer in the street.

There is a decent show of religion which people, as a rule, must keep up or they cannot be received into polite society. But the idea of bringing religion down to the breakfast table, introducing it to the drawing-room, taking it into the kitchen, keeping it on hand in the shop, in the workshop, or the corn exchange, carrying it out to sea in your vessel—this is thought by some to be sheer fanaticism! And yet if there is anything taught by the Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is just this—that religion is a matter of common, everyday life—and no man understands the Christian religion at all unless he has fully accepted it as not a thing for

Sundays and for certain places and certain times, but for *all* places and *all* times, and *all* conditions and *all* forms of life.

An active, operative faith is by the Holy Spirit implanted in the Christian and it is sent to him on purpose to sustain him under trial. I shall put this to some of you as a test by which you may try whether you have obtained the faith of God's elect. You have lost a large sum of money—well, are you distracted and bewildered? Do you almost lose your senses? Do you murmur against God? Then I ask you what are *you* better than the man who has no religion at all? Are you not an unbeliever? If you believed that all things work together for your good, would you be so rebellious? Yet that is God's own declaration! Now is the time when your faith in God should enable you to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

What do you more than others unless you can thus speak with submission and resignation—yes, even with cheerfulness? Where is your new nature if you cannot say, "It is the Lord, let Him do as seems good to Him"? By this shall you test whether you have faith or not. Or it may be you have lost a darling child and that loss has cut you to the very quick. You are scarcely able to reconcile yourself at present to it. Yet I trust you do not so repine as to accuse your God of cruelty, but I trust your faith helps you to say, "I shall go to him, though he shall not return to me. I would not have it other than my heavenly Father has determined." Here will be a crucible for your faith!

Those two instances may serve as specimens. In all positions of life a real faith is to the Believer like the hair of Samson in which his great strength lies. It is his Moses' rod dividing seas of difficulty, his Elijah's chariot in which he mounts above the earth! So, too, in difficult labors, for instance, in labors for Christ's cause, a man who feels it his duty to do good in his neighborhood yet may say, "I do not know what I can do. I am afraid to commence so great a matter, for I feel so unfit, and so feeble." My dear Friend, if it is your duty to do it, your not being able to do it cannot excuse you because you have only to go and tell your heavenly Father of your weakness and ask for strength, and He will give it liberally.

Some of us who can now speak with ease were once very diffident in public. Those preachers who are now most useful were poor stammerers before their gifts were developed. And those who are our best teachers and most successful soul-winners were not always so. But they had faith and they pressed forward, and God helped them. Now, if your religion is not worth an old song you will not persevere in holy work. But if it is real and true you will press forward through all difficulties, feeling it to be an essential of your very existence that you should promote the Redeemer's cause. I would quite as soon not be, as live to be a useless thing. Better, far, to fatten the fields with one's corpse than to lie rotting above ground in idleness. To be a soldier in Immanuel's ranks, and never fight, never carry a burden, nor uphold a banner, nor hurl a dart—yes, better that the dogs should eat my worthless carrion than that such should be the case!

Feeling this, then, you will press forward with the little power you have and new power will come upon you—and so you will prove that your faith is sincere because it comes to your support in the ordinary work of Christian life. Under all difficulties and labors, then, the just shall live by faith.

Furthermore, faith in ordinary life has an effect upon the dispensations of Divine Providence. It is a riddle which we cannot explain how everything is eternally fixed by Divine purpose, and yet the prayer of faith moves the arm of God. Though the enigma cannot be explained, the fact is not to be denied. My Brothers and Sisters, I may be thought fanatical, but it is my firm belief that in ordinary matters, such as the obtaining of your living, the education of your children, the ruling of your household—you are to depend upon God as much as in the grand matter of the salvation of your soul! The hairs of your head are all numbered—go to God, then, about your trifles. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father—cast upon the Lord your minor trials.

Never think that anything is too little for your heavenly Father's love to think upon. He who rides upon the whirlwind walks in the garden at evening in the cool breath of the zephyr! He who shakes the avalanche from its Alp also makes the sere leaf to twinkle as it falls from the aspen! He whose eternal power directs the spheres in their everlasting marches guides each grain of dust which is blown from the summer's threshing floor! Confide in Him for the *little* as well as for the great and you shall not find Him to fail you. Is He God of the hills only, and not the God of the valleys?

“Are we to we expect *miracles*, then?” says one. No, but we expect the same *results* as are compassed by miracles. I have sometimes thought that for God to interpose by a miracle to accomplish a purpose is a somewhat clumsy method, if I may be allowed such a word. But for Him to accomplish the very same thing without interfering with the wheels of His Providence seems to me the more thoroughly God-like method. If I were hungry today and God had promised to feed me, it would be as much a fulfillment of His promise if my friend here brought my food unexpectedly as if the ravens brought it! And the bringing of it by ordinary means would all the better prove that God was there—not interrupting the machinery of Providence—but making it to educe the end which He designed.

God will not turn stones into bread for you, but perhaps He will give you stones to break and you will thus *earn* your bread. God may not rain manna out of Heaven and yet every shower of rain falling upon your garden brings you bread. It will be the better for you to earn your food than to have it brought by ravens, or better that Christian charity should make you its care than that an inexhaustible barrel and cruse should be placed in your cupboard. Anyhow, your bread shall be given you and your water shall be sure.

My witness is, and I speak it for the honor of God, that God is a good provider! I have been cast upon the Providence of God ever since I left my father's house, and in all cases He has been my Shepherd, and I have known no lack. My first income as a Christian minister was small enough in all conscience, never exceeding 40 pounds, yet I was as rich then as I am now, for I had enough! And I had no more cares, no, not half as many, then, as I have now! And when I breathed my prayer to God then, as I do now, for *all* things temporal and spiritual, I found Him ready to answer me at every pinch—and pinches I have had full many.

Many a monetary trial since then have I had in connection with the college work which depends for funds upon the Lord's moving His people to liberality. My faith has been often tried, but God has always been faithful

and sent supplies in hours of need. If any should tell *me* that prayer to God was a mere piece of excitement and that the idea of God's answering human cries is absurd, I should laugh the statement to scorn, for my experience is not that of one or two singular instances—but that of *hundreds* of cases in which the Lord's interposition for the necessities of *His* work has been as manifest as if He had rent the clouds and thrust forth His own naked arm and bounteous hand to supply the needs of His servant.

This, my testimony, is but the echo of the witness of the Lord's people everywhere. When they look back they will tell you that God is good to Israel and that when they have walked by faith they have never found that God has failed them. The Red Sea of trouble has been divided! The waters have stood upright as a heap, and the depths have been congealed in the heart of the sea! As for their doubts and their difficulties, like the Egyptians the depths have covered them, there has not been one of them left. And standing on the further shore to look back upon the past, the redeemed of the Lord have shouted aloud, "Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously," for faith has conquered all their difficulties and brought supplies for all their needs.

Do not let me be misunderstood, however. Faith is never to be regarded as a *premium* for idleness. If I sit down and fold my arms, and say, "The Lord will provide," He will most likely provide me a summons to the County Court and a place in the parish workhouse. God has *never* given any promise to idle people that He will provide for them, and therefore they have no right to believe that He will. To trust in God to make up for our laziness is not *faith*, but wicked *presumption*.

Neither does the power of faith afford ground for fanaticism. I have no right to say, "I should like to have so-and-so, and I will ask for it, and shall have it." God has never promised to give to us everything which our whimsies may select. If we really want any good thing we may plead the promise, "No good thing will I uphold from them that walk uprightly," but we must never dream that God will pander to our fooleries. The God of Wisdom will not be part and parcel with our mere whims. Nor is faith to be a substitute for prudence and economy. I have known some who have, to a great degree, abstained from energetic action because they feared to interfere with the Lord! This fear never perplexes me. My faith never leads me to believe that *God* will do for me what *I can do for myself*.

I do *not* believe that the Lord works needlessly. Up to the highest pitch that my own prudence, and strength and judgment can carry me, I am to go depending upon Divine guidance. Then I stop, for I can go no further—and I plead with my Father thus—"Now, Lord, the promise reaches further than this. It is Your business to make up the deficiency." There I pause, and God is as good as His word. But if I stop short when *I* might advance—how dare I ask the Lord to pander to my sloth? I believe, in Christian work, we ought for God to exert ourselves to the utmost, both in the giving of our substance and in the collecting help from our fellow Christians—and come in faith and prayer to the Lord for help.

Faith is operative in the land of the unseen, not in the seen. Faith is to come to your help where creature-power fails you. Up to the point at which you *can* work, you *must* work, and with God's blessing upon it your work will not hinder your faith but be an exhibition and display of it. Thus

with a simple faith in God, not fanatical, not idle, but going on in the path of prudence—desiring to glorify God—you shall find that all difficulties will vanish and your doubts and fears shall fly away.

Do understand that even faith itself will be no guarantee against trials and against poverty, for it is good for God's people to be tried and there are some of them who would not glorify God if they were not poor. Therefore, you are not to suppose that you have no faith because you are in need—neither are you to *expect* that in answer to prayer God will necessarily keep you in easy circumstances. If it is best for you that you should not be poor, He will keep you from it. But if it is better that you should be, He will sustain you in it. Resignation should walk hand-in-hand with faith, and they each will minister to the other's beauty.

III. Lastly, THIS IS ALSO TRUE IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AS A WHOLE. The Christian Church lives by faith. She lives by faith in opposition to speculation. Every now and then a fit of speculative philosophy seizes the Church and then her vitality withers. In the days of the school-men, just before Luther's time, good men were fighting and squabbling from morning to night—gathered like so many carrion crows around the dead body of Aristotle—fighting about nobody knows what. It is said that they held sage discussions upon how many angels could poise themselves upon the point of a needle!

While such foolish and unlearned questions as these were being raised, the poor people in the Christian Church were starved and the Church lost all its energy. Sinners were not converted, fundamental Truths of God were despised. Then came Luther and the notable revival. In more modern days, in the period after Doddridge and Watts, among Dissenters the habit of philosophizing upon the Trinity was common. Brethren tried to be very exact and precise, as exact and precise as the Athanasian creed—while others combated their dogmatism and the result was that a large proportion of the Dissenting Churches fell asleep practically—degenerated doctrinally, and Socinianism threatened to eat out the very life of evangelical Dissent.

Speculation is not the life of the Christian Church, but *faith*, a reception of the Bible Truth in its sublimity and authority—an obedient belief in Revelation, not because we understand all its teachings, but because, not understanding, we nevertheless receive the Lord's Word upon the *ipse dixit* of the Most High. Whenever the Church is simple-minded enough to require no outworks to her faith, to care very little about evidences, *internal* or *external*—but just to fight the battle on the ground of Divine authority, saying, "This is of God, and at your peril reject it"—she has been "fair as the sun, clear as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners." Let her begin to split hairs, try to move away objections and spend all her time upon her outworks, and then her glory departs.

In the next place, faith is the life of the Church in opposition to reliving despondency. In our own Churches it used to be the habit for our friends to be very well content if they built a Chapel in the lowest part of a town, down two courts, three alleys, and a turning. And as to attendants, the members appeared to be particularly anxious to avoid anything like the excitement of a crowd. They were a most retiring people as a rule, but as to coming out into the forefront to set their city on a hill and make their light shine by evangelizing the masses, that was a forgotten business!

At the present hour, from other quarters you constantly hear expressions defiled with the most dastardly timidity, denoting the most shameful cowardice. For instance, lately we have heard that, "The Church is in danger!" "The Church is in danger!" Christians with their Bibles and all the Truths in the Bibles! Christians with their ministers and all their earnestness! Christians with the Holy Spirit, with God's promises, with the foundations against which the gates of Hell shall not prevail—and yet in *danger!* Really, such remarks and such fears are quite unworthy of the manhood of those who believe in the Divinity of the Christian faith.

No Church can make progress till she believes enough in her God to be sure that in Him she is strong! While she *imagines* that she is weak she *is* weak. Fear paralyzes her. Dread kills her energies. But when she believes in the Divine strength with which she is encountered as with a golden girdle, then she marches on with certainty of triumph! May we as a Church always believe that as long as we are resting upon the strength of God nothing can hurt us! I defy the House of Lords, the House of Commons, the Pope, the Turk and all the nations in all the world and all the devils in Hell to put this Church in danger! I do not know anything that they could take away from us, for I know of nothing which they have given us.

If *they* had endowed and established us, they could take away what they gave, but as they have not given us a thread to a shoelace, they can do whatever they please and we shall not even call a Church meeting to consider it. Yet here are other Churches, with Lord Bishops, and deans, and prebends and I know not what beside, which are horribly shaken because an arm of flesh is failing them! The pay of their preachers will by-and-by, by a gradual process, be withdrawn and they tremble for the ark of the Lord! Shame on your little minds, to be thus afraid! Surely you have lost confidence in the Truth of God and in God or you would not fear because of the talents of gold which will be justly withheld from you!

Remember that the Truth of God allied with *earthly* power has often been defeated by error—but the Truth of God alone has always *defeated* error—even when that error has had physical might upon its side. Let Truth have her fair chance and stand alone! She is most strong when least hampered with human strength, and most sure to be victorious when she has no might but that which dwells in herself or comes from her God!

In the next place, the Christian Church lives by faith, that is, faith in opposition to a squeamishness which I see springing up nowadays as to the selection of instruments. Let me be understood. I hear it is said, "Why allow these men to preach in the street? Is it not a pity that illiterate persons should preach at all? Some of them are very ungrammatical, and really, what they say at the very best is very so-so. Is it not better that none should go out but the best trained men?" Then, for missions, it is said the very best picked men, only, should be sent forth. As to young men, full of zeal, not having had experience and not having learned all the classics and being well up in mathematics—it is of no use thinking to send them!

Many a Church, indeed, thinks that all her officers ought to be rich, all her ministers learned, all her agents Masters of Arts, at least—if not Doctors of Divinity. This was not so in olden times. Thus it was not when the

Church of God grew mightily, for of old the Church of God had FAITH—in what? Why, faith in *weakness*! Faith in the things that *were not*! Did not she believe, “Not many noble, not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty are called; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised”?

It is very memorable that in the catacombs of Rome among those remarkable inscriptions which are now preserved with so much care as the memorials of the departed saints—it is rare to find an inscription which is all of it spelt correctly—proving that the persons who wrote them, who were no doubt the very pick of the Christian flock, could neither write nor spell correctly! And yet *these* were the men that turned the world upside down. When Wesley began *his* career, our Churches were nearly dead with the disease called, “proprieties,” but Mr. Wesley employed men, some of whom were quite unlettered, to go about to preach—and by those men this *nation* was revived!

To this day, our Primitive Methodist friends are doing a great and noble work for which God be thanked, because they use almost every man they have, and they use the men till they become fit to be used, trained and tutored by *practice*. In this Church I thank God I have always encouraged every Brother and Sister to do all they can—and I do still urge all so to do. I trust there is not a young man here who can say that I ever held him back in desiring to serve his Master. If I have, I am sure I am very sorry for it. Oh, all of you do all that you can—for this Church, at any rate—has faith in you all, that though you make a thousand blunders, yet it is better to have the Gospel preached blunderingly than not at all!

And while three millions and more in London are perishing for lack of knowledge, it is better that you spoil the Queen’s English and make ever such mistakes than that you should not preach Jesus Christ! God will not be angry with you for all your ignorance if you are not ignorant of the one thing necessary! So, Brethren, it comes to this—that we must not, as a Christian Church, calculate our resources, nor take out our note books and count up how much we have to rely upon. The treasury of the Church is the liberality of God! The power of the Church is the Omnipotence of Jehovah! The persuasions of the Church are the irresistible influences of the Holy Spirit! The destiny of the Church is an ultimate conquest over all the sons of men!

Advance then, every one of you to the fray, for you advance also to conquest! Rely upon Him who has said, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!” and you shall find that as the just you *shall* live by faith! If you sit down and waste your time, or turn your backs and retire from the battle, you shall be written among the cowards whose memorial is in the dust. But if you stand fast and are immovable, “always abounding in the work of the Lord,” your record shall be on high and your portion shall be at the right hand of the Father, where Christ sits, and where you shall also sit forever and ever. God bless these words for His name’s sake. Amen.

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THE CURSE REMOVED

NO. 3254

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 1911.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY AGO.**

***“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us:
for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.”
Galatians 3:13.***

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text is #873, Volume 15—
CHRIST MADE A CURSE FOR US—
read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org> .]

THE Law of God is a Divine Law, holy, heavenly, perfect. Those who find fault with the Law, or in the least degree depreciate it, do not understand its design and have no right idea of the Law itself. Paul says, “We know that the Law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.” In all that we ever say concerning justification by faith, we never intend to lower the opinion which our hearers have of the Law, for the Law is one of the most sublime of God’s works. There is not a commandment too many—there is not one too few! The Law of the Lord is so incomparable that its perfection is a proof of its Divinity. No human lawgiver could have given forth such a Law as this which we find in the Decalogue. It is a perfect Law, for all human laws that are right are to be found in that brief compendium and epitome of all that is good and excellent toward God, or between man and man.

But while the Law is glorious, it is never more misapplied than when anyone attempts to use it as a means of salvation! God never intended men to be saved by the Law. When He proclaimed it on Sinai, it was with thunder, lightning, clouds, fire and smoke, as if He would say, “O Man, hear My Law, but tremble while you hear it! It is proclaimed with the blast of the trumpet exceedingly loud, even as the great Day of Destruction will also be of which it is the herald, if you offend against it and find none to bear your doom for you.” It was written on stone, as if to teach us that it was a hard, cold, stony Law—one which would have no mercy upon us, but which, if we go against it, would fall upon us and grind us to powder! O you who are trusting in the Law for your salvation, you have erred from the faith—you do not understand God’s designs—you are ignorant of the Truths of God that He has revealed to us by His Holy Spirit! In the Chapter from which our text is taken, the Apostle says, “If

there had been a Law given which could have given life, verily righteousness would have been by the Law. But the Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise, by faith, of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe.” The Law was intended, by its terrors, to crush every hope of self-righteousness and, by its lightning, to scathe and demolish every tower of our own works—that we might be brought humbly to accept a finished salvation through the one Almighty Mediator who has magnified the Law and made it honorable, and brought in an everlasting righteousness wherein we stand complete in Christ if, indeed, we are in Him by a living faith. So you perceive that all that the Law does is to curse—it cannot bless. In all the pages of Revelation, you will find no blessings that the Law ever gave to one who had offended it. There were blessings for those who kept it completely—though none ever did—but no blessing is ever written for one offender. Blessings we find in the Gospel, curses we find in the Law.

This afternoon we shall briefly consider, first, *the curse of the Law*. Secondly, *the curse removed*. Thirdly, *the great Substitute who removed it* by “being made a curse for us.” And then, lastly, we shall solemnly ask one another whether we are included among the innumerable multitude for whom Christ was “made a curse.”

I. First, then, let us consider “THE CURSE OF THE LAW.” All who sin against the Law are cursed by the Law—all who disobey its commands are cursed, cursed instantly, cursed terribly.

We shall regard that curse, first, as being *a universal curse* resting upon everyone of the seed of Adam. Perhaps some here will be inclined to say, “Of course, the Law of God will curse all those who are loose in their lives or profane in their conversation. We can all of us imagine that the swearer is a cursed man, cursed by God. We can suppose that the wrath of God rests upon the head of the man who is filthy in his life, the man who is degraded and under the ban of society.” But, my Friends, the real Truth is that the curse of God rests upon everyone of us as by nature we stand before Him! You may be the most moral man in the world, yet the curse of God is upon you! You may be lovely in your life, modest in your carriage, upright in your behavior, almost Christ-like in your conduct, yet if you have not been born-again—if you have not been regenerated by the Holy Spirit—the curse of God still rests upon your head! If you have committed but one sin in your life, God’s Justice is so inexorable that it condemns you for that one solitary offense! And though your life should henceforth be one continued career of holiness, if you have sinned but once, unless you have a saving interest in the blood of Christ, the thunders of Sinai are meant to terrify you and the lightning of Divine Vengeance flash all around you!

Ah, my Hearers, how humbling is this truth to our pride—that the curse of God is upon everyone who is of the seed of Adam, that every

child born into this world is born under the curse since it is born under the Law! Then, in addition to the curse that rests upon us because we are children of Adam, there is the further curse that comes through our own transgression. The first moment that I sin, though I sin but once, I come beneath the curse quoted in the 10th verse of this Chapter, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them”—cursed without hope of mercy apart from that blessed Savior who “has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.” It is a dreadful thought that the trail of the serpent is over the whole earth, that the poison of sin is in the fountain of every human heart, that the blood in all our veins is corrupt, that we are all condemned already, that each one of us, without a single exception, whether he is a philanthropist, senator, philosopher, Divine, prince, or monarch, is under the curse unless he has been redeemed from it by Christ!

The curse, too, while it is universal, *is also just*. There are many persons who think that the curse of God upon those who are undeniably wicked is, of course, right, but that the curse of God upon those who, for the most part, appear to be excellent, and who may have sinned but once, is an act of injustice! But when God pronounces the curse, He does it justly. He is a God of Justice and just and right are all His ways. And mark you, Man, if you are condemned, it shall be by the strictest Justice. Even if you have sinned but once, the curse is a righteous one when it lights upon your head! Do you ask me how this is? I answer—You say that your sin is little. Then, if it is but little, how little trouble it might have taken you to have avoided it! If your transgression is but small, at how small an expense you might have refrained from it! Some have said, “Surely the sin of Adam was but a little one—he did but take an apple and eat it.” Yes, but in its littleness was its greatness! If it was but a little thing to take the forbidden fruit, with how little trouble might the sin have been avoided! And because it was so small an act, there was couched within it the greater malignity of guilt. So, too, you may never have blasphemed your God, you may never have desecrated His Sabbath, yet insomuch as you have committed a little sin, you are justly condemned, for a little sin has in it the essence of all sin—and I know not but that what we call little sins may be greater in God’s sight than those which the world universally condemns and against which the hiss of the curse of humanity continually rises! I say that God is just even though He should pronounce a curse upon all His creatures! So tremble, O Sinners, and “kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”

So the curse is universal and it is just.

But, next, the curse of the Law is also *fearful*. There are some who seem to think that it is a little matter to be under the curse of God, but, oh, if they knew the fearful consequences of that crime, they would realize that it is indeed a terrible one! It were enough to make our knees knock together, to chill our blood and to cause every hair of our head to stand on end if we did but know what it is to be under the curse of God! What does that curse include? It involves the death of the body and that is by no means an insignificant portion of its sentence. It also includes spiritual death—the death of that inner life which Adam had—the life of the spirit which can only be restored by the Holy Spirit who quickens whom He will. And it includes, last of all and worst of all, eternal death—that second death which can only be described by that awful—I had almost said, unutterable word, “Hell.” This is the curse which rests upon every man by nature. We make no exception for rank or degree, for God has made none. We offer no hope of exception for character or reputation, for God has made none. The whole of us are shut up to this, that as far as the Law is concerned, we must die—die here, and die in the next world the death which never dies, “where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched,” even by a flood of tears of penitence if they could be shed! There we must be forever lost! Could we estimate all the consequences of that curse, we might well afford to ridicule all the torments that tyrants could inflict upon us—we might well despise any injuries that this body might sustain—when we compare them with that awful avalanche of threats which rushes down with resistless force from the mountain of God’s Truth!

We hasten from this point, Beloved, for it is fearful work to speak upon it. Yet we must not depart from it entirely until we have hinted at one more thought, and that is that the curse of God which comes upon sinful men is *a present curse*. O my dear Hearers, could I lay hold of your hands, if you are not converted, I would labor with tears and groans, to get you to grasp this thought! It is not merely damnation in the future that you have to dread—it is condemnation NOW that is your portion! Yes, my Hearer, sitting where you are, if you are out of Christ, you are already condemned! Your death warrant has been sealed with the great seal of the Majesty on High, and the angel’s sword of vengeance is already unsheathed over your head this afternoon! Whoever you may be, if you are out of Christ there hangs a sword over you, suspended by a single hair which death shall cut, and then that sword shall descend, dividing your soul from your body, and dooming both to eternal pains! You might well start up from your seats in terror if you did but realize your true condition in God’s sight! You are reputable, you are respectable, you are honorable—perhaps right honorable—yet you are condemned men, condemned women! On the walls of Heaven your names are written up there among the Deicides who have slain the Savior, among the rebels

against God's government who have committed high treason against Him! And perhaps even now the dark-winged Angel of Death is spreading his pinions upon the blast, hastening to hurry you down to destruction! Say not, O Sinner, that I frighten you! Say rather that I would bring you to the Savior, for whether you believe this or not, you cannot alter the truth thereof—that you are now, if you have not given yourself to Christ—“condemned already.” Wherever you sit, you are but in the condemned cell, for to the unconverted, the unrenewed, the unrepentant, this whole world is but one huge prison wherein the condemned one does drag along a chain of condemnation till death takes him to the scaffold where the fearful execution of terrific woe must take place upon him! This, then, is “the curse of the Law.”

II. But now I must speak, in the second place, of THE REMOVAL OF THAT CURSE. This is a sweet and pleasant duty. Some of you, my dear Friends, will be able to follow me in your experience while I remind you how it was that in your salvation, Christ removed the curse from you.

First, you will agree with me when I say that the removal of the curse from us is done in a moment. *It is an instantaneous thing.* I may stand here one moment under the curse and then, if the Spirit shall quicken me, and I breathe a prayer to Heaven—if by faith I cast myself on Jesus—in one solitary second, before the clock has ticked, my sins shall be all forgiven! Hart sang truly—

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

You will remember in Christ's life that most of the cures He worked—yes, I believe all—were instantaneous cures. Look! There lies a man stretched upon his couch from which he has not risen for years. “Take up your bed and walk,” said Christ in majesty—and then, without the intervention of weeks of convalescence, “immediately he rose up before them and took up that where he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.” There is another man! He is deaf and practically dumb. Christ said to him, “Ephphatha, that is, Be opened, and immediately his ears were opened and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly.” Yes, and even in the case where Christ healed death, itself, he did it instantaneously. When that beautiful young creature lay asleep in death upon the bed, Jesus went to her and though her dark ringlets covered up her eyes, which were glazed in death, Jesus did but take her clay-cold hand in His and say to her, “Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto you, arise,” then, “straightway the damsel arose and walked.”

It is true that in conversion, Christ commences a work which is to be carried on through life in sanctification, but the justification of the sin-

ner, the taking away of the curse, is done in a single moment. “Unwrite the curse,” says God, and it is done! The acquittal is signed and sealed—it takes not long. I may stand here at this moment and I may have believed in Christ but five minutes ago—still, even if I have believed in Christ for only that short time, I am as fully justified, in God’s sight, as I would be should I live until these hairs are whitened by the sunlight of Heaven, or as I shall be when I walk among the garden lamps of the city of palaces! God justifies His people at once! The curse is removed in a single moment. Sinner, hear that! You may be now under condemnation, but before you can say, “now,” again, you may be able to say, “There is therefore now no condemnation to me, for I am in Christ Jesus.”

Mark, Beloved, in the next place, that this removal of the curse from us, when it does take place, is *an entire removal*. It is not merely a part of the curse which is taken away. Christ does not stand at the foot of Sinai and say, “Thunders, diminish your force!” He does not catch the lightning, now and then, and bind its wings. But when He comes, He blows away all the smoke! He puts aside all the thunder, He quenches all the lightning—He removes it all! When Christ pardons sin, He pardons all sin! You may be old and gray-headed, and hitherto unpardoned, but though your sins exceed in number the stars of the sky, one moment suffices to take them all away! Mark that—*all!* That sin of midnight, that black sin which, like a ghost, has haunted you all your life! That hideous crime! That unknown act of blackness which has darkened your character. That awful stain upon your conscience—they shall all be taken away in a moment! And though you have a stain upon your hands which you have often sought in vain to wash out with the mixtures which Moses can give you, you shall find, when you are bathed in Jesus’ blood, that you shall be able to say, “All clean my Lord! All clean! Not a spot, all is gone! I am completely washed from head to foot, the stains are all removed.” It is the glory of this removal of the curse, that it is all taken away! There is not a single atom off it left! Hushed now is the Law’s loud thunder—the sentence is completely reversed and there is no fear of it left!

We must also say upon this point, that when Christ removes the curse, *it is an irreversible removal*. Once let me be acquitted by God and who is he that can condemn me? There are some, in these days, who teach that God justifies, and yet, after that, condemns the same person whom He has justified! We have heard it asserted pretty boldly that a man may be a child of God today—hear it, you heavens, and be astonished—and be a child of the devil tomorrow! We have heard it said, but we know it is untrue, for we find nothing in Scripture to warrant it! We have often asked ourselves—Can men really believe that after having been begotten again by God unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead—that new birth can fail and die? We have

asked ourselves, Can men imagine that after God has once broken our chains, and set us free, He will call us back and bind us once again, like Prometheus, to the great rocks of despair? Will He once blot out the handwriting that is against us and then record the charge again? Once pardoned, then condemned? We know that if Paul had met with such teachers, he would have said, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also make intercession for us." There is no condemnation now to us who are "in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." It is a sweet thought to me that even Satan himself can never rob me of my pardon. I may lose my copy of it, and lose my comfort from it, but the original pardon is filed in Heaven! It may be that gloomy doubts may arise, and I may fear that I am not forgiven, yet I can say—

***"O my distrustful heart,
How small your faith appears!
But greater, Lord, You are
Than all my doubts and fears!
Did Jesus once upon me shine?
Then Jesus is forever mine!"***

I love, at times, to go back in thought to that hallowed hour when I first realized that my sins were all forgiven for Christ's sake. There is much comfort in recalling that blessed hour when first we knew the Lord—

***"Do mind the place, the spot of ground
Where Jesus did you meet!"***

Perhaps you do. Perhaps you can look back to the very place where Jesus whispered to you that you were His. Can you do so? Oh, what comfort it will give you! For remember, once acquitted, you are acquitted forever! So says God's Word. Once pardoned, you are clear forever! Once set at liberty, you shall never be a slave again! Once Sinai's wrath has been appeased, it shall never thunder against you again! Blessed be God's name, we have been brought to Calvary and we shall be brought to Zion, too! At last we shall stand before God and even there we shall be able by Grace to say—

***"Great God, we are clean!
Through Jesus' blood we are clean."***

III. Now we are brought, in the third place, to observe THE GREAT SUBSTITUTE by whom the curse is removed.

"The curse of the Law" was not easily taken away. In fact, there was but one way whereby it could be removed. The lightning was in God's hand—it must be launched—He said it must. The sword was unsheathed. Divine Justice must be satisfied, God vowed that it must. Vengeance was ready. Vengeance must fall! God had said that it must. How, then, was the sinner to be saved? The only answer was this. The Son of

God appears and He says, "Father, launch Your thunderbolts at Me! Here is My breast, plunge the sword of Justice in here! Here are My shoulders, let the lash of vengeance fall on them!" Thus Christ, our Substitute, came forth and stood for us, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." It is our delight to preach the Doctrine of Substitution because we are fully persuaded that no Gospel is preached where Substitution is omitted. Unless sinners are plainly and positively told that Christ stood in their place to bear their guilt and carry their sorrows, they never can see how God can "be just and the Justifier of him which believes in Jesus."

We have heard some preach a Gospel something after this order—that, though God is angry with sinners, yet, out of His great mercy, for the sake of something that Christ has done, He does not punish them, but remits the penalty. Now we hold that this is not God's Gospel, for it is neither just to God nor safe for man! We believe that God never remitted the penalty, that He did not forgive the sin without punishing it, but that He exacted the full penalty without the abatement of a solitary jot or tittle—that Jesus Christ, our Savior, did drink the veritable cup of our redemption to its very dregs—that He did suffer beneath the crushing wheels of Divine Vengeance, the same pains and sufferings which we ought to have endured! Oh, the glorious Doctrine of Substitution! When it is preached fully and rightly, what a charm and what a power it has! Oh, how sweet is the work to be able to tell sinners that although God has said, "The soul that sins, it shall die," their Maker has Himself bowed His head to death in their place, and thus God is righteously able to pardon all Believers in Jesus because He has met all the claims of Divine Justice on their account!

Should there be one here who does not yet understand the Doctrine of Substitution, let me repeat what I have said. Sinner, the only way in which you can be saved is this. God *must* punish sin. If He did not, He would unDeify Himself. But if He has punished sin in the Person of Christ for you, you are fully absolved, you are quite clear! Christ has suffered what you ought to have suffered, and you may well rejoice in that. "Well," you say, "I ought to have died." But Christ has died! "I ought to have been sent to Hell." But Christ has suffered that which is a full equivalent, and which completely satisfies God's demands. The cup which His Father gave Him, He drank to its dregs—

***"At one tremendous draft of love
He drank damnation dry"—***

for all who believe in Him! All the punishment, all the curse was laid upon Him—now it is all gone forever. Yet it had not gone without having been taken away by the Savior. The thunder has not been reserved, the lightning has been launched at Him! Divine Justice is satisfied because Christ has endured the full penalty of all His people's guilt.

IV. Now we come to answer that last question, HOW MANY OF US CAN SAY THAT CHRIST HAS REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW, HAVING BEEN MADE A CURSE FOR US?

The first part of our discourse has been entirely doctrinal, some of you have not cared for it because you did not feel that you were interested in it. It was natural that it should be so. At the reading of a will, does the servant stay to listen? No, for there is nothing for her. But if a man is a son of the testator, how eagerly does he open his ears to catch every sound, that he may know whether the estate has been left to him or not? However badly the lawyer may read the will, he is anxious to hear every word that he may learn if he is to have a portion among the children. Now, Beloved, let us read the will again to see if you are among those for whom Christ was the Substitute. The usual way with most of our congregations is this—they write themselves down as Christ's long before they know whether God has done so or not. You make a profession of religion, you wear a Christian's cloak, you behave like a Christian, you take a seat in a church or a chapel, and you think you are Christianized at once. Yet many in our congregation who fancy that they are Christian, have made a great mistake! Let me beg you not to suppose that you are Believers in Christ because your parents were, or because you belong to an orthodox church. Religion is a thing which we must have for ourselves, and it is a question which we all ought to ask—whether we are savingly interested in the Atonement of Christ and have a portion in the merit of His agonies?

Come, then, my Friend, let me put a question or two to you. And first let me ask you this—*Were you ever condemned by the Law in your own conscience?* “No,” you say, “I know not what you mean.” Of course you do not, and you have therefore no true hope that you are saved. But I will ask you yet again—Have you ever been condemned by the Law in your conscience? Have you ever heard the Law of God saying in your soul, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them”? And have you felt that you were thus cursed? Did you ever stand before God's bar, like a poor condemned criminal before his judge, ready for execution? Have you, as John Bunyan would have put it, ever had the rope around your neck? Have you ever seen the black cap placed upon the head of your Judge? Have you even *thought* yourself about to be turned to the gallows? Have you ever walked the earth as if, at every step, it would open beneath your feet and swallow you up? Have you ever felt yourself to be a worthless, ruined, sin-condemned, Law-condemned, conscience-condemned sinner? Have you ever fallen down before God and said, “Lord, You are just. Though You slay me, I will say that You are just, for I am sinful and deserve Your wrath”? As the Lord lives, if you have never felt and spoken like that, you are still a stranger to His Grace, for the man who acquits himself, God

condemns! And if the Law condemns you, God will acquit you! So long as you have felt yourself condemned, you may know that Christ died for condemned ones and shed His blood for sinners. But if you fold your arms in self-security, if you say, "I am good, I am righteous, I am honorable," be you warned of this—your armor is the weaving of a spider and it shall be broken in pieces! The garments of your righteousness are light as feathers and shall be blown away by the breath of the Eternal in that day when He shall unspin all that Nature has ever woven! Yes, I bid you now take heed of this—if you have never been condemned by the Law, you have never been acquitted by Divine Grace!

Now I will ask you another question—*Have you ever felt yourself to be acquitted by Grace?* "No," says one, "I have never expected to feel that. I thought that we might perhaps know it when we came to die, or that a few eminent Christians might possibly then know themselves to be forgiven, but I think, Sir, you are very enthusiastic to ask *me* whether I have ever felt myself forgiven." My dear Friend, you make a great mistake. If a man had been a galley slave, chained to an oar for many a year, and if he were once set free, do you think that he would not know whether he were free or not? Do you think that a slave who had been toiling in bondage for years, when once he trod the land of freedom, if you should say to him, "Do you know that you are emancipated?" do you think that he would not know it? Or if a man who has been dead in his grave were to be awakened to life, do you think he would not know it? He will know himself to be alive as the emancipated slave will know that he is a free man! If you have never felt your chains fall off you, then your chains are still on you, for when God breaks our chains off us, we know ourselves to be free! The most of us, when God set us free from our prison camp, leaped for very joy! And we remember that the mountains and the hills did break forth before us into singing, and all the trees of the field did clap their hands! We shall never forget that gladsome moment! It is indelibly impressed upon our memory—we shall remember it to life's last hour! I ask you again—Did you ever feel yourself to be forgiven? And if you say, "No," then you have no reason to think that you *are* forgiven! If the Lord has never whispered in your ear, "I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions"—you have no right to think yourself pardoned! Oh, I beseech you, examine yourself and know whether you have been condemned by the Law, and whether you have been acquitted by Grace!

And, lastly, my dear Friends, I may have, and doubtless do have, many here present who have simply come to spend an hour, but who have no care, no interest, no concern about their souls, who are perhaps, utterly careless as to whether they are condemned or not. If I could speak to you as I could wish, I would speak—

***"As though I never might speak again,
And as a dying man to dying men."***

When I remember that, likely enough, I shall never see the faces of many of you again, I feel that there is a deep and an awful responsibility lying upon me to speak to such of you as are careless. There are some of you who are putting off the evil day, or you are saying, "If I am condemned, I care not for it." Ah, my Friend! If I saw you asleep upon your bed when the flames were raging in your chamber, I would shout in your ear, or I would drag you from your couch of slumber. If I knew that while you had a fatal disease within you, you would not take the medicine which alone could cure you, I would, upon my knees implore you to take that medicine! But, alas, here you are, many of you, in danger of eternal destruction—and you have a disease within your souls that must soon destroy them forever! Yet what careless, hardened, thoughtless creatures you are, just caring for the body and not seeing Christ to be the Savior of your souls! As the angels laid hold upon Lot, and said to him, "Escape for your life! Look not behind you, neither stay you in all the plain! Escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed," so would I do to you. I would come to each one of you and say, "My brother, carelessness may be of use to you now, but carelessness will not stop the voice of death when *he* speaks! Indifference may silence *my* voice in your conscience now, but when that grim skeleton tyrant comes to address you, indifference will not do then! You may laugh now, you may dance now, you may be merry now, your cup may be full to the brim now—but what will you do in that day when the heavens are clothed with Glory, when the books are opened, when the Great White Throne is set, and when you come before your Maker to be acquitted or condemned? I beseech you, prepare for that day! I beg of you, for Christ's sake, to picture yourself before your Judge—conceive of Him there in yonder heavens seated upon His Throne—imagine that you are now looking upon Him. O my Hearer, what will you do? You are before the Judgment Seat without Christ as your Savior! "Rocks, hide me, for I am naked!" But you are dragged out, Sinner, naked before your Judge! What will you do now? I see you bend your knees. I hear you cry, "O Jesus, clothe me now!" "No," says Jesus, "that robe can never be worn by you now." "Savior, have mercy upon me even now." "No," says He, "I called, but you refused. I stretched out My hand, but no man regarded; you set at nothing all My counsel, and would none of My reproach, so now I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear comes."

Am I talking realities or mere fictions? Why, realities, and yet, if I were reading a novel to you, you would be lost in tears! But when I tell you God's Truth that soon His Throne shall be set and we shall all appear before Him, you sit unmoved and remain careless concerning that great event! But be it known to every careless sinner that death and judgment are not the unimportant things that they may have fancied! Everlasting wrath and eternal severance from God are not such light things to en-

dure as they may have conceived. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Have I one here who is saying, “What must I do to be saved, for I feel myself condemned?” Hear Christ’s own words—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” Do you ask me what it is to believe? Hear, then, the answer. To believe is to look to Jesus! That little word, “look,” beautifully expresses what a sinner is to do. There is little in its appearance, but there is much in its meaning. Believing is letting the hands lie still and turning the eyes to Christ. We cannot be saved by our hands—but we are saved when we look to Jesus by faith. Sinner, it is no use for you to try to save yourself! To believe in Christ is the only way of salvation—and that is throwing self behind your back and putting Christ right before you! I can never find a better description than that of the Negro—“to believe is to fall flat down upon the promise, and to lie there.” To believe is to do as one might do in a stream. It is said that if we were to fold our arms and lie motionless upon the water, we would not sink. To believe is to float upon the stream of Grace. I grant you that there will be much that you will *do* afterwards, but you must *live* before you can do! The Gospel is the reverse of the Law. The Law says, “Do, and live.” The Gospel says, “Live first, then do.” The thing for you to say, poor Sinner, is just this, “Lord Jesus, here I am. I give myself to You.”

I never had a better idea of believing in Jesus than I once had from a poor countryman. I may have mentioned this before, but it struck me very forcibly at the time and I cannot help repeating it. Speaking about faith, he said, “The old enemy has been troubling me very much lately, but I told him that he must not say anything to me about my sins—he must go to my Master, for I had transferred the whole concern to Him—bad debts and all.” That is believing in Jesus! Believing is giving up all we have to Christ and taking all that Christ has to ourselves! It is changing houses with Christ, changing clothes with Christ, changing our unrighteousness for His righteousness, changing our sins for His merits. Execute the transfer, Sinner, or rather, may God’s Grace execute it and give you faith in it! And then the Law will no longer be your condemnation, but it shall acquit you! May Christ add His blessing! May the Holy Spirit rest upon us and may we all at last meet in Heaven! Then will we sing “to the praise of the Glory of His Grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved.”

—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.**

CHRIST MADE A CURSE FOR US

NO. 873

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 30, 1869,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law,
being made a curse for us: for it is written,
Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.”
Galatians 3:13.*

The Apostle had been showing to the Galatians that salvation is in no degree by works. He proved this all-important Truth of God, in the verses which precede the text, by a very conclusive form of double reasoning. He showed, first, that the Law could not give the blessing of salvation, for, since all had broken it, all that the Law could do was to curse. He quotes the substance of the 27th chapter of Deuteronomy, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.” And as no man can claim that he has continued in all things that are in the Law, he pointed out the clear inference that all men under the Law had incurred the curse.

He then reminds the Galatians, in the second place, that if any had ever been blessed in the olden times, the blessing came not by the Law, but by their faith—and to prove this, he quotes a passage from Habakkuk 2:4 in which it is distinctly stated that the just shall live by faith—so that those who were just and righteous did not live before God on the footing of their obedience to the Law, but they were justified and made to live on the ground of their being Believers. See, then, that if the Law inevitably curses us all, and if the only people who are said to have been preserved in gracious life were justified not by works, but by *faith*—then is it certain beyond a doubt that the salvation and justification of a sinner cannot be by the works of the Law, but altogether by the Grace of God through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

But the Apostle, no doubt feeling that now he was declaring that doctrine he had better declare the foundation and root of it, unveils in the text before us a reason why men are not saved by their personal righteousness, but saved by their faith. He tells us that the reason is this—that men are not saved by any personal merit but their salvation lies in Another—lies, in fact, in Christ Jesus, the representative Man who alone can deliver us from the curse which the Law brought upon us. And since works do not connect us with Christ, but faith is the uniting bond, faith becomes the way of salvation.

Since faith is the hand that lays hold upon the finished work of Christ—which works *could* not and *would* not do, for works lead us to boast and to forget Christ—faith becomes the true and only way of obtain-

ing justification and everlasting life. In order that such faith may be nurtured in us, may God the Holy Spirit this morning lead us into the depths of the great work of Christ! May we understand more clearly the nature of His substitution and of the suffering which it entailed upon Him. Let us see, indeed, the truth of the stanzas whose music has just died away—

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

I. Our first contemplation this morning will be upon this question, WHAT IS THE CURSE OF THE LAW HERE INTENDED? It is the curse of God. God who made the Law has appended certain penal consequences to the breaking of it and the man who violates the Law becomes at once the subject of the wrath of the Lawgiver. It is not the curse of the mere Law of itself—it is a curse from the great Lawgiver whose arm is strong to defend His statutes. Therefore, at the very outset of our reflections, let us be assured that the curse of the Law must be supremely just and morally unavoidable.

It is not possible that our God, who delights to bless us, should inflict an atom of curse upon any one of His creatures unless the highest right shall require it. And if there is any method by which holiness and purity can be maintained without a curse, rest assured the God of Love will not imprecate sorrow upon His creatures. The curse then, if it falls, must be a necessary one—in its very *essence* necessary for the preservation of order in the universe and for the manifestation of the holiness of the universal Sovereign.

Be assured, too, that when God curses, it is a curse of the most weighty kind. The curse causeless shall not come, but God’s curses are never causeless and they come home to offenders with overwhelming power. Sin must be punished and when by long continuance and impenitence in evil, God is provoked to speak the malediction, I know that he whom He curses is cursed, indeed. There is something so terrible in the very idea of the Omnipotent God pronouncing a curse upon a transgressor that my blood curdles at it and I cannot express myself very clearly or even coherently. A father’s curse, how terrible! But what is that to the malediction of the great Father of Spirits?

To be cursed of men is no mean evil, but to be accursed of God is terror and dismay! Sorrow and anguish lie in that curse! Death is involved in it and that second death which John foresaw in Patmos and described as being cast into a lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). Hear the Word of the Lord by His servant Nahum and consider what His curse must be—“God is jealous and the Lord revenges. The Lord revenges and is furious. The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries and He reserves wrath for His enemies...The mountains quake at Him and the hills melt and the earth is burned at His Presence, yes, the world and all that dwell herein. Who can stand before His indignation? And who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire and the rocks are thrown down by Him.”

Remember, also, the prophecy of Malachi: "For behold, the day comes that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yes, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble. And the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Let such words, and there are many like they, sink into your hearts that you may fear and tremble before this just and holy Lord! If we would look further into the meaning of the curse that arises from the breach of the Law, we must remember that a curse is, first of all, a sign of displeasure.

Now, we learn from Scripture that God is angry with the wicked every day. Though towards the persons of sinners God exhibits great longsuffering, yet sin exceedingly provokes His holy mind. Sin is a thing so utterly loathsome and detestable to the purity of the Most High, that no *thought* of evil, or an ill word, or an unjust action, is tolerated by Him. He observes every sin and His holy soul is stirred thereby. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. He cannot endure it. He is a God that will certainly execute vengeance upon every evil work. A curse implies something more than mere anger. It is suggested by burning indignation, and truly our God is not only *somewhat* angry with sinners, but His wrath is great towards sin.

Wherever sin exists, there the fullness of the power of the Divine indignation is directed. And though the effect of that wrath may be, for awhile, restrained through abundant longsuffering, yet God is greatly indignant with the iniquities of men. We wink at sin, yes, and even harden our hearts till we *laugh* at it and take *pleasure* in it. But oh, let us not think that *God* is such as we are! Let us not suppose that sin can be beheld by Him and yet no indignation be felt. Ah, no, the most holy God has written warnings in His Word which plainly inform us how terribly He is provoked by iniquity, as, for instance, when he says, "Beware, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver."

"Therefore, says the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease Me of My adversaries and avenge Me of My enemies." "For we know Him that has said, Vengeance belongs to Me, I will recompense, says the Lord." And again, the Lord shall judge His people. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Moreover, a curse imprecates evil and is, as it comes from God, of the nature of a *threat*. It is as though God should say, "By-and-by I will visit you for this offense. You have broken My Law which is just and holy and the inevitable penalty shall certainly come upon you."

Now, God has, throughout His Word, given many such curses as these—He has threatened men over and over again. "If he turns not, He will whet his sword. He has bent His bow and made it ready." Sometimes the threat is wrapped up in a plaintive lamentation. "Turn you, turn you from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?" But still it is plain and clear that God will not suffer sin to go unpunished—and when the fullness of time shall come and the measure shall be filled to the brim and the weight of iniquity shall be fully reached and the harvest shall be

ripe, and the cry of wickedness shall come up mightily into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth—then will He come forth in robes of vengeance and overwhelm His adversaries.

But God's curse is something more than a threat. He comes at length to blows. He uses warning words at first, but sooner or later He bares His sword for execution. The curse of God, as to its actual infliction, may be guessed at by some occasions where it has been seen on earth. Look at Cain, a wanderer and a vagabond upon the face of the earth! Read the curse that Jeremiah pronounced by the command of God upon Pashur—"Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends. And they shall fall by the sword of their enemies and your eyes shall behold it." Or, if you would behold the curse upon a larger scale, remember the day when the huge floodgates of earth's deepest fountains were unloosed and the waters leaped up from their habitations like lions eager for their prey!

Remember the day of vengeance when the windows of Heaven were opened and the great deep above the firmament was confused with the deep that is beneath the firmament and all flesh were swept away—except only the few who were hidden in the ark which God's Covenant mercy had prepared. Consider that dreadful day when sea-monsters whelped and stabled in the palaces of ancient kings! When millions of sinners sank to rise no more! When universal ruin flew with raven wings over a shoreless sea vomited from the mouth of death! Then was the curse of God poured out upon the earth!

Look, yet again, further down in time. Stand with Abraham at his tent door and see towards the east the sky all red at early morning with a glare that came not from the sun—sheets of flames went up to Heaven—which were met by showers of yet more vivid fire received the curse of God, and Hell was rained upon them out of Heaven until they were utterly consumed! If you would see another form of the curse of God, remember that bright spirit who once stood as servitor in Heaven—the son of the morning, one of the chief of the angels of God!

Think how he lost his lofty principality when sin entered into him! See how an archangel became an archfiend and Satan, who is called Apollyon, fell from his lofty throne, banished forever from peace and happiness—to wander through dry places, seeking rest and finding none—to be reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the Last Great Day. Such was the curse that it withered an angel into a devil! It burned up the cities of the plain! It swept away the population of a globe!

Nor have you yet the full idea. There is a place of woe and horror—a land of darkness as darkness itself and of the shadow of death—without any order and where the light is darkness. There those miserable spirits who have refused repentance and have hardened themselves against the Most High, are forever banished from their God and from all hope of peace or restoration. If your ear could be applied to the gratings of their cells. If you could walk the gloomy corridors wherein damned spirits are confined, you would, then, with chilled blood and hair erect, learn what the curse of

the Law must be—that dread malediction which comes on the disobedient from the hand of the just and righteous God!

The curse of God is to lose God's favor, and, consequently, to lose the blessings which come upon that blessing—to lose peace of mind, to lose hope, ultimately to lose life itself—for “the soul that sins, it shall die.” And that loss of life and being cast into eternal death is the most terrible of all, consisting as it does in everlasting separation from God and everything that makes existence truly life. It is a destruction lasting *forever*. According to the Scriptural description of it, it is the fruit of the curse of the Law.

Oh, heavy tidings have I to deliver this day to some of you! Hard is my task to have to testify to you the terrible justice of the Law! But you would not understand or prize the exceeding love of Christ if you heard not the curse from which He delivers His people—therefore hear me patiently! O unhappy men, unhappy men, who are under God's curse today! You may dress yourselves in scarlet and fine linen. You may go to your feasts and drain your full bowls of wine. You may lift high the sparkling cup and whirl in the joyous dance, but if God's curse is on you, what madness possesses you! O Sirs, if you could but see it and understand it, this curse would darken all the windows of your mirth!

O that you could hear, for once, the voice which speaks against you from Ebal, with doleful repetition—“Cursed shall you be in the city and cursed shall you be in the field. Cursed shall be your basket and your store. Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the fruit of your land, the increase of your cattle and the flocks of your sheep. Cursed shall you be when you come in and cursed shall you be when you go out.” How is it that you can rest while such sentences pursue you? Oh, unhappiest of men are those who pass out of this life still accursed! One might weep tears of blood to think of them! Let our thoughts fly to them for a moment, but O, let us not continue in sin, lest our spirits be condemned to hold perpetual companionship in their grief! Let us fly to the dear Cross of Christ, where the curse was put away, that we may never come to know, in the fullness of its horror, what the curse may mean!

II. A second enquiry of great importance to us this morning is this—WHO ARE UNDER THIS CURSE? Listen with solemn awe, O sons of men! First, especially and foremost, the Jewish nation lies under the curse, for such I gather from the connection. To them the Law of God was very peculiarly given beyond all others. They heard it from Sinai and it was to them surrounded with a golden setting of ceremonial symbols and enforced by solemn national Covenant. Moreover, there was a word in the commencement of that Law which showed that in a certain sense it peculiarly belonged to Israel. “I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.”

Paul tells us that those who have sinned without Law shall be punished without Law. But the Jewish nation, having received the Law, if they broke it, would become peculiarly liable to the curse which was threatened for such breach. Yet further, all nations that dwell upon the face of

the earth are also subject to this curse for this reason—that if the Law were not given to all from Sinai, it has been written by the finger of God, more or less legibly, upon the conscience of all mankind. It needs no Prophet to tell an Indian, a Laplander, a South Sea Islander, that he must not steal—his own judgment so instructs him. There is that within every man which ought to convince him that idolatry is folly, that adultery and unchastity are villainies, that theft and murder and covetousness are all evil.

Now, inasmuch as all men in some degree have the Law within, to that degree they are under the Law. The curse of the Law for transgression comes upon them. Moreover, there are some in this House this morning who are peculiarly under the curse. The Apostle says, “As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse.” Now, there are some of you who choose to be under the Law—you deliberately choose to be judged by it. How so? Why, you are trying to reach a place in Heaven by your own good works! You are clinging to the idea that something you can *do* can save you! You have therefore elected to be under the Law and by so doing you have chosen the curse—for all that the law of works can do for you is to leave you still accursed—because you have not fulfilled all its commands. O Sirs, repent of so foolish a choice, and declare from now on that you are willing to be saved by Divine Grace and not at all by the works of the Law!

There is a little band here who feel the weight of the Law, to whom I turn with brightest hope, though they themselves are in despair. They feel in their consciences today that they deserve from God the severest punishment. This sense of His wrath weighs them to the dust. I am glad of this, for it is only when we come consciously and penitently under the curse that we accept the way of escape from it. You do not know what it is to be redeemed from the curse till you have first felt the slavery of it. No man will ever rejoice in the liberty which Christ gives him till he has first felt the iron of bondage entering into his soul.

I know there are some here who say, “Let God say what He will against me, or do what He will to me, I deserve it all. If He drives me forever from His Presence and I hear the Judge pronounce that awful sentence, ‘Depart, accursed one,’ I can only admit that such has been my heart and such my life that I could expect no other doom.” O you dear Heart, if you are thus brought down, you will listen gladly to me while I now come to a far brighter theme than all this! You are under the curse as you now are, but I rejoice to tell you that the curse has been removed through Jesus Christ our Lord! O may the Lord lead you to see the plan of substitution and to rejoice in it!

III. Our third and main point, this morning, is to answer the question, **HOW WAS CHRIST MADE A CURSE FOR US?** The whole pith and marrow of the religion of Christianity lies in the doctrine of “Substitution,” and I hesitate not to affirm my conviction that a very large proportion of Christians are not Christians at all, for they do not understand the fundamen-

tal doctrine of the Christian creed. And alas, there are preachers who do not preach, or even *believe* this cardinal truth.

They speak of the blood of Jesus in an indistinct kind of way and descant upon the death of Christ in a hazy style of poetry—but they do not strike this nail on the head and lay it down that the way of Salvation is by Christ's becoming a Substitute for guilty man! This shall make me the more plain and definite. Sin is an accursed thing. God, from the necessity of His holiness, must curse it. He must punish men for committing it. But the Lord's Christ, the glorious Son of the everlasting Father, became a Man and suffered, in His own proper Person, the curse which was due to the sons of men, that so, by a vicarious offering, God, having been just in punishing sin, could extend His bounteous mercy towards those who believe in the Substitute.

Now for this point. But, you enquire, how was Jesus Christ a *curse*? We beg you to observe the word "made." "He was *made* a curse." Christ was no curse in Himself. In His Person He was spotlessly innocent, and nothing of sin could belong personally to Him. In Him was no sin. "God made Him to be sin for us." And the Apostle expressly adds, "who knew no sin." There must never be supposed to be any degree of blameworthiness or censure in the Person or Character of Christ as He stands as an Individual. He is in that respect without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing—the immaculate Lamb of God's Passover.

Nor was Christ made a curse of necessity. There was no necessity in Himself that He should ever suffer the curse—no necessity except that which His own loving suretyship created. His own intrinsic holiness kept Him from sin and that same holiness kept Him from the curse. He was made sin for us, not on His own account—not with any view to Himself—but wholly because He loved us and chose to put Himself in the place which we ought to have occupied. He was made a curse for us not, again, I say, out of any personal want, or out of any personal necessity, but because He had voluntarily undertaken to be the Covenant Head of His people and to be their Representative and as their Representative to bear the curse which was due to them.

We must be very clear here because very strong expressions have been used by those who hold the great Truth of God which I am endeavoring to preach, which strong expressions have conveyed the Truth they meant to convey, but also a great deal more. Martin Luther's wonderful book on Galatians, which he prized so much that he called it his Catherine Born (that was the name of his beloved wife and he gave this book the name of the dearest one he knew)—in that book he says plainly, but be assured did not mean what he said to be *literally* understood, that Jesus Christ was the greatest sinner that ever lived—that all the sins of men were so laid upon Christ that He became all the thieves and murderers and adulterers that ever were, in one.

Now, he meant that God treated Christ as if He had been a great sinner—as if He had been all the sinners in the world in one—and such lan-

guage teaches that Truth very plainly. But Luther, in his boisterousness, overshoots his mark and leaves room for the censure that he has almost spoken blasphemy against the blessed Person of our Lord. Christ never was and never could be a *sinner*—and in His Person and in His Character, in Himself considered, He never could be anything but well-beloved of God, and blessed forever and well-pleasing in Jehovah’s sight! So that when we say, today, that He was a curse, we must lay stress on those words, “He was *made* a curse.” He was constituted a curse, set as a curse.

And then, again, we must emphasize those other words, “*for us*”—not on His own account at all—but entirely out of love to us that we might be redeemed. He stood in the sinner’s place and was reckoned to be a sinner and treated as a sinner, and *made* a curse for us. Let us go farther into this Truth of God. *How* was Christ made a curse? In the first place, He was made a curse because all the sins of His people were actually laid on Him. Remember the words of the Apostle—it is no doctrine of mine, mark you, it is an Inspired sentence, it is *God’s* doctrine—“He made Him to be sin for us.”

And let me note another passage from the Prophet Isaiah, “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” And yet another from the same Prophet, “He shall bear their iniquities.” The sins of God’s people were lifted from off them and imputed to Christ—and their sins were looked upon as if Christ had committed them. He was regarded as if He had been the sinner! He actually and in very deed stood in the sinner’s place. Next to the imputation of sin came the curse of sin. The Law, looking for sin to punish, with its quick eye detected sin laid upon Christ and, as it must curse sin wherever it was found, it cursed the sin as it was laid on Christ. So Christ was made a curse.

Wonderful and awful words, but as they are Scriptural words, we must receive them. Sin being on Christ, the curse came on Christ and in consequence our Lord felt an unutterable horror of soul. Surely it was that horror which made Him sweat great drops of blood when He saw and felt that God was beginning to treat Him as if He had been a sinner. The holy soul of Christ shrunk with deepest agony from the slightest contact with sin. So pure and perfect was our Lord, that never an evil thought had crossed His mind, nor had His soul been stained by the glances of evil. And yet He stood in God’s sight a *sinner* and therefore a solemn horror fell upon His soul.

The heart refused its healthful action and a bloody sweat bedewed his face. Then He began to be made a curse for us, nor did He cease till He had suffered all the penalty which was due on our account. We have been accustomed in divinity to divide the penalty into two parts, the penalty of loss and the penalty of actual suffering. Christ endured both of these. It was due to sinners that they should lose God’s favor and Presence and therefore Jesus cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” It was due to sinners that they should lose all personal comfort—Christ was deprived of every consolation and even the last rag of clothing was torn

from Him and He was left like Adam, naked and forlorn. It was necessary that the soul should lose everything that could sustain it, and so did Christ lose every comfortable thing. He looked and there was no man to pity or help. He was made to cry, "But I am a worm and no man; a reproach of men and despised of the people."

As for the second part of the punishment, namely, an actual infliction of suffering, our Lord endured this, also, to the uttermost, as the Evangelists clearly show. You have read full often the story of His bodily sufferings. Take care that you never depreciate them. There was an amount of physical pain endured by our Savior which His body never could have borne unless it had been sustained and strengthened by union with His Godhead. Yet the sufferings of His soul were the soul of His sufferings. That soul of His endured a torment equivalent to Hell itself. The punishment that was due to the wicked was that of Hell and though Christ suffered not Hell, He suffered an equivalent of it.

And now, can your minds conceive what that must have been? It was an anguish never to be measured, an agony never to be comprehended. It is to God and God, alone, that His griefs were fully known. Well does the Greek liturgy put it, "Your unknown sufferings," for they must forever remain beyond guess of human imagination. See, Brothers and Sisters, Christ has gone thus far—He has taken the sin, taken the curse and suffered all the penalty. The last penalty of sin was death, and therefore the Redeemer died. Behold, the mighty Conqueror yields up His life upon the tree! His side is pierced! The blood and water flows forth and His disciples lay His body in the tomb.

As He was first numbered with the transgressors, He was afterwards numbered with the dead. See, Beloved, here is Christ bearing the curse instead of His people. Here He is, coming under the load of their sin, and God does not spare Him but smites Him as He must have struck us. He lays His full vengeance on Him. He launches all His thunderbolts against Him. He bids the curse wreak itself upon Him and Christ suffers all, sustains all.

IV. And now let us conclude by considering WHAT ARE THE BLESSED CONSEQUENCES OF CHRIST'S HAVING THUS BEEN MADE A CURSE FOR US. The consequences are that He has redeemed *us* from the curse of the Law. As many as Christ died for, are forever free from the curse of the Law, for when the Law comes to curse a man who believes in Christ, he says, "What have I to do with you, O Law? You say, 'I will curse you,' but I reply, "You have cursed Christ instead of me. Can you curse twice for one offense?"

Behold how the Law is silenced! God's Law, having received all it can demand, is not so unrighteous as to demand anything more. All that God can demand of a believing sinner, Christ has already paid, and there is no voice in earth or Heaven that can accuse a soul that believes in Jesus. You were in debt, but a Friend paid your debt! No writ can be served on you. It matters nothing that *you* did not pay it, it is paid and you have the

receipt. That is sufficient in any court of equity. So with all the penalty that was due to us, Christ has borne it. It is true I have not borne it—I have not been to Hell and suffered the full wrath of God—but Christ has suffered that wrath for me and I am as clear as if I had myself paid the debt to God and had myself suffered His wrath.

Here is a glorious foundation to rest upon! Here is a rock upon which to lay the foundation of eternal comfort! Let a man once get to this—my Lord outside the city's gate bleeding and dying for me as my Surety on the Cross—He discharged my debt. Why, then, great God, Your thunders I no longer fear! How can You strike me now? You have exhausted the quiver of Your wrath—every arrow has been already shot forth against the Person of my Lord and I am in Him clear and clean and absolved and delivered—even as if I had never sinned! “He has redeemed us,” says the text.

How often I have heard certain gentry of the modern school of theology sneer at the Atonement, because they charge us with the notion of its being a sort of business transaction, or what they choose to call, “the mercantile view of it.” I hesitate not to say that the mercantile metaphor expresses rightly God's view of redemption, for we find it so in Scripture. The Atonement is a *ransom*—that is to say, a price paid. And in the present case the original word is more than usually expressive—it is a payment for, a price instead of.

Jesus did, in His sufferings, perform what may be forcibly and fitly described as the payment of a ransom, the giving to justice, a *quid pro quo* for what was due on our behalf for our sins. Christ, in His Person, suffered what we ought to have suffered in *our* persons. The sins that were ours were made His—He stood as a sinner in God's sight, though not a sinner in Himself. He was punished as a sinner and died as a sinner upon the tree of the curse. Then having exhausted His imputed sinfulness by bearing the full penalty, He made an end of sin and He rose again from the dead to bring in that everlasting righteousness which at this moment covers the persons of all His elect, so that they can exultingly cry, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”

Another blessing flows from this satisfactory Substitution. It is this, that now the blessing of God, which had been up to then arrested by the curse is made most freely to flow. Read the verse that follows the text—“That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” The blessing of Abraham was that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed. Since our Lord Jesus Christ has taken away the curse due to sin, a great rock has been lifted out from the riverbed of God's mercy and the living stream comes rippling, roiling, swelling on in crystal tides—sweeping before it all human sin and sorrow and making glad the thirsty who stoop down to drink there.

O my Brothers and Sisters, the blessings of God's Grace are full and free this morning! They are as full as your necessities. Great Sinners, there is great mercy for you! They are as free as your poverty could desire them to be, free as the air you breathe, or as the cooling stream that flows along the water brook. You have but to trust Christ and you shall live! Be you who you may, or *what* you may, or *where* you may—though at Hell's dark door you lie down to despair and die—yet the message comes to you, "God has made Christ to be a propitiation for sin. He made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Christ has delivered us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.

He that believes, has no curse upon him. He may have been an adulterer, a swearer, a drunkard, a murderer, but the moment he believes, God sees none of those sins in him! He sees him as an innocent man and regards his sins as having been laid on the Redeemer and punished in Jesus as He died on the tree. I tell you, if you believe in Christ this morning, my Hearer, though you are the most damnable of wretches that ever polluted the earth, yet you shall not have a sin remaining on you after believing! God will look at you as pure! Even Omniscience shall not detect a sin in you, for your sin shall be put on the Scapegoat, even Christ, and carried away into forgetfulness so that if your transgression is searched for, it shall not be found.

If you believe—there is the question—you are clean! If you will trust the Incarnate God, you are delivered! He that believes is justified from all things. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved," for, "he that believes and is baptized, shall be saved. And he that believes not shall be damned."

I have preached to you the Gospel—God knows with what a weight upon my soul and yet with what holy joy! This is no subject for gaudy eloquence and for high-flying attempts at oratory. This is a matter to be put to you plainly and simply. Sinners—you must either be cursed of God, or else you must accept Christ as bearing the curse instead of you. I do beseech you, as you love your souls, if you have any sanity left, accept this blessed and Divinely-appointed way of salvation! This is the Truth of God which the Apostles preached and suffered and died to maintain. It is this for which the Reformers struggled. It is this for which the martyrs burned at Smithfield. It is the grand basic doctrine of the Reformation and the very Truth of God.

Down with your crosses and rituals! Down with your pretensions to good works and your crouching at the feet of priests to ask absolution from them! Away with your accursed and idolatrous dependence upon yourself! Christ has finished salvation-work, altogether finished it! Hold not up your rags in competition with His fair white linen—Christ has borne the curse—bring not your pitiful penances and your tears all full of filth to mingle with the precious fountain flowing with His blood! Lay down what is your own and come and take what is Christ's! Put away, now, eve-

rything that you have thought of being or doing by way of winning acceptance with God! Humble yourselves and take Jesus Christ to be the Alpha and Omega, the first and last, the beginning and end of your salvation.

If you do this, not only shall you *be* saved, but you *are* saved! Rest, you weary one, for your sins are forgiven. Rise, you lame man, lame through lack of faith, for your transgression is covered. Rise from the dead, you corrupt one, rise, like Lazarus from the tomb, for Jesus calls you! Believe and live. The words in themselves, by the Holy Spirit, are soul-quickening. Have done with your tears of repentance and your vows of good living until you have come to Christ! Then take them up as you will.

Your first lesson should be none but Jesus, none but Jesus, none but Jesus! O come to Him! See, He hangs upon the Cross. His arms are open wide and He cannot close them, for the nails hold them fast. He tarries for you. His feet are fastened to the wood, as though He meant to tarry, still. O come to Him! His heart has room for you. It streams with blood and water—it was pierced for you. That mingled stream is—

***“Of sin the double cure,
To cleanse you from its guilt and power.”***

An act of faith will bring you to Jesus. Say, “Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.” And if you do so, he cannot cast you out, for His Word is, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.”

I have delivered to you the weightiest Truth of God that ever ears heard, or that lips spoke—put it not from you! As we shall meet each other at the last tremendous day, when Heaven and earth are on a blaze and the trumpet shall ring and raise the dead—as we shall meet each other then—I challenge you not to put this from you. If you do, it is at your own peril and your blood is on your own heads. I plead with you to accept the Gospel I have delivered to you. It is Jehovah’s Gospel. Heaven itself speaks in the words you hear today! Accept Jesus Christ as your substitute. O do it now, this moment, and God shall have Glory, but *you* shall have SALVATION. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 22.

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THE USES OF THE LAW

NO. 128

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 19, 1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“What purpose then does the Law serve?”
Galatians 3:19.***

THE Apostle, by a highly ingenious and powerful argument, had proved that the Law was never intended by God for the justification and salvation of man. He declares that God made a Covenant of Grace with Abraham long before the Law was given on Mount Sinai. He says that Abraham was not present at Mount Sinai and, therefore, there could have been no alteration of the Covenant made there by his consent—that, moreover, Abraham’s consent was never asked as to any alteration of the Covenant, without which consent the Covenant could not have been lawfully changed. And besides that, the Covenant stands fast and firm, seeing it was made to Abraham’s *seed*, as well as to Abraham himself. “This I say, that the Covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance is of the Law, it is no more of promise—but God gave it to Abraham by promise.” Therefore, no inheritance and no salvation ever can be obtained by the Law. Now, extremes are the error of ignorance. Generally, when men believe one truth, they carry it so far as to deny another. And very frequently, the assertion of a cardinal truth leads men to generalize on other particulars and so to make lies out of truth. The objection supposed may be worded thus—“You say, O Paul, that the Law cannot justify. Surely then, the Law is good for nothing at all—‘What purpose then does the Law serve?’ If it will not save a man, what is the good of it? If, of itself, it will never take a man to Heaven, why was it written? Is it not a useless thing?” The Apostle might have replied to his opponent with a sneer—he might have said to him, “Oh, fool and slow of heart to understand! Is it proved that a thing is utterly useless because it is not intended for very purpose in the world? Will you say that because iron cannot be eaten, therefore, iron is not useful? And because gold cannot be the food of man, will you, therefore, cast gold away and call it worthless dross? Yet on your foolish supposition you *must* do so, for because I have said the Law cannot save, you have foolishly asked me what is the

use of it? And you foolishly suppose God's Law is good for nothing and can be of no value whatever."

This objection is generally brought forward by two sorts of people. First, by mere cavilers who do not like the Gospel and wish to pick all sorts of holes in it. They can tell us what they do *not* believe. But they do not tell us what they *do* believe. They would fight with everybody's Doctrines and sentiments, but they would be at a loss if they were asked to sit down and write their own opinions. They do not seem to have got much further than the genius of the monkey which can pull everything to pieces but can put nothing together! Then, on the other hand, there is the Antinomian who says, "Yes, I know I am saved by Grace alone." And then breaks the Law—says it is not binding on him—even as a rule of life. He asks, "What purpose then does the Law serve?" He throws it out of his door as an old piece of furniture only fit for the fire because it is not adapted to save his soul. Why, a thing may have many uses, if not a particular one. It is true that the Law cannot save. And yet it is equally true that the Law is one of the highest works of God and is deserving of all reverence and extremely useful when applied by God to the purposes for which it was intended!

Yet, pardon me, my Friends, if I just observe that this is a very natural question, too. If you read the Doctrine of the Apostle Paul you find him declaring that the Law condemns all mankind. Now let us for one single moment take a bird's-eye view of the works of the Law in this world. Lo, I see the Law given upon Mount Sinai! The very hill does quake with fear. Lightning and thunder are the attendants of those dreadful syllables which make the hearts of Israel to melt! Sinai seems altogether on fire. The Lord came from Paran and the Holy One from Mount Sinai—"He came with ten thousand of His saints." Out of His mouth went a fiery Law for them. It was a dread Law even when it was given and since then from that Mount of Sinai an awful lava of vengeance has run down to deluge, to destroy, to burn and to consume the whole human race! If it had not been that Jesus Christ had stemmed its awful torrent and bid its waves of fire be still, we would have all been lost forever! If you could see the world without Christ in it, simply under the Law, you would see a world in ruins, a world with God's black seal put upon it—stamped and sealed for condemnation! You would see men, who, if they knew their condition, would have their hands on their loins and be groaning all their days—you would see men and women condemned, lost and ruined. And in the uttermost regions you would see the pit of Hell that is dug for the wicked into which the whole earth would have been cast if the Law had its way, apart from the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Redeemer! Yes, Beloved, the Law is a great deluge which would have drowned the world

with worse than the water of Noah's flood. It is a great fire which would have burned the earth with a destruction worse than that which fell on Sodom! It is a stern angel with a sword, thirsty for blood and winged to slay. It is a great destroyer sweeping down the nations. It is the great messenger of God's vengeance sent into the world. Apart from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Law is nothing but the condemning voice of God thundering against mankind. "What purpose then does the Law serve?" seems a very natural question. Can the Law be of any benefit to man? Can that Judge who puts on a black cap and condemns us all—this Lord Chief Justice Law—can he help in salvation? Yes, he did! And you shall see how he does it, if God shall help us while we preach. "What purpose then does the Law serve?"

I. The first use of the Law is *to manifest to man his guilt*. When God intends to save a man, the first thing He does with him is to send the Law to him to show him how guilty, how vile, how ruined he is and in how dangerous a position he is. You see that man lying there on the edge of the precipice? He is sound asleep and just on the perilous verge of the cliff. One single movement and he will roll over and be broken in pieces on the jagged rocks beneath and nothing more shall be heard of him. How is he to be saved? What shall be done for him—what shall be done? It is our position. We, too, are lying on the brink of ruin, but we are insensible to it. God, when He begins to save us from such an imminent danger, sends His Law, which, with a stout kick, wakes us up and makes us open our eyes. We look down on our terrible danger, discover our misery and then it is we are in a right position to cry out for salvation and our salvation comes to us! The Law acts with man as the physician does when he takes the film from the eyes of the blind. Self-righteous men are blind men—though they think themselves good and excellent. The Law takes that film away and lets them discover how vile they are and how utterly ruined and condemned if they are to abide under the sentence of the Law.

Instead, however, of treating this doctrinally, I shall treat it practically and come home to each of your consciences. My Hearer, does not the Law of God convict you of sin this morning? Under the hand of God's Spirit, does it not make you feel that you have been guilty, that you deserve to be lost, that you have incurred the fierce anger of God? Look here, have you not broken these Ten Commandments? Even in the letter, have you not broken them? Who is there among you who has always honored his father and mother? Who is there among us who has always spoken the truth? Have we not sometimes borne false witness against our neighbor? Is there one person here who has not made unto himself another god and loved himself, or his business, or his friends, more than

he has Jehovah, the God of the whole earth? Which of you has not coveted your neighbor's house, or his manservant, or his ox, or his donkey? We are all guilty with regard to every letter of the Law! We have, all of us, transgressed the Commandments. And if we really understood these Commandments and felt that they condemned us, they would have this useful influence on us of showing us our danger and so of leading us to flee to Christ! But, my Hearers, does not this Law condemn you because even if you should say you have not broken the letter of it, yet you have violated the spirit of it. Though you have never killed, yet we are told, he that is angry with his brother is a murderer! As a slave said once, "Sir, I thought me no kill—me innocent there. But when I heard that he that hates his brother is a murderer, then me cry guilty, for me have killed 20 men before breakfast very often, for I have been angry with many of them very often." This Law does not only mean what it says in words, but it has deep things hidden in its heart. It says, "You shall not commit adultery," but it means, as Jesus has it, "He that looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart." It says, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain," it means that we should reverence God in every place and have His fear before our eyes and should always pay respect unto His ordinances and evermore walk in His fear and love. Yes, my Brethren, surely there is not one here so foolhardy in self-righteousness as to say, "I am innocent." The spirit of the Law condemns us. And this is its useful property. It humbles us, makes us know we are guilty and so are we led to receive the Savior!

Mark this, moreover, my dear Hearers, *one breach of this Law is enough to condemn us forever*. He that breaks the Law in one point is guilty of the whole! The Law demands that we should obey every command and one of them broken, the whole of them are broken. It is like a vase of surpassing workmanship—in order to destroy it you need not shiver it to atoms—make but the smallest fracture in it and you have destroyed its perfection. As it is a perfect Law which we are commanded to obey and to obey perfectly, make but one breach thereof and though we are ever so innocent we can hope for nothing from the Law except the voice, "You are condemned, you are condemned, you are condemned!" Under this aspect of the matter, ought not the Law to strip many of us of all our boasting? Who is there that shall rise in his place and say, "Lord, I thank You I am not as other men are"? Surely there cannot be one among you who can go home and say, "I have tithed mint and cummin. I have kept all the Commandments from my youth"? No, if this Law is brought home to the conscience and the heart, we shall stand with the publican, saying, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." The only reason why a man thinks he is righteous is because he does not know the Law. You

think you have never broken it because you do not understand it! There are some of you who are most respectable people. You think you have been so good that you can go to Heaven by your own works. You may not exactly say so, but you secretly think so! You have devoutly taken the Sacrament, you have been mightily pious in attending your Church or Chapel regularly, you are good to the poor, generous and upright and you say, "I shall be saved by my works." No, Sir, look to the flame that Moses saw and shrink and tremble and despair—the Law can do nothing for us except condemn us—the utmost it can do is to whip us out of our boasted self-righteousness and drive us to Christ! It puts a burden on our backs and makes us ask Christ to take it off. It is like a lancet, it probes the wound. It is, to use a parable, as when some dark cellar has not been opened for years and is full of all kinds of loathsome creatures. We may walk through it not knowing they are there. But the Law comes, opens the shutters, lets light in and then we discover what a vile heart we have and how unholy our lives have been. And, then, instead of boasting, we are made to fall on our faces and cry, "Lord, save or I perish. Oh, save me for Your mercy's sake, or else I shall be cast away!" Oh, you self-righteous ones now present who think yourselves so good that you can mount to Heaven by your works—blind horses, perpetually going round the mill and making not one inch of progress—do you think to take the Law upon your shoulders as Sampson did the gates of Gaza? Do you imagine that you can perfectly keep this Law of God? Will you dare to say you have not broken it? No, surely, you will confess, though it is in but an under tone, "I have revolted." Then, know this—the Law can do nothing for you in the matter of forgiveness. All it can do is just this—it can make you feel you are nothing at all. It can strip you. It can bruise you. It can kill you, but it can neither quicken, nor clothe, nor cleanse—it was never meant to do that!

Oh, are you this morning, my Hearer, sad because of sin? Do you feel that you have been guilty? Do you acknowledge your transgression? Do you confess your wandering? Hear me, then, as God's ambassador! God has mercy upon sinners! Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners! And though you have broken the Law, He has kept it. Take His righteousness to be yours. Cast yourself upon Him. Come to Him now, stripped and naked and take His robe as your covering! Come to Him, black and filthy in sin, and wash yourself in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. And then you shall know, "what purposes then does the Law serve?" That is the first point.

II. Now, the second. *The Law serves to slay all hope of salvation by a reformed life.* Most men, when they discover themselves to be guilty, swear that they will reform. They say, "I have been guilty and have de-

served God's wrath, but for the future I will seek to win a stock of merits which shall counterbalance all my old sins." In steps the Law puts its hand on the sinner's mouth and says, "Stop, you cannot do that, it is impossible!" I will show you how the Law does this. It does it partly by reminding the man that *future obedience can be no atonement for past guilt*. To use a common metaphor so that the poor may thoroughly understand me—you have run up a score at your shop. Well, you cannot pay it. You go off to Mrs. Brown, your shopkeeper, and you say to her, "Well, I am sorry, Ma'am, that through my husband being out of work, and all that, I know I shall never be able to pay you. It is a very great debt I owe you, but, if you please, Ma'am, if you forgive me this debt I will never get into your debt any more. I will always pay for all I have." "Yes," she would say, "but that will not square our accounts. If you pay for all you have, it would be no more than you ought to do. But what about the old bills? How are they to be receipted? They won't be receipted by all your fresh payments." That is just what men do towards God. "True," they say, "I have gone far astray, I know, but then I won't do so any more." Ah, it is time you threw away such child's talk! You do but manifest your rampant folly by such a hope! Can you wipe away your transgression by future obedience? Ah, no, the old debt must be paid somehow—God's justice is inflexible and the Law tells you all your requirements can make no atonement for the past! You must have an Atonement through Christ Jesus the Lord! "But," says the man, "I will try and be better and then I think I shall have mercy given to me." Then the Law steps in and says, "You are going to try and keep me, are you? Why, Man, you cannot do it!" *Perfect obedience in the future is impossible*. And the Ten Commandments are held up and if any awakened sinner will but look at them, he will turn away and say, "It is impossible for me to keep them." "Why, Man, you say you will be obedient in the *future*? You have not been obedient in the past and there is no likelihood that you will keep God's Commandments in time to come! You say you will avoid the evils of the past? You cannot—'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may you also do good that are accustomed to do evil?'" "But," you say "I will take greater heed to my ways." "Sir, you will not. The temptation that overcame you yesterday will overcome you tomorrow. But, mark this, even if you could, you could not win salvation by it."

The Law tells you that unless you perfectly obey, you cannot be saved by your doings. It tells you that one sin will make a flaw in it all, that one transgression will spoil your whole obedience. It is a spotless garment that you must wear in Heaven. It is only an unbroken Law which God can accept! So, then, the Law answers this purpose—to tell men that

their acquirements, their talk and their doings—are of no use whatever in the matter of salvation! It is theirs to come to Christ, to get a new heart and a right spirit—to get the evangelical repentance which needs not to be repented of—that so they may put their trust in Jesus and receive pardon through His blood! “What purpose then does the Law serve?” It serves this purpose, as Luther has it—the purpose of a hammer. Luther, you know, is very strong on the subject of the Law. He says, “For if any are not a murderer, an adulterer, a thief and outwardly refrain from sin, as the Pharisee did, which is mentioned in the Gospel, he would swear that he is righteous and, therefore, he conceives an opinion of righteousness and presumes of his good works and merits. Such a one God cannot otherwise mollify and humble, that he may acknowledge his misery and damnation but by the Law—for that is the hammer of death, the thundering of Hell and the lightning of God’s wrath that beats to powder the obstinate and senseless hypocrites! For as long as the opinion of righteousness abides in man, so long there also abides in him incomprehensible pride, presumption, security, hatred of God, contempt of His Grace and mercy, ignorance of the promises and of Christ. The preaching of free remission of sins, through Christ cannot enter into the heart of such an one, neither can he feel any taste or savor thereof. For that mighty rock and adamant wall, to wit, the opinion of righteousness, wherewith the heart is environed, does resist it. Therefore the Law is that hammer, that fire, that mighty strong wind and that terrible earthquake rending the mountains and breaking the rocks” (1 Kings 19:11, 12, 13). That is to say, the proud and obstinate hypocrites. Elijah, not being able to abide these terrors of the Law, which by these things are signified, covered his face with his mantle. Notwithstanding, when the tempest ceased, of which he was a beholder, there came a soft and a gracious wind in the which the Lord was. But it behooved that the tempest of fire, of wind and the earthquake should pass before the Lord should reveal Himself in that gracious wind.”

III. And now, a step further. You that know the Grace of God can follow me in this next step. *The Law is intended to show man the misery which will fall upon him through his sin.* I speak from experience, and many of you who hear me will hear this with ears of attention because you have felt the same. There was a time with me, when but young in years, I felt with much sorrow the evil of sin. My bones waxed old with roaring all day long. Day and night God’s hand was heavy upon me. There was a time when He seared me with visions and frightened me by dreams. By day I hungered for deliverance, for my soul fasted within me—I feared lest the very skies would fall upon me and crush my guilty soul. God’s Law had got hold upon me and was showing me my misery. If

I slept at night, I dreamed of the bottomless pit and when I awoke I seemed to feel the misery I had dreamed! Up to God's House I went. My song was but a groan. To my chamber I retired and there with tears and groans, I offered up my prayer without a hope and without a refuge. I could then say with David, "The owl is my partner and the bittern is my companion," for God's Law was flogging me with its ten-thronged whip and then rubbing me with brine afterwards! I did shake and quiver with pain and anguish and my soul chose strangling rather than life, for I was exceedingly sorrowful. Some of you have felt the same. The Law was sent on purpose to do that. But, you will ask, "Why that misery?" I answer that misery was sent for this reason—that I might then be made to cry to Jesus! Our Heavenly Father does not usually make us seek Jesus till He has whipped us clean out of all our confidences! He cannot make us in earnest after Heaven till He has made us feel something of the intolerable tortures of an aching conscience which is a foretaste of Hell!

Do you not remember, my Hearer, when you used to awake in the morning and the first thing you took up was *Alleine's Alarm*, or Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*? Oh, those books, those books in my childhood—I read and devoured them when under a sense of guilt. But they were like sitting at the foot of Sinai. When I turned to Baxter, I found him saying some such things as these—"Sinner, do you know within an hour you may be in Hell? Do you know you may soon be dying? Death is even now gnawing at your cheek. What will you do when you stand before the bar of God without a Savior? Will you tell Him you had no time to spend on religion? Will not that empty excuse melt into thin air? Oh, Sinner, will you, then, dare to insult your Maker? Will you, then, dare to scoff at Him? Think! The flames of Hell are hot and the wrath of God is heavy. Were your bones of steel and your ribs of brass, you might still quiver with fear. Oh, had you the strength of a giant, you could not wrestle with the Most High. What will you do when He shall tear you in pieces and there shall be none to deliver you? What will you do when He shall fire off His ten great guns at you? "The first Commandment shall say, 'Crush him! He has broken me!' The second shall say, 'Damn him! He has broken me!' The third shall say, 'A curse upon him! He has broken me!' And so shall they all fly upon you—and you without a shelter, without a place to flee to and without a hope."

Ah, you have not forgotten the days when no hymn seemed suitable to you but the one that began—

***"Stoop down my soul that used to rise
Converse awhile with death!
Think how a gasping mortal lies,
And pants away his breath!"***

Or else—

***“That awful day shall surely come,
The appointed hour makes haste,
When I must stand before my Judge,
And pass the solemn test.”***

Yes, that was why the Law was sent—to convict us of sin—to make us shake and shiver before God! Oh, you that are self-righteous, let me speak to you this morning with just a word or two of terrible and burning earnestness. Remember, Sirs, the day is coming when a crowd more vast than this shall be assembled on the plains of earth. When on a great White Throne the Savior, Judge of Men, shall sit. Now He is come. The Book is opened. The glory of Heaven is displayed, rich with triumphant love and burning with unquenchable vengeance! Ten thousand angels are on either hand. And you are standing to be tried. Now, self-righteous Man, tell me *now* that you went to Church three times a day! Come, Man, tell me *now* that you kept all the Commandments! Tell me now that you are not guilty! Come before Him with a receipt of your mint and your anise and your cummin! Come along with you! Where are you? Oh, you are fleeing! You are crying, “Rocks hide me! Mountains fall on me!” Where are you going, Man? Why, you were so fair on earth that none dare spoke to you! You were so good and so comely—why do you run away? Come, Man, pluck up your courage! Come before your Maker—tell Him that you were honest, sober, excellent and that you deserve to be saved! Why do you delay to repeat your boasts? Out with it—come—say it! No, you will not. I see you still fleeing, with shrieks, away from your Maker’s Presence. There will be none found to stand before Him, then, in their own righteousness. But look! Look! Look! I see a man coming forward out of that motley throng. He marches forward with a steady step and with a smiling eye. What? Is there any man found who shall dare to approach the dread tribunal of God? What? Is there one who dares to stand before his Maker? Yes, there is one—he comes forward and he cries, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” Do you not shudder? Will not the mountains of wrath swallow him? Will not God launch that dreadful thunderbolt against him? No—listen while he confidently proceeds—“Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died. Yes, rather, that has risen again.” And I see the right hand of God outstretched—“Come, you blessed, enter the Kingdom prepared for you.” Now is fulfilled the verse which you once sweetly sang—

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

IV. And now, my dear Friends, I am afraid of wearying you. Therefore, let me briefly hint at one other thought. “What purpose then does the

Law serve?" *It was sent into the world to show the value of a Savior.* Just as foils set off jewels and as dark spots make bright tints more bright, so does the Law make Christ appear the fairer and more Heavenly! I hear the Law of God curse and how harsh its voice. Jesus says, "come unto Me." Oh, what music! All the more musical after the discord of the Law. I see the Law condemn. I behold Christ obeying it. Oh, how ponderous that price—when I know how weighty was the demand! I read the Commandments and I find them strict and awfully severe—oh, how holy must Christ have been to obey all these for me! Nothing makes me value my Savior more than seeing the Law condemn me! When I know this Law stands in my way and like a flaming cherubim will not let me enter Paradise, then I can know how sweetly precious must Jesus Christ's righteousness be—which is my passport to Heaven and gives me Grace to enter there!

V. And, lastly, "What purpose then does the Law serve?" *It was sent into the world to keep Christians from self-righteousness.* Christians—do they ever get self-righteous? Yes, they do. The best Christian in the world will find it hard work to keep himself from boasting and from being self-righteous. John Knox, on his deathbed, was attacked with self-righteousness. The last night of his life on earth he slept some hours during which he uttered many deep and heavy moans. Being asked why he moaned so deeply, he replied, "I have during my life sustained many assaults of Satan. But at present he has assaulted me most fearfully and put forth all his strength to make an end of me at once. The cunning serpent has labored to persuade me that I have *merited* Heaven and eternal blessedness by the faithful discharge of *my* ministry. But blessed be God who has enabled me to quench this fiery dart by suggesting to me such passages as these—"What have you that you have not received?" And, "By the Grace of God I am what I am." Yes, and each of us have felt the same. I have often felt myself rather amused at some of my Brothers and Sisters who have come to me and said, "I trust the Lord will keep you humble," when they, themselves, were not only as proud as they were high, but a few inches over! They have been most sincere in prayer that I should be humble, unwittingly nursing their own pride by their own imaginary reputation for humility! I have long since given up entreating people to be humble because it naturally tends to make them proud. A man is apt to say, "Dear me, these people are afraid I shall be proud. I must have something to be proud of." Then we say to ourselves, "I will not let them see it." And we try to keep our pride down but after all we are as proud as Lucifer within! I find that the most proud and most self-righteous people are those who do nothing at all and have no shadow of presence for any opinion of their own goodness. The old truth in the

book of Job is still true. You know in the beginning of the book of Job it is said, “The oxen were plowing and the asses were feeding beside them.” That is generally the way in this world. The oxen are plowing in the Church—we have some who are laboring hard for Christ—and the asses are feeding beside them on the finest livings and the fattest of the land! These are the people who have so much to say about self-righteousness! What do they do? They do not do enough to earn a living and yet they think they are going to *earn Heaven*. They sit down and fold their hands and yet they are so reverently righteous because they sometimes dole out a little in charity. They do nothing and yet boast of self-righteousness! And with Christian people it is the same. If God makes you laborious and keeps you constantly engaged in His service, you are less likely to be proud of your self-righteousness than you are if you do nothing! But at all times there is a natural tendency to it. Therefore, God has written the Law that when we read it, we may see our faults—that when we look into it, as into a mirror—we may see the impurities in our flesh and have reason to abhor ourselves in sackcloth and ashes and still cry to Jesus for mercy! Use the Law in this fashion and in no other.

And now, says one, “Sir, are there any here that you have been preaching at?” Yes, I like to preach *at* people. I do not believe it is of any use to preach *to* people—preach right *into* them and right *at* them. I find in every circle a class who say, in plain English, “Well, I am as good a father as is to be found in the parish. I am a good tradesman. I pay twenty shillings in the pound. I am no Sir John Dean Paul. I go to Church, or I go to Chapel—and that is more than everybody does. I pay my subscriptions—I subscribe to the infirmary. I say my prayers. Therefore I believe I stand as good a chance of Heaven as anybody in the world.” I do believe that three out of four of the people of London think something of that sort. Now, if that is the ground of your trust, you have a rotten hope! You have a plank to stand upon that will not bear your weight in the day of God’s account! As the Lord my God lives, before whom I stand, “Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven.” And if you think the best performance of your hands can save you—know this—that “Israel, which followed after the Law of righteousness, has not attained to the Law of righteousness.” Those who sought not after it have attained it! Why? Because the one has sought it by faith, the other has sought it by the deeds of the Law—where justification never was to be found. Hear, now, the Gospel, Men and Women—down with that boasting form of your righteousness—away with your hopes, with all your trusts that spring from this—

“Could your tears forever flow,

***Could your zeal no respite know!
All for sin could not atone
Christ must save and save alone!"***

If you would know how we must be saved, hear this—you must come with nothing of your own to Christ. Christ has kept the Law. You are to have His righteousness to be your righteousness! Christ has suffered in the place of all who repent. His punishment is to stand instead of your being punished! And through faith in the sanctification and Atonement of Christ you are to be saved! Come, then, you weary and heavy laden, bruised and mangled by the Fall. Come then, you Sinners. Come then, you Moralists. Come then, all you that have broken God's Law and feel it—leave your own trusts and come to Jesus—He will take you in, give you a spotless robe of righteousness and make you His forever! "But how can I come?" asks one. "Must I go home and pray?" No, Sir, no! Where you are standing now, you may come to the Cross. Oh, if you know yourself to be a sinner, now—I beseech you, before your feet shall leave the floor on which you stand—now, say this—

***"Myself into Your arms I cast—
Lord, save my guilty soul at last."***

Now, down with you, away with your self-righteousness! Look at me—look, now. Say not, "Must I mount to Heaven and bring Christ down?" "The Word is near you, on your mouth and in your heart. If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe with your heart, you shall be saved." Yes, you—you—YOU!

Oh, bless God, we have heard of hundreds who have in this place believed on Christ! Some of the blackest of the human race have come to me but even lately and told me what God has done for them! Oh, that you, too, would now come to Jesus! Remember, he that believes shall be saved, be his sins ever so many. And he that believes not, must perish, be his sins ever so few! Oh, that the Holy Spirit would lead you to believe—so should you escape the wrath to come and have a place in Paradise among the redeemed!

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

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

A MEDIATOR

NO. 2180

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 23, 1890,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.”
Galatians 3:20.***

THE text does not strike you as difficult, but it is exceedingly perplexing to the interpreter. I was looking at one very old commentator who is a great favorite of mine and I noticed that he said that there were 250 different meanings given by expositors to this verse. John Prime, in 1587, called it, “an endless labyrinth.” “Oh,” I thought, “here is a nice wood to lose oneself in! Two hundred and fifty meanings!” Turning to a more modern author—a great reader, however—he said he believed that more than 400 different interpretations had been put upon the passage. This was getting from a wood into a forest—a black forest, where one might lose himself hopelessly! Should I preach from such a text? Yes, but I must not worry you with these many interpretations. Some of them cannot be correct. Some of them are, no doubt, nearly accurate. What does the passage mean? I will not venture to say that I know, but I will venture to say that I know how to use it for a practical purpose. If the Spirit of God will help us, we shall find our way, by a very simple clue, to the practical meaning and make use of the words for our soul's profit.

A mediator! What is a mediator? A mediator is a middleman, a go-between—one who comes in between two parties who otherwise could not commune with each other. Take the case of Moses. God's voice was very terrible and the people could not bear it, so Moses came in and spoke on the behalf of God. The Presence of Jehovah upon the mountain was so glorious that men could not climb the hill and endure that great sight—so Moses went up for men to God. He was a mediator, speaking for the Lord, and making intercession for the people. This is what Paul alludes to when he speaks of the Law being, “ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” And here the Apostle lets slip a sort of general statement—a Truth of God which does not seem to be in connection with anything that goes before, or anything that follows after.

He lays this down as a general rule—“A mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.” Paul has gold dust—his every thought is precious. He is looking at one object, and talking about it, and meanwhile he strikes a stone with his foot and lays bare a vein of gold! As if he did not notice the treasure, he passes on and leaves that vein of gold for you and for me. He is very fond of digression. It is the style of Paul and the style of every man who is very full and running over. He keeps to one argument, but he

sees many others. While he is running towards the goal, he lets fall golden apples in the form of general principles which occur to him at the time.

I understand Paul here, not as going on with any argument, but as letting fall a general principle which I—taking it out of its connection—hope to use for our profit tonight. A mediator, a go-between, an interposer, is not a mediator of one, that is clear—but God is one. What shall we learn from this?

I. First, A MEDIATOR IS NOT FOR GOD ALONE. A mediator deals with *two* persons—with God and man. A mediator does not come because God needs, Himself, any kind of mediator. He is eternally One and if you view Him as the sacred Trinity, yet He is a Trinity in Unity. God is One. Some persons call themselves Unitarians who have no exclusive right to the name. All Trinitarians are Unitarians—though we believe that the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God, yet we confess that there are *not* three gods, but one God. Now, between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit there is no difference, no ground for contention—and therefore no mediator is needed to reconcile the Divine Persons. God is One—therefore our God does not need the mediator for Himself.

Who is the mediator needed for, then? Why, for somebody else! That somebody else is here tonight and I want to find him out. A mediator! Blessed be God, there is a Mediator, but God does not need Him for His personal purposes! *There is another person for whom the Mediator is required.* Where is that other person? In the very gift of Christ as a Mediator, in the sending of Him in His Divine and Human Nature—in Christ's life, in Christ's death—God had an eye to another party. God, looking out beyond Himself to somebody else, provided a Mediator. That ought to be a great thought to you, for if God is looking out of Himself, why should He not look at *you*? If God has so looked out of Himself as to provide a Mediator, that must mean that He is thinking of a creature who needs one. O my Soul, may He not be thinking of you? Though you have wandered from Him and lived for many years without Him, may it not be that as there is a Mediator and that Mediator cannot be for God alone—for God is One—that Mediator may be intended to meet my need and bring me back to God?

Now, according to the run of the text and according to the run of Scripture, *that other party, for whom a Mediator is sent, is man.* Man has fallen out with God. Man is at enmity with God and God is necessarily angry with man, for He cannot but hate sin and He must punish evil. God, therefore, is looking out on man—and here am I tonight, sitting in the House of Prayer—is He looking on me? God desires fellowship with men! God would have men brought near to Him—why should not I, then, be brought near? Why should I live at a distance? Here is a Mediator—that Mediator cannot be for God alone, for God is One—He must be meant for a second person. May not I be that person?

Let me lift my eyes to Heaven, and say, "O gracious Lord, grant that I may be that other person for whom this Mediator is concerned!" For a

mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is One, and would have me to be the second, that there may be work for a Mediator to do! That is clear enough.

II. Now go a step further. In the second place, A MEDIATOR IS NOT FOR PERSONS WHO ARE AGREED WITH EACH OTHER. A mediator is not needed for persons of one heart and of one soul. I need no mediator between myself and my brother, between myself and my son, between myself and my wife. We are perfectly at one already and no mediator is needed. So, then, it is clear that if there is a mediator, it is for two persons between whom *there is some ground of difference*. Mark well this Truth of God and understand it. I am not going to say pretty things, or use fine words, yet I say to those of you who long to be saved—Understand what I am saying, for it will help you!

A Mediator! That must be for persons between whom there is ground of quarrel. Sinner! Sinner, this is good news for you! A Mediator is not for a man who is perfectly at one with God, but for *you*, who has by many sins provoked God! For you who by the sinfulness of your nature stand at a distance from Him! There is need of a Mediator between you and the thrice-holy God—and it is for such as *you* that a Mediator has appeared! Do you understand this Truth of God? A mediator is not a mediator between those who are at one. He is a mediator between persons who differ—and that is the case with you as to your God!

III. A mediator also comes when THERE IS A GROUND OF DIFFERENCE WHICH CANNOT READILY BE RESOLVED, for if the ground of difference is trivial and the two parties are willing to be agreed, they soon settle the matter. A mediator, an arbitrator, is brought in when the case is hard. Such is your case and mine by nature. We have sinned. God is just. He is full of compassion and willing to forgive as far as the slight is against His Person, but He is also King and Judge of all the earth and He must punish sin. If He does not punish sin, He will be unjust and the injustice which does not punish sin is cruelty to all righteous men.

If our judges were tomorrow to say to every thief, housebreaker, murderer, “Go your way, you are forgiven,” it would be kindness to *them*, but it would be cruelty to *us*. It would not be true mercy on the part of God to pass by sin without punishment. He could not occupy His Throne as the Guardian of right and the Protector of virtue if He did not execute judgment upon sin. Here, then, we perceive a barrier between God and the guilty—God must punish offenders—and man has offended. How can these two be brought together? Here steps in the Mediator, one of a thousand, who can lay His hand upon both—settle this deadly feud and make eternal peace! A mediator is not for those who are at one, but for those who have a ground of difference which cannot be readily removed.

IV. In this case, if there is any wish on the part of the offending one to be reconciled, it may be done, for the offended God is willing to be at peace. THERE WOULD BE NO USE IN A MEDIATOR UNLESS THE PARTIES WERE BOTH WILLING TO BE RECONCILED TO EACH OTHER. A mediator who comes in between two who have a continued hatred

simply wastes his time. But in our case God is willing to be reconciled. "Fury is not in Me," He says. But man is not willing to be reconciled to God until Divine Grace changes his heart. If there is, on your part, a wish to end your quarrel and to be friends with God, you will be happy to know that there is a Mediator. Jesus stands waiting to remove the barrier that divides you from God and to reconcile you to God by His own death.

There must, however, in order for a mediator, an umpire, be a *willingness on both sides to leave the matter in his hands*. There must be a difference which they cannot remove, a difference which they wish to have removed and a difference which they are willing to leave in the umpire's hands. God is willing to leave our matter with Christ. He has done so. He has laid help on One that is mighty. He has qualified and commissioned Him to come as an Ambassador and make peace between Him and guilty men. On your part, are you willing to hand the matter over to Christ entirely, to do what He bids you, to admit to what He would have you confess, to repent wherein He tells you you are wrong, to seek to be right wherein He warns you that you have failed? Will you give your case over to the Mediator and make Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to be your Representative in the business?

God trusts His honor in the hands of His Son Jesus. He is not afraid to leave everything that concerns His moral government and His royal Character in the hands of the Well-Beloved. Will you trust your soul's eternal interests in those same dear pierced hands? If so, rejoice that there is a Mediator between two parties that have long been alienated—a Mediator between God and you! Take Him to your heart tonight!

V. Now we will go a step further. A mediator is not a mediator of one, but HE STUDIES THE INTERESTS OF BOTH PARTIES. Such is our Lord Jesus Christ. Coming here on earth, did He come to save men? Yes. Did He come to glorify His Father's name? Yes. For which of these two purposes did He chiefly come? I will not say. He came for both and He blends the two. He looks after the interests of man and pleads the causes of his soul—He looks after the interests of God and vindicates the honor of God even unto death. Is He obedient that He might magnify the Law of God and make it honorable? Yes, but He is Mediator that He may deliver us from the curse of the Law.

Beloved, our blessed Mediator is not a Mediator for one! An umpire must not take sides, and a mediator that did not understand more than one side and was not concerned for but one side, would be unworthy of the name. Our Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, has both Natures. Is He God? Verily, He is very God of very God. Is He Man? Assuredly, of the substance of His mother, as truly Man as any man among us! Is He more God, or is He more Man? This is a question not to be asked, and, therefore, not to be answered. He is my Brother. He is God's Son. Yes, He is Himself, God. What better Umpire can we want than this Divine Human Being who can lay His hands upon us both?

He counts it not robbery to be equal with God and yet calls man His brother! Our Mediator is not a Mediator of one since He wears both

Natures and espouses both causes. Oh, how dear to the heart of Christ is the Glory of God! He lives, He dies, He rises again to glorify the Father! Oh, how dear to Christ is the salvation of men! He lives, He dies, He rises again and pleads for the salvation of sinners! He has the enthusiasm of humanity, but He has the enthusiasm of Divinity as well. God must be glorified—our Mediator will die to do it! Man must be saved—He will die to do it! What a splendid Mediator, who is not a Mediator of one, but a Mediator who takes up the cause of both sides!

VI. In this capacity, OUR BLESSED MEDIATOR PLEADS FOR BOTH WITH BOTH—for He is not a Mediator of one. A mediator, when he would make peace, goes to this one and he states the case. And he urges him and pleads with him. When he has done that, he returns to the other party and states the other side. He pleads with the one on the behalf of the other. Even so our Lord Jesus Christ comes in between God and man. Oh, how wonderful! He pleads with God for sinners, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” And then he turns round and pleads with sinners for God and bids them turn to Him and be reconciled to Him, since He is their Father and their Friend!

A mediator is not a mediator of one. He who should come in and pretend to be a mediator and then throw all the blame on one party, and care only for the interests of the other party, would not be a mediator, but a partisan! But, in this case, here is One who has something to say, not in vindication, or excuse for sin, but in pleading for mercy to the sinner! He has something to say to magnify the justice of God and yet He cries for mercy. He prays, “Have mercy, O God! Have mercy upon the guilty!” I think that I have got the run of this text, somehow, if I cannot give you the exact meaning of the words. This meaning lies hidden within the words—a mediator is not for one, but he studies the interests of both.

VII. It is, then, most clear that A MEDIATOR MUST HAVE TWO PARTIES TO DEAL WITH or else his office is a mere name. An umpire is chosen to keep order between two sets of people, but if only one set shall put in an appearance, you may go home, Mr. Umpire. There is evidently nothing for you to do. “A mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.”

Now, tonight my Lord is here to be a Mediator. God is willing to be reconciled to men, but if there is nobody here to be reconciled—if the preaching of tonight has no relation to anybody here—then it is quite clear that the office of Christ cannot be exercised. He cannot be a Mediator unless there is a sinner here to be reconciled. Where is he? My Lord the Mediator holds His court, tonight, and sits here as an Ambassador—but what can He do unless there is another party? Unless I can discover the offender, the guilty one—and unless, discovering him, the Spirit of God shall bring him to say, “I wish to be reconciled to God and I put my case into the hands of the great Interposer”—if there is no sinner in the world, then there is no Savior in the world!

How can He save if men are not guilty and do not need saving? I tell you, Sinner, you are necessary to Christ’s doing any business! A man is a

surgeon and puts a brass plate outside his door. Go and tell him that there is nobody ill in the parish. Prove to him that within 10 miles there is nobody who has so much as a cold or a toothache—the good man may take down his brass plate and go and spend a month in the country! It breaks a doctor up if everybody remains healthy! Now, if tonight everybody here has kept God's Law and is innocent, guiltless and fully at one with God, my Master has no mission here, nor have I. I have no need to speak of Him to you, for, "they that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick."

Therefore I come forth in the name of the Mediator to ask whether there is not some sinner here who will confess his guilt—some enemy of God who will ask for peace! Is there not here some giddy young man who has lived without God, until now, who will pray to be reconciled to Him? If so, you make work for my Master! You give Him something to do in that Divine office of Mediator in which He takes such a delight. And mark you this—in the case of a mediator, or umpire, the more difficult the case, the greater is the honor that comes to him if he can settle it. If there is a very stiff quarrel between you and God, I commend to you my Lord as Mediator, for He never failed yet to settle any dispute and at this time He says, "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out."

Solomon was great in handling hard matters, but a greater than Solomon is here! If your life is all in a tangle and a snarl, He can put it straight! If your differences with God are too solemn and weighty to be stated in words. If they press your life out of you. If they rob you of sleep. If they bring you down to Hell's door—yet still my Lord the Mediator can settle every difference and make peace between your soul and God! Are you willing that He should exercise His office for you? If so, the worse your case the greater will be the credit that will come to my Lord as Mediator when He has removed every difficulty for you!

Do not be afraid because there are so many sinful ones here and such great numbers of you are still the enemies of God! I do not only invite *one* of you to come, but I would say—Come all, and the more the merrier! My Lord will have the greater honor if He composes this quarrel in hundreds of cases, all varying and all grievous! You may come, the whole of you, and He will not shut His door against you! If you go to see some eminent doctors of this city, you must get there early in the morning and wait almost till night before your turn comes round—but there will be no waiting with my Lord and Master! If you wish to be friends with God, the Mediator is ready to settle the difference and to send you away happy in the love of the Most High.

"But may I come?" asks one. May you come? When Christ sets up to be a Mediator, why should you not use Him as a Mediator? I do not ask the doctor's pardon when, feeling ill, I knock at his door! He has put up his name as one that is willing to deal with the sick and therefore I seek him. I take no liberty in coming. If he has undertaken an office, let him do his office. Poor guilty Wretch, afraid to come to God? Behold Christ puts up the name of Mediator with intent that He should be used as such! He is

the way of access to the Father! Come and use Him for what He professes to be. Believe that He is able to do what, by His name and His official title, He claims to do! Now come and be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, His Son the Mediator!

I have been nearly 40 years now trying to preach. I cannot get at it yet. Oh, that I knew how to put this so as to move every soul to come to God and sue for peace! How willing must God be to be at peace with men when He provides a Mediator between Himself and them! How readily ought you to come when Christ's honor and Glory depend upon men's trusting their problems in His hands! I ask again, what is a mediator if no case is trusted to him? A king without a crown, a shepherd without a flock, a farmer without land, a physician without sick people—these are all in a poor plight. And Christ without sinners, where is He? His name is an empty thing and His Glory gone! Come, then, you chief of sinners, come to Christ and leave your problems with Him!

VIII. But I close by noticing that, although it is necessary, when the mediator begins, that there should be two parties—for he is not a mediator of one, and God is one—yet when the case ends, A MEDIATOR MUST MAKE THE TWO ONE OR HE HAS NOT SUCCEEDED. Our Lord Jesus has broken down the middle wall of partition. He has really reconciled those who stood apart. Christ has done this for so many that I should like you, sitting in the gallery to ask, "Why should not He do it for me?" Hung up in Christ's private chamber there is a record of millions of quarrels between men and God that He has settled. Why should He not have your name among them? Why should He not end the quarrel between you and God? Why should He not reconcile you to the Father so that the Father should give you the kiss of peace? He has never failed in a case yet!

Some of the very worst cases have been submitted to His arbitration and He has always succeeded. They know not in Heaven of a single defeat of our Lord—and the gloomy shades of Hell cannot reveal a single failure on the part of Christ, in the case of one poor, condemned, guilty soul, that came to Him and said, "Make my peace with God." He was never obliged to say, "I cannot do it." There is no such instance! Come, my Friend, if you have lived to be 80, an enemy to God, you may yet become His friend through this Mediator! Come, my Hearer, if you are young and full of vigor, and if your passions have led you far away from purity so that God may well quarrel with you, you may come at once, just as you are, and Christ will make up the quarrel between you and God!

His pardoning blood can take away the guilt that angers God and the water which flowed with the blood from His dear pierced side can take away the propensity to rebellion within your own bosom! Surely I ought, by such words as these, to comfort some souls and lead them to Jesus! Reconciliation, worked out by Christ, is absolutely perfect! It means eternal life! O my Hearer, if Jesus reconciles you to God now, you will never quarrel with God again, nor God with you! If the Mediator takes away the ground of feud—your sin and sinfulness—He will take it away

forever! He will cast your iniquities into the depths of the sea, blotting out your sins like a cloud and like a thick cloud your transgressions. He will make such peace between you and God that He will love you forever and you will love Him forever—and nothing shall separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I have heard of some mend-all which so puts the pieces of broken plates together that the articles are said to be stronger than they were before they were broken. I know not how that may be. This I know—the union between God and the sinner reconciled by the blood of Jesus—is closer and stronger than the union between God and unfallen Adam! That was broken by a single stroke—but if Christ joins you to the Father by His own precious blood, He will keep you there by the inflowing of His Divine Grace into your soul—for who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?

One thing more I have to say. Remember, if you refuse the Mediator whom God appoints, you do peremptorily refuse to be at peace with God. *You* could not have found a mediator—you cannot discover another now. There can be no other so every way suitable to come between us and God as the God-Man, Christ Jesus bleeding on the Cross to put away our sin and risen from the dead to proclaim that we are justified! Now, if God takes out of His own bosom His own Son, and gives Him up to die that He may make peace with us—and we *refuse* Him—we mean endless war with God! That is what it comes to. If you will not have Christ, you are baring your arms for an eternal conflict with the Almighty God! You are putting on your helmet and girding your sword to fight with your Maker.

You are rejecting peace when you reject Christ. I am sure that it is so. You are choosing war with the Lord of Hosts. Well, Sirs, if you will have it, you must have it—but I would implore you to repent at once of your insane choice! HOW can you fight with God? WHY should you fight with God? To battle with God is to battle against your own best interests and to ruin your soul! Heaven, the only Heaven that a creature can have, is to be at peace with his Creator. There is no peace unto the wicked. HOW can there be? The only hope that we can have is to be agreed with God. If He has made me, He has made me for a purpose. If I fulfill that purpose, I shall answer the end of my being and I shall be happy.

If I do not fulfill that purpose, I must be unhappy—and in choosing to be the foe of God I have chosen my own eternal damnation! God help us to repent of such a choice and may we now lay hold on Christ the Mediator and trust ourselves with Him, that He may make peace between us and God—and to His name shall be glory forever and ever! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians 3.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—433, 384, 369.**

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THE GREAT JAIL AND HOW TO GET OUT OF IT NO. 1145

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 30, 1873,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith
of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”
Galatians 3:22.***

IN every work which we undertake it is most important that we should act upon right principles, for if we are misled upon essential points, our efforts will be wasted since success cannot possibly be the result. A man may study the stars as long as he pleases, but he certainly will not come to right conclusions if he calculates their courses upon the theory that they daily revolve around the earth as a center. The alchemists were earnest even to enthusiasm, but the object of their pursuit was unattainable and the theories which guided their investigations were absurd, and, therefore, they exhibited a sorrowful spectacle of misapplied perseverance and labor thrown away.

In mechanics the most ingenious contriver must fail if he forgets the Law of gravitation. You must proceed upon right principles, or disappointment awaits you. If a man in London believed that he would reach the city of York by traveling rapidly to the south, he would certainly fail, even though he had a special express attached to his carriage. If another should be sincerely of the opinion that by drinking a strong poison he would restore himself to health, his friends and survivors would have to regret his infatuation. The earnestness of his belief will not alter the fact—the principles which make the deadly drug so murderous will not yield because the man is sincere—and he will certainly die for his obstinacy.

Now, the greatest matter of concern for any one of us is the eternal salvation of our soul. We need to be saved, and, according to the Scriptures, there is but one way of salvation—but that way does not happen to be in favor among the sons of men. The great popular principle, popular all over the world, no matter whether the people happen to be Protestant or Catholic, Parsee or Muslim, Brahminist or Buddhist, is self-salvation—they would reach eternal life by merit! There are differences about what is to be done, but the great universal principle of unregenerate man is that he is, somehow or other, to save himself. This is his principle, and the further he goes in it, the less likely is he to be saved.

My objective, this morning, is to bring before you the much despised principle which God has revealed as the only true one, namely, salvation by the Grace of God, through Jesus Christ, by simple faith in Him. We

preach, at God's command, the way of salvation by *mercy*, not by merit—by *faith*, not by works—by *Grace*, not by the efforts of men. May God help us so to set forth that principle that many may accept it! I do not care one snap of my finger about preaching so that the style shall please your ears! I long to reach your *hearts*. I want you to receive the only sure method of salvation, and I pray the Holy Spirit to baptize my words in His own mighty fire and make them to burn their way into your hearts and subdue you to the obedience of faith.

The text divides itself into two parts, but my sermon will not end there, for I shall try to enforce its great Truths of God. Upon two points we will speak at once. The first is a crowded prison—"The Scripture has confined all under sin." And the second is a glorious jail delivery—"that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." After that we will try to show how excellent is that plan which God has marked out—the plan of deliverance from sin by the promise of faith in Christ Jesus.

I. Behold THE CROWDED PRISON—"The Scripture has confined all under sin." The Jailer is the Scripture—a lawful Authority, for the Scripture is not the word of man, but of the Spirit of God. If any man reject the Scripture, I have little to say to him at this moment, for I am speaking mainly to those who accept the Bible as having been written by an Infallible pen. If the Scriptures, then, which you admit to be written by God, confine you in sin, you are shut up by a lawful Authority against which you cannot rebel! God has done it! God's own voice has declared you to be a prisoner under sin.

No Authority is more powerful than that of Scripture, for it is not only true, but it has force to support it. Where the Word of the God is, there is power. The Scripture, when it comes home to the heart like a hammer, breaks in pieces, and like a fire burns its way. We need not be alarmed when judged of men, but the voice of the Lord is full of terrible majesty and awes the spirit which it condemns. But how does the Scripture confine all men under sin? I reply, first, it has been well observed by Martin Luther that the very promises of Scripture confine all mankind under sin.

To begin with the first—that morning star of promise which shone over this world when first our parents left the gates of blighted Eden—"The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Since such a promise was needed, it is clear that the blessing could only come to men through the Redeemer, the Seed of the woman. And that in the case of all men the serpent's head must be broken, or they would remain under his dominion. When a blessing is promised, there must have been a *need* for it. Where a Deliverer is predicted, there must have been a necessity for Him. If a blessing could come to men by the way of merit, or in the course of Nature, there would be no need of a promise—a promise implies a need and the very first promise of deliverance by the woman's Seed from the power of the serpent implies that men were under that evil power.

The promise of Grace is clear in the Covenant with Noah, in which the Lord declared that He would no more destroy the earth with a flood. Had

the race of man been holy, God would not have destroyed it with a flood, for He would have violated Justice by destroying an innocent race. To a pure race there could be no necessity for a Covenant of preservation, for there would be no conceivable reason for the destruction of the innocent. The very making of a Covenant that the earth should not again be swept with an overwhelming flood implies that, apart from such a gracious Covenant, the earth might justly be destroyed at any time.

The lovely rainbow, while it comfortably reminds us of the Divine faithfulness, is also a memorial of that universal depravity of our race which necessitated a Covenant of Grace to stand as a barrier for our protection lest the righteous wrath of God should break forth upon us. The yet more explicit Covenant which God made with Abraham plainly shows men to be shut up under sin, because it runs thus, "In your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," proving that the nations were not originally in a blessed state and could only be blessed through the promised seed. If some of them were blessed, already, or could be blessed by their works, then the words of the promise would not be true.

The Covenant blessing comes to the nations only through Jesus Christ, the Seed, and, consequently, it is clear that the nations were in need of a blessing. The fact is that the very existence of the Gospel, and its provisions of Grace, pardon, and so on—the coming of a Savior, His death upon the tree and His intercession in Heaven—all prove that men were confined in sin. If you had not been so, what need of you, O Cavalry? What need of Your five wounds, O Son of God? Surely all this vast machinery for redemption is ridiculous if men are not slaves! This wondrous filling of a fountain with blood is a vain superfluity if men are not foul. So the very Scripture which is brightest with life to the sons of men carries within it convincing evidence that men, apart from the Grace of God, are shut up under sin.

I have no doubt the Apostle alluded more immediately to that part of Scripture which deals with Law. Turn, I pray you, to the 20th chapter of Exodus, which I hope you carry in your memories. Let me ask you to read those Ten Commandments with deep solemnity, and see whether they do not shut you up under sin. What man can read them and then say, "I am clear of all these"? The Ten Commandments surround us on all sides and encompass all the movements of body, soul, and spirit—comprising under their jurisdiction the whole range of moral action. They hold us under fire from all points and nowhere are we out of range.

These 10 precepts are condensed into two comprehensive precepts, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself." Can you listen to those two precepts, which are the essence of the 10, without feeling that you have *not* loved God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, but very far from it, and that you have *not* loved your neighbor as yourself, but have gone far aside? A man who can read the Law and not tremble, if he is out of Christ, must be

dead in his sin! He must be ignorant, altogether, of its meaning, or else he must have hardened his heart against its terrible import.

The awakened conscience knows that the Law curses every one of us, without exception, for we have broken it. The Law as given on Sinai does that—and let us remember that the Law as repeated by Mosaic command upon Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, at the time of the entrance of Israel into the Holy Land, is not less express than the thunders of the mount which might not be touched. Read the passage in Deuteronomy 27:26. Perhaps of all the verses of the Word of God this is the most sweeping and utterly crushing to self-righteous hopes. “Cursed be he that confirms not all the Words of the Law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.”

The Apostle quotes in another form, in the New Testament—“Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.” The Law roars like a lion upon us in this sentence! If there is, in any one of us a solitary violation of the command of God, we are cursed by Him! If we have, at any time throughout life, in any measure or degree, in deed, word, or thought, by omission or commission, diverged from absolute perfection, we are cursed! Such is the statement of God, Himself, by the mouth of His servant Moses, in this book of Deuteronomy! There is no exception made whatever—all sins are included in it, and we are, all of us, included—“Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.”

Right well does our text say that the Scripture has shut all of us up under sin. We are putting no strain upon the Scripture, for such was the understanding of the Law by the saints of old. Turn to Psalm 143:2 and remember, while I quote this, that this is by no means a solitary passage, but only selected as one of many. There David says, “Enter not into judgment with Your servant, for in Your sight shall no man living be justified.” He stood before God, a man whose heart was sincere and true, but he did not dare to bring his works into judgment. And, speaking by the Spirit of God as a Prophet, he declared that in God’s sight no man could be clear of guilt.

And yet further, Brothers and Sisters, the Law of God shuts us up, not only as it was delivered from Sinai, as it was repeated at Gerizim, as it was understood by the saints, but especially as it was expounded by the Savior. He did not come to break the bars of this prison, nor to remove this Jailer from being its marshal—His deliverance is not by violence, but by fair legal process. He came to strengthen, rather than to weaken the Law, for what does He say concerning it? He does not merely forbid adultery, but He expounds the command by saying, “He that *looks* upon a woman to lust after her commits adultery with her already in his heart.”

He shows what had been so much forgotten by the Jews, that the Commandments are *spiritual* and that they reach infinitely further than mere outward actions. That, for instance, “You shall not kill,” does not merely mean, “You shall do no murder,” but is to be understood in the sense given it by the Lord Jesus—“I say unto you that whoever is angry

with his brother without shall be in danger of the judgment.” As Christians understand it, the Law forbids our doing anything whereby the natural or *spiritual* life of another may be placed in jeopardy. Now, since the Law is to be so understood, its commandments are exceedingly broad. Since it touches our thoughts, our imaginations, and our casual wishes, who among us can stand before it?

Verily the Law confines us as in a terrible Bastille and we are, each one of us, prisoners under sin. Here will be the time for us to say that not only do the Scriptures of promise and the Scriptures of Law shut us up, but so do *all* the Scriptures of the old ceremonial Law of the Jews. “Oh,” you say, “how is that?” I reply, “When the destroying angel went through Egypt on that memorable night, not one man, woman, or child was delivered except through the sprinkling of the blood upon the doorposts and the lintel of the houses where they dwelt. What did that mean? Why, that they were *all* under sin—and had it not been for the *blood*, the same angel who smote the first-born of Egypt must have smitten every one of them, God’s people, as they were, for they were all under sin!

When they reached the wilderness, there were different rites and ceremonies, but it is remarkable that everything under the Law was sprinkled with blood, because the people and all that they did were polluted with sin before God and needed to be cleansed by an atonement. When an Israelite came to worship God at the Tabernacle, he could not come without a *sacrifice*. Atonement for sin was the way to God—the altar and the slaughtered lamb were the way of approach. There must be *blood* to cleanse the comer because every comer was, in himself, unclean.

Note, also, that the Holy Place in the Tabernacle in the wilderness was closed, and into it no man went but the High Priest, and he but once every year. This was a most solemn declaration of God that no man was fit to come near to His infinite holiness—that every man, even of the chosen people—was so polluted that there must be hung up a veil between him and God. And the one man who did come near at all must approach with sprinkled blood and smoking incense, typical of the coming Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus! There was nothing about the Mosaic economy to say to man, “You are good, or you can be good, and you can save yourself.” But everywhere the declaration was—“You have rebelled and have not served the Lord. You cannot come near unto Him until you are purged by the blood of the great Sacrifice. God cannot accept you as you are, you are polluted and defiled.”

The sinfulness of all men is abundantly taught in Scripture. Indeed, it is to be found on every page of it. I have spoken of the Jailer. Now notice His prisoners. “The Scripture has concluded all under sin”—all, all. The heathen? Yes, for the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans tells us, that though they have not God’s written Law, they have sufficient of it upon their consciences to accuse them if they do wrong, and every heathen has violated the Law of God by sinning against the light of Nature. To us who have heard that Law the, “all,” of the text is very emphatic.

But you have been very moral, you say. Yes, but you are shut up under sin, for, outwardly moral as you have been, you dare not say that you have never thought of evil so as to long for it. That you have never indulged wrong imaginations. That you have never a rash word, that you have never sinned in action. Surely you dare not say that you have loved God with all your heart and all your soul, and all your strength? Nor that you have always loved your neighbor as yourself? My Friend, you, who are so fair to look upon when you look in the glass of your own self-adulation—if you could see yourself as God sees you, would discover that you are leprous from head to foot—your sins are abundant and loathsome though you perceive them not!

And this is true of the most religious of those men who are resting in outward observances. They have prayed every night and morning since they were children. They have never absented themselves from assemblies for worship. They have attended to Baptism and Communion, and the like. Ah, Sirs, but the Law takes no account of this! If you have not kept its Ten Commandments *perfectly*, it accepts no ceremonies as a recompense. God requires of His creatures that they obey His Law completely, without flaw—and one sin of omission or commission will bring down that dreadful sentence which I have already quoted, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.” Religious or irreligious, the broken Law confines all men in the same prison!

Now, notice for a minute, the prison itself. It is one from which we cannot escape by any efforts of our own. Brothers and Sisters, if we say, “We will never sin again,” we shall sin. And our never sinning again would make no atonement for *past* offenses. Suppose we were to resolve, from this time forth, that we would suffer mortifications of body and sorrow of heart, to make atonement for sin? It would be useless, for the Law speaks nothing of *repentance*. When a man has broken the Law, he must be punished for it—there is no space left for repentance under the Law—and the sure result of our being shut up in the prison of the Law, apart from the Grace of God, is to be taken from that prison to execution—and to be destroyed forever by the wrath of God.

There is the prison of the text. There is the Jailer and his prisoners.

II. It is our great happiness to know that we are not shut up in this way with a view to our hopeless destruction, but in order that the Grace of God may come to us, and so we have to speak of A GLORIOUS JAIL-DELIVERY. The jail-delivery which I have to speak of is evidently of those who are shut up in the prison. “The Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” Christ came into this world to save those who have broken the Law, those whom the Law curses and those who have no means, whatever, of escaping from the curse, unless Jesus opens the way.

He has not come to save the righteous. If there are any among you who will not believe that you are shut up in the prison of the Law, I have no

Gospel to preach to you. Why send a physician to a man who is not sick? And why offer alms to a man who is not poor? If you can save yourselves by your works, go and do so, fools that you are, for you might as well hope to drink dry the Atlantic! If you believe in self-salvation, I am hopeless of doing you any good till you are exhausted of your strength. When you are weak and sick, and ready to die, *then* will you be willing to accept the free salvation of Christ! Remember, Christ came to save the ungodly—the guilty, alone, are objects mercy.

The Lord Jesus Christ has come to bring to all those who believe in Him a complete deliverance from the bondage of the Law. The man who believes in Jesus is forgiven. The very moment he believes, all his transgressions are blotted out and from that moment he is just in the sight of God. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Having believed, he becomes, at once, a child of God, a son of the Most High. And since God will never cast away His children, nor reject those whom He has loved, the man is then and there saved, and saved eternally. He was a slave before, and deserved the lash and felt it. He is a child now, and is no longer under the Law, but under Grace.

The principle which guides him now is not, “This do and you shall live,” but this—“I am saved and now I love to serve my God.” Now he does not work for wages and expect to win a reward by merit—he is a saved man and he has all that he needs—for Christ is his and Christ is All. Now a higher principle burns within his bosom than that of self-salvation! He loves God and is selfish no longer. Observe that this jail-delivery comes to men by promise. It is salvation according to *promise*. The promise is given, says the text. Now, if any man is saved on the Bible plan of salvation, it is not the result of anything he has done—he has never deserved it—it is not the result of a bargain between him and God.

No, the Lord says freely, “I will blot out your sins. I will accept you. I will hear your prayer. I will save you.” He does this because He chooses to do it of His own Sovereign good will and pleasure. “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” “So, then, it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” The promise is not made to works, but only to faith. It is “the promise of faith by Christ Jesus.” If God had made His promise to a certain measure of holiness, or a certain amount of feeling, then, Brothers and Sisters we might have despaired—but the promise is to *faith*. If you *believe*, you are *saved*!

You poor harlot, if you believe, you are saved! You thief, you murderer, you vilest of wretches, however far you may have gone, if you believe in Jesus Christ, your transgressions are forgiven you and you are a child of God. It is your *believing*, not your doing. Your *trusting*, your *relying upon* Christ, not your prayers, tears, preaching, hearing, or anything else you can do, or be, or feel! You are saved by giving up self, entirely, and resting wholly on Him whom God has set forth to be a Propitiation, namely, the crucified Redeemer.

Observe that the faith spoken of in the text is faith in Christ Jesus. It must not be faith in *yourself*, nor faith in a *priest*, nor faith in *sacraments*, nor faith in a set of *doctrines*—the praise is to faith in Christ Jesus. That is to say, you must believe that Christ, the Son of God, came on earth and became a Man, took your sins upon His shoulders, bore them up to the tree and suffered what was due for your sins in His own Person on the Cross—and you must trust yourself with Him, with Him fully, with Him, alone, and with all your heart—and if you do, the promise is given to faith in Christ Jesus, and it will be fulfilled to you, and you shall be blessed and saved! This promise of faith in Christ Jesus is given to all Believers, weak as well as strong, young as well as old.

Dear Friend, if you have only believed in Jesus during the present service, you are as certainly forgiven as if you had been a Believer 50 years! If you only believed in Jesus when the last word escaped my lips, yet still your faith has saved you! Go in peace. Faith is the vital matter. “But there must be works,” says one, “to follow.” Brother, there *will* be works to follow. There was never a true faith which did not *produce* works—but the *works* do not save us—faith, alone, saves! How strong is the Apostle Paul upon this point! Read the Epistle to the Romans, carefully, and the Epistle to the Galatians, and you will see that they come down like a Nasmyth hammer upon all notion of salvation by our own doings.

No reasoning could be more cogent, no expressions more plain. “Not of works, lest any man should boast,” says the Apostle! And he puts it over again—“If by Grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it is of works, then it is no more Grace: otherwise work is no more work.” He will have it that we are saved as poor sinners by the Sovereign Grace of God, through faith in Christ Jesus, and not by works, or forms, or ceremonies, or anything whatever of our own doing! Now, there is the plan of salvation! I put it before you, and I pray through Jesus Christ that many may receive it, for it is not a matter of human opinion, but of Divine ordinance. I am not setting up the dogma of a sect—I am preaching to you the very Truth of God. If there is salvation by any other way than by Jesus Christ I am a false prophet among you, and this Bible, also, is false. But if there is salvation to Believers in Jesus, I am a saved man, and all of you who have believed in Jesus are saved, also, effectually and eternally!

Having thus spoken upon the text itself, I desire to say a few things upon the subject in general. Objections are continually raised to this plan of salvation. The world’s plan of salvation is, “Do.” The Bible plan of salvation is, “It is all done. Accept it as a free gift.” The Gospel way of salvation is, Christ has saved His people and as many as trust in Him *are* His people, and are saved. Just think for a minute—is not this way of salvation which we have preached to you the only one which would be suited to all sorts and conditions of men? Dear Sir, you, yourself, may be a man of excellent disposition and of admirable habits. I will suppose that the salvation to be preached by us was exactly such as would be suitable to such a

person as you believe yourself to be—would not this be a very misfortunate thing for many others?

Are there not living within your observation many persons who are far below you in moral character? Do you not know of whole swarms of your fellow creatures whose outward life is utterly defiled? Some of these are conscious of their degradation and would gladly rise out of it—would you have them left to despair? A way of salvation suited to the righteous, it is clear, would not suit *them*—are they to be overlooked? Would you have salvation put up to an examination like a place in the Civil Service and only those allowed to pass who are as good as you are? Are all beneath your level to perish? I am speaking to you on your own ground—I feel sure that you love your fellow men enough to say, “No, let the plan of salvation be such as to save the most reprobate of men.”

Then, I ask you, what plan could there be but this one, that God freely forgives for Christ’s sake, even the greatest offenders, if they turn to Him and put their trust in His dear Son? We have here a Gospel which reaches to the lowest depths and saves to the uttermost. But I shall put another argument. Would any other salvation than that which I have preached suit *any* man? O excellent Sir, would any other, after all, suit *you*? I admit, and I admire your excellences. I would that all men were such as you are rather than dissolute and depraved. But, Sir, can you really sit down in the quietude of your chamber and as a thoughtful man weigh your own character in the scales, and say that it is so perfect that you could die with it in perfect peace and stand before your Maker without fear?

I am sure it is not so! It is very remarkable that some persons who have been exceedingly moral have never seen their sinfulness till they have been on the borders of the grave—and then they have realized eternity—and have abhorred themselves in dust and ashes! I have heard of some, who, in the very hour of imminent peril of death by drowning, have in the act of sinking seen the whole panorama of their lives pass before them and they have seen, as they never saw before, the evil nature of that which they before thought so excellent. Then they have said, “I must be saved by the merits of Jesus! I cannot be saved by my own.”

My dear Friend, whoever you may be, I am not about to condemn you, but I must believe God’s Word before I believe your estimate of yourself! And as God’s Word has declared that you have sinned and are condemned, I am sure that for you, as well as for the rest of your fellow men, there is no plan of salvation at all available but that of salvation by the free mercy of God through Jesus Christ His Son. Now, observe a few of the beauties of the plan of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. It prevents men from having low thoughts of sin, because if a man says, “I have not kept this Law of God perfectly, but I still have done very well. And any mistakes I have made are little sins—God is merciful—He will wipe them out,” he is sure to be a believer in self-salvation. It is always connected with narrow thoughts of sin.

A man knows he has sinned, but he thinks little of the wrong. He cannot believe that sin is such a great evil that men should be cast into Hell for it. He kicks against the doctrine of damnation. He will not believe it just because he does not know and will not admit that sin is a great and tremendous evil. So long as the idea of self-salvation exists, sin is lightly thought of. But oh, when we see that sin could not be put away till the Incarnate God, Himself, did hang upon the tree and bleed to death for men—then we see sin in its true colors and loathe it as a deadly thing—and with our joy for pardoned guilt we mingle abhorrence of the sin which required such an atoning Sacrifice.

The plan of salvation by Grace has this beauty about it, that it gives men high thoughts of God. In the other system, their idea of God is that He is very much like themselves. Look at the Catholic's god. He is pleased with candles and delights in incense—he is a god who likes show and gewgaws, garments of blue and scarlet, and dolls dressed up, and flowers on his altars. I know not what kind of god to call him. However, that is their notion of him. They try to save themselves, and they pull down their god to their standard. And every man who is a self-saver, even if he is a Protestant, lowers God in some manner.

He fancies that God will accept something short of perfection. Each man has a different standard. That miserly old gentleman—his standard is that he will build a row of almshouses with his moldy leavings and that will content the Most High. Another says, "I never open my shop on Sunday." Perhaps he cheats enough on Monday to make up for it, but Sunday's rest—that will do for his god. Another, who is living a wicked life in private, believes the doctrines of Grace and that will satisfy his god.

But the man who is saved by the Grace of God says, "My God is infinitely just. Nothing will content Him but a perfect righteousness. As a moral Lawgiver, He will not put away sin till He has laid punishment upon One who stood in the sinner's place. He is so loving that He gave His Son. He is so just that He slew His Son on my behalf." All the Divine attributes flame with splendor before the eyes of the man who is saved by faith and he is led to reverence and to adore God. The way of salvation by Grace, Beloved, is the best promoter of holiness in all the world. "There," says yonder gentleman, "I went to hear Spurgeon in the Tabernacle this morning and he was crying out against salvation by good works. Of course, the worst results will come of such teaching."

Ah, that has been the cuckoo-cry from the very first, whereas salvation by Grace *promotes* good works far better than the teaching of salvation by works ever will—for those who hope to be saved by their works have generally very scanty works to be saved by—and those who put works aside altogether as a ground of hope, and look to Grace, alone, are the very people who are most zealous to perform good works and I will tell you why! Who loved Christ best at the Pharisee's feast? Simon, the Pharisee, who had kept the Law? Ah, no! He was to be saved by his doings, and yet Je-

sus said to him, "You gave Me no kiss. You gave Me no water to wash My feet."

Simon did not love the Master. He did what he did because he thought he ought to do it and must do it. But there was a poor woman there who was a sinner. And she had had much forgiven—and she, it was, that washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Simon shows how the self-righteous, then, love the Savior—they do not even wash His feet or kiss His cheeks—but those who are saved by Grace love Jesus, and therefore kiss His feet and bathe them with their tears—and would willingly lay down their lives for Him.

Law! There is no power for holiness in it! Law drives our spirits to rebellion, but love has magic in it. Has God forgiven me? Did Christ die for me? Am I God's child? Has He forgiven me, not because of anything I did, but just because He would do it out of love to my poor guilty soul? O God, I love You! What would You have me to do? There speaks the man who will perform good works, I guarantee you, Sir, and while he will tread under foot with the deepest detestation any idea that he can merit anything of God's, he is the man who will lay himself out, as long as he lives, for the honor of that dear Lord and Master by whose precious blood he has been redeemed.

The Law does not furnish me with a constraining principle, but the Gospel does. The Law treats me like a mere hireling, and a hireling can never serve with the zeal which is born of love. There is a better place with double wages, and naturally enough, the servant leaves your house, but your child will not. You do not give your child wages and you do not bind him by indentures or agreements. He loves you and his sense of your love leads him to a tender obedience, and what he does is doubly sweet to you. Missionaries and martyrs have done and borne, for love's sake, what Law could not have forced from them.

Oh yes, the doctrine of salvation by Grace, by teaching men to love, transforms them and makes new creatures of them. I have seen it hundreds of times. There are some here, but I will not speak of them, but of cases parallel to theirs. They have been to a place of worship and they have been preached to about their duty. And they have read the Bible and have thought it was all about what was required from their own efforts. But all the while they have felt no obedience of heart, no love to Christ and no joy in God. But those same persons have heard the Gospel and found that there is nothing to do, that Jesus Christ has done it all! That sin was put away by His death and righteousness was worked out. And they have taken what God has presented to them and believed in Jesus and been saved!

And from that very moment the difference has been evident. They have cried, "I never felt any love to God before, but now I do. I love Him with all my soul for what He has done for me." You hear them say, "I used to go to the House of God as a matter of duty, and I might almost as well have been away, for it was no enjoyment to me. But now I go as a matter of

privilege and I take my Bible with me and sing God's praises, with all my soul, because He has done so much for me." Those people will tell you that whereas they resolved to be good, and to give up vice, and to practice virtue, they never did it till they believed in Jesus—and when they believed in Him, love to Him made service easy, and sin hateful—and they became new creatures in Christ Jesus by the Spirit's power.

There is the heart of it all. If you want to get rid of the guilt of sin, you must believe in Jesus. But equally, if you would be rid of the chains of sin, the tyranny of your passions, the domination of your lusts, you must believe in Him. From His side there flows not merely blood but water—blood to take away your criminality, and water to take away your tendencies to sin—so that from now on you shall not serve sin, or live any longer in it. It is all there in that pierced heart. It is all there in that crimson fount opened on Calvary's bloody tree. Look to Jesus and you shall be saved! This is it in a nutshell. "There is life in a look at the crucified One."

I may never have an opportunity of preaching this Gospel to some of you again. It may be the first time you have heard it, and perhaps the last. O Sirs, I charge you accept it, and may the Spirit of God constrain you to do so! We will meet in Heaven if it is so, but if you put it from you, you are like a man who flings away the only lifebelt that can keep him alive in the angry flood. You put from you the only medicine under Heaven that can heal your soul, for I am holding up before you the only Gospel in the world! If any man preaches any other Gospel, let him be accursed! Intolerant? I am content to be as intolerant as my Master and He bade me say, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned."

"But may I not be saved some other way?" No, Sir. "But may I not reject with impunity this which you have preached?" No, Sir. At your peril is it and before God I will put it right plainly before you. You must believe in Jesus, and if you reject Him your blood is upon your own head, for there are no other ways of salvation. The Lord grant that you may receive it, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians 3.

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UNDER ARREST

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***“But before faith came, we were kept under the Law, shut up unto
the faith which should afterwards be revealed.”
Galatians 3:23.***

THIS is a condensed history of the Jews before the Gospel was fully preached to them. Before the clear and plain revelation of the way of salvation—that is to say, before Jesus Christ, Himself, actually appeared among the sons of men—the Hebrew nation was put under the tutorship and governance of the Mosaic Law. So far as salvation was to be obtained by it, that Law was a total failure. It did not make the Jews a holy people—whenever they reached any point of excellence, they soon went back from it, for they were bent on backsliding. Whatever the influence of that blessed Law might be supposed to be, the actual net result was very poor, indeed, for, when Christ came to the chosen people, they were in a most miserable condition, and there was no hope for them at all apart from the promised Messiah. They were shut up to the alternative of receiving Him, or else being put away as a nation for a long time of banishment and exile. This, indeed, they have actually endured through their rejection of the one and only Savior.

I am not going to preach at this time about the Jews, but I want to show you that the history of every soul chosen of God is very like the history of the chosen nation. I have heard of masses of crystal which assume certain forms and, if they are split up, again and again, however small the particles may be, the same crystalline shape remains—the crystals are still of one form! So, if you take a nation as a mass, its spiritual history will be found in each individual and often every experience of that individual will still bear the same shape and outline. I take this text, therefore, as being, I am sure, a picture of myself. Before faith came, I was, “kept under the Law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.” And my impression is that this is the history of *all* the people of God, more or less. We are not all alike in every respect. We differ greatly in certain particulars, yet the main features of all the children of God will be found to be the same—and their Christian experience will resemble that of the other members of the Lord's family.

So I shall leave the text as a matter of history of the Jews and use it as the life-story of many here present! Perhaps while I am explaining the experience of the child of God, there may be some, here, who are passing through the darker stages of that experience, who may gather hope from that fact and say, “I see that my spot is the spot of the Lord's children.

Possibly, my soul-trouble, being like theirs, may be producing in me the same result as it produced in them.” And thus, I trust, while I am speaking, some may be led into a clearer light and may even come into the full light of God’s reconciled Countenance!

There are three things that I am going to talk about as the Holy Spirit shall guide me. The first is, *the unhappy period*—it was long ago with some of us—the unhappy period “before faith came.” Secondly, I shall describe *the custody we were in at that time*—“we were kept under the Law, shut up.” That is where we were when the spirit of bondage was holding us in captivity “before faith came.” Then, thirdly, I shall have a little to say upon *the revelation which set us free*—“the faith which should afterwards be revealed.”

I. First, then, I have to say something about THE UNHAPPY PERIOD. “Before faith came.” As I said just now, this period was long ago with some of us, but it was not so far back with others of you, “before faith came.”

We remember, some of us, when we *had no idea of faith*. We were, in a measure, religiously inclined, and in a certain way, sincere and devout. As a matter of duty, we went to Church, or we went to the Meeting House, and we felt easy in our mind because we had been there. As a matter of duty, we read our Bibles and, sometimes, we felt a pleasure in getting through the chapter—perhaps we had all the more pleasure if the chapter was not a long one! We did not object to family prayer—it may be that we had been used to it from our childhood. The less we had of it, the better we liked, it but still, we kept to it, although it was always only a matter of duty.

As to *saving* faith, we had not an intelligent idea of it. Our notion was that good people would get to Heaven and that we must do our best to make ourselves fit to be in that holy place. We had a great many shortcomings and failures, no doubt, but in some mysterious way we fancied that all would get rectified and we would be all right if we were only sincere. Many still seem to imagine that it does not matter what persons believe as long as they are sincere, nor what they do so long as they are conscientious in doing it. That was our notion, but as to any idea of there being a faith peculiar to God’s elect, a faith which saves the soul by linking us to the Savior—if anyone had talked to us in *that* fashion—we would have said, “Yes, that is, no doubt, orthodox teaching—we have heard that Martin Luther taught that doctrine at the time of the Reformation, but what he meant by it, we have not the slightest idea!” We did not know. We had not formed any idea of that which, had we known it, would have been the chief joy of our minds and hearts—in that unhappy period we had no idea of faith.

Some of us used to hear the Gospel. Some of us did not. But, whether we heard the Gospel or not, “*before faith came,*” *we did not know what it was*. I have no doubt that I heard, hundreds of times, such texts as these—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” “Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” But

I still had no intelligent idea of what faith meant. When I first discovered what faith really was, and exercised it, for with me these two things came together, I believed as soon as I knew what believing meant. And then I thought I had never heard that Truth of God preached before! But, on looking back, I am persuaded that the Light of God often shone in my eyes, but I was blind and, therefore, I thought that the Light had never come. The Light was shining all the while, but there was no power to receive it—the eyeballs of the soul were not sensitive to the Divine beams!

Perhaps some of you did *not* hear the Gospel, for it is by no means a difficult thing to attend a place of worship year after year, and yet not hear the Gospel. I am sorry that it should be so, but I know that it is so—there is a great deal of preaching that may be edifying to Christians, a great deal that is morally excellent—but the way of salvation by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is often regarded by the preacher as a Truth of God too elementary to be introduced to the notice of a congregation so intelligent and so experienced as the one he is privileged to address! This is a great mistake for any minister to make. The Lord's command to Moses was, "With all your offerings you shall offer salt," and His injunction to all His servants, now, is, "With all your teaching, preach the simple doctrine of faith in Christ Crucified." I delight to cry, with the Apostle Paul, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," and it is my constant joy to preach that simple doctrine of, "Believe, and live." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." But whether people heard the Gospel or did not hear it, I know that it has often been the case that "before faith came" no idea of what faith is had penetrated the soul! Much was heard *about* it, but nothing was understood. Much, in some respects, was understood about the doctrine, but faith, itself, was still unknown.

And, beloved Brothers and Sisters, as it is that before faith comes we have no idea of it, and we do not understand it, so *we have been puzzled to think of what it could be when we have seen it in others*. We have heard of others, we have read of others and the most of us have seen others who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And we have wished that we could do the same. We have looked upon their experience as some extraordinary secret, some marvelous mystery, some special manifestation—and we have said to ourselves, "We can never reach that height on which those people stand." So we have continued our Chapel going, our Bible reading and so forth, under the notion that faith was something quite impossible for us.

We have thought of it as if it were some precious diamond that kings and queens might buy, but it was not for poor people like us. Though we have been told over and over again, that—

"There is life for a look at the Crucified One,"

we have said, "Yes, life for a look, ah, yes! No doubt that is true, but I cannot look." And so we have still turned away from the one hope of salvation! Perhaps we have been still further pressed by some earnest spirit and the Truth has been made as plain as a pikestaff, yet we still could not think that the speaker really meant what he said—there must be some strange mystery at the back of it all. We asked ourselves—"How do

people obtain faith? Of course, it is simple enough to those who understand it, but as for us poor souls who do not comprehend it, how can we get to know what it means and how can we obtain it for ourselves?" That was the puzzled condition in which we were "before faith came." We were just in that kind of state, so that, even when we *wished* to believe, it seemed to us as if it was something altogether beyond our reach.

There was also a time with us, dear Friends, when "before faith came" in its healing and comforting power, *a measure of faith came to wound, cut and kill*. We saw our sin, we felt our need of a Savior and we believed so far as this—that Christ was a Savior, that He was *the* Savior, and that He could save us. But our difficulty was like that of the woman in the crowd who tried to touch the hem of Christ's garment—how could we get in *contact* with Him? What could we *do* to be saved? Oh, the many times that I have wished the preacher would tell me something to *do* that I might be saved! Gladly would I have done it, if it had been possible. If he had said, "Take off your shoes and stockings, and run to John O'Groat's," I would not even have gone home, first, but would have started off that very night, that I might win salvation! How often have I thought that if they had said, "Bare your back to the scourge and take 50 lashes!" I would have said, "Here I am! Come along with your whip and beat as hard as you please, so long as I can but obtain peace and rest, and get rid of my sin."

Yet that simplest of all matters—believing in Christ Crucified, accepting His finished salvation, being *nothing* and letting Him be *everything*, *doing* nothing but *trusting* to what He has done—I could not get a hold of it at all! I might truthfully say that I have known many who, after years of what I think was very sincere and earnest hearing, still remain just the same, apparently willing, but really *unwilling* to believe! They wish to know the way of salvation—and the road is open right straight before them—yet they do not experimentally know the way of life, the only way by which a man can be eternally saved! I am speaking, at this time, I do not doubt, to many who are still in that fog, still bewildered, and knowing not which way to turn, albeit that from this platform there sounds forth that clarion note and nothing else, "Look to Jesus and live! Believe in Him. Trust in Him and you shall be saved at once, yes, saved *eternally*, from the moment that you have done with self and, by faith, have laid hold on Christ!"

Why is it that people do not believe? I suppose it is, partly, because they are so proud. You, my Friend, have a proud notion in your head that there is, after all, something due from God to you! In truth, there is nothing due from God to you but that He should let you perish in your sin—that is all He owes you! You have so sinned against Him that if He should, at this moment, cast you into the lowest Hell, it is all that you have any right to expect! And He will have you know this and make you feel it before He will speak a word of blessing to your soul. You are too high and mighty to be saved as you are—you must come down from that lofty position. This, then, is one reason why men do not "believe and live," because they are too proud to be saved by simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Besides, salvation by believing seems so strange, so amazing, so contrary to the usual run of human opinion and, in addition, it is so *spiritual* that the natural man rebels against it. If it were but a carnal thing, something to be done with the hands, or performed with the feet, we could do *that*—but the *spiritual* action of *believing*, the action which honors God by taking salvation as the free gift of His Grace and mercy—we cannot bend our backs and stoop so low as that! The fact is that it is difficult because it is easy! It is difficult because there is no difficulty in it and it seems obscure simply because it is so clear! There is nothing for you to do, O lost Sinner, but to yield yourself up to your God and accept His Sovereign Mercy which He freely gives you in the Person of His dear Son! Still, though I have said all this so plainly, you do not believe me—you do not yet understand what I mean, unless you have been taught of the Spirit! That, then, is how we were in the unhappy period “before faith came.”

II. Now I want to show you, in a few words, THE CUSTODY WE WERE IN. “Before faith came, we were kept under the Law, shut up.” The word for, “kept,” means that we were arrested and given in charge, or that we were taken under the care of a garrison. The Ten Commandments of God, like ten armed legionaries, took us into custody and held us fast. “Before faith came, we were kept under the Law.” How was that?

When the Spirit of God began to deal with us, we found that *we were always within the sphere of Law*—we could not get out of it. We woke in the morning—there was the Law right in front of us. All during the day—there was the Law right before our eyes. If we went to sleep at night—there was the Law—we were everywhere under the Law. We said, with David, “Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your Presence?” When once we recognized God and realized the fact that we were His creatures, there came into our startled conscience the remembrance of the universality of Law!

I remember that experience and how I thought of what was said of the old Roman empire that, under the rule of Caesar, if a man once broke the law of Rome, he was in prison everywhere! The whole *world* was one vast prison to him, for he could not get out of the reach of the imperial power—and so did it come to be in my awakened conscience! Wherever I went, the Law of God had a demand upon my thoughts, upon my words, upon my rising, upon my resting. What I did and what I did not do, all came under the cognizance of the Law—and then I found that this Law so surrounded me that I was always running against it! I was always breaking it! I seemed as if I were a sinner and nothing else but a sinner. If I opened my mouth, I spoke amiss. If I sat still, there was sin in my silence. I remember that when the Spirit of God was thus dealing with me, I used to feel myself to be a sinner, even, when I was in the House of God! I thought that when I sang, I was mocking the Lord with a solemn sound upon a false tongue! And if I *prayed*, I feared that I was sinning in my prayers, insulting Him by uttering confessions which I did not feel and asking for mercies with a faith that was not at all true, but only another form of unbelief! Oh, yes, some of us know what it is to be given

into custody to the Law! Perhaps some here are now in this condition without quite understanding it.

At that time, when I was in the custody of the Law, *I did not take any pleasure in sin!* Alas, I sinned, but my sense of the Law of God kept me back from a great many sins. I could not, as others did, plunge into profligacy, or indulge in any of the grosser vices, for that Law had me well in hand! I sinned enough without acting like that. Oh, I used to tremble to put one foot before another, for fear I would do wrong! I felt that my old sins seemed to be so many that it were well to die rather than commit any more! The Law of God, when it gets a man into its charge, makes him feel just like that.

Then, *I could not find any rest* while under the custody of the Law. If I wanted to sleep a while, or to be a little indifferent and careless, then some one or other of those Ten Commandments roughly awakened me and, looking on me with a frowning face, said, "You have broken me!" I thought that I would do some good works but, somehow, the Law always broke my good works in the making. I fancied that if my tears flowed freely, I might make some recompense for my wrongdoing, but the Law held up the mirror and I soon saw my face all smeared and made more unhandsome by my tears. The Law of God shut me up in all directions and would not let me rest anywhere when I was under its custody.

Then, also, *the Law seemed to blight all my hopes.* I hoped this and I hoped that—but then the Law said, "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them." And I knew I had not continued in all those things, so I saw myself accursed, turn which way I might! I had offended against the justice of God! I was impure and polluted! And I used to say, "If God does not send me to Hell, He ought to." I sat in judgment upon myself and pronounced the sentence that I felt would be just. I could not have gone to Heaven with my sin unpardoned, even if I had had the offer to do it, for I knew that it would not be right that I should do so—I justified God in my own conscience while I condemned myself!

One thing I found concerning the Law, that *it would not even let me despair.* If I thought I would give up all desire to do right and just go and drown my conscience in sin, the Law said, "No, you cannot do that, there is no rest for you in sinning. You know the Law too well to be able to sin in the blindness of a seared conscience." So the Law worried and troubled me at all points—it shut me up as in an iron cage—every way of escape was effectually blocked up!

I am talking now, not only of my own experience, but also of the experience of many another child of God. I will tell you one or two of the things that shut me up dreadfully. One was when I knew the spirituality of the Law. If the Law said, "You shall not commit adultery," I said to myself, "Well, I have never committed adultery." Then the Law, as interpreted by Christ, said, "Whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her, already, in his heart." The Law said, "You shall not steal," and I said, "Well, I never stole anything." but then I found that even the *desire* to possess what was not my own was guilt! The spirituality of the Law astounded me! What hope could I have of es-

caping from such a Law as this which in every way surrounded me with an atmosphere from which I could not possibly escape?

Then, as I have already reminded you, the Law informed me that I was cursed unless I continued in all things that were written in the Book of the Law, so that, if I had not committed one sin, that made no difference if I had committed another sin, for I was under the curse. What if I had never blasphemed God with my tongue? Yet, if I had coveted, I had broken the Law. He who breaks a chain might say, "I did not break that link, or the other link." No, but if you break *one* link, you have broken the chain! Ah, me, how I then seemed shut up!

Then I remembered that, even if I kept the Law perfectly, and kept it for ten, twenty, or thirty years without a fault, yet if, at the end of that time, I should *then* break it, I must suffer its dread penalty! Those words spoken by the Lord to the Prophet Ezekiel came to my mind—"If he trusts to his own righteousness and commits iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he has committed, he shall die for it." So I saw that I was, as the text says, "shut up." I had hoped to escape this way, or that way, or some other way. Was I not "christened" when I was a child? Had I not been taken to a place of worship? Had I not been brought up to regularly say my prayers? Had I not been an honest, upright, moral youth? Was all this nothing? "Nothing," said the Law, as it drew its sword of fire! "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them." So there was no rest for my spirit, no, not even for a moment.

What was I to do? I was in the custody of one that showed no mercy whatever, for Moses never said, "Mercy." The Law has nothing to do with mercy! That comes from another mouth and under another dispensation. But before I turn to that other point, I would like to say that if any of you are passing through all that I have been describing, do not be at all discouraged! I rejoice that it is so with you, for this breaking down of the idols is the way to set up the true God in your heart! This cleaning out of your refuges of lies is a blessed work of God who loves you, though He seems, now, to be dealing out to you the blows of a cruel one! This is the way in which He is severing you from your deceptions, freeing you from your delusions so that He may bring you to His Truth and to Himself! That is my last point.

III. THE REVELATION WHICH SET US FREE—"We were shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed."

Now let me tell the story. It was on a day, never to be forgotten, when I first understood that *salvation was in and through Another*—that my salvation could not be of *myself*—but must be through One better and stronger than I. And I heard—and oh, what music it was that the Son of God had taken upon Himself our human nature and had, by His life and death, worked out a perfect salvation, finished from top to bottom, which He was ready to give to every soul that was willing to have it—and that salvation was all of Grace from first to last, the free gift of God through His blessed Son, Jesus Christ! Oh, the melody of that doctrine! "But I have heard that lots of times," says one. Have you ever heard it at all? "Why, I heard you say it just now!" Again I put the question—Have you

heard it? It has passed your ears, but have you ever *heard* it? Have you ever caught the meaning of it?

Then I had this vision—not a vision to my eyes, but to my heart. *I saw what a Savior Christ was*—Divine as well as Human! I saw what sufferings His were, what a righteousness His was. I saw the fullness of Christ, the Glory of Christ, the Love of Christ, the Power of Christ to save to the uttermost, them that come unto God by Him!

Now I can never tell you how it was, but I no sooner saw whom I was to believe than *I also understood what it was to believe* and I believed in one moment! As much as if it had never been revealed to any mortal man, or written in this blessed Book, it was revealed to me by the Spirit of God that I, guilty wretch as I was, was then and there to fall at those dear feet that once were nailed to the Cross, and to take Jesus Christ to be my Lord and Savior—and that the moment I did so, I would be saved!

I did take Him as my Savior and I am saved! And I come to tell you, again tonight, *the reason why I took Him for my Savior*. To my own humiliation, I must confess that I did it because I could not help it—I was shut up to it. That Law-work, of which I told you, had hammered me into such a condition that if there had been 50 other saviors, I could not have thought of them! I was driven to this One—I needed a Divine Savior—I needed One who was made a curse for me to expiate my guilt! I needed One who had died, for I deserved to die. I needed One who had risen again, who was able, by His life, to make me live! I needed the exact Savior that stood before me in the Word of God, revealed to my heart—and I could not help having Him!

And, what is more, I cannot help still having Him as my Savior—I am shut up to it! I think I have told you of an American Brother who sat in one of the pews behind me, one Sunday night. When I went out, I said to him, “What? You, here again?” He said, “Yes, it is 20 years since I sat in this pew. I wondered if you would remember me.” I said, “Oh, yes, I do remember your face right well!” He said, “You are still hitched in the old place, I see.” “Yes,” I replied, “and if God spares you to come in another 20 years’ time, and I have not gone to Heaven, meanwhile, you will find that I am hitched in the same old place, then, too!”

I have nothing to tell of but Christ Crucified! Nothing to say to the sinner but, “Away, away, away from all other confidences, to Him whom God has set forth to be a propitiation for sin!” I want the Law to shut you right up to this one course. If a man were to ask, “Why do you go out of the Tabernacle by the right hand door?” it would be a very good answer if you had to say, “Because all the rest are bricked up.” That would be a valid reason, would it not? You had no choice in the matter—and that is the reason why we come to Christ—because we have tried, and proved, and known that there is none other salvation, for, “there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” The Law has shut us up to this one road! It has stopped up every other opening and gangway—and we are driven to stand here, and say—

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

Now, if there are any of you who have gotten into that position, I am right glad of it! This proves that you are God's child! He has chosen you, He loves you, He has given His Son to save you! Take the Lord Jesus Christ to be everything to you and go on your way rejoicing! "Before faith came," you were shut up, but you were shut up to faith in Christ! And now you have that faith, you are shut up no longer, you have received the liberty with which Christ makes His people free! Go home and enjoy it—and if you meet any other poor soul shut up as you were, tell how you came out to liberty! Do not be satisfied to go to your bed, tonight, without having told somebody of how the Lord Jesus came, dressed in garments dipped in blood, and with His pierced hands broke the bars of brass and cut the doors of iron in two—and set your soul at liberty, and said, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions and, as a cloud, your sins." God bless you, for His dear Son's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: GALATIANS 3.

Paul, writing, to those changeable Galatians, who had so soon deserted the faith, says to them in this chapter.

Verse 1. *O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you?* Paul does not compliment them on being a very "thoughtful," "educated," "cultured" people—he does not care one atom about that matter but, because they had forsaken the simple Truth of the Gospel, he says, "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?" Those are hard words, Paul! Why did he not say, "Who has led you forward into more advanced views?" Not he! He calls it witchery, the work of the devil, and it is nothing better—and the wisdom of it is no better than the trickery of some old witch. If you take your eyes off Christ, it must be witchcraft that makes you do it! There is such glory, such beauty, such perfection, such wisdom, such divinity in Christ Crucified that if you turn from that sight to anything else, no matter how scientific and learned it may be, you are foolish, indeed, and somebody has "bewitched you."

2. *This only would I ask of you, Received you the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?* They had gone off into legality. They were trying to be saved by ceremonies and by works of their own. "Well," asks Paul, "how did you receive the Spirit—the Spirit by which miracles were worked among you, the Spirit by which you spoke with unknown tongues—the Spirit which changed and renewed your hearts? If you did, indeed, receive Him, did you receive Him by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?" There was only one reply to the question—the Spirit came to them as the result of *faith!*

3. *Are you so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?* If the very beginning of your religion was spiritual, a work of the Spirit received by faith, are you now going to be perfected by the flesh, by outward rites and ceremonies, or by efforts of your own?

4. *Have you suffered so many things in vain? If it is yet in vain.* You had to struggle and endure much contention within your own spirit to get upon the ground of faith at all—are you going to throw all that away? Is all the experience of your past life to go for nothing and are you now going to begin on a lower and baser platform?

5. *Therefore He that ministers to you the Spirit, and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?* He knew that they must reply that it was faith and not the works of the Law, that gave those miraculous powers!

6. *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.* That is the old way, the way of faith! It is not here recorded that Abraham *did* anything, though he did much, but the one thing that was “accounted to him for righteousness” was this, that he “believed God.”

7. *Know you, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.* Not this nation or that, as Anglo-Israelites might say, but those that are of *faith*—these are the children of Abraham! Abraham is the father of the faithful, the Believers, and Believers are all the children of Abraham! Race has nothing to do with this matter—an end has been put to all that. God is not the God of the Jews, only, but also of the Gentiles, and here is a new race whose distinction is not that they were born of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but by the *will of God*! This is the token by which they are known—they *believe God* and it is accounted to them for *righteousness*—even as it was accounted to Abraham!

8. *And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, in you shall all nations be blessed.* That is the Gospel! And we are blessed by it, because we believe in Christ, and so become the children of believing Abraham.

9, 10. *So then, they who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse.* All the people in the world who think themselves good. All the mere moralists. All those who, however amiable they may be, however excellent and religious they may be, are trusting to be saved by *good works*, are all under the curse, as surely as the drunkard, the liar, or the swearer is under the curse!

10. *For it is written, Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* That is all that Moses can say to you, and all that the Old Testament can reveal to you. Apart from faith in Christ, all its rites and ceremonies, all its Laws and precepts, if you are resting in them, can only land you under the curse because you cannot continue in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them! You have not so continued thus far—you will not so continue—and nothing but an absolutely *perfect obedience to the Law* could save a man by the way of works! And as that obedience is not possible, we come under the curse if we come under the Law.

11. *But that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God, it is evident, for, The just shall live by faith.* Here Paul again quotes from the Old

Testament Scriptures—“The just shall live by faith.” Even the just man lives by faith! Then how can you, who are not just, expect to live in any other way?

12. *And the Law is not of faith, but, The man that does them shall live in them.* The very spirit of Law is the spirit of works and, as life only comes by faith, it cannot come by the works of the Law, for they are not of faith! Now comes the Gospel, clear and bright, like the sun rising out of a thick fog!

13. *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.* Here is Substitution—what else can the words mean? Christ hung on a tree for us, bearing our curse, in our place!

14. *That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.* Christ was made a curse for us that the blessing might come upon us. He took our curse that we might take the blessing from His own dear hands and might possess it forever!

15. *Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: Though it is but a man’s covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no man disannuls, or adds thereto.* A covenant is a covenant—whatever happens, it cannot be altered—it stands, though it were only made by men.

16. *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He says not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to your seed, which is Christ.* Quoting from the Old Testament, we may believe in the absolute plenary Inspiration of that Sacred Book because the Apostle finds an argument upon the singular of a noun having been used rather than the plural!

17. *And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of no effect.* Is not that splendid argument? The Covenant was made with Abraham that God would bless him and his seed. Well now, 430 years later, the Law was given on Sinai, but that could not affect a covenant made 430 years before! The argument goes to prove that the Covenant of Grace is not affected by any Law of rites and ceremonies, no, not even by the Moral Law, itself! The Covenant made with Abraham and his seed must stand—the seed signifies those who believe, therefore, the Covenant stands fast with Abraham and all other Believers.

18. *For if the inheritance is of the Law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.* All through the Book of Genesis, it is promise, promise and promise! Isaac was an heir of the promise and Jacob was an heir of the promise. In fact, Isaac was born *by* promise and Ishmael, the elder brother, did not inherit the blessing because he was born after the flesh. They who believe in Christ are heirs according to the promise! Now, a promise takes us out of the region of Law.

19. *Why, then, serve the Law? What is the use of it?*

19, 20. *It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God*

is *One*. The Law had its uses, blessed uses. The Law should be used for its own purposes and then it is admirable—it is Divine. Take it out of its own proper use—make it a *master* instead of being a *servant*—and it is something like fire, which, in your grate, will comfort you, but if it masters you, it burns your house and destroys you!

21, 22. *Is the Law, then, against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a Law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law. But the Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.* It shuts you all up as in a dungeon, that by the one and only door of *faith in Christ* you might come out into a glorious liberty!

23, 24. *But before faith came we were kept under the Law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Therefore the Law was our schoolmaster—*This is an unfortunate translation! It should be, “The Law was our pedagogue.” That was a slave who was employed by the father of a family, to take his boy to school and bring him home, again. He often was also permitted to whip the boy if he did not learn his lessons well. “The Law was our pedagogue”

24, 25. *To bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. We have outgrown him! God has given us power, now, to go to Christ’s school, ourselves, joyfully and cheerfully! I remember and I daresay you do, also, when that pedagogue whipped us very sorely! I am glad that I am no longer under his power.*

26, 27. *For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. You set forth that Truth of God in your Baptism—you then confessed that you were dead to sin—and declared that you were risen again in Christ to newness of life. Whatever you had to do with the Law before, you were dead and buried to it and to everything but Christ!*

28, 29. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then are you Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.* That settles the question! If you belong to Christ, you are the children of Abraham! Come, then, and, without the least hesitation, claim all the privileges that belong to Abraham’s seed! If you have come under the promise, enjoy its blessing, and do not go back to trusting in rites and ceremonies—or in works of your own performing—but live a life of joyous faith in Jesus Christ your Lord!

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

THE STERN TEACHER

NO. 1196

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

***“Therefore the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ,
that we might be justified by faith.
But after faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”
Galatians 3:24-26.***

NEITHER the Jewish Law of Ten Commandments, nor its Law of ceremonies were ever intended to save anybody. It was not the intent of the ceremonial Law, in itself to effect the redemption of the soul—by a set of pictures it set forth the way of salvation—but it was not, itself, the way. It was a *map*, not a country. It was a model of the road, not the road itself. The blood of bulls and goats, nor the ashes of a heifer could take away sin! These sacrifices and offerings were but *types* of the great Sacrifice which, in due time, was presented by the true Priest. There was no inherent virtue in the victims that were slain, or in the services that were observed by the worshippers! Those sacred rites were intended to portray to the minds of the people the real Sacrifice, which was, in the fullness of time, to be offered by our Lord Jesus Christ—but they could do nothing more.

The king's *portrait* is not himself, the king! The engraving of a banquet is not the feast, itself, and so the grand old ceremonial Law was but a *shadow* of good things to come. It did not contain the substance of spiritual blessings. Neither was the moral Law of the Ten Commandments proclaimed on Mount Sinai ever given with the view of sinners being saved by it. When that Law was announced by God, He knew that everyone to whom He gave that Law had already broken it and that, consequently, they could not keep its precepts or claim justification by their conformity to its requirements. He never intended it to be a way of salvation!

Hundreds of years before He had revealed His Covenant of Grace and the way of faith to His servant, Abraham, and the Law was not meant to disannul the ancient promise. To look at the Law as a Savior is to place Sinai in the place of Zion and so to misuse and abuse the Law. It was sent with quite a different purpose, as we shall presently try to show you. It was sent to be our *schoolmaster* till Christ came—the schoolmaster of a world in its minority that had need to be under tutelage until it attained full age—which would not happen until Christ should be born of a woman and the doctrine of Salvation by Faith in Him should be fully preached and known.

Now I shall try and show, first, the office of the Law. Then, secondly, the design of that office—“to bring us to Christ.” And, thirdly, the termina-

tion of that office—"After faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

I. We begin with THE OFFICE OF THE LAW. It is to be a schoolmaster. Here I must endeavor to explain the figure. A schoolmaster nowadays is not at all like the personage Paul intended. He speaks of a *pedagogue*, an official, seldom, if ever, now seen among men. This was not a person who actually officiated as master in the school and gave instruction in the school itself, but one—a slave, generally—who was set to take the boys to school and to watch over them. He was to be a sort of general supervisor of them, both in school and out of school and, in fact, at all times.

A pedagogue was very generally employed in the training of the young. Indeed, it was a common and customary thing for the sons of the Greek and Roman nobility to have appointed over them some trustworthy servant of the family who took them in charge. The boys were entirely under these servants—and thus had their spirits broken in and their vivacity restrained. As a rule, these pedagogues were very stern and strict—they used the rod freely, not to say *cruelly*—and the condition of the boys was sometimes no better than slavery.

The boys, (as it was supposed to be for their good), were kept in perpetual fear. Their recreations were restricted—even their walks were under the surveillance of the grim pedagogues. They were sternly held in check in all points and were thus disciplined for the battle of life. As for the young women, they, also, had some elderly Roman of grim appearance who tried to keep them out of mischief and suppress anything like cheerfulness or girlish glee. It was considered necessary for young people that they should suffer from rigid discipline and bear the yoke in their youth. Therefore they were all put under pedagogues, whoever they might be—pedagogues armed with penalties and devoid of sympathies.

Now Paul, taking up this thought, which was his idea in the word, "schoolmaster," says the *Law* was our pedagogue, our guardian, our custodian, ruler, tutor, governor until Christ came. Well, then, what is the business of the Law as a pedagogue? The business of the Law is, first, to teach us our *obligations* to God. Let us ask ourselves if we have ever heard the Law teaching us in that way. Brothers and Sisters, read the Ten Commandments and study each separate precept—you will find that in those 10 short precepts you have all the moral virtues, the full compass of your accountability to God and of your relationship to your fellow men.

It is a wonderful condensation of morals. The essence of all just decrees and statutes lies there. Perfection is photographed there and holiness mapped out. No one has ever been able to add to it without creating an excrescence. Not a word could be taken from it without causing a serious omission. It is the perfect Law of God and tells us exactly what we ought to be—if we are in any degree deficient—we are to that extent guilty before God. When the Law comes to a man's conscience, it reveals to him the Divine standard of right—holds it up before him—makes him look at it and

apprises him that the Commandments do not merely refer to acts and deeds, but with equal force to the words and thoughts from where they proceed.

I guarantee you it is a humbling day when a man gets to understand that for every idle word he has spoken he will be brought to account—and that even his *desires* and *imagination*s will all come under Divine scrutiny! How startled is the purest mind when it understands that whoever looks upon a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart—so that even *glances* of the eyes and *thoughts* of the heart are offenses of the Law of God! The Law of God takes cognizance of the entire nature and reveals the evil which lurks in every faculty. The mere *imagination* of sin is sinful—the very conception of it, albeit that we should reject it and never carry it into act—would still be a stain upon our minds and render us impure before the thrice holy God! This is one of the first works of the Law—to show us what spotless purity it demands and to reveal to us the matchless perfection which alone can meet its requirements. He who has once gazed upon the blinding light of legal holiness will tremble at the memory of it—and abhor himself in dust and ashes as he feels how far short of it he falls!

Having done that, the Law acts as a schoolmaster, next, by showing us our sinfulness. We are naturally prone to account ourselves very good. Our own opinion of ourselves is seldom too low—most generally it is a rather high one—but just as a stern pedagogue would say to a boy who was getting a little proud, “Come along, Sir, I must take you down a little,” so the Law takes us down. It says, “Look at that precept. You have not kept that! And consider this other precept, for you appear to have forgotten it.” “Look,” says the Law, “you talk about your holiness, but have you loved the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your might? And have you loved your neighbor as yourself?”

And then, when Conscience, who is a great friend of this pedagogue, replies, “Indeed I have done nothing of the kind,” the conviction of sin comes home to the soul and sadness reigns! You will tell me, “This is very unpleasant—to be made to feel that you are sinful.” Yes, but it is very *necessary*—there is no getting to Christ in any other way! Christ died for *sinners* and if you are *not* sinners, what interest can you have in His death? Why should you think that He died for you? You must be convinced of your sinfulness before you can possibly realize the value and need of salvation! It is the business of the Law to lay before you the straight line—that you may see your crookedness—and put before you the pure gold. The Law is there that you may discern the humbling fact that what you *thought* to be pure metal is only so much worthless dross! It is the part of this pedagogue to bring you down—to humble you and make you feel how sinful you have been.

When the Law has carried our education this far, its next business is to sweep away all our excuses and stop our mouths as to all self-justifying

pleas. Did you ever know a boy without an excuse? I never did! I think I never knew a girl, either! We all make excuses readily enough. But those rough, surly pedagogues always answered the boy's idle apologies by giving the offender an extra stroke of the whip for daring to impose upon his guardian! And that is what the Law does with us. We say to it, "We have not done *exactly* as we ought, but then think of poor human nature!" Ah, how often we make that excuse! But the Law answers, "I have nothing to do with the poverty of human nature. This is what God commands and if you do not obey you will have to be cast away forever from His Presence."

The Law makes no diminution of its claims because of fallen human nature! And what is more, when the Law comes with power to a man's conscience, he does not, himself, dare to plead human nature—for of all pleas that is one of the most fallacious. A man will say, "Well, I know I drank to intoxication, but that is merely gratifying an instinct of human nature." Now, just suppose that this drunk, when he gets sober, falls into the hands of a thief—will he not turn the rogue over to a policeman? But what if the defense is set up that it was human nature that robbed him? See what he will say about it. Says he, "I will get human nature locked up for 12 months if I can." He does not recognize soft speeches about human nature when anyone does wrong to *him*—and he knows, in his own soul, that there is no valid defense in such a plea when he does wrong to God!

What if human nature is bad? That only proves that the man ought to be punished more! A man stands before my Lord Mayor tomorrow morning. He is brought up for a thief, charged with having picked somebody's pocket. He says, "My Lord Mayor, I ought to be forgiven, for the fact is, it is my *nature* to steal! I have stolen so long that whenever I see a pocket I feel a disposition, at once, to put my hand into it—such is the infirmity of my nature." What does the Lord Mayor say? He replies very gravely, "Why, I see that it is not merely in actions that you are guilty, but your very nature is poisoned with dishonesty. I shall give you a *double* punishment—your plea is not an excuse, but an aggravation." So when the Law comes, it sweeps all excuses away and makes us see how hollow, false and even wicked they are! Men, like boys, will say that circumstances were such that they could not help doing amiss—but the Law, like a stern pedagogue, says—"I have nothing to do with circumstances. Whatever your circumstances are, there is your duty and you have not done it, and, not having done it, you must be punished for your offense."

Where does Moses, in the 20th chapter of Exodus, speak about exonerating or even extenuating circumstances? God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the Lord your God, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them." That is to say, not under *any* circumstances! "You shall

not steal,” not under *any* circumstances. *Circumstances* are not taken into account! The Law sweeps that excuse away and makes men speechless before the Judgment Seat.

Many transgressors argue, “Well, but I have not done worse than other people.” To which the Law replies, “What have you to do with other people? Each individual must stand or fall on his own account before the Law. The Law is to *you*. If another has broken it, he shall be punished even as you shall, inasmuch as you have broken it.” Then the man cries, “But I have been better than others!” “But,” says the Law, “If you have not perfectly walked in all the ways of the Lord your God to do them, I have nothing to do with comparing you with others. This is my sentence, ‘Cursed is every man that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.’”

Now, my dear Hearers, these are not *my* words, they are the Words of God by His servant Moses! And there they stand like a flaming sword, turning every way, and blocking up the legal road to the Tree of Life. Conscience, when it is really awakened by the Law, confesses herself condemned and ceases to uphold her plea of innocence. How can it be otherwise, when the Law is so stern? Then, Perhaps, the man will say, “I mean to do better in the future”—to which the Law replies, “What have I to do with that? It is already due that you should be perfect in the future—and if you should be perfect, in what way would that wipe out your *old* offenses? You have only done what you ought to have done.”

But the man cries, “I repent of having done wrong.” “Yes,” says the Law, “but I have nothing to do with *repentance*.” There is no provision in the Ten Commandments for repentance! Cursed is the man that breaks the Law—and that is all that the Law says to him. Over the top of Sinai there were flames exceedingly bright and a trumpet sounded exceedingly loud—but there were no drops of the rain of pity there! Storm and tempest, thunder and lightning appalled the people so that they trembled in the camp—and such must be the sights and sounds we witness as long as we are under the Law!

Having thus swept away excuses, this pedagogue does the next thing which pedagogues did to boys. It begins to chide us and to chasten us. And it will chide, too! I know it. I had the Law frowning and shaking its fist at me for years before I got from under it. Glad enough was I to escape from it, for well do I remember the weight of its club—that crab tree club of which John Bunyan speaks! I guarantee you it can give you such sore bones that you cannot lie down upon the bed of your self-confidence to take a rest. “Why,” says the Law, “you have done this and that, and the other, and you know you have! You have sinned against light and against knowledge—and against conscience, love and against mercy.” And each of these brings another blow from the great rod till we are all wounds and bruises—and we seem to ourselves to be covered with putrefying sores.

The Law will serve us as the pedagogue did the boy—it will accompany and follow us everywhere. The old pedagogue went with the boy to the playground—he did not let him play in peace. He went upstairs to bed with him—he did not let him go to sleep without a frown—and he woke him up in the morning much earlier than he liked to be awakened, and made him come out of his bed, whether he liked it or not. He could never go anywhere without this pedagogue with him, poor child. And so it is when the Law gets hold of a man—really gets hold of him. Does he go to the theater to find pleasure in sin? The Law will go with him and make him feel more wretched than when he was at home! He may get among the frivolous and try to sing some old song to get rid of his feelings, but the more he tries to drown his misery, the more the dark forebodings come before his mind.

He cannot rest. The Law keeps on saying, “What are you doing, now? Why, you are only going from bad to worse.” The Law also smites the awakened conscience, again and again—and frightens him with what is soon to come. “Suppose you were to die where you now are,” says the Law. “Suppose you were now to appear before your Maker, unforgiven, where would you be?” Perhaps in this kind of feeling a man goes to the House of God. The Law follows him there. If the preacher preaches a contorting sermon, the Law says, “This is not for you. You have nothing to do with that. You are under *my* government, not under Christ.” The sweeter the promise, the more bitter will be the taste of the sermon in the poor sinner’s mouth, for the Law says, “You have broken my injunctions. You have violated my statutes. There is nothing for you but eternal punishment—to be driven forever from the Presence of God.”

“Hard lines,” you say. You do not like this pedagogue. No, nor did I, when I was under him. I was glad when the day came that I was of age. Do you see what the drift of all this is? Why, the drift of it is to make you despair of being saved by your good works—and to make you feel that you can do *nothing* right, apart from Jesus! You are forced by the Law to cry out, “Why, I cannot do anything right! I have tried and failed! I have tried again and have failed! I thought I was going to improve myself into an angel, but I seem to be worse every day! I thought surely the Law would have smiled on me and said, ‘That is well done,’ but when I have done my best I am still condemned, I am allowed no peace!”

No, dear Soul, and if God means to save you, you never will have any peace till you come to Christ! The man whom God does *not* intend to save is often left *without* the Law—to enjoy his portion in this life as best he may. What is the use of worrying *that* man? He may as well have peace in *this* life, for he will never see the face of the Lord in Heaven. But the Lord’s *elect* are made to feel the rod and by that rod they are so beaten that they are driven out of all heart and confidence in themselves—and made to turn to Jesus—to find salvation by some better method than by their own works! The Law is our schoolmaster to whip us to Christ—our pedagogue

to flog us and beat us till we are heartily sick of *self*—and look for our hope and confidence in some other source.

II. Thus I have shown you the office of the Law and I will proceed to the second head, which is, THE DESIGN OF THIS OFFICE. The Law is *not* intended to conduct any man to despair. “But did not you say it was, just now?” No, I did not! I said it was sent to drive a man to despair of *himself*. That is the despair which hails the Gospel—and the sooner we have it the better—it would be quite another matter if we were driven to absolute despair. Brothers and Sisters, the Law says, “You shall not indulge the hope of being saved by me. I will whip it out of you.” And it does this effectually, but it is not meant that the man should say, “Well, if I cannot be saved by my works there is no hope of my being saved at all.”

Oh, no! It is that he may ask, “What must I do to be saved?” And may get this answer—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” Its office is not to urge us to make an amalgam of works and faith, as some suppose. There are those who say, “I cannot keep the Law, but if I believe in Jesus, then the blood of Jesus will make up for my sins and deficiencies.” That is *not* the way of salvation! Nobody will ever get to Heaven that way! If you have any engagements with the Law, you must pay it 20 shillings in the pound. It will not take a composition of any sort whatever—you must satisfy its utmost demands or it will give you no rest—either in time or in eternity!

If you say to the Law, “I will give you so much in works and so much in Grace,” the Law does not deal in that way—it must be paid by a legal tender of current coin of the king’s realm. It demands *works* and it will have nothing but works—and those absolutely perfect and in full tale and measure. The Law repudiates amalgamation and so does the Gospel of Free Grace. If you have anything to do with Jesus, you must get right away from your own good works—I mean from all reliance upon them—and come to rest in Him, and Him alone, for it can never be Christ *and* company. He will save from top to bottom, from first to last, or else not at all. Not a drop of His blood and then a drop of your tears! Not a work from Christ and then a work from you! Oh no! Such hideous patchwork cannot be endured. It is not the object of the Law to drive you to a *compromise*. Its object is this—to make you accept salvation as the *free gift* of God—to make you stand and admit that you are a *sinner*, and accept a free, full, perfect forgiveness—according to the infinite Grace of the eternal Father. The Law is meant to keep you always holding on to salvation by Divine Grace.

For my part, I cannot bear that preaching which is partly Law and partly Grace. I have had enough of the Law! If you had known five years of its rigor—five years of discipline of the pedagogue—you would never want to see even his back again! When a man once knows what law-work is in his soul, he knows the difference between that and the Gospel—and he will not have linsey-woolsey! He needs to have the pure white linen all of

one material—and that material Free Grace! It must not be, “Yes, no,” but, “Yes, yes”—Grace, Grace, all Grace, nothing but Grace, and not Grace and works, not Moses and Christ, but Jesus only! The Grace must be pure and unadulterated!

It is a grand thing when this schoolmaster makes a man stick to Divine Grace and so flogs and whips him that he never wants to go back to the Law any more for, Brothers and Sisters, nobody is so happy in the liberty of Christ as the man who has thoroughly known the bondage of the Law! I think I have repeated to you a story my old friend, Dr. Alexander Fletcher, once told me. He said he was passing by the Old Bailey, or some other of our jails, and he saw a couple of boys turning somersaults, standing on their heads, making wheels of themselves and all sorts of things. He stopped and said, “Why, boys, whatever are you doing? You seem to be delighted.” One of them said, “Yes, and you would be delighted, too, if you had been locked up in that jail three months! You would jump when you came out.” And the good old doctor said he thought it was very likely he should. If he had been a prisoner there he should hardly know how to express his delight in getting out.

Now, if a man has been once pummeled by the Law. If he has felt his sin and misery—and the impossibility of obtaining any relief by the way of human merit. When he comes to see that Christ has kept the Law *for him*. When he comes to know that he is saved, and saved perfectly by an act of *faith* in Jesus Christ—when he realizes all this—it is then that he lives under new conditions and is not under the Law but under Divine Grace! He is the man to know the sweets of liberty because before the iron had entered into his soul! He is the man to kiss the Emancipator’s feet, for was he not heavily ironed in the days of his former estate? This, then, is the design of the Law—to make us sick of self and fond of Christ—to condemn us that we may accept Free Grace. To empty us that God may fill us, to strip us that God may clothe us—in a word—to kill us that Christ may make us alive!

III. Now to our last point—TERMINATION OF THE LAW’S OFFICE. When does it terminate? The text says, “But after faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” We come to believe in Jesus and then the pedagogue troubles us no more. No, there is a great change in the pedagogue’s behavior. When the young Roman, or we will say a young Hebrew, who had come under the Greek law, was under thirteen and a-half years old, this pedagogue was always beating, cuffing and buffeting him for his faults. But when he was a day over the time, then, according to the Law, he was free from the tutelage of the pedagogue.

Do you think the pedagogue struck him that morning? He knew better! He had whipped him yesterday, but now he must know his master and render him another sort of service. The lad is come to his full age and is under other regulations. Under the old Roman law a man was not of full age till he was twenty-five. According to that law the pedagogue might be

insulting and domineering over him when he was 23 or twenty-four. But when his young master had come of age, he changed his talk altogether—matters wore another phase. And so when a man becomes a Believer, he has come of age and the schoolmaster's rule is over. He is no longer under his former tutors and governors, for his time of liberty appointed by the Father is come!

He is not under the pedagogue of the Law any longer, for Christ's work has set him entirely free. Certainly, a man sees the office of the Law as pedagogue ended when he ascertains that Christ has fulfilled it! I read the Ten Commandments and say, "These thundered at me and I trembled at them, but Christ has kept them, kept them for me! He was my Representative in every act of His obedient life and death—and before God it is as if I had kept the Law—and I stand accepted in the Beloved! When Jesus Christ is seen of God, God sees His people in Him, and they are justified through His righteousness because they have faith in Him. "He that believes in Him is not condemned."

Oh, is it not a thousand mercies in one that the grand old cannons of the Law are no longer turned against us? Christ has either spiked them or else turned them on our enemies by fulfilling the Law so that they are on our side instead of against us. The Law ceases its office as schoolmaster when it comes to be written on our hearts. Boys have their lessons on slates, but men have their laws in their minds! We trust a man where we should carefully watch a boy. When the child becomes a man, his father and mother do not write down little rules for him as they did when he was a child—neither do they set servants over him to keep him in order. He is trusted. His manliness is trusted. His honor is trusted. His best feelings are trusted.

So now, Brothers and Sisters, we who have believed in Jesus have the Law written, *here*, in our hearts and it corresponds with what is written there in the Scriptures! And now we do not say of a sin, "I am afraid to do that, for I should be lost if I did." We do not desire to do it. We loathe it. And of a virtue, we do not say, "I must do that, or else I shall not be a child of God." No, we *love* to do it—we want to do it! The more of holiness the better! We love the Law of the Lord and desire to keep its statutes unto the end. We no longer have, "You shall," and, "You shall not," constantly sounding in our ears as we did when we were children. We are men in Christ Jesus and now our sacred passions delight to run in the way of God's Commandments—and if the old nature rebels, Grace is given to put it down! There is a daily conflict, but the new life that is within us cannot sin because it is born of God! And it keeps down the old nature so that we walk in the ways of righteousness after the example of our Lord.

A warfare goes on, but we are no longer children. When faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. This is not Antinomianism, for we are not *against* the Law, but the Law that once was on the stone tablets and there was broken, is now written on the fleshy tablet of a renewed

heart—and the Lord sweetly inclines us to keep His Testimonies and observe His Statutes. Moreover, we get free from the Law when we take up our heirship in Christ. I am afraid some Christians have never fully done this. Can you say, Beloved, “I have believed in Jesus and therefore I am one with Him—whatever Christ is before God, that I am—for I am a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones”?—

**“So near, so very near to God, I cannot nearer be,
For in the Person of His Son I am as near as He.
So dear, so very dear to God, I cannot dearer be
The love wherewith He loves His Son,
Such is His love to me.”**

Can you say, “He has made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure? As long as Jesus lives I cannot die, for it is written, ‘Because he lives, I shall live, also’?—

**“My name from the palms of His hands
Eternity cannot erase,
Impressed on His heart it remains
In marks of indelible Grace.”**

When a man gets there and knows that his standing does not depend on himself, but that he is what he is in Christ—when he knows that Christ has done everything for him and has saved him so that he can challenge every accuser in the words of Paul—“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies, who is he that condemns?”—when he gets *there*, then he can truly say that he is no longer under a school-master! O Brothers and Sisters, read the eighth and ninth chapters of Romans! Get into the spirit of the Apostle when he rejoiced and triumphed in the complete salvation of Christ—get away from all beliefs that you have something to do in order to save yourself!

If there are any unconverted persons here, and I am afraid there are a great many, I beseech you do not abide under the Law, for the Law can do nothing for you but curse you! Give up all hope of being saved by anything that *you* can do and agree to be saved by what Christ has done. Plead guilty! Plead guilty, and then God will say, “I absolve you.” Plead guilty and plead the blood of Jesus and, this done, you are accepted in the Beloved!—

**“There is life for a look at the Crucified One!
There is life at this moment for you,”**

and for every soul that will confess its guiltiness and renounce all hope of self-salvation! Only fly away to the wounds of Jesus!

And how shall I urge *you*, O Christian, never to go back to the Law? Do not begin to judge yourself as if you were under the Law. What if you are a sinner? It is true you are! Confess your sin and mourn over it, but remember there is a Fountain open for sin and for uncleanness in the house of David. That sin of yours was laid on Christ before you committed it! It was laid on the Scapegoat’s head of old and put away—and at this moment you are still clean in the sight of God through that great washing which you have received in the precious blood! Do not imagine that God

will change His mind about you! He never did and never can change His mind! He has said concerning each soul that believes in His dear Son, "He that believes in Him is not condemned." You are complete in Christ Jesus! In Him you have righteousness and strength. In Him you may even glory! Get away from legal doctrines and stand upon the Gospel rock—and you will be happy and holy all your days!

Let me speak to those of you who are engaged in Christian service. When you try to teach others, always keep the Law in its proper place. I remember hearing a sermon from this text, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy," in which the preacher so thoroughly missed the mark as to leave the inference upon the minds of his hearers that, after all, our good works and repentance would save us! Now, that is not the Gospel! Neither ought it to be preached as such. We preach up good works with all our might as the *result* of faith, as the *outgrowth* of faith—but *not* as the *groundwork* of salvation! We tell you that the tree of human nature must be altered, first, or the fruit cannot be good. There will be no pears upon that crabapple tree till you change the stock! Do not, therefore, go preaching to crab trees and tell them to bear pears and apples!

We testify that *Christ* is able to change a man's nature—and then good fruits will come as a matter of course—but I am afraid that in many Sunday schools the children are taught a different doctrine—somewhat after this fashion. "Now, dear Children, be very good and obey your parents, and love Jesus, and you will be saved." That is *not* the Gospel and it is not true! Often do I hear it said, "Love Jesus, dear Children." That is not the Gospel. It is, "Trust Him"—"Believe." Not *love*, but *faith* is the Saving Grace! That love of Jesus of a sentimental kind, which does not spring out of faith in Him, is a spurious emotion, a counterfeit love—not at all the love of God, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit! The root of the matter is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved"—that is the Gospel for a child of two years of age—and the Gospel for a man of a hundred! There is only one Gospel for all that are born on the face of the earth—"Believe in Jesus." Not your *doing*, not your *obeying* the Law—you have broken that—you have put yourself out of all possible hope in that direction! But your acceptance of what *Christ* has done will save you at once, save you forever!

But why should I multiply words? I do not know how to put the whole matter in a simpler form, or to commend it more plainly to your understanding. It is not the mere exposition of a few verses of Scripture, or the clearing up of some small critical difficulty. Rather would I have you consider it a direction of vital importance to every seeking soul—a counsel of thrilling interest to every tried and exercised heart! Oh, how anxious I am to make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way! I wish that all of you, especially our young friends, would learn and often repeat that hymn of Dr. Watts till it becomes indelibly fixed on their memory—

***“The Law commands and makes us know
 What duties to our God we owe.
 But ‘tis the Gospel must reveal
 Where lies our strength to do His will.
 The Law discovers guilt and sin,
 And shows how vile our hearts have been.
 Only the Gospel can express
 Forgiving love and cleansing Grace.
 What curses does the Law denounce
 Against the man that sins but once!
 But in the Gospel, Christ appears
 Pardoning the guilt of numerous years.
 My Soul, no more attempt to draw
 Your life and comfort from the Law.
 Fly to the hope the Gospel gives,
 The man that trusts the promise lives.”***

And remember, last of all, that the Law which is so sharp and terrible to men when it only deals with them for their good, will, if you and I die without being brought to Christ, be much more terrible to us in eternity, when it deals with us in *justice* for our punishment! Then it will not be enshrined in the body of Moses, but, terrible to tell, it will be incarnate in the Person of the Son of God sitting upon the Throne! He will be at once the Lawgiver, the Judge and the Savior—and you that have despised Him as the Savior will have to appear before Him as your Judge! And His justice will be clear and undiluted now that His mercy has been scorned.

Oil is soft—but set it on fire and see how it burns! Love is sweet—but curdle it to jealousy and see how sour it is! If you turn the Lamb of Zion into the Lion of the tribe of Judah, beware, for He will tear you in pieces and there shall be none to deliver you! Rejected love will change its hand. The pierced hands were stretched out with invitations of mercy—but if these are rejected—! O Sinners, I am telling you the solemn truth! Please hear it, I pray you, before I send you away—if from those hands that were pierced you will not take the perfect salvation which He is prepared to give to all who confess their guilt, you will have to receive from those same hands the blows of that iron rod which shall break you in pieces as a potter’s vessel.

Fly now and kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way while His wrath is kindled but a little! Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him! Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians 4.
 HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—567, 647, 565.***

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THE GREAT BIRTHDAY AND OUR COMING OF AGE NO. 1815

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 21, 1884,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, “Abba, Father.”
Galatians 4:3-6.*

THE birth of our Lord Jesus Christ into this world is a wellspring of pure, unmingled joy. We associate with His Crucifixion much of sorrowful regret, but we derive from His birth at Bethlehem nothing but delight. The angelic song was a fit accompaniment to the joyful event and the filling of the whole earth with peace and good will is a suitable consequence of the condescending fact. The stars of Bethlehem cast no baleful light—we may sing with undivided joy, “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.” When the Eternal God stooped from Heaven and assumed the nature of His own creature who had rebelled against Him, the deed could mean no harm to man. God, in our nature, is not God against us but God with us! We may take up the young Child in our arms and feel that we have seen the Lord’s salvation—it cannot mean destruction to men.

I do not wonder that the men of the world celebrate the supposed anniversary of the great birthday as a high festival with carols and banquets. Knowing nothing of the spiritual meaning of the mystery, they yet perceive that it means man’s good and so, in their own rough way, they respond to it. We who observe no days which are not appointed of the Lord, rejoice *continually* in our Prince of Peace and find in our Lord’s Manhood a fountain of consolation. To those who are truly the people of God, the Incarnation is the subject of a thoughtful joy which always increases with our knowledge of its meaning, even as rivers are enlarged by many trickling brooks. The Birth of Jesus not only brings us hope, but the certainty of good things. We do not merely speak of Christ’s coming into relation with our nature, but of His entering into *union* with ourselves, for He has become one flesh with us for purposes as great as His love! He is one with all of us who have believed in His name.

Let us consider by the light of our text the special effect produced upon the Church of God by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in human flesh. You know, Beloved, that His coming a *second* time will produce a wonderful change upon the Church. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the

sun.” We are looking forward to His Second Advent for the lifting up of the Church to a higher platform than that upon which it now stands. Then shall the militant become triumphant and laboring become exultant! Now is the time of battle, but the Second Advent shall bring both victory and rest. Today our King commands us to conflict, but soon He shall gloriously reign upon Mount Zion with His ancients! When He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. Then shall the bride adorn herself with her jewels and stand ready for her Husband!

The whole waiting creation which now groans and travails together in harmony with the birth pangs of the Church shall then come to her time of deliverance and enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God. This is the promise of the Second Advent—but what was the result of the First Advent? Did that make any difference in the dispensation of the Church of God? Beyond all doubt it did! Paul here tells us that we were children in bondage under the elements of the world until the fullness of time was come, when, “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, born under the Law.” Some will say, “He is speaking here of the Jews,” but he expressly warns us in the previous chapter against dividing the Church into Jews and Gentiles. To Paul, it is only *one* Church, and when he says we were in bondage, he is talking to the Galatian Christians who were, many of them, Gentiles.

But in truth he regards them neither as Jews nor Gentiles, but as part of the one and indivisible Church of God. In those ages in which election mainly embraced the tribes of Israel, there were always some chosen ones beyond that visible line. And in the mind of God, the chosen people were always regarded as neither Jews nor Gentiles, but as one in Christ Jesus. So Paul lets us know that the Church, up to the time of the coming of Christ, was like a child at school under tutors and governors—or like a young man not yet arrived at years of discretion and, therefore, most fitly kept under restraint. When Jesus came, His great birthday was the day of the coming of age of the Church—then Believers remained no more children but became *men* in Christ Jesus!

Our Lord, by His First Advent, brought the Church up out of her non-age and her pupilage into a condition of maturity in which she was able to take possession of the inheritance and claim and enjoy her rights and liberties. It was a wonderful step from being under the Law as a schoolmaster, to come from under its rod and rule into the freedom and power of a full-grown heir! And such was the change for Believers of the old time and, in consequence, there was a wonderful difference between the highest under the Old Testament and the lowest under the New. Of them that are born of woman there was not born a greater than John the Baptist and yet the *least* in the Kingdom of Heaven was greater than he!

John the Baptist may be compared to a youth of 19, still an infant in law, still under his guardian, still unable to touch his estate. But the least Believer in Jesus has passed his minority and is, “no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” May the Holy Spirit bless the text to us while we use it thus. First, let us *consider in itself the joyful mission of the Son of God*. And then let us consider the *joyful result which has come of that mission*, as it is expressed in our text.

I. I invite you to CONSIDER THE JOYFUL MISSION OF THE SON OF GOD. The Lord of Heaven has come to earth! God has taken upon Himself human nature. Hallelujah! *This great transaction was accomplished at the right time*—"When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman." The reservoir of time had to be filled by the inflowing of age after age and, when it was full to the brim, the Son of God appeared! Why the world should have remained in darkness for 4,000 years—why it should have taken that length of time for the Church to attain her full age, we cannot tell, but this, we are told, that Jesus was sent forth when the fullness of time was come. Our Lord did not come before His time nor behind His time! He was punctual to His hour and cried at the moment—"Lo, I come."

We may not curiously pry into the reasons why Christ came when He did, but we may reverently muse thereon. The birth of Jesus is the grandest light of history, the sun in the seasons of all time. It is the pole-star of human destiny, the hinge of chronology, the meeting place of the waters of the past and the future. Why did it happen at just that moment? Assuredly it was so predicted! There were many prophecies which pointed *exactly* to that hour. I will not detain you, just now, with them, but those of you who are familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures well know that, as with so many fingers, they pointed to the time when the Shiloh would come and the great Sacrifice would be offered. He came at the hour which God had determined. The infinite Lord appoints the date of every event—*all times* are in His hands.

There are no loose threads in the Providence of God, no stitches are dropped, no events are left to chance. The great clock of the universe keeps good time and the whole machinery of Providence moves with unerring punctuality. It was to be expected that the greatest of all events should be most accurately and wisely timed and so it was that God willed it to be when and where it was—and that will is, to us, the ultimate reason! If we might suggest any reasons which can be appreciated by ourselves, we should view the date in reference to the Church, itself, as to the time of her coming of age. There is a measure of reason in appointing the age of 21 as the period of a man's majority, for he is, then, mature and full grown. It would be unwise to make a person to be of age while only ten, 11, or twelve. Everybody would see that such boyish years would be unsuitable. On the other hand, if we were detained from being of age till we were 30, everyone would see that it was a needless and arbitrary postponement.

Now, if we were wise enough, we should see that the Church of God could not have endured Gospel Light earlier than the day of Christ's coming and, neither would it have been well to keep her in gloom beyond that time. There was a fitness about the date which we cannot fully understand because we have not the means of forming so decided an estimate of the life of a Church as of the life of a man. God alone knows the times and seasons for a Church and, no doubt to Him, the 4,000 years of the old dispensation made up a fit period for the Church to abide at school and bear the yoke in her youth.

The time of coming of age of a man has been settled by law with reference to those that are round about him. It were not meet for servants, that the child of five or six should be master. It were not meet in the world of commerce that an ordinary boy of 10 or 12 should be a trader on his own account. There is a fitness with reference to relatives, neighbors and dependents. So was there a fitness in the time when the Church should come to her age with regard to the rest of mankind. The world must know its darkness, that it might value the Light of God when it should shine forth! The world must grow weary of its bondage, that it might welcome the great Emancipator! It was God's plan that the world's wisdom should prove itself to be folly—He meant to permit intellect and skill to play themselves out and then He would send His Son. He would allow man to prove his strength to be perfect *weakness*—and then *He* would become his righteousness and strength. Then, when one monarch governed all lands and when the temple of war was shut after ages of bloodshed, the Lord whom the faithful sought suddenly appeared! Our Lord and Savior came when time was full and, like a harvest ready for it reaping, so will He come again when, once more, the age is ripe and ready for His Presence.

Observe, concerning the First Advent, that *the Lord was moving in it towards man*. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son." We moved not towards the Lord, but the Lord towards us! I do not find that the world, in repentance, sought its Maker. No, but the offended God, Himself, in infinite compassion, broke the silence and came forth to bless His enemies! See how spontaneous is the Grace of God! All good things begin with Him. It is very delightful that God should take an interest in every stage of the growth of His people—from their spiritual infancy to their spiritual manhood. As Abraham made a great feast when Isaac was weaned, so does the Lord make a feast at the coming of age of His people. While they were as minors under the Law of ceremonial observances, He led them about and instructed them. He knew that the yoke of the Law was for their good and He comforted them in the bearing of it. But He was glad when the hour came for their fuller joy.

Oh, how truly did the Psalmist say, "How precious are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" Tell it out with joy and gladness that the blessings of the new dispensation under which we dwell are the spontaneous gifts of God, thoughtfully bestowed in great love, wherein He has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence! When the fullness of time was come, God Himself interposed to give His people their privileges, for it is not His will that any one of His people should miss a single point of blessedness. If we are babes, it is not His wish—He would have us men! If we are famished, it is not by His desire—He would fill us with the Bread of Heaven.

Mark the Divine interposition—"God sent forth His Son." I hope it may not seem wearisome to you if I dwell upon that word, "sent"—"God sent forth His Son." I take great pleasure in that expression, for it seals the whole work of Jesus. Everything that Christ did was done by commission and authority of His Father. The great Lord, when He was born at Bethlehem and assumed our nature, did it under Divine authorization. And when He came and scattered gifts with both His hands among the sons of

men, He was the Messenger and Ambassador of *God*. He was the Plenipotentiary of the Court of Heaven! At the back of every word of Christ there is the warrant of the Eternal. At the back of every promise of Christ there is the oath of God. The Son does nothing of Himself, but the Father works with Him and in Him!

O Soul, when you lean on Christ, you rely upon no amateur Savior, no uncommissioned Redeemer, but upon One who is sent of the Most High and, therefore, is authorized in everything that He does! The Father says, "This is My Beloved Son; hear Him," for in hearing Him you are hearing the Most High! Let us find joy, then, in the coming of our Lord to Bethlehem because He was *sent*!

Now run your eyes to the next word—"When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth *His Son*." *Observe the Divine Person who was sent*. God sent not an angel, nor any exalted creature, but, "His Son." How there can be a Son of God we know not. The eternal filiation of the Son must forever remain one of those mysteries into which we must not pry. It were something like the sin of the men of Bethshemesh if we were to open the Ark of God to gaze upon the deep things of God. It is quite certain that Christ is God, for here He is called, "His Son." He existed before He was born into this world, for God, "sent" His Son! He was *already in being* or He could not have been "sent." And while He is One with the Father, yet He must be distinct from the Father and have a personality separate from that of the Father—otherwise it could not be said that God sent His Son.

God the Father was not made of a woman, nor made under the Law, but only God the Son. Therefore, while we know and are assured that Christ is One with the Father, yet is His distinctness of personality most clearly to be observed. Admire that God should have only one begotten Son and should have sent Him to lift us up. The Messenger to man must be none other than God's own Son. What dignity is here! It is the Lord of angels that is born of Mary! It is He without whom nothing was made, who deigns to hang at a woman's breast and to be wrapped in swaddling cloths! Oh, the dignity of this and, consequently, oh the efficiency of it! He that has come to save us is no weak creature like ourselves! He that has taken upon Himself our nature is no being of limited strength, such as an angel or a seraph might have been—He is the Son of the Highest! Glory be to His Blessed name! Let us dwell on this with delight—

***"If some Prophet had been sent
With salvation's joyful news,
Who that heard the blest event
Could their warmest love refuse?
But 'twas He to whom in Heaven
Hallelujahs never cease!
He, the mighty God, was given—
Given to us—a Prince of Peace!
None but He who did create us
Could redeem from sin and Hell.
None but He could reinstate us
In the rank from which we fell."***

Press on, still keeping to the very words of the text, for they are very sweet. *God sent His Son in real humanity*—"made of a woman." The Revised Version properly has it, "born of a woman." Perhaps you may get

nearer to it if you say, "Made to be born of a woman," for both ideas are present—the *factum* and the *natum*—the being made and the being born. Christ was really and truly of the substance of His mother, as certainly as any other infant that is born into the world is. God did not create the Human Nature of Christ by itself and then transmit it into mortal existence by some special means. His Son was made and born of a woman! He is, therefore, of our race, a Man like ourselves, and not man of another stock. You are to make no mistake about it—He is not only of humanity, but of *your* humanity—for that which is born of a woman is brother to us, be it born when it may.

Yet there is an omission, I doubt not intentional, to show how holy was that Human Nature, for He is born of a woman, not of a man. The Holy Spirit overshadowed the Virgin and, "that Holy Thing" was born of her without the original sin which pertains to our race by natural descent. Here is a pure humanity though a true Humanity—a true Humanity though free from sin. Born of a woman, He was of few days and full of trouble. Born of a woman, He was compassed with our physical infirmities but, as He was not born of man, He was altogether without tendency to evil or delight therein. I beg you to rejoice in this near approach of Christ to us! Ring out the glad bells, if not in the spires and steeples, yet within your own hearts, for gladder news did never greet your ears than this—that He who is the Son of God was, also, "made of a woman."

Still further it is added that God sent His Son, "*born under the Law,*" or *made* under the Law, for the word is the same in both cases. And by the same means by which He came to be of a woman, He came under the Law of God. And now admire and wonder! The Son of God has come under the Law. He was the *Law-maker* and the *Law-giver*—and He is both the *Judge* of the Law and the *Executioner* of the Law—and yet He, Himself, came under the Law! No sooner was He born of a woman than He came under the Law—voluntarily and yet necessarily. He willed to be a Man and, being a Man, He accepted the position and stood in the place of man as subject to the Law of the race. When they took Him and circumcised Him according to the Law, it was publicly declared that He was under the Law of God.

During the rest of His life you will observe how reverently He observed the Commandments of God. Even to the ceremonial Law, as it was given by Moses, He had scrupulous regard. He despised the traditions and superstitions of men, but for the rule of the dispensation He had a high respect. By way of rendering service unto God on our behalf, He came under the Moral Law. He kept His Father's Commandments. He obeyed to the full, both the First and the Second Tables, for He loved God with all His heart and His neighbor as Himself. "I delight to do Your will, O My God," He says, "yes, Your Law is within My heart." He could truly say of the Father, "I do always those things that please Him." Yet it was a marvelous thing that the King of kings should be under the Law—and especially that He should come under the *penalty* of the Law as well as the service of it!

"Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." As our Surety and Substitute He came under the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us. Having taken our place and espoused our nature, though without sin,

Himself, He came under the rigorous demands of justice and, in due time, He bowed His head to the sentence of death. "He laid down His life for us." He died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God! In this mystery of His Incarnation—in this wonderful substitution of Himself in the place of sinful men—lies the ground of that wonderful advance which Believers made when Jesus came in the flesh! His Advent in human form commenced the era of spiritual maturity and freedom.

II. I ask you, therefore, in the second place, to CONTEMPLATE THE JOYOUS RESULT WHICH HAS COME OF OUR LORD'S INCARNATION. I must return to what I have said before—*this coming of Christ has ended the minority of Believers*. The people of God among the Jews were, before Christ came, the children of God, but they were mere babes or little children. They were instructed in the elements of Divine knowledge by types, emblems, shadows and symbols. When Jesus was come there was an end of that infantile teaching! The shadows disappear when the Substance is revealed! The symbols are not needed when the Person symbolized is, Himself, present!

What a difference between the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ when He shows them plainly of the Father and the teaching of the priests when they taught by scarlet wool and hyssop and blood! How different the teaching of the Holy Spirit by the Apostles of our Lord and the instruction by meats and drinks and holy days. The old economy is dim with smoke, concealed with curtains, guarded from too familiar an approach—but now we come boldly to the Throne of God and all, with unveiled face, behold as in a glass, the Glory of God! The Christ has come and now the Kindergarten school is quitted for the College of the Spirit, by whom we are taught of the Lord to know even as we are known! The hard governorship of the law is over!

Among the Greeks, boys and youths were thought to need a cruel discipline. While they went to school, they were treated very roughly by their pedagogues and tutors. It was supposed that a boy could only imbibe instruction through his skin and that the Tree of Knowledge was originally a birch! And, therefore, there was no sparing the rod and no mitigation of self-denials and hardships. This fitly pictures the work of the Law upon those early Believers. Peter speaks of it as a yoke, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear (Acts 15:10). The Law of God was given amid thunder and flaming fire—it was more fit to inspire a wholesome *dread* than a loving *confidence*. Those sweeter Truths of God which are our daily consolation, were hardly known, or but seldom spoken. Prophets *did* speak of Christ, but they were more frequently employed in pouring out lamentations and denunciations against children that were corrupters.

I think one day with Christ was worth a half century with Moses! When Jesus came, Believers began to hear of the Father and His *love*, of His abounding *Grace* and the kingdom which He had prepared for them. Then the doctrines of eternal love and redeeming Grace and covenant faithfulness were unveiled—and they heard of the tenderness of the Elder Brother, the Grace of the great Father and the indwelling of the ever-blessed Spirit. It was as if they had risen from servitude to freedom, from

infancy to manhood! Blessed were they who in their day shared the privilege of the old economy, for it was wonderful light as compared with heathen darkness. Yet, for all that, compared with the noontide that Christ brought, it was mere candlelight. The Ceremonial Law held a man in stern bondage—"You must not eat this and you must not go there. And you must not wear this and you must not gather that." Everywhere you were under restraint and walked between hedges of thorns. The Israelite was reminded of sin at every turn and warned of his perpetual tendency to fall into one transgression or another. It was quite right that it should be so, for it is good for a man that, while he is yet a youth, he should bear the yoke and learn obedience—but it must have been irksome.

When Jesus came, what a joyful difference was made! It seemed like a dream of joy, too good to be true! Peter could not, at first, believe in it, and needed a vision to make him sure that it was even so. When he saw that great sheet let down, full of all manner of living creatures and four-footed things—and was bid to kill and eat—he said, "Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." He was startled, indeed, when the Lord said, "What God has cleansed, call you not that common." That first order of things "stood only in meats and drinks, and different washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." "But," Paul says, "I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself." Prohibition upon mere ceremonial points and commands upon carnal matters are now abolished—and great is our liberty! We shall be foolish, indeed, if we suffer ourselves to be again entangled with the yoke of bondage! Our minority was ended when the Lord, who had before spoken to us by His Prophets, at last sent His Son to lead us up to the highest form of spiritual manhood!

Christ came, we are told next, to redeem those who are under the Law. That is to say, the birth of Jesus and His coming under the Law—and His fulfilling the Law—have set all Believers free from it as a yoke of bondage. None of us wish to be free from the Law as a rule of life. We delight in the commands of God, which are holy, just and good. We wish that we could keep every precept of the Law, without a single omission or transgression. Our earnest desire is for perfect holiness, but we do not look in that direction for our justification before God. If we are asked, today, are we hoping to be saved by ceremonies, we answer, "God forbid!"

Some seem to fancy that Baptism and the Lord's Supper have taken the place of circumcision and the Passover—and that while Jews were saved by one form of *ceremony* we are to be saved by another. Let us never give place to this idea—no, not for an hour! God's people are saved not by outward rites, nor forms, nor priestcraft, but because, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, born under the Law." And He has so kept the Law that, by faith, His righteousness covers all Believers and we are not condemned by the Law. As to the Moral Law, which is the standard of equity for all time, it is no way of salvation for us! Once we were under it and strived to keep it in order to earn the Divine favor, but we have now no such motive. The Word was, "This do and you shall live," and we, there-

fore, strived like slaves to escape the lash and earn our wages—but it is so no longer.

Then we strove to do the Lord's will that He might love us and that we might be rewarded for what we did. But we have no design of purchasing that favor, now, since we freely and securely enjoy it on a very different ground. God loves us out of pure Grace and He has freely forgiven us our iniquities—and this out of gratuitous goodness. We are already saved and that not by works of righteousness which we have done, or by holy acts which we hope to perform, but wholly of Free Grace! If it is of Grace, it is no more of works—and that it is *all* of Grace from first to last is our joy and glory! The righteousness that covers us was worked out by Him that was born of a woman—and the merit by which we enter Heaven is the merit, not of our own hands or hearts, but of Him that loved us and gave Himself for us. Thus are we redeemed from the Law by our Lord's being made under the Law—and we become sons and no more servants because the great Son of God became a servant in our place.

“What?” asks one, “then do you not seek to do good works?” Indeed we do! We have *talked* of them before, but we actually *perform* them, now! Sin shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under Law, but under Grace. By God's Grace we desire to abound in works of holiness and the more we can serve our God, the happier we are! But this is not to save *ourselves*, for we are already saved! O sons of Hagar, you cannot understand the freedom of the true heir, the child born according to promise! You that are in bondage and feel the force of legal motives, you cannot understand how we should serve our Father who is in Heaven with all our heart and all our soul—not for what we get by it—but because He has loved us and saved us, irrespective of our works! Yet it is even so—we would abound in holiness to His honor, praise and Glory because the love of Christ constrains us! What a privilege it is to cease from the Spirit of bondage by being redeemed from the Law! Let us praise our Redeemer with all our hearts!

We are redeemed from the Law in its operation upon our mind—it breeds no fear within us. I have heard children of God say, sometimes, “Well, but don't you think if we fall into sin we shall cease to be in God's love and so shall perish?” This is to cast a slur upon the unchangeable love of God! I see that you make a mistake and think a child is a *servant*. Now, if you have a servant and he misbehaves, you say, “I give you notice to quit. Here is your wage—you must find another master.” Can you do that to your *son*? Can you do that to your *daughter*? “I never *thought* of such a thing,” you say. Your child is yours for life. Your boy has behaved very badly—why did you not give him his wages and fire him? You answer that he does not serve you for wages and that he is your son and cannot be otherwise. Just so. Then always know the difference between a servant and a son—and the difference between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace.

I know how a base heart can make mischief out of this, but I cannot help it—the Truth of God is the truth. Will a child rebel because he will always be a child? Far from it! It is this which makes him feel love in return. The true child of God is kept from sin by other and better forces

than a slavish fear of being turned out of doors by his Father. If you are under the Covenant of Works then, mind you, if you do not fulfill all righteousness you will perish! If you are under that Covenant, unless you are *perfect*, you are lost! One sin will destroy you! One sinful *thought* will ruin you! If you have not been perfect in your obedience, you must take your wages and be gone. If God deals with you according to your works, there will be nothing for you but, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son." But if you are God's child, that is a different matter—you will still be His child even when He corrects you for your disobedience.

"Ah," says one, "then I may live as I like." Listen! If you are God's child, I will tell you how you will like to live. You will desire to live in perfect obedience to your Father and it will be your passionate longing from day to day to be perfect even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect! The nature of sons which Grace imparts is a law unto itself—the Lord puts His fear into the hearts of the regenerate so that they do not depart from Him. Being born again and introduced into the family of God, you will render to the Lord an obedience which you would not have thought of rendering to Him if you had only been compelled by the idea of law and penalty! Love is a master force and he that feels its power will hate all evil. The more salvation is seen to be of Grace, the deeper and more mighty is our love—and the more does it work towards that which is pure and holy.

Do not quote Moses for motives of Christian obedience! Do not say, "The Lord will cast me away unless I do this and that." Such talk is of the bondwoman and her son—and it is very unseemly in the mouth of a true-born heir of Heaven! Get it out of your mouth! If you are a son, you disgrace your Father when you think that He will repudiate His own—you forget your spiritual heirship and liberty when you dread a change in Jehovah's love. It is all very well for a mere babe to talk in that ignorant fashion—and I don't wonder that many professors know no better, for many ministers are only half-evangelical! But you that have become men in Christ and know that He has redeemed you from the Law ought not to go back to such bondage. "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law."

What else has He come for? Notice further, "*That we might receive the adoption of sons.*" The Lord Jesus Christ has come in human flesh that His people might, to the fullest, realize, grasp and enjoy, "the adoption of sons." I want you, this morning, to see if you can do that. May the Holy Spirit enable you! What is it to receive the adoption of sons? Why to feel, "Now I am under the mastery of love, as a dear child who is both loved and loving. I go in and out of my Father's house not as a casual servant, called in by the day or the week, but as a child at *home*. I am not looking for hire as a servant, for I am always with my Father and all that He has is mine. My God is my Father and His Countenance makes me glad. I am not afraid of Him, but I delight in Him, for nothing can separate me from Him. I feel a perfect love that casts out fear and I delight myself in Him." Try and enter into that spirit this morning. That is why Christ has come in the flesh—on purpose that you, His people, may be, to the fullest, the adopted children of the Lord—acting out and enjoying all the privileges which sonship secures to you.

And then, next, exercise your heirship! One who is a son and knows he is an heir of all his father's estates, does not pine in poverty, nor act like a beggar. He looks upon everything as his own. He regards his father's wealth as making him rich. He does not feel that he is stealing if he takes what his father has made, to be his own, but he knows it is his. I wish Believers would realize the promises and blessings of their God are theirs! Help yourselves, for no good thing will the Lord withhold from you! All things are yours—you only need to use the hand of faith. Ask what you will. If you appropriate a promise, it will not be pilfering—you may take it boldly and say, "This is mine." Your adoption brings with it large rights—be not slow to use them. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Among men, sons are only heirs, heirs in possession, when the father is *dead*. But our Father in Heaven lives and yet we have full heirship in Him. The Lord Jesus Christ was made of a woman on purpose that His dear people might, at once, enter into their heirship!

You ought to feel a sweet joy in the perpetual relationship which is now established between you and God, for Jesus is still your Brother. You have been adopted and God has never cancelled an adoption yet. There is such a thing as regeneration, but there is *not* such a thing as the life, then received, ever dying out! If you are born unto God, you are born unto God! The stars may turn to coals and the sun and moon may become clots of blood, but he that is born of God has a life within him which can never end—he is God's child and God's child he always is! Therefore let him walk at large like a child, an heir, a prince of the blood royal who bears a relationship to the Lord which neither time nor eternity can ever destroy! This is why Jesus was made of a woman and born under the Law, that He might give us to enjoy the fullness of the privilege of adopted sons.

Follow me, a minute, a little further. The next thing that Christ has brought us by being made of a woman is, "Because you are sons, God *has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.*" Here are two seedings! God sent His Son and now He sends His Spirit! Because Christ has been sent, therefore the Spirit is sent, and now you shall know the Holy Spirit's indwelling because of Christ's Incarnation. The Spirit of Light, the Spirit of Life, the Spirit of Love, the Spirit of Liberty—the same Spirit that was in Christ Jesus is in you! That same Spirit which descended upon Jesus in the waters of Baptism also descended upon you! You, O child of God, have the Spirit of God as your present Guide and Comforter—and He shall be with you forever. The life of Christ is your life and the Spirit of Christ is your Spirit! Therefore, this day be exceedingly glad, for you have not received the spirit of bondage, again, to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption!

There we finish, for Jesus has come *to give us the cry* as well as the spirit of adoption, "whereby we cry, Abba, Father." According to ancient traditions, no slave might say, "Abba, Father." And according to the Truth of God as it is in Jesus, none but a man who is really a child of God and has received the adoption, can truly say, "Abba, Father." This day my heart desires for every one of you, my Brothers and Sisters, that because Christ has been born into the world, you may at once come of age and may, at this hour, confidently say, "Abba, Father." The great God, the

Maker of Heaven and earth, is *my* Father and I dare say it, without fear, that He will never disown the kindred! The Thunderer, the Ruler of the stormy sea is my Father and, notwithstanding the terror of His power, I draw near to Him in love! He who is the Destroyer—who says, “Return, you children of men,” is *my* Father and I am not alarmed at the thought that He will call me to Himself in due time!

My God, You who shall call the multitudes of the slain from their graves to fire, I look forward with joy to the hour when You shall call and I shall answer You! Do what You will with me, You are my Father. Smile on me and I will smile back and say, “My Father.” Chasten me and as I weep I will cry, “My Father.” This shall make everything work good to me, be it never so good to bear! If You are my Father, all is well to all eternity! Bitterness is sweet and death, itself, is life, since You are my Father. Oh, go merrily home, you children of the living God, saying, each one within himself, “I have it! I have it! I have that which cherubim before the Throne of God have never gained—I have a relationship with God of the nearest and the dearest kind—and my spirit, for her music, has this word, ‘Abba, Father! Abba, Father!’”

Now, dear children of God, if any of you are in bondage under the Law, why do you remain so? Let the redeemed go free! Are you fond of wearing chains? Are you like Chinese women that delight to wear little shoes which crush their feet? Do you delight in slavery? Do you wish to be captives? You are not under the Law but under Grace! Will you allow your unbelief to put you under the Law? You are not a slave. Why tremble like a slave? You are a child. You are a son! You are a daughter! You are an heir—live up to your privileges!

Oh, you banished seed, be glad! You are adopted into the household of God! Then be not as a stranger. I hear Ishmael laughing at you—let him laugh! Tell your Father of him and He will soon say, “Cast out this bondwoman and her son.” Free Grace is not to be mocked by human merit! Neither are we to be made sad by the forebodings of the legal spirit. Our soul rejoices and, like Isaac, is filled with holy laughter, for the Lord Jesus has done great things for us of which we are glad! To Him be glory forever and ever! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
Galatians 3:24-29; 4; 5:1-4.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK—249, 647, 260.**

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END OF VOLUME 30

ADOPTION—THE SPIRIT AND THE CRY

NO. 1435

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 22, 1878,
BY C.H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”
Galatians 4:6.*

WE do not find the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity set forth in Scripture in formal terms, such as those which are employed in the Athanasian creed, but this Truth of God is continually taken for granted, as if it were a fact well known in the Church of God. If not laid down very often, in so many words, it is everywhere held in solution and it is mentioned incidentally in connection with other Truths of God in a way which renders it quite as distinct as if it were expressed in a set formula. In many passages it is brought before us so prominently that we must be willfully blind if we do not note it. In the present chapter, for instance, we have distinct mention of each of the three Divine Persons. “God,” that is the Father, “sent forth the Spirit,” that is the Holy Spirit and He is here called, “the Spirit of His Son.”

Nor have we the *names* alone, for each sacred Person is mentioned as acting in the work of our salvation. Look at the fourth verse, “God sent forth His Son.” Then note the fifth verse, which speaks of the Son as redeeming them that were under the Law. And then the text itself reveals the Spirit as coming into the hearts of Believers and crying Abba, Father. Now, inasmuch, as you have not only the mention of the separate names, but also certain special operations ascribed to each, it is plain that you have, here, the distinct personality of each.

Neither the Father, the Son, nor the Spirit can be an *influence*, or a mere form of *existence*, for each one acts in a Divine manner and with a special sphere and a distinct mode of operation. The error of regarding a certain Divine Person as a mere influence, or emanation, mainly assails the Holy Spirit, but its falseness is seen in the words—“crying, Abba, Father”—an *influence* could not cry! The act requires a person to perform it. Though we may not understand the wonderful Truth of the undivided Unity and the distinct personality of the Triune Godhead, yet, nevertheless, we see the Truth revealed in the Holy Scriptures and, therefore, we accept it as a matter of faith.

The Divinity of each of these sacred Persons is also to be gathered from the text and its connection. We do not doubt the Divinity of the Father, for He is here distinctly mentioned as “God.” Twice is the Father evidently intended when the word, “God,” is used. That the Son is God is implied, for though made of a woman, as to His human Nature, He is described as “sent forth” and, therefore, He was *preexistent* before He was sent forth and made of a woman. This, together with His being called the Son of God

and His being spoken of as able to redeem, are, to our minds, sufficient proofs of Deity.

The Spirit is said to do what only God can do, namely, to dwell in the hearts of all Believers. It were not possible for any being to cry in the hearts of a multitude of men if He were not Omnipresent and, therefore, Divine! So here we have the name of each Divine Person, the working of each, the personality of each and, in some degree, the Deity of each within the compass of a few lines. As for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, they know how necessary is the co-operation of the entire Trinity to our salvation and they are charmed to see the loving union of all in the work of deliverance. We reverence the Father, without whom we had not been chosen or adopted—the Father who has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

We love and reverence the Son by whose most precious blood we have been redeemed and with whom we are one in a mystic and everlasting union. And we adore and love the Divine Spirit, for it is by Him that we have been regenerated, illuminated, quickened, preserved and sanctified—and it is through Him that we receive the seal and witness, within our hearts, by which we are assured that we are, indeed, the sons of God. As God said of old, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness,” even so do the Divine Persons take counsel together and all unite in the new creation of the Believer. We must not fail to bless, adore and love each one of the exalted Persons, but we must diligently bow in most humble reverence before the one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.”

Having noted this most important fact, let us come to the text itself, hoping to enjoy the doctrine of the Trinity while we are discoursing upon our adoption, in which wonder of Grace they each have a share. Under the teaching of the Divine Spirit may we be drawn into sweet communion with the Father through His Son Jesus Christ, to His Glory and to our benefit. Three things are very clearly set forth in my text—the first is the dignity of Believers—“you are sons.” The second is the consequent indwelling of the Holy Spirit—“because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.” And the third is the filial cry—crying, “Abba, Father.”

I. First, then, THE DIGNITY OF BELIEVERS. Adoption gives us the *rights* of children; regeneration gives us the *nature* of children. We are partakers of both of these, for we are sons. And let us here observe that this sonship is a gift of Grace received by faith. We are not the sons of God by nature in the sense here meant. We are in a sense “the offspring of God” by *nature*, but this is very different from the sonship here described, which is the peculiar privilege of those who are born again. The Jews claimed to be of the family of God, but as their privileges came to them by the way of their fleshly birth, they are likened to Ishmael, who was born after the flesh, but who was cast out as the son of the bondwoman and compelled to give way to the son of the promise.

We have a sonship which does not come to us by nature, for we are “born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of

God.” Our sonship comes by *promise*, by the operation of God as a special gift to a peculiar seed, set apart unto the Lord by His own Sovereign Grace, as Isaac was. This honor and privilege come to us, according to the connection of our text, by faith. Note well the 26th verse of the preceding chapter (Gal. 3:26): “For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” As unbelievers we know nothing of adoption. While we are under the Law as self-righteous we know something of *servitude*, but we know nothing of sonship. It is only after faith has come that we cease to be under the schoolmaster and rise out of our minority to take the privileges of the sons of God.

Faith works in us the spirit of adoption and our consciousness of sonship, in this wise—first, it brings us justification. Verse 24 of the previous chapter says, “The Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” An unjustified man stands in the condition of a criminal, not of a child—his sin is laid to his charge. He is reckoned as unjust and unrighteous as, indeed, he really is and he is, therefore, a rebel against his king and not a child enjoying his father’s love. But when faith realizes the cleansing power of the blood of Atonement and lays hold upon the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, then the justified man becomes a son and a child!

Justification and adoption always go together. “Whom He called, them He also justified” and the calling is a call to the Father’s house and to a recognition of *sonship*. Believing brings forgiveness and justification through our Lord Jesus! It also brings adoption, for it is written, “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” Faith brings us into the realization of our adoption, in the next place, by setting us free from the bondage of the Law. “After that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” When we groaned under a sense of sin and were shut up by it as in a prison, we feared that the Law would punish us for our iniquity and our life was made bitter with fear.

Moreover, we strove in our own blind self-sufficient manner to keep that Law and this brought us into yet another bondage which became harder and harder and as failure succeeded to failure we sinned and stumbled more and more to our soul’s confusion. But now that faith has come, we see the Law fulfilled in Christ and ourselves justified and accepted in Him—this changes the slave into a child and duty into choice! Now we delight in the Law and, by the power of the Spirit, we walk in holiness to the glory of God. Thus it is that by believing in Christ Jesus we escape from Moses, the taskmaster, and come to Jesus, the Savior. We cease to regard God as an angry Judge and view Him as our loving Father! The system of merit and command, punishment and fear has given way to the rule of Grace, gratitude and love—and this new principle of government is one of the grand privileges of the children of God.

Now, faith is the mark of sonship in all who have it, whoever they may be, for, “you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26). If you are believing in Jesus, whether you are Jew or Gentile, bond or free, you are a son of God. If you have only believed in Christ of late and have but for the past few weeks been able to rest in His great salva-

tion, yet, Beloved, now are you a child of God! It is not a later privilege, granted to assurance or growth in Grace! It is an early blessing and belongs to him who has the smallest degree of faith and is no more than a baby in Grace. If a man is a Believer in Jesus Christ, his name is in the register of the great family above, “for you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”

But if you have no faith, no matter what zeal; no matter what works; no matter what knowledge; no matter what pretensions to holiness you may possess, you are nothing and your religion is vain. Without faith in Christ you are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, for without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith then, wherever it is found, is the infallible token of a child of God and its absence is fatal to the claim. This according to the Apostle is further illustrated by our Baptism, for in Baptism, if there is faith in the soul, there is an open putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ. Read the 27th verse: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” In Baptism you professed to be dead to the world and you were, therefore, buried into the name of Jesus. And the meaning of that burial, if it had any right meaning to you, was that you professed yourself to be dead to everything but Christ and henceforth your life was to be in Him and you were to be as one raised from the dead to newness of life.

Of course the outward form means nothing to the unbeliever, but to the man who is in Christ it is a most instructive ordinance. The spirit and essence of the ordinance lie in the soul’s entering into the symbol, in the man’s knowing not only the baptism into water, but the baptism into the Holy Spirit and into fire—and as many of you as know that inward mystic Baptism into Christ, know also that henceforth you have put on Christ and are covered by Him as a man is by his garment! Henceforth you are one in Christ! You wear His name, you live in Him, you are saved by Him, you are altogether His! Now, if you are one with Christ, since *He* is a son, you are also sons. If you have put on Christ, God sees you not in yourself but in Christ—and that which belongs to Christ belongs also to you, for if you are Christ’s, then are you Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.

As the Roman youth, when he came of age, put on the toga and was admitted to the rights of citizenship, so the putting on of Christ is the token of our admission into the position of sons of God. Thus are we actually admitted to the enjoyment of our glorious heritage. Every blessing of the Covenant of Grace belongs to those who are Christ’s and every Believer is on that list. Thus, according to the teaching of the passage, we receive adoption by *faith* as the *gift* of Grace.

Again, adoption comes to us by redemption. Read the passage which precedes the text—“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Beloved, prize redemption and never listen to teaching which would destroy its meaning or lower its importance! Remember that you were not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish! You were under the Law and subject to its curse,

for you had broken it most grievously! And you were subject to its penalty, for it is written, “the soul that sins, it shall die.” And yet again, “cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.”

You were also under the *terror* of the Law, for you feared its wrath and you were under its irritating power, for often when the commandment came, sin within you revived and you died. But now you are redeemed from all! As the Holy Spirit says, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” Now you are not under the Law, but under Grace, and this because Christ came under the Law and kept it both by His active and His passive obedience, fulfilling all its commands and bearing all its penalty on your behalf! Henceforth you are the redeemed of the Lord and enjoy a liberty which comes by no other way but that of the eternal ransom!

Remember this and whenever you feel most assured that you are a child of God, praise the redeeming blood—whenever your heart beats highest with love to your great Father, bless the “Firstborn among many brethren,” who, for your sakes came under the Law, was circumcised, kept the Law in His life and bowed His head to it in His death, honoring and magnifying the Law and making the justice and righteousness of God to be more conspicuous by His life than it would have been by the holiness of all mankind! And He made God’s justice to be more fully vindicated by His death than it would have been if all the world of sinners had been cast into Hell! Glory be to our redeeming Lord, by whom we have received the adoption!

Again, we further learn from the passage that we now enjoy the privilege of *sonship*. According to the run of the passage the Apostle means not only that we are children, but that we are full-grown sons. “Because you are sons” means because the time appointed of the Father is come and you are of age and no longer under tutors and governors. In our minority we are under the schoolmaster, under the regimen of ceremonies, under types, figures, shadows—learning our A B Cs by being convicted of sin. But when faith is come, we are no longer under the schoolmaster but come to a more free condition. Till faith comes we are under tutors and governors, like mere boys. But after faith, we take our rights as sons of God!

The Jewish church of old was under the yoke of the Law. Its sacrifices were continual and its ceremonies endless. New moons and feasts had to be kept. Jubilees had to be observed and pilgrimages made. In fact, the yoke was too heavy for feeble flesh to bear! The Law followed the Israelite into every corner and dealt with him upon every point—it had to do with his garments, his meat, his drink, his bed, his board and everything about him! It treated him like a boy at school who has a rule for everything. Now that faith has come, we are full grown sons and, therefore, we are free from the rules which govern the school of the child. We are under law to Christ, even as the full-grown son is still under the discipline of his father’s house, but this is a law of love and not of fear, of Grace and not of bondage.

“Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” Return not to the beggarly elements of a merely outward religion, but keep close to the worship of God in spirit and in truth, for this is the liberty of the children of God! Now, by faith we are no more like bondservants. The Apostle says that, “the heir, as long as he is a child, differs nothing from a servant, though he is lord of all; but is under tutors and governors till the time appointed of the father.” But, Beloved, you are now the sons of God and you have come to your majority— you are now free to enjoy the honors and blessings of the Father’s house! Rejoice that the free Spirit dwells within you and prompts you to holiness! This is a far superior power to the merely external command and the whip of threats.

Now no more are you in bondage to outward forms, rites and ceremonies, but the Spirit of God teaches you all things and leads you into the inner meaning and substance of the Truth of God. Now, also, says the Apostle, we are heirs—“Why you are no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” No man living has ever realized, to the fullest, what this means! Believers are at this moment heirs, but what is the estate? It is God Himself! We are heirs of God! Not only of the promises, of the Covenant engagements and of all the blessings which belong to the chosen seed, but heirs of God Himself! “The Lord is my portion, says my soul.” “This God is our God forever and ever.” We are not only heirs to God, to all that He gives to His firstborn, but heirs of God, Himself! David said, “The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup.”

As God said to Abraham, “Fear not Abraham, I am your shield and your exceeding great reward,” so says He to every man that is born of the Spirit! These are His own words—“I will be to them a God and they shall be to Me a people.” Why, then, O Believer, are you poor? All riches are yours! Why, then, are you sorrowful? The ever-blessed God is yours! Why do you tremble? Omnipotence waits to help you! Why do you distrust? His immutability will abide with you even to the end and make His promises steadfast! All things are yours, for Christ is yours and Christ is God’s! And though there are some things which at present you cannot actually grasp in your hand, nor even see with your eyes, remember the things which are laid up for you in Heaven, you can enjoy by faith, for, “He has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ,” “in whom, also, we have obtained an inheritance,” so that, “our citizenship is in Heaven.”

We enjoy even now the pledge and earnest of Heaven in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit! Oh what privileges belong to those who are the sons of God! Once more upon this point of the Believer’s dignity, we are already tasting some of the inevitable consequences of being the sons of God. What are they? One of them is the opposition of the children of the bondwoman. No sooner had the Apostle Paul preached the liberty of the saints, than straightway there arose certain teachers who said, “This will never do! You must be circumcised, you must come under the Law.” Their opposition was to Paul a token that he was of the free woman, for behold, the children of the bondwoman singled him out for their virulent opposition!

You shall find, dear Brothers and Sisters, that if you enjoy fellowship with God; if you live in the spirit of adoption; if you are brought near to the Most High so as to be a member of the Divine family, straightway all those who are under bondage to the Law will quarrel with you. Thus says the Apostle, "As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." The child of Hagar was found by Sarah to be mocking Isaac, the child of promise. Ishmael would have been glad to have shown his enmity to the bated heir by blows and personal assault, but there was a superior power to check him so that he could get no further than "mocking." So it is now! There *have* been periods in which the enemies of the Gospel have gone a great deal further than mocking, for they have been able to imprison and burn alive the lovers of the Gospel—but now, thank God—we are under His special protection as to life and limb and liberty and are as safe as Isaac was in Abraham's house.

They can mock us, but they cannot go any further, or else some of us would be publicly hung! But trials of cruel mocking are still to be endured—our words are twisted, our sentiments are misrepresented and all sorts of horrible things are imputed to us—things which we know not! And to all we would reply with Paul, "Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" This is the old way of the Hagarenes—the child after the flesh is still doing his best to mock him that is born after the Spirit. Do not be astonished, nor grieved in the least degree when this happens to any of you! Rather let this turn to the establishment of your confidence and to the confirmation of your faith in Christ Jesus, for He told you of old, "If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

II. Our second head is THE CONSEQUENT INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN BELIEVERS—"God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." Here is a Divine act of the Father—the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son—and God has sent Him forth into your hearts! If He had only come knocking at your hearts and asked your leave to enter, He had never entered. But when Jehovah sent Him, He made His way without violating your will, but with irresistible power! Where Jehovah sent Him, there He will abide and go no more out forever.

Beloved, I have no time to dwell upon the words, but I want you to turn them over in your thoughts, for they contain a great depth. As surely as God sent His Son into the world to dwell among men, so that His saints beheld His Glory, the "Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth," so surely has God sent forth the Spirit to enter into men's hearts, there to take up His residence that in Him, also, the Glory of God may be revealed. Bless and adore the Lord who has sent you such a Visitor as this!

Now, note the style and title under which the Holy Spirit comes to us. He comes as the Spirit of Jesus. The words are "the Spirit of His Son," by which is not meant the Character and disposition of Christ, though that were quite true, for God sends this unto His people, but it means the Holy Spirit! Why, then, is He called the Spirit of His Son, or the Spirit of Jesus?

May we not give these reasons? It was by the Holy Spirit that the Human Nature of Christ was born of the Virgin. By the Spirit our Lord was attested at His Baptism when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove and abode upon Him. In Him the Holy Spirit dwelt without measure, anointing Him for His great work. And by the Spirit He was anointed with the oil of gladness more than His fellows.

The Spirit was also with Him, attesting His ministry by signs and wonders. The Holy Spirit is our Lord's great gift to the Church. It was after His ascension that He bestowed the gifts of Pentecost and the Holy Spirit descended upon the Church to abide with the people of God forever. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, because He is Christ's Witness here below, for, "there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood." For these and many other reasons He is called "the Spirit of His Son" and it is He who comes to dwell in Believers. I would urge you very solemnly and gratefully to consider the wondrous condescension which is here displayed. God Himself, the Holy Spirit, takes up His residence in Believers!

I never know which is the more wonderful—the Incarnation of Christ or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit! Jesus dwelt here for a while in human flesh untainted by sin—holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. But the Holy Spirit dwells *continually* in the hearts of all Believers, though as yet they are imperfect and prone to evil! Year after year, century after century, He still abides in the saints and will do so till the elect are all in Glory! While we adore the Incarnate Son, let us adore, also, the indwelling Spirit whom the Father has sent!

Now notice the place wherein He takes up His residence—"God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your *hearts*." Note that it does not say into your heads or your brains! The Spirit of God, doubtless, illuminates the intellect and guides the judgment—but this is not the commencement nor the main part of His work. He comes chiefly to the affections! He dwells with the heart, for with the heart man believes unto righteousness and "God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." Now, the heart is the center of our being and, therefore, does the Holy Spirit occupy this place of vantage. He comes into the central fortress and universal citadel of our nature and thus takes possession of the whole!

The heart is the vital part. We speak of it as the chief residence of life and, therefore, the Holy Spirit enters it and, as the living God dwells in the living heart, taking possession of the very core and marrow of our being! It is *from* the heart and *through* the heart that life is diffused. The blood is sent to the extremities of the body by the pulsing of the heart—and when the Spirit of God takes possession of the affections, He operates upon every power, faculty and member of our entire manhood. Out of the heart are the issues of life and from the affections sanctified by the Holy Spirit all other faculties and powers receive renewal, illumination, sanctification, strengthening and ultimate perfection! This wonderful blessing is ours "because we are sons" and it is filled with marvelous results.

Sonship sealed by the indwelling Spirit brings us peace and joy. It leads to nearness to God and fellowship with Him. It excites trust, love, vehement desire and creates in us reverence, obedience and actual likeness to

God. All this and much more, because the Holy Spirit has come to dwell in us! Oh, matchless mystery! Had it not been revealed, it had never been imagined! And now that it *is* revealed, it would never have been believed if it had not become matter of actual experience to those who are in Christ Jesus! There are many professors who know nothing of this! They listen to us with bewilderment as if we told them an idle tale, for the carnal mind knows not the things that are of God! They are spiritual and can only be *spiritually* understood!

Those who are not sons, or who only come in as sons under the Law of Nature, like Ishmael, know nothing of this indwelling Spirit and are up in arms at us for daring to claim so great a blessing! Yet it is ours and none can deprive us of it!

III. Now I come to the third portion of our text—THE FILIAL CRY. This is deeply interesting. I think it will be profitable if your minds enter into it. Where the Holy Spirit enters there is a cry. “God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son, crying, ‘Abba, Father.’” Now notice it is the *Spirit of God* that cries—a most remarkable fact! Some are inclined to view the expression as a Hebraism and read it, He “makes us to cry,” but, Beloved, the text does not say that and we are not at liberty to alter it upon such a pretense! We are always correct in keeping to what God says and here we plainly read of the Spirit in our hearts that He is crying, “Abba, Father.”

The Apostle, in Romans 8:15, says, “You have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby *we* cry, Abba, Father,” but *here* he describes the Spirit, Himself, as crying, “Abba, Father.” We are certain that when he ascribed the cry of, “Abba, Father,” to us, he did not wish to exclude the Spirit’s cry, because in the 26th verse of the famous eighth Chapter of Romans, he says, “Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Thus he represents the Spirit Himself as groaning with unutterable groans within the child of God, so that when he wrote to the Romans he had on his mind the same thought which he here expressed to the Galatians—that it is the Spirit, Himself, which cries and groans in us, “Abba, Father.”

How is this? Is it not ourselves that cry? Yes, assuredly! And yet the Spirit cries also! The expressions are both correct. The Holy Spirit prompts and inspires the cry. He puts the cry into the heart and mouth of the Believer. It is *His* cry because *He* suggests it, approves of it and educates us to it. We would never have cried thus if He had not first taught us the way. As a mother teaches her child to speak, so He puts this cry of, “Abba, Father,” into our mouths! Yes, it is He who forms in our hearts the desire after our Father, God, and keeps it there! He is the Spirit of adoption and the Author of adoption’s special and significant cry! Not only does He prompt us to cry, but He works in us a sense of need which *compels* us to cry and also that spirit of confidence which emboldens us to claim such relationship to the great God!

Nor is this all, for He assists us in some mysterious manner so that we are able to pray aright—He puts His Divine energy into us so that we cry, “Abba, Father,” in an acceptable manner. There are times when we cannot cry at all and then He cries in us! There are seasons when doubts and

fears abound and so suffocate us with their fumes that we cannot even raise a cry—and then the indwelling Spirit represents us, speaks for us and makes intercession for us—crying in our name and making intercession for us according to the will of God! Thus does the cry, “Abba, Father,” rise up in our hearts even when we feel as if we could not pray and dare not think ourselves children! *Then* we may each say, “I live, yet not I, but the Spirit that dwells in me.”

On the other hand, at times our soul gives such a sweet assent to the Spirit’s cry that it becomes ours, also. But then we more than ever acknowledge the work of the Spirit and still ascribe to Him the blessed cry, “Abba, Father.” I want you, now, to notice a very sweet fact about this cry, namely, that it is literally the cry of the Son. God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts and that Spirit cries in us exactly according to the cry of the Son! If you turn to the Gospel of Mark, at the 14th chapter, 36th verse, you will find there what you will not discover in any other Evangelist (for Mark is always the man for the striking points and the memorable words). He records that our Lord prayed in the garden, “Abba, Father, all things are possible unto You; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what You will.” So that this cry in us copies the cry of our Lord to the letter—“Abba, Father.”

Now, I dare say you have heard these words, “Abba, Father” explained at considerable length at other times. And if so, you know that the first word is Syrian or Aramaic, or, roughly speaking, Abba is the Hebrew word for, “father.” The second word is in Greek and is the Gentile word, “Pater,” which also signifies father. It is said that these two words are used to remind us that Jews and Gentiles are one before God. They do remind us of this, but this cannot have been the principal reason for their use. Do you think that when our Lord was in His agony in the garden that He said, “Abba, Father,” because Jews and Gentiles are one? Why should He have thought of that doctrine and why need He mention it in prayer to His Father?

Some other reason must have suggested it to Him. It seems to me that our Lord said, “Abba,” because it was His native tongue. When a Frenchman prays, if he has learned English, he may ordinarily pray in English, but if ever he falls into an agony he will pray in French, as surely as he prays at all! Our Welsh Brothers and Sisters tell us that there is no language like Welsh—I suppose it is so to *them*. They will talk English when about their ordinary business and they can pray in English when everything goes comfortably with them, but I am sure that if a Welshman is in a great fervency of prayer, he flies to his Welsh tongue to find full expression. Our Lord, in His agony, used *His* native language and as born of the seed of Abraham He cries in His own tongue, “Abba.”

Even thus, my Brethren, we are prompted by the spirit of adoption to use our own language, the language of the *heart*—and to speak to the Lord freely in our own tongue. Besides, to my mind, the word, “Abba,” is of all words in all languages the most natural word for father. I must try and pronounce it so that you see the natural childishness of it, “Ab-ba,” “Ab-ba.” Is it not just what your children say, ab, ab, ba, ba, as soon as they try to talk? It is the sort of word which any child would say, whether

Hebrew, or Greek, or French, or English! Therefore, Abba is a word worthy of introduction into all languages! It is truly a *child's* word and our Master felt, I have no doubt, in His agony, a love for child's words.

Dr. Guthrie, when he was dying, said, "Sing a hymn," but he added, "Sing me one of the children's hymns." When a man comes to die, he wants to be a child, again, and longs for children's hymns. And Our blessed Master in His agony used the children's word, "Abba," and it is equally becoming in the mouth of each one of us. I think this sweet word, "Abba," was chosen to show us that we are to be very natural with God and not stilted and formal. We are to be very affectionate and come close to Him and not merely say, "Pater," which is a cold Greek word, but say, "Abba," which is a warm, natural, loving word—fit for one who is a little child with God and makes bold to lie in His bosom—and look up into His face and talk with holy boldness!

"Abba" is not a word, somehow, but a baby's lisping. Oh, how near we are to God when we can use such a speech! How dear He is to us and dear we are to Him when we may thus address Him, saying, like the great Son, Himself, "Abba, Father." This leads me to observe that this cry in our hearts is exceedingly near and familiar. In the sound of it I have shown you that it is childlike, but the tone and manner of the utterance are equally so. Note that it is a *cry*. If we obtain audience with a king we do not cry, we speak in measured tones and set phrases. But the Spirit of God breaks down our measured tones and takes away the formality which some hold in great admiration—and He leads us to *cry*—which is the very reverse of formality and stiffness.

When we cry, we cry, "Abba." Even our very cries are full of the spirit of adoption! A cry is a sound which we are not anxious that every passer-by should hear, yet what child minds his father hearing him cry? So, when our heart is broken and subdued, we do not feel as if we could talk fine language at all, but the Spirit in us sends forth cries and groans! And of these we are not ashamed, nor are we afraid to cry before God. I know some of you think that God will not hear your prayers because you cannot pray grandly like such-and-such a minister. Oh, but the Spirit of His Son cries and you cannot do better than cry, too! Be satisfied to offer to God broken language—words salted with your grief—wet with your tears. Go to Him with holy familiarity and be not afraid to cry in His Presence, "Abba, Father."

But then how earnest it is—for a cry is an intense thing. The word implies fervency. A cry is not a flippant utterance, nor a mere thing of the lips—it comes up from the soul! Has not the Lord taught us to cry to Him in prayer with fervent importunity that will not take a denial? Has He not brought us so near to Him that sometimes we say, "I will not let You go unless You bless me"? Has He not taught us so to pray that His disciples might almost say of us as they did of one of old, "Send her away, for she cries after us." We do cry after Him! Our heart and our flesh cry out for God, for the living God, and this is the cry—"Abba, Father! I must know You! I must taste Your love! I must dwell under Your wings! I must behold Your face! I must feel Your great fatherly heart overflowing and filling my heart with peace!" We cry, "Abba, Father."

I shall close when I notice this, that the most of this crying is kept within the heart and does not come out at the lips. Like Moses we cry when we say not a word. God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." You know what I mean—it is not alone in your little room, by the old armchair that you cry to God, but you call Him, "Abba, Father," as you go about the streets or work in the shop! The Spirit of His Son is crying, "Abba, Father," when you are in the crowd or at your table among the family! I see it is alleged as a very grave charge against me that I speak as if I were familiar with God. If it is so, I make bold to say that I speak only as I feel! Blessed be my heavenly Father's name, I know I am His child and with whom should a child be familiar but with His father?

O you strangers to the living God, be it known that if this is vile, I purpose to be viler, still, as He shall help me to walk more closely with Him! We feel a deep reverence for our Father in Heaven which bows us to the very dust, but for all that we can say, "truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ." No stranger can understand the nearness of the Believer's soul to God in Christ Jesus—and because the world cannot understand it, it finds it convenient to sneer—but what of that? Abraham's tenderness to Isaac made Ishmael jealous and caused him to laugh, but Isaac had no cause to be ashamed of being ridiculed since the mocker could not rob him of the Covenant blessing!

Yes, Beloved, the Spirit of God makes you cry, "Abba, Father," but the cry is mainly within your heart and there it is so commonly uttered that it becomes the habit of your soul to be crying to your heavenly Father! The text does not say that He had cried, but the expression is, "crying"—it is a present participle, indicating that He cries every day, "Abba, Father." Go home, my Brothers and Sisters, and live in the spirit of sonship! Wake up in the morning and let your first thought be, "My Father, my Father, be with me this day." Go out into business and when things perplex you, let that be your resort—"My Father, help me in this hour of need." When you go to your home and meet with domestic anxieties, let your cry be, "Help me, my Father."

When alone, you are not alone because the Father is with you! And in the midst of the crowd you are not in danger, because the Father, Himself, loves you! What a blessed word is that—"The Father Himself loves you"! Go and live as His children! Take heed that you reverence Him, for if He is a father, where is His fear? Go and obey Him, for this is right. Be imitators of God as dear children! Honor Him wherever you are by adorning His doctrine in all things. Go and live upon Him, for you shall soon live with Him! Go and rejoice in Him! Go and cast all your cares upon Him. Go henceforth and whatever men may see in you may they be compelled to acknowledge that you are the children of the Highest!

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." May you be such henceforth and evermore. Amen and amen!

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THE ALLEGORIES OF SARAH AND HAGAR

NO. 69

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH, 2, 1856,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

“These are the two Covenants.”
Galatians 4:24.

THERE cannot be a greater difference in the world between two things than there is between Law and Grace. And yet, strange to say, while the things are diametrically opposed and essentially different from each other, the human mind is so depraved and the intellect, even when blessed by the Spirit, has become so turned aside from right judgment, that one of the most difficult things in the world is to discriminate properly between Law and Grace. He who knows the difference—and always remembers the essential difference between Law and Grace—has grasped the marrow of divinity. He is not far from understanding the Gospel theme in all its ramifications, its outlets and its branches, who can properly tell the difference between Law and Grace! There is always in a science, some part which is very simple and easy when we have learned it, but which, in the commencement, stands like a high threshold before the porch. Now, the first difficulty in striving to learn the Gospel is this—between Law and Grace there is a plain enough difference to every Christian and especially to every enlightened and instructed one. But still, when most enlightened and instructed, there is always a tendency in us to confuse the two things. They are as opposite as light and darkness and can no more agree than fire and water. Yet man will be perpetually striving to make a compound of them—often ignorantly and sometimes willfully. They seek to blend the two, when God has positively put them asunder!

We shall attempt, this morning, to teach you something of the allegories of Sarah and Hagar, so that you may, thereby, better understand the essential difference between the Covenants of Law and of Grace. We shall not go fully into the subject, but shall only give such illustrations of it as the text may furnish us. First, I shall want you to notice *the two women* whom Paul uses as types—Hagar and Sarah. Then I shall notice *the two sons*—Ishmael and Isaac. In the third place, I shall notice *Ishmael’s conduct to Isaac*. And I shall conclude by noticing *the different fates of the two*.

I. First, we invite you to notice THE TWO WOMEN—Hagar and Sarah. It is said that they are the types of the two Covenants. And before we start, we must not forget to tell you what the Covenants are. The first

Covenant for which Hagar stands is the Covenant of Works which is this—"There is My Law, O man. If you on your side will engage to keep it, I, on My side will engage that you shall live by keeping it. If you will promise to obey My commands perfectly, wholly, fully, without a single flaw, I will carry you to Heaven. But mark Me, if you violate one command, if you do rebel against a single ordinance, I will destroy you forever." That is the Hagar Covenant—the Covenant propounded on Sinai, amidst tempests, fire and smoke—or rather, propounded, first of all, in the Garden of Eden where God said to Adam, "In the day that you eat, thereof, you shall surely die. As long as he did not eat of the tree, but remained spotless and sinless, he was most assuredly to live. That is the Covenant of the Law—the Hagar Covenant.

The Sarah Covenant is the Covenant of Grace or the Everlasting Covenant, not made with God and man, but made with God and Christ Jesus, which Covenant is this—"Christ Jesus, on His part, engages to bear the penalty of all His people's sins, to die, to pay their debts, to take their iniquities upon His shoulders. And the Father promises on His part that all for whom the Son does die shall most assuredly be saved! That seeing they have evil hearts, He will put His Law in their hearts, that they shall not depart from it and that seeing they have sins, He will pass thereby and not remember them any more forever." The Covenant of Works was, "Do this and live, O man!" But the Covenant of Grace is, "Do this, O Christ and you shall live, O man!" The difference of the Covenants rests here—the one was made with man, the other with Christ. The one was a conditional Covenant, conditional on Adam's standing—the other is a conditional Covenant with Christ, but as perfectly unconditional with us! There are no conditions, whatever, in the Covenant of Grace, or if there are conditions, the Covenant *gives* them. The Covenant of Grace *gives* faith, *gives* repentance, *gives* good works, *gives* salvation as a purely gratuitous unconditional act! Nor does our continuance in that Covenant depend in the least degree on ourselves. The Covenant was made by God with Christ, signed, sealed and ratified, in all things ordered well!

Now come and look at the allegory. First, I would have you notice that *Sarah, who is the type of the new Covenant of Grace, was the original wife of Abraham*. Before he knew anything about Hagar, Sarah was his wife. The Covenant of Grace was the original Covenant after all. There are some bad theologians who teach that God made man upright and made a Covenant with him. That man sinned and that as a kind of afterthought God made a new Covenant with Christ for the salvation of His people. Now, that is a complete mistake! The Covenant of Grace was made before the Covenant of Works. For Christ Jesus, before the *foundation of the world*, did stand as its Head and Representative. And we are said to be elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. We, long before we fell, were

loved of God! He did not love us out of pity to us, but He loved His people, considered purely as creatures. He loved them when they became sinners—but when He started with them He considered them as creatures. He allowed them to fall into sin to show forth the riches of His Grace, which existed *before* their sin. He did not love them and choose them from among the rest, after their fall, but He loved them beyond their sin and before their sin! He made the Covenant of Grace before we fell by the Covenant of Works. If you could go back to eternity and ask which is the older born, you would hear that Grace was born before Law—that it came into the world long before the Law was promulgated. Older, even, than the fundamental principles which guide our morals is that great fundamental Rock of Grace, in Covenant made of old, long before seers preached the Law and long before Sinai smoked. Long before Adam stood in the Garden, God had ordained His people to eternal life, that they might be saved through Jesus Christ!

Notice next—*though Sarah was the elder wife, yet Hagar bore the first son*. So the first man, Adam, was the son of Hagar. Though he was born perfectly pure and spotless, he was not the son of Sarah when he was in the Garden. Hagar had the first son. She bore Adam, who lived for a time under the Covenant of Works. Adam lived in the Garden on this principle. Sins of commission were to be his fall. And if he omitted to do the sin, then he was to stand forever. Adam had it entirely in his own power whether he would obey God or not—his salvation, then, rested simply on this basis, “If you touch that fruit, you die. If you obey My command and do not touch it, you shall live.” And Adam, perfect as he was, was but an Ishmael and not an Isaac, till after his fall. *Apparently*, at any rate, he was a Hagarene, though *secretly*, in the Covenant of Grace, he may have been a child of promise. Blessed be God, we are not now under Hagar! We are not under the Law since Adam fell. Now Sarah has brought forth children. The new Covenant is, “The mother of us all.”

But notice again, *Hagar was not intended to be a wife. She never ought to have been anything but a handmaid to Sarah*. The Law was never intended to save men—it was only designed to be a handmaid to the Covenant of Grace. When God delivered the Law on Sinai, it was apart from His ideas that any man would ever be saved by it. He never conceived that man would attain perfection thereby. But you know that the Law is a wondrous handmaid to Grace. Who brought us to the Savior? Was it not the Law thundering in our ears? We would never have come to Christ if the Law had not driven us there! We would never have known sin if the Law had not revealed it. The Law is Sarah’s handmaid to sweep our hearts and make the dust fly so that we may cry for blood to be sprinkled, that the dust may be laid. The Law is, so to speak, Jesus Christ’s dog, to go after His sheep and bring them to the Shepherd. The Law is the thunderbolt which frightens ungodly men and makes them turn from

the error of their ways and seek God! Ah, if we know rightly how to use the Law, if we understand how to put her in her proper place and make her obedient to her mistress, then all will be well. But this Hagar will always be wishing to be mistress, as well as Sarah. And Sarah will never allow that, but will be sure to treat her harshly and drive her out. We must do the same! And let none murmur at us if we treat the Hagarene harshly in these days—if we sometimes speak hard things against those who are trusting in the works of the Law. We will quote Sarah as an example. *She* treated Hagar harshly and so will we. We mean to make Hagar flee into the wilderness—we wish to have nothing to do with her. Yet it is very remarkable that as coarse and ill-featured as Hagar is, men have always a greater love for her than they have for Sarah—and they are prone to be continually crying, “Hagar, you shall be my mistress,” instead of saying, “No, Sarah, I will be your son and Hagar shall be bondmaid.” What is God’s Law now? It is not *above* a Christian—it is *under* a Christian. Some men hold God’s Law like a rod *in terror* over Christians and say, “If you sin, you will be punished with it.” It is not so! The Law is *under* a Christian. It is for him to walk on, to be his guide, his rule, his pattern. “We are not under the Law, but under Grace.” Law is the road which guides us, not the rod which drives us, nor the spirit which actuates us! The Law is good and excellent if it keeps its place. Nobody finds fault with the handmaid, because she is not the wife—and no one shall despise Hagar because she is not Sarah. If she had but remembered her office, it had been all well and her mistress had never driven her out. We do not wish to drive the Law out of Chapels, as long as it is kept in its right position. But when it is set up as mistress—away with her—we will have nothing to do with legality!

Again—*Hagar never was a free woman and Sarah never was a slave.* So, Beloved, the Covenant of Works never was free and none of her children ever were. All those who trust in works never are free and never can be, even could they be perfect in good works. Even if they have no sin, still, they are bond slaves, for when we have done all that we ought to have done, God is not our debtor, we are still debtors to Him and still remain as bond slaves. If I could keep all God’s Law, I should have no right to favor, for I should have done no more than was my *duty* and still be a bond slave! The Law is the most rigorous master in the world, no wise man would love its service. For after all you have done, the Law never gives you a, “Thank you,” for it, but says, “Go on, Sir, go on!” The poor sinner trying to be saved by Law is like a blind horse going round and round a mill and never getting a step further, but only being continually whipped. The faster he goes, the more work he does and the more he is tired—so much the worse for him! The better legalist a man is, the more sure he is of being damned. The more holy a man is, if he trust to his works, the more he may rest assured of his own final rejection and

eternal portion with Pharisees. Hagar was a slave—Ishmael, moral and good as he was—was nothing but a slave and never could be more. Not all the works he ever rendered to his father could make him a free-born son! Sarah never was a slave. She might, sometimes, be taken prisoner by Pharaoh, but she was not a slave even then! Her husband might sometimes deny her, but she was still his wife—she was soon acknowledged by her husband and Pharaoh was soon obliged to send her back. So the Covenant of Grace might seem in jeopardy and the representative of it might cry, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.” But it never was in real danger. And sometimes the people under the Covenant of Grace may seem to be captives and bond slaves. But they are still free. Oh, that we knew how to “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.”

One thought more. *Hagar was cast out, as well as her son. But Sarah never was.* So the Covenant of Works has ceased to be a Covenant. Not only have the people been cast away who trusted in it—not simply was Ishmael cast out, but Ishmael’s mother, too! So the legalist may not only know himself to be damned, but the Law as a Covenant has ceased to be, for mother and son are both driven out by the Gospel and those who trust in the Law are sent away by God. You ask today who is Abraham’s wife? Why Sarah—does she not sleep side by side with her husband in the Machpelah’s cave at this instant? There she lies and if she lies there for a thousand years to come, she will still be Abraham’s wife, while Hagar never can be! Oh, how sweet to think that the Covenant made of old was in all things ordered well and never, never shall be removed! “Although my house is not so with God yet He made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” Ah, you legalists, I do not wonder that you teach the doctrine of falling away, because that is consistent with your theology! Of course Hagar has to be driven out and Ishmael, too. But we who preach the Covenant of free and full salvation know that Isaac never shall be driven out and that Sarah never shall cease to be the friend and wife of Abraham. You Hagarene! You ceremonialists! You hypocrites! You formalists! Of what use will it be, when at last you shall say, “Where is my mother? Where is my mother, the Law?” Oh, she is driven out and you may go with her into eternal oblivion! But where is my mother? The Christian can say, at last, and it will be said, “there is the mother of the faithful, Jerusalem above, the mother of us all. And we shall enter in and dwell with our Father and our God.”

II. Now we are going to review the TWO SONS. While the two women were types of the two Covenants, the two sons were types of those who live under each Covenant. Isaac is a type of the man who walks by faith and not by sight, and who hopes to be saved by Grace. Ishmael of the man who lives by works and hopes to be saved by his own good deeds. Let us look at these two.

First. *Ishmael is the elder*. So, Beloved, the legalist is a great deal older than the Christian. If I were a legalist, today, I would be some 15 or 16 years older than I am as a Christian, for we are all born legalists. Speaking of Arminians, Whitefield said, "We are all born Arminians." It is Grace that turns us into Calvinists! It is Grace that makes Christians of us, Grace that makes us free and makes us know our standing in Christ Jesus." The legalist must be expected, then, to have more might of argument than Isaac. And when the two boys are wrestling, of course Isaac generally gets a fall, for Ishmael is the bigger fellow. And you must expect to hear Ishmael making the most noise, for he is to be a wild man, his hand against every man and every man's hand against him. Whereas Isaac is a peaceful lad. He always stands up for his mother and when he is mocked, he can go and tell his mother that Ishmael mocked him but that is all that he can do—he has not much strength. So you notice now-a-days—the Ishmaelite are generally the stronger and they can give us desperate falls when we get into arguments with them. In fact, it is their boast and glory that the Isaacs have not much power of reasoning—not much logic. No, Isaac does not need it, for he is an heir according to promise—and promise and logic do not much consist together. His logic is his faith—his rhetoric is his earnestness. Never expect the Gospel to be victorious when you are disputing after the manner of men—more usually look to be beaten. If you are discoursing with a legalist and he conquers you, say, "Ah, I expected that, it shows I am an Isaac, for Ishmael will be sure to give Isaac a thrashing and I am not at all sorry for it. Your father and mother were in the prime of life and were strong. And it was natural that you should overcome me, for my father and mother were quite old people."

But where was the *difference* between the two lads in their outward appearance? There was *no difference between them as to ordinances*, for both of them were circumcised. There was no distinction with regard to outward and visible signs. So, my dearly Beloved, there is often no difference between Ishmael and Isaac—between the legalist and the Christian—in matters of outward ceremonies. The legalist takes the sacrament and is baptized. He would be afraid to die if he did not. And *I do not believe there was much difference as to character*. Ishmael was nearly as good and honorable a man as Isaac. There is nothing said against him in Scripture. Indeed, I am led to believe that he was an especially good lad, from the fact that when God gave a blessing, He said, "With Isaac shall the blessing be." Abraham said, "O that Ishmael might live before You." He cried to God for Ishmael because he loved the lad, doubtless, for his disposition! God said, I will give Ishmael such-and-such a blessing. He shall be the father of princes, he shall have temporal blessings. But God would not turn aside, even for Abraham's prayer. And when Sarah was rather fierce, as she must have been that day when she turned Hagar out

of the house, it is said, "It grieved Abraham because of his son." And I do not suspect that Abraham's attachment was a foolish one. There is one trait in Ishmael's character that you love very much. When Abraham died, he did not leave Ishmael a single stick or stone, for he had previously given him his portion and sent him away. Yet Ishmael came to his father's funeral, for it is said that his sons, Ishmael and Isaac, buried him in Machpelah. There seems, then, to have been but little difference in the characters of the two. So, dearly Beloved, there is little difference between the legalist and the Christian as to the outward walk. They are both the visible sons of Abraham. It is not a distinction of life. For God allowed Ishmael to be as good as Isaac, in order to show that it was not the goodness of *man* that made any distinction, but that He "will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and whom He will, He hardens."

Then *what was the distinction?* Paul has told us that the first was born after the *flesh* and the second after the *Spirit*. The first was a natural son, the other a spiritual one. Ask the legalist, "You do good works. You have repented, you say—you are keeping the Law and you have no need to repent. Now, where did you get your strength from?" Perhaps he says, "Grace." But if you ask him what he means, he says that he used it. He had Grace, but he used it. Then the difference is, *you* used your Grace and others did not. Yes. Well, then, it is your own *doing*. You may call it Grace, or you may call it *mustard*. It was not Grace, after all, for it was *your using*, you say, that made the difference! But ask poor Isaac how he has kept the Law and what does he say? "Very badly, indeed." Are you a sinner, Isaac? "Oh, yes, an exceedingly great one. I have rebelled against my Father times without number. I have often gone astray from Him." Then you do not think yourself quite as good as Ishmael, do you? "No." But yet there is a difference between you and him after all. What has made the difference? "Why, Grace has made me to differ." Why is not Ishmael an Isaac? Could Ishmael have been an Isaac? "No," says Isaac, "it was God who made me to differ, from the first to the last. He made me a child of promise before I was born and He must keep me so"—

**"Grace all the work shall crown
Through everlasting days.
It lays in Heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise."**

Isaac has more really good works. He does not stand second to Ishmael. When he is converted, he labors, if it is possible, to serve his Father far more than the legalist does his master. But still, doubtless, if you were to hear both their tales, you would hear Isaac say that he was a poor miserable sinner, while Ishmael would make himself out a very honorable Pharisaic gentleman! The difference is not in works, however, but in *motives*. Not in the life, but in the means of sustaining life—not in what they do, so much as in how they do it. Here, then, is the difference

between some of you. Not that you legalists are worse than Christians. You may be often better in your lives and yet you may be lost! Do you complain of that as unjust? Not in the least! God says men must be saved by *faith* and if you say, “No, I will be saved by works,” you may try it, but you will be lost forever! It is as if you had a servant and you should say, “John, go and do such-and-such a thing in the stable,” but he goes away and does the reverse and then says, “Sir, I have done it very nicely.” “Yes,” you say, “but that is not what I told you to do.” So God has not told you to work out your salvation by good works. But He has said, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure.” So when you come before God with your good works, He will say, “I never told you to do that. I said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized and you shall be saved.” “Ah,” you say, “I thought the other was a great deal better way.” Sir, you will be lost for your thoughts! “Why is it that the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, have attained unto righteousness,” when Israel, who followed after righteousness, has not attained it? It is this—“Because they sought it not by faith, but by the works of the Law.”

III. Now I will briefly say a word or two concerning ISHMAEL’S CONDUCT TO ISAAC. It says that Ishmael mocked Isaac. Have not some of you, dear sons of Hagar, felt exceedingly irritated when you heard this Doctrine? You have said, “It is dreadful! It is horrible! It is quite unjust, that I may be as good as I like, but if I am not a son of the Promise, I cannot be saved! It is really awful! It is an immoral Doctrine—it does a deal of damage and ought to be stopped.” Of course! That shows that you are an Ishmael. Of course Ishmael will mock at Isaac and we need no further explanation. Where the pure Sovereignty of God is preached, where it is held that the child of the Promise and not the child of the flesh, is the heir, the child of the flesh always makes a hubbub about it! What said Ishmael to Isaac? “What business have you here? Am I not my father’s eldest son? I would have had all the property, if it had not been for you. Are you above me?” That is how the legalist talks. “Is not God the father of everybody? Are we not all His children? He ought not to make any difference.” Said Ishmael—“Am not I as good as you? Do I not serve my father as well? As for you, you know you are your mother’s favorite, but my mother is as good as yours.” And so he teased and mocked Isaac. That is just how you Arminians do with Free Salvation. The legalist says, “I don’t see it, I cannot have it and I won’t. If we are both equal in character, it cannot be fair that one should be lost and the other saved.” And thus he mocks Free Grace. You may get on very easily if you do not preach Free Grace too fully, but if you dare to speak such things that are obnoxious to the crowd, what will people say? They call them “baits for popularity.” (See the *so-called* FREEMAN Newspaper.) Few fish-

es however, bite at those baits! Most men say, "I hate him, I cannot stand him! He is so uncharitable." You say we preach this to gain popularity!? Why, it is, upon the surface of it, a bare-faced lie! For the Doctrine of God's Sovereignty will always be unpopular—men will always hate it and grind their teeth—just as they did when Jesus taught it! Many widows, He said, were in Israel, but to none of them was the Prophet sent, save unto a widow of Sarepta. And many lepers were in Israel, but none of them were healed, except one who came far away from Syria. A fine popularity our Savior got from that sermon! The people ground their teeth at Him and all the popularity He had would have been to be pushed down the hill, from which, it is said, they would have cast him headlong. But He made His way out of them and escaped. What? *Popular* to humble a man's pride, to abolish man's standing and make him cringe before God as a poor sinner? No, it will never be popular till men are born angels and all men love the Lord—and that will not be just yet, I suppose.

IV. But we have to enquire **WHAT BECAME OF THE TWO SONS?**

First, *Isaac had all the inheritance and Ishmael none*. Not that Ishmael came off poorly, for he had many presents and became very rich and great in this world. But he had no *spiritual* inheritance. So the legalist will get many blessings, as a reward for his legality. He will be respected and honored. "Verily," said Christ, "the Pharisees have their reward." God does not rob any man of his reward. Whatever a man angles for, he catches. God pays men all He owes and a great deal more. And those who keep His Law, even in this world, will receive great favors. By obeying God's command they will not injure their bodies as much as the vicious and they will better preserve their reputation—obedience does good in this world. But then Ishmael had none of the inheritance. So, you poor legalist, if you are depending on your works, or on anything, except the Free Sovereign Grace of God for your deliverance from death, you will not have so much as a foot of the inheritance of Canaan! In that great day when God shall allot the portions of all the sons of Jacob, there will not be a scrap for you! But if you are a poor Isaac, a poor guilty trembling sinner—and if you say, "Ishmael has his hands full—

***"But nothing in my hands I bring
Simply to the Cross I cling!"***

If you are saying, this morning—

***"I am nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my All-in-All."***

If you renounce all the works of the flesh and do confess, "I am the chief of sinners, but I am the child of the Promise and Jesus died for me," you shall have an inheritance and you shall not be robbed of it by all the mocking Ishmaels in the world! Nor shall it be diminished by the sons of Hagar. You may sometimes be sold and carried down to Egypt, but God will bring His Josephs and His Isaacs back and you shall yet be exalted to Glory and sit at Christ's right hand! Ah, I have often thought what

consternation there will be in Hell when outwardly good men go there. "Lord," says one as he goes in, "Am I to go into that loathsome dungeon? Did not I keep the Sabbath? Was not I a strict Sabbatarian? I never cursed or swore in all my life. Am I to go there? I paid tithes of all that I possessed and am I to be locked up there? I was baptized! I took the Lord's Supper. I was everything that ever a man could be that was good. It is true, I did not believe in Christ. But I did not think I needed Christ, for I thought I was too good and too honorable! And am I to be locked up there?" Yes, Sir! And among the damned you shall have this pre-eminence—that you did scorn Christ most of all! They never set up an anti-Christ. They followed sin and so did you, in your measure, but you did add to your sin this most damnable of sins—that you did set up yourself as an anti-Christ and bowed down and worshipped your own fancied goodness!

Then God will proceed to tell the legalist, "On such a day I heard you rail at My Sovereignty. I heard you say it was unfair of Me to save My people and distribute My favors after the counsel of My own will. You did impugn your Creator's Justice, and justice you shall have in all its power." The man had thought he had a great balance on his side but he finds it is only some little grain of duty. But then God holds up the immense roll of his sins, with this at the bottom—"Without God, without hope, a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel!" The poor man then sees that his little treasure is not half a mite, while God's great bill is ten thousand million talents! And so with an awful howl and a desperate shriek, he runs away with all his little notes of merit that he had hoped would have saved him, crying, "I am lost! I am lost with all my good works! I find my good works were sands but my sins were mountains. And because I had not faith, all my righteousness was but white-washed hypocrisy."

Now, once more, *Ishmael was sent away and Isaac was kept in the house*. So there are some of you, when the searching day shall come to try God's Church, though you have been living in the Church as well as others, though you have got the mask of profession on you—you will find that it will not avail! You have been like the elder son—whenever a poor prodigal has come into the Church, you have said, "As soon as your son is come which has devoured your living with harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf." Ah, envious legalist, you will be banished, at last, from the house! I tell you legalist and formalist, that you have no more to do with Christ than the heathens have and though you have been baptized with Christian Baptism, though you sit at a Christian table, though you hear a Christian sermon, you have neither part nor lot in the matter—any more than a Roman Catholic or a Muslim—unless you are trusting simply in the Grace of God and are an heir according to the Promise! Whoever trusts to his works, though it be ever so little, will find that that little trust will ruin his soul! All that nature spins must be un-

raveled! That ship which works have built must have her keel cut in halves. A soul must trust simply and wholly to the Covenant of God, or else that soul is lost! Legalist, you hope to be saved by works. Come, now, I will treat you respectfully. I will not charge you with having been a drunk, or a swearer. But I want to ask you, Are you aware that in order to be saved by your works, it is requisite that you should be *entirely perfect*? God demands the keeping of the *whole Law*. If you have a vessel with the smallest crack in it, it is not a whole one! Have you never committed sin in all your life? Have you never thought an evil thought? Never had an evil imagination? Come, Sir, I would not suppose that you have stained those white kid gloves with anything like lust, or carnality, or that your fine mouth which uses such chaste language ever condescended to an oath, or anything like lasciviousness! I will not imagine that you have ever sang a lascivious song. I will leave that out of the question—but have you ever sinned? “Yes,” you say. Then, mark this—“*the soul that sins, it shall die.*” And that is all I have to say to you. But if you will deny that you have ever sinned, do you know that if, in the future you commit but *one* sin—though you should live a perfect life for 70 years and at the end of that 70 years, you have committed but *one* sin, all your obedience would go for nothing. For “*he that offends in one point is guilty of all.*”

“Sir,” you say, “you are going on a wrong supposition, for though I believe I ought to do some good works, I believe Jesus Christ is very merciful and though I am not exactly perfect, I am sincere and I think *sincere* obedience will be accepted instead of *perfect* obedience.” You do, indeed! And pray tell, what is *sincere* obedience? I have known a man get drunk once a week. He was very sincere and he did not think he was doing wrong as long as he was sober on a Sunday. Many people have what they call a *sincere* obedience, but it is one which always leaves a little margin for iniquity. But then you say, “I do not take too much margin, it is only a little sin I allow.” My dear Sir, you are quite in error as to your sincere obedience, for if this is what God requires, then hundreds of the vilest characters are as sincere as you are! But I do not believe you are sincere. If you were sincere, you would obey what God says—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” It strikes me your sincere obedience is a sincere delusion and such you will find it! “Oh,” you say, “I believe that after all we have done, we must go to Jesus Christ and we must say, ‘Lord, there is a great deficiency here, will You make it up?’” I have heard of weighing witches against the parish Bible and if they were found heavier, they were declared to be innocent. But to put the witch and the Bible in the same scale is a new idea! Why, Christ will not get in the scale with such a conceited fool as you are! You wish Christ to be a make-weight? He is much obliged to you for the compliment, but He will accept no such menial service! “Oh,” you say, “He shall *assist* me in the

matter of salvation.” Yes, I know that would please you. But Christ is a very different kind of Savior. He has a propensity, when He does a thing, to do it all. You may think it strange, but He never likes any assistance. When He made the world, He did not ask the angel Gabriel so much as to cool the molten matter with his wings— but He did it entirely Himself! So it is in salvation—He says, “My Glory I will not give to another.”

And I beg to remind you, as you profess to go to Christ and have a little share in the business of salvation, yourself, that there is a passage in the Scriptures which is *appropriate to you* and which you may masticate at your leisure—“And if by Grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it is of works, then is it no more Grace, otherwise work is no more work.” For if you mix the two together, you spoil them both! Go home, Sir and make yourself a mixture with fire and water! Endeavor to keep in your house a lion and a lamb—and when you have succeeded in doing these—tell me that you have made works and Grace agree, and I will tell you, even then, you have told me a lie! For the two things are so essentially opposite, it cannot be done! Whoever among you will cast all his good works away and will come to Jesus, with this—“Nothing, *nothing*, NOTHING—

**‘Nothing in my hands I bring
Simply to the Cross I cling.’ ”**

Christ will give you good works enough! His Spirit will work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure and will make you holy and perfect. But if you have endeavored to get holiness before Christ, you have begun at the wrong end! You have sought the flower before you have the root, and are foolish for your pains!

Ishmaels, tremble before Him now! If others of you are Isaacs, may you always remember that you are children of the Promise. Stand fast. Be not entangled by the yoke of bondage, for you are not under the Law, but under Grace. Amen.

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

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

SALVATION BY FAITH AND THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT NO. 1228

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 11 1875,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith”
Galatians 5:5.***

IT may seem remarkable that Paul, who was once the strictest of Pharisees, should become the most ardent champion of the doctrines of Salvation by Grace and Justification by Faith. How large a portion of the New Testament is given up to his writings—and the most prominent subject in all that falls from his pen is righteousness by faith. Did not the Lord show great wisdom in selecting as the chief advocate of this Truth of God a man who knew the other side—who had worked diligently under the Law, who had practiced every ceremony, who was a Hebrew of the Hebrews—and had profited above many under the Jews' religion, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the fathers?

Paul would know, right well, the bondage of the old system, and having felt its iron enter into his soul, he would more highly prize the liberty with which Christ makes men free! He was also a man of great learning—he was at home in every part of the Old Testament and, consequently, the quotations which he makes from it are innumerable. He also understood the Rabbinical method of spiritualizing and used it against his old associates, turning the Old Testament allegories into a battery in defense of New Testament principles.

He knew how to take the story, as we have seen, of Hagar and Sarah, and to find in it an argument for the doctrine which he desired to defend. It was well that a man who had been, in spirit, a Pharisee and in education equal to the most learned of the Jewish doctors, should be engaged by the Spirit of God to defend the glorious principles of Salvation by Grace. Moreover, Paul was a man of very powerful mind. Has the Christian Church ever had in her midst a man whose arguments are so keen, so subtle, so profound and yet so clear? He dives to the very bottom of things, but he never darkens counsel by mysticism.

Like the eagle, he soared aloft and his piercing eyes did not fail him as he gazed on the sun. He was amazed by the Revelations he beheld, but he was not dazzled. He spoke some things hard to be understood, which the foolish have wrested to their destruction, but they had to do his teaching great violence before they could *pervert* it. His intimate acquaintance with Divine things and the logical conformation of his mind, combined with an immovable decision of character and a flaming ardor of soul, made him, in

the hands of God, the fittest conceivable instrument for the Divine purpose. He was wisely chosen and set for the defense of the Gospel.

But why, my Brothers and Sisters, such care in selecting an advocate whose previous education and formation of mind so well enabled him to do battle for the cause? Why was the choice so carefully made? Why such a display of Divine Wisdom? I reply, because this is the point which, above all others has been, is, and always will be, most assailed by the enemies of our holy religion. Justification by Faith is the Thermopylae of Christianity! It is there that the battle must be decided by hand-to-hand fight! If that narrow pass is once carried by the enemy, then the whole of our bulwarks may be stormed! But as long as that fort is held fast, the rest of the Truths of the Gospel will be maintained.

The Lord, therefore, sent this mighty man of valor, this Saul the Benjamite—head and shoulders taller than his fellows, of sound heart and decided purpose and devout spirit—to wage war with the adversaries of Free Grace. I have said that the Truth of God has always been assailed and is it not the case? It was the clouding of this light, the almost quenching of it, which occasioned the darkness of the medieval period! It was Luther's clear sight of this Truth and the astonishing thunders with which he uttered it, which brought about the Reformation!

And though there are other Truths of God of great importance—and we would not depreciate their value for a single moment—yet this one, whenever it has flashed forth with brilliance before the eyes of men, has always been the means of restoring evangelical doctrines and at the same time exercising a powerful influence over men's hearts and bringing much glory to the Savior. Despite this fact, or perhaps because of it, it is still resisted. And at the present day it is opposed as much as ever, for you hear, continually, the remark that the preaching up of salvation by immediate faith in Christ is very dangerous and opposed to the interests of morality. It is asserted that it cannot be supposed to make men any better and will only create in them a false confidence. They say it will add to other faults the pride and presumption which grow out of an assured security.

We continually hear such observations. The present revival has set all the owls hooting and you know their note—good works are in peril and virtue in jeopardy! However well meant, I believe that at the bottom of these wonderful objections you will discover the old Popery of reliance upon good works. Human nature always did kick against Salvation by Grace, alone, and it always will! Even professing Christians raise the same objection, but they word it cautiously. They say that the preaching up of Jesus Christ as saving men *immediately* upon their believing in Him ignores, too much, the work of the Holy Spirit. And they affirm that a great deal more ought to be said about the preparation of the heart, the humbling and abasing of the soul, the law work, the inward sense of need and so on.

There may be some truth in this as seen from a certain point, and I should be disposed to hear such criticisms patiently, but I fear that in not a few instances the remarks are suggested by a measure of departure

from the simplicity of the Gospel—the very essence of which lies in the words, “believe and live.” There is a danger of meaning, “salvation by works,” while we use the phrase, “the work of the Spirit.” Zeal for the inner life may only be a convenient method for covering up pure legalism. I will, therefore, assert it boldly that salvation by *feelings* is as unscriptural as salvation by works—and that Paul did not cry out against those who trusted in works with greater vehemence than he would, now, have called out against any who relied upon their terrors and convictions, or who imagined that their feelings, or their doings may be joined on to the finished work of Christ as a ground of trust. Jesus Christ, alone, is a complete and all-sufficient foundation for faith! It is by believing in Him that men are justified—and in no degree by anything else!

We shall use our text, this morning, with the view of dealing with that class of objections which are founded upon the work of the Holy Spirit. It would be a grievous fault in any preaching if it did not ascribe honor to the Holy Spirit, nor could we too severely rebuke any ministry which ignored His Divine working. But, on the other hand, it is no less a fault to misrepresent the Spirit’s work and set it up in a kind of competition with the work of the Lord Jesus! Faith is not opposed to the Spirit, but is the *child* of it—“We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”

Two things I shall try to do—may the Holy Spirit enable me—for on His mysterious teachings my mind relies for guidance into the Truth of God. First I shall labor to *declare the Christian’s hope*. Then, secondly, I shall endeavor to *show the relation of that hope to the Holy Spirit*.

I. Let me DECLARE THE CHRISTIAN’S HOPE. “We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” Concerning the Christian’s hope, let us notice, first, *its singularity*. The Jews had a hope founded upon their *descent*. “We have Abraham for our father,” they said. “We were free born, we were never in bondage to any man. The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we.” They looked down upon Gentiles as uncircumcised and despised them.

Brethren, we have no such hope! We do not expect to be saved by virtue of our parentage. We cannot boast of fleshly descent from Abraham. Neither do we rest upon the fact that we are, some of us, the children of godly parents and that from generation to generation saintly names occur in our pedigree. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and no more, however pure the flesh may be. The children of God are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God. Carnal descent leaves us heirs of wrath even as others. We have no belief in a pretended Abrahamic Covenant made with the seed of Believers according to the flesh. We have no reliance upon anything that comes to us by the way of the natural birth, for that would make us like that son of the bondwoman who was born after the flesh.

Those who glory in their birth may do so at their leisure—we have no sympathy with their glorying. Our hope is altogether distinct from the hope of the Jew. Neither have we any confidence in outward rites and

ceremonies. Paul has said, “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision,” and we hold that if you put any other rite in the place of circumcision the same statement is true. No infant baptism, no immersion, no mass, no sacrament, no confirmation, no *ceremony* of any kind can, in any measure or degree, be rested upon as the soul’s righteousness. What if the rites which we believe that God, Himself, had given were authenticated to us by a voice out of the excellent Glory? On those rites we dare not build, no, not for an instant!

No blood of bullocks or of goats after the old Law and no unbloody sacrifice of the mass after the modern legality of Popery can we rest upon! The beggarly elements of a visible external religion we have left behind as childish garments, unfit for men in Christ Jesus. No, Brothers and Sisters, we are wide as the poles asunder from all who rest upon outward forms and ceremonial religiousness! We hope to be saved, not because we attend a place of worship, nor because we have made a profession of religion, but because we have obtained righteousness by faith! We differ, also, from those who place reliance upon moral virtues and spiritual excellencies—and even from those who would have us found our hope upon certain Graces supposed to be the works of the Holy Spirit.

Had we been the most courageously honest. Had we been the most chastely pure. Had we never offended against the law of man in any respect whatever. If we could say with the Apostle, “as touching the law, blameless,” and if, like the young man in the Gospel narrative, we could say of the Commandments, “All these things have I kept from my youth up,” yet would we count our virtues and obedience to be but dross that we might win Christ and be found in Him, not having our own righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

We dare not hope to be acceptable with God because of anything good that is in us by nature, or may be infused into us by Grace. We are accepted in the Beloved and apart from Him we look not to be found acceptable. Even what the Holy Spirit works with us does not furnish us with any merit which we can plead, for it is a *gift* of Grace, and no part of our justifying righteousness. We rest upon Jesus Christ crucified and not upon our faith, our repentance, our prayers, our conquests of sin, our likeness to Christ! Right away from anything that comes *from* us or *to* us we look to Jesus, who is all our salvation, the Alpha and Omega, the Author and the Finisher of faith.

Our faith is singular, then, because it differs from that of the Jew who boasts in his carnal descent. It differs from that of the religionist, who rests upon outward forms, and that of the self-righteous man who depends upon his own works in whole or in part. These three forms of dependence we renounce from the very depth of our hearts! And any other form of dependence upon anything that can be done by man is equally detestable to us. We know that if we are saved it must be upon quite another ground than that of the merit of works of any sort or kind. “We wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”

Secondly, consider *the specialty* of our hope. Taking our text in connection with the 4th verse, we remark that our hope is in Divine Grace alone. According to Paul, any man who tries to be justified by the Law has altogether given up Salvation by Grace—therefore we trust for righteousness in Christ, alone, and look entirely to the free mercy of God. If I ever get to Heaven it will be in no measure because I deserve to be there, but because God willed that I should enter Glory by His abounding Grace! No man has any claim upon God whatever! If God gives man what he may claim in justice, He will award him eternal destruction from the glory of His power—that is all man has a right to—he is an undeserving, ill-deserving, Hell-deserving sinner!

If any good thing, therefore, comes to us, it must be entirely on the ground of goodness freely given to the undeserving. It is pardon extended to the guilty. It is infinite compassion looking upon our misery and determining to reveal itself in a free gift. It is not to be won by effort—not to be deserved nor purchased—but bestowed solely because He “will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion.” Our hope stands on pure Grace, Sovereign Grace, Grace unqualified! God blesses us because *He* is good, not because we are! God saves us because He is gracious, not because He sees any Grace inherent in us! He blesses as according to His great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in trespasses and sins. And therefore Grace must ever be the subject of our praise! We can never endure the preaching of any other confidence, for we know it to be a delusion and a snare.

Thirdly, consider *the ground* of our hope. A groundless hope is a retched thing. But *our* hope has a firm foundation. It is founded upon right and is called, “the hope of righteousness by faith.” Righteousness is a solid basis for hope. If we had a hope which disturbed or destroyed or diminished the luster of the Righteousness of God, the sooner we were rid of it the better. But we need not detract in any degree from the severity of Divine Justice in order to sustain our hope. We expect to be saved by an act of Justice as well as by a deed of Mercy. A strong expression to use—and we use it advisedly. We reckon that by faith we are saved by a method which as much vindicates the Justice of God as if He had cast us into Hell—a plan by which the Divine Righteousness is manifested, rather than obscured.

Observe that our hope is the hope, “of righteousness.” That is to say, a hope arising out of the fact that we are righteous and therefore God will treat us as such. “Strange hope,” says one, “for we are guilty.” That we admit with deepest shame and we disown all reliance upon our *own* righteousness which we know to be but filthy rags. But still, we have a glorious hope based upon the fact that we are, at this moment, actually righteous before God! By *faith* we are as righteous as if we had never sinned! Those eyes which can discern the slightest flaw, gaze upon us and discern our inmost thoughts—but they discover no flaw in our righteousness! Like burning suns they search us through and through, but our righteousness

endures the search and comes forth unscathed from the heat of that consuming fire.

This day, having believed in Jesus Christ, “there is therefore now no condemnation to us.” “Being justified by faith we have peace through Jesus Christ our Lord.” We have a righteousness which we dare present before God, for it is *perfect!* In it there is no omission and no excess. We are righteous before God and without fault before His Throne. Bold words, but not bolder than the Apostle used when he said, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather that is risen again.”

Now, Brothers and Sisters, if we have a hope founded upon righteousness it is well sustained, for where Justice lends its aid to bless, we are sure that all the other Divine attributes will co-operate! But is it, indeed, the fact that we are righteous? According to Holy Scripture it is undoubtedly so! We are not righteous in *ourselves*. Have we not, with detestation, flung away that thought? But we know that it is written, “To him that works not, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

Even David, also, describes the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” When we put our trust in Christ Jesus, His blood cleanses us from all sin! Does Divine Perfection need us to be more clean than that? Cleansed from all sin! When we trust in Jesus Christ, He is made of God unto us righteousness—do we require a more perfect and glorious righteousness? Our Redeemer finished transgression and made an end of sin! What remains of that of which an end is made? What more do we need than *everlasting* righteousness? What more does God, Himself, require? Don’t you know, Beloved, how the Lord, Himself, has said concerning His Church—“This is the name with which she shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness”?

I said that clothed in the Righteousness of Christ we are as accepted as if we had never sinned. I correct myself—had we never sinned we could only have stood in the righteousness of man. But this day, by faith, we stand in the Righteousness of God, Himself! The works and the dying of our Lord Jesus Christ make up, for us, a wedding dress more glorious than human merit could have spun, even if unfallen Adam had been the spinner!—

**“With my Surety’s vesture on,
Holy as the Holy One.”**

Here is the footing of our hope, then, that we are righteous in the Righteousness of Christ, accepted in the Beloved, complete in Him and perfect in Christ Jesus. This righteousness we have not obtained by any process which has occupied a great deal of time and exhibited our ability and tried our strength—it is the righteousness of *faith*. We have *believed* and we are righteous! “Strange doctrine,” says one. Not at all! It is the way by which Abraham became righteous, for it is written, “Abraham *believed* God and

it was counted unto him for righteousness.” Along this path all the ancient saints traveled and sang, “Surely in the Lord Jehovah have we righteousness and strength.” This is the only possible way to righteousness and blessed is the man who follows it and knows that by faith in the great substitutionary Sacrifice he is righteous before God!

We will now dwell a minute upon *the substance of this hope*. Suppose you were all perfectly righteous—what would you expect from God? You cannot expect more, at any rate, than we do who have the righteousness of faith. We expect to die triumphantly, glorying in our exalted Head! We expect, as soon as our breath has left our body, to be with Him where He is, that we may behold His Glory! We expect to sit at the right hand of God, even the Father—because Christ is there. We expect to rise again at the blast of the archangel’s trumpet, when the Lord, who is our Righteousness, shall descend upon the earth! We expect, then, to be manifested because He will be manifested, for, “it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like He; for we shall see Him as He is.”

We expect to share in all the glories of His millennial reign and when comes the end and He delivers up the kingdom to the Father, we expect to be there and forever in the perfection of bliss and Glory to dwell with Him, always singing, “Worthy is the Lamb” We will never sing, “Worthy am I,” but always say, “We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” We will never claim that our robes were not defiled, or that we cleansed them ourselves. We expect this and we expect it because we are righteous! Do you see this? No man has a right to expect a reward if he has not a righteousness to which it is due—but lo, He who is All in All to us, our Covenant Head, deserves the reward—and He has transferred that reward to us who are members of His body. And so are one with Him! We wait for the hope of righteousness by faith!

Once more upon this point, notice *the posture which our hope takes up*. We are *waiting* for this hope—waiting. Would it not have been better to have said, “We are *working*”? No, it would have spoiled the sense altogether. To complete the foundation of our hope of righteousness by faith we have nothing more to *do* except to wait for the reward of what is done! To the garment which covers us we dare not think of adding a single thread. Why should we? To the acceptance in which we stand before God we cannot hope to add a single jewel. Why attempt it? Has not Jesus said, “It is finished”?

As far as justifying righteousness is concerned, we are as righteous as we shall be when robed in light! We shall cast our crowns before the Throne of God. We are at rest, waiting in peace. It is true we are working for other reasons and other purposes, but as far as the righteousness of faith is concerned we are waiting, not working. Waiting—that is the posture of confidence! We are not hurrying, bustling and running about in anxiety, but we are at rest, knowing that the reward will come. As the workman, when his six days’ work is over, goes up to his master’s pay table and waits for his wages, we believe that the meritorious work by which

Heaven is procured for us is all done. And therefore we are waiting in the name of Jesus to take the reward which as a matter of justice is due to Him and has been, by His dying testament, transferred to us.

Waiting implies continuance. The Galatians wanted to be more sure than faith could make them and so they ran off to get circumcised and observed days, weeks, months and all sorts of carnal ordinances. But the Apostle says, "We, through the Spirit, *wait*." We ask no touch of priests, or charm of magic rites! We are thoroughly furnished in our blessed Lord and are content to abide in Him. Our faith is not for today and tomorrow only, but for time and eternity! We are rooted and grounded in faith in Christ—

***"All that remains for me
Is but to love and sing,
And wait until the angels come
To bear me to their King."***

"I thought it was a race," says one, "a combat." Oh, yes, we will tell you about that another time, but that has nothing to do with our *righteousness*, nothing to do with the ground of our acceptance before God—and that is what we are speaking about just now. As far as that is concerned, "It is finished," sounded from the tree of Calvary and that, "It is finished," brings the righteous to perfect peace—and there they sit and wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

I have said enough upon the first point and must hasten to the second.

II. THE RELATION OF THIS MATTER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT. We may be quite sure that the doctrine of Salvation by Faith in Jesus Christ cannot be opposed to the work of the Spirit of God, for never, without blasphemy, can we imagine anything like a division in the purposes and works of the sacred Persons of the adorable Trinity. The will of the Father, the will of the Son and the will of the Spirit must be one! It is a perverse forgetfulness of the Unity of the Godhead to suppose otherwise. That which glorifies Jesus cannot dishonor the Holy Spirit—we may be quite sure of that.

But observe, Brothers and Sisters, it is the Spirit's work to destroy the pride of man. All flesh is grass and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of grass. The grass withers because the Spirit of the Lord blows upon it. All the vaunted comeliness of the natural man is to be destroyed by the Holy Spirit—and does not the doctrine of Righteousness by Faith wither up the glory of man? What can do it more effectually? I have seen the proud Pharisee leer with a scornful hatred when he has heard this doctrine. "What?" he cries, "After all I have done for years, am I to come to Christ just as if I had been a thief or a harlot and be saved by *charity*?"

He cannot bear it! He will not have it! Now the Spirit of God designs to stain the pride of all glorying and to bring into contempt all the excellency of the earth—and this doctrine is the appropriate instrument for His work and is, therefore, consistent with the mind of the Spirit. Another office of the Holy Spirit is to exalt Christ. "He shall glorify Me," said Jesus. And does not this doctrine glorify Jesus, since it makes Him the head and front, the All in All of a sinner's hope by informing him that nothing but

faith in Jesus will save him? Is not this according to the mind of the Spirit?

O Beloved, the Holy Spirit is no rival to the Redeemer, but a glorious co-worker, delighting to honor the Son! We know, Beloved, that the Spirit of God works under the economy of Grace, only. The Apostle says, "Received you the Spirit by the works of the Law?" Nobody ever received the Spirit by his own works, or as a matter of merit. Since, then, the Spirit only comes to men in connection with the great principle of Grace, and Justification by Faith is the essential doctrine of Grace, it must be perfectly consistent with His mind! And you may be sure of this, poor Sinner, that there is no deep, mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit which can, if rightly understood, stand in conflict with the Gospel announcements that, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." And, "Whoever believes in Him is not condemned." And, "Whoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." Salvation by Grace through faith and the operations of the Holy Spirit must be consistent!

Carefully note that this righteousness by faith must be consistent with the work of the Spirit because the faith which brings this righteousness is *never exercised by any but those who are born of the Spirit*. The flesh relies upon works. It is a somewhat remarkable circumstance, perhaps, but so it is, that sinful flesh, which is barren of all real excellence, always clings to *merit*. The natural man persists in the belief that he has something to do and yet he can do nothing! He grasps with all his might the sword which cuts him. You cannot get him to see that—

***"Till to Jesus Christ you cling
By a simple faith,
'Doing' is a deadly thing
'Doing' ends in death."***

He finds fault with it. He cannot bear it. Of course he cannot—Ishmael is the bondwoman's son and has the nature of his mother in him. That which is born of the Spirit instinctively clutches the promise, even as Isaac did, for Isaac knew that he had no right to the inheritance except according to the promise, for, according to the flesh, Ishmael was the first born.

The new-born life in every man runs instinctively to Grace and lives by faith! You shall never find simple faith in Jesus exercised by any life except the life that is born of Divine Seed in the new birth. Here, then, simple faith and the Holy Spirit are related, for the new heart which the Spirit creates is the only soil in which faith will grow.

Again, faith for righteousness is *based on the testimony of the Holy Spirit*. My Brothers and Sisters, why do we believe that we are justified by faith in Jesus Christ? On the ground that the Spirit, in the Holy Scripture, has borne witness that it is so! The witness which God gave concerning His Son is the basis for our belief! We accept the witness of the Holy Spirit as contained in these pages. The Bible cannot be contrary to the mind of the Spirit because it is inspired by the Spirit! So you may rest certain that faith in Jesus Christ as the ground of salvation cannot be opposed to the

Spirit's work, because that faith is based upon the Spirit's own testimony concerning Christ!

Moreover, *simple faith is always the work of the Spirit*. No man did ever believe in Jesus Christ for righteousness unless the Spirit of God led him to it. He can never be brought to it unless the Holy Spirit shall lead him there. Faith is as much the gift of God as Jesus Christ, Himself! Nature never did produce a grain of *saving* faith and it never will. When a man has believed, *he obtains a great increase to his faith in Jesus by the work of the Spirit*. The Spirit never takes a man off from Jesus Christ as he grows in Grace, but He establishes him in his confidence in the Righteousness of Christ. The witness of the Spirit in us is a testimony to the faith that Jesus is the Propitiation for sin. He never leads us to rest upon the work within, but points us always to Jesus.

When He works in us mightily, our faith becomes even more simple and childlike. We sink in our own esteem and rise higher in confidence in Jesus. The Holy Spirit could not be supposed to do this if salvation by faith were an imperfect matter, or dangerous, or dishonoring to Himself! It is *by the Spirit that we continue to exercise faith*. Notice my text. I will quote it emphatically—"We, *through the Spirit*, wait for the righteousness by faith." It is not because of any other influence but the influence of the *Spirit* that we come to rest—and continue to rest and wait while we rest—for the hope of the righteousness by faith! The Spirit of God works it all and, therefore, He is not in conflict with it. It is that which He plants, waters, fosters and brings to perfection—and He cannot but love it. Ridiculous, then, absurdly ridiculous, is the attempt to make out that the preaching of Justification by Faith is derogatory to the ministry and deity of the Holy Spirit!

Let us draw an inference or two before we close. From this subject the inference is that whoever has this hope of righteousness by faith has the Spirit of God. If your hope, Beloved, is based upon your being righteous through faith in Jesus Christ, you have been born again and renewed in heart by the Holy Spirit! Many are puzzled and say, "I wish I knew I had the Spirit." They fancy that the Spirit of God would cause some singular excitement in them—very different from quiet penitence and humble trust. I have even known them suppose that it would cause some very astounding swooning, palpitations, and I know not what besides! The best evidence of your having the Spirit of God is your depending upon Christ as a little child depends upon its mother!

Others may bring other evidence to prove that they are born from above—let them bring the evidence and be thankful that they can bring it. But if you have no other evidence but this, "Jesus Christ is my sole reliance and on Him do I depend," that is enough! All the rest will follow in due course. He that believes has the Holy Spirit in himself. He that believes in Him is not condemned.

Draw a second inference. Wherever there is any *other* hope, or a hope based upon anything else but this, the Spirit of God is *not* present. There may be much talk about Him, but the Spirit Himself is not there, for

“other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ the Righteous.” The Spirit will not bear witness to man’s home-born presumptuous hopes! He bears witness only to the finished work of Jesus Christ! If you are trusting that you have the Spirit, but are building upon sacraments, works, orthodoxies, feelings, or anything *but* Jesus Christ, you have not the Spirit of God, for the Spirit of God never taught a man to place his house upon such sandy foundations.

Beloved Friend, you may, therefore, answer inquiries about what is within so far as they cause you distress, by turning your eyes to Jesus, the Lord, our Righteousness. “Look to Me,” says Jesus, “and be you saved.” Look away from self to God’s appointed Propitiation! On yonder shameful tree hangs all your trust! Look up to Jesus upon His Father’s Throne, for there dwells your hope!

One further thought I want to leave upon every mind. Nothing should make us speak with bated breath when we are lifting up Christ crucified before the eyes of sinful men. There is no doctrine, there is no experience, there is no decree of the Father, there is no influence of the Spirit which needs, for a moment, make us hesitate when we are extolling the Lord Jesus as an All-Sufficient Savior for the very chief of sinners. I stand here, this morning, to solemnly assert before God that I have not a shadow of a hope of seeing His face with acceptance except that which lies in the fact that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners!

In Him I do unfeignedly trust, and in Him alone. What if I have preached the Gospel these 25 years? What if I have brought souls to Jesus, not by the hundreds but by the thousands through the Divine blessing? What if I have been the means of founding and fostering works of usefulness on the right hand and on the left? Truly, if these things were to be gloried in we might glory before men! But far from it! We ascribe them all to the Lord’s Grace and before His Presence we lie in the dust. We have no hope because of our works! No, nor a *shadow* of hope! We have no reliance upon our Graces! No, nor a ghost of a reliance upon them!

Jesus Christ stood in my place! I, a guilty sinner, have taken shelter by *faith* which He has *given* me! Beneath His wings I hide myself in Him. *There* is my hope and that is the hope of every true Believer here—

***“Not what these hands have done
Can save this guilty soul.
Not what this toiling flesh has borne
Can make my spirit whole.
Not what I feel or do
Can give me peace with God.
Not all my prayers and sighs and tears,
Can bear my awful load.
Your work alone, O Christ,
Can ease this weight of sin.
Your blood alone, O Lamb of God,
Can give me peace within.”***

Now we preach the same hope to the ungodly! Hear what God’s Word says to you! You have broken His Laws and deserve His wrath! He might

justly sweep you down to Hell but behold, He addresses you in tones of Divine Grace! You have no claim upon Him. You have no right to expect mercy at His hands because of anything in you that could move Him to pity. But in the plenitude of His Grace He has set forth Christ to be a Propitiation for your sins. And the Apostle adds, “And not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.” We preach Jesus Christ unto you this morning and say in His own Words, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.”

Come to Christ and trust in Him, and you shall be reconciled to God—

***“Your sins shall vanish quite away,
Though black as Hell before.
Shall be dissolved beneath the sea
And shall be found no more.”***

Whoever you may be and in whatever condition of heart you may be—it doesn't matter if you have seven devils in you, or if you are as vile as Lucifer, himself, in rebellion against God—if you believe in the great atoning Sacrifice you shall have instantaneous pardon and acceptance in the Beloved! O, hold not out against such free and boundless love! “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” “Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Oh, yield, Man! What are your works but sin and death? What are your boasted performances, your virtues and your excellencies? All rottenness in the sight of the heart-searching God! Quit your refuges of lies, I pray you! Quit them now, lest the avalanche of Divine Wrath overwhelms both you and your refuges—

***“Come, guilty souls, and flee away,
Like doves to Jesus' wounds!
This is the accepted Gospel day,
Wherein free Grace abounds.”***

Trust His Son Jesus! It is His *command* to you! In other words, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved,” for, “he that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” God save us, for Christ's sake. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians 4, 5:1-6.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—202, 531, 533.***

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AN OBJECTION AND AN ANSWER

NO. 1280

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

*“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything,
nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love.”*
Galatians 5:6.

THE most prominent doctrine in Paul’s teaching was that of Justification by Faith. He taught it so very plainly, so very boldly—I had almost said so very baldly—that it seemed necessary to the Holy Spirit that James should bear testimony to the necessity of holiness as the result of faith. Hence the Epistle of James is put into the sacred canon lest any should wrest and twist the language of Paul from its proper meaning. His great teaching—anybody can see this with half an eye—the great teaching of Paul is that we are saved by the Grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. This doctrine has always been taught in the Church of God and it is, as Luther well put it, the standing or falling article—the test of a standing or a falling Church.

A Church which holds this doctrine in its integrity, notwithstanding many errors, is still a Church of Christ, but the church which denies this, whatever else it may hold, is against Christ, and is not a Church of Christ at all. The great Reformation, for which we so often bless God, was brought about by this light. The Truth of God, which had been hidden in darkness, was held forth in the preaching and teaching of Protestant Reformers. For a long time after those eminent men had departed, the testimony of all the Protestant Churches to Justification by Faith was clear and unwavering. You can scarcely read a sermon of any of the immediate successors of the Reformers, but you will find it filled with the doctrine that man is justified through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, by faith in Him and *not* by the works of the Law.

It was the same testimony which produced the revival in the last century, when Whitfield and Wesley awoke the slumbering masses of our population as they went forth through every town and hamlet preaching the Gospel. Whatever difference there might have been between those eminent Evangelists and their followers, they did not differ at all upon this point, that men are saved by believing in Jesus Christ—by resting upon the Atonement once offered for human sin upon the bloody tree of Calvary. And I rejoice, dear Friends, that this doctrine was never more clearly preached than now. As the time of the singing of birds has come and the Churches are waking up and expecting a blessed springtide, I thank God that there is this sign of its being a truthful work! Among other gracious signs it is conspicuous that Jesus Christ is preached and that faith in Him is declared to be of paramount importance.

That it is so is evident from the opposition which has been aroused! I can hear the voice of the old growler—he is a gentleman that never has been absent when the banner of Christ has been unfurled. He is beginning, again, to whine and snarl, as he always did, and to bark at this doctrine, in particular, as not according to holiness, subversive of morality and mischievous in all its tendencies! I shall not attempt to stop his growling. His temper tells its own tale. He and his cronies do but display their natural disposition. If dogs delight to bark and bite, Dr. Watts has taught us to let them do so, “for ‘tis their nature, too.”

I am not thinking of the cynical skeptic just now—my aim is to meet the sincere seeker. This objection takes the form of a difficulty in the minds of some who are anxious to find salvation. They say to themselves, “Can it be so? Is it possible that by simply *believing* on Christ, Himself, my soul can be saved? I can comprehend that this might be made a condition upon which God should pardon me, but that is not all I need. I need a new heart. I need a right spirit. It would be of little use for me merely to have my past sins forgiven. I need to become a better man. The salvation that I need is salvation from my sins, from temptations in the world and from the uprisings of my own naturally depraved heart. If I cannot get that, the mere pardon of sin is a very small business. I can understand, however, that God would pardon me upon my believing in Jesus. What I need to know is what effect my believing in Jesus will have upon *me*, personally—what change would accrue to my nature as the result of my believing.”

It is about that I want to talk—faith which works—faith which works! And I want to show something about how it works. It works “by love.” To begin, then, I shall first attempt to answer the enquiry, “What is the faith which saves the soul?” And I venture to answer the question, first, by saying that it does not differ as a mental act from any other kind of believing. I fully admit that there is much about faith that is mysterious and of that I may speak presently. But if any man asked me what the act of believing is, I should not hesitate to reply, “I believe God just the same as I believe anybody else—believe Him as I believe my father, as I believe my mother, as I believe my wife. It is the same mind which believes and it is the same act of the mind that comes into operation. It is a rational assent. Faith is to believe what God says, to take it to be true, real, a matter of fact.”

Now, when I believe what a man tells me, I do not say to myself, “Well, that is now a piece of my creed,” and so put it on the shelf and have done with it. A man tells me, for instance, in the middle of the night, that my house is on fire. You know what I should do. You know what *you* would do. You know what any sane man would do! But when you are told in God’s Word that you are in danger of the wrath to come, do you believe what you read? No, you do not, or you would not be so cool as you now are. Your imminent peril would prompt instant action. I would to God that what men call faith in a religious point of view were as prompt in its proceedings as the common acts of faith which they exercise towards their fellow men!

The fact is, the creed we profess comes often far—very far—short of the credit we give to our fellow creatures about the common affairs of life. Do you want to be saved? Believe God as you would believe the one that told you that your house was on fire! Believe God as you would believe your friend—believe Him actively, really, truly—for that is faith. God tells you that you have transgressed against Him, but that He wills not your death—that He has, therefore, sent His Son into the world to suffer in the place of sinners and that if you rely upon His Son you shall have immediate forgiveness and shall be saved. Believe that message! Believe it to be true! You ought to believe it, for God cannot lie.

It is an indisputable fact that whatever God says, stands good. It is not contingent upon anything but His own will and He is without variableness or shadow of turning. What He says He means. Believe Him, then, whom you have not seen, as you would believe anyone whom you see daily. Give credit to the Word He has written as you would credit any word that is spoken to you. And if you do so believe, mark you, your faith will then resolve itself into an act of reliance. If I believe a man, when I am in trouble, and he says, “Now, Sir, leave that with me I will get you through”—I rely upon him to do it. I leave the matter in his hands and go my way.

This is the very core of saving faith. It is to say, “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. I am a sinner. I will trust Him to save me. He, on the Cross, made expiation for me and I am at peace. My heart rests on the Atonement which He has offered.” It is dependence, reliance—or as the old Puritans used to say, “recumbency”—leaning upon a Friend because I have ceased to rely on myself. If He takes the burden, I stand aloof. His the weight, mine the relief, free from pressure, free from anxiety. That is faith, easy, artless faith—self-renouncing, God-honoring faith! It is unequivocal faith—faith taken in the simple common acceptance of the word, of the act, of the feeling. The very core, marrow, essence, soul of faith is reliance upon Jesus Christ, once offered for human sin, and now gone, covered with Glory, up to the right hand of God to represent sinners within the veil!

And this reliance, wherever it is true, may also be described as an acceptance of what God has set forth as a propitiation for sin. God has given His Son. Let me put it in other words. God Himself, because He could not tarnish His justice, has descended to earth and taken up our Nature—He has worn the clay garb of our humanity. God Himself has suffered, has died upon the Cross as if He had been guilty. The Judge has taken the culprit’s place and borne the vengeance due to the offender. He says, “Will you accept My Substitution? Shall it be so? Are you willing that I should be in your place, that you may be in Mine?”

Sinner, I ask you, now—and let your *heart* reply—are you willing that the scourging of Christ should be in the place of your being scourged? Are you agreeable that by His stripes you may be healed? Are you willing that His blood should be shed instead of your blood—His death instead of your eternal death? You say—

***“My faith does lay her hand
On that dear head of Yours,***

While like a penitent I stand***And here confess my sin.***

You Say, "I am all too glad to take this Substitute, this blessed Substitute and to accept God's way of salvation." Very well! You are saved then and there! Believing God's testimony, relying on God's Son, accepting God's way of salvation—that is the faith that saves the soul!

That is not faith which says, "I am saved because I believe I am." That may be a lie. It is not a faith that says, "I feel so happy and, therefore, I am saved." There are a great many that feel very happy, indeed, that will be lost. But it is a faith that goes upon principles, upon the Truths of God written in Scripture—not upon *excitement* nor upon *feelings*. God gives Christ to save men and Christ saves all who trust Him. I trust Him, therefore He saves me. I believe *God gave me* that trust, therefore I give all the glory to God! Having no works to boast of, I confess that I am saved through what Jesus did on my behalf. That is my first direction for your first dilemma.

I want to answer a few objections against this being the way of salvation. Let me ask you, however, what on earth is the good of your objecting? If God has made this to be the way of salvation, your best plan is to accept it. What good will your objections do? "Can I not do as I will with My own?" would be God's response to your impertinence! As surely as this Book is God's Word, so surely are we taught there that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ. "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved: he that believes not shall be damned." Now it is no use your kicking against it. There it stands and it will not be altered for anyone.

Were this city starving and a man of wealth were to bring in bread and distribute it, any regulations he chose to make for the distribution, he surely would have a right to enforce! Nobody ought to quibble at it. God has made and fixed this fast and firm— there is no other salvation. "There is no other name given under Heaven among men whereby we must be saved." Man, do not object! We sometimes say to boys who go out to business and do not like the work, "It is no use quarrelling with your bread and butter." Surely the available supply of actual necessities ought to silence every murmur. What profit, I pray, Sir, can you expect to come of quibbling at God's Covenant, or challenging the propriety of His salvation which He has prepared before the face of all people?

God has fixed it! He will not alter the thing that has gone out of His mouth. Leave your objections for something else! Write to the newspapers, if you please, about some public grievance, but to impugn with indignation, or bemoan with bitter complaints, God's way of salvation must be the most unprofitable, not to say the most impertinent and wicked way of wasting time! It is alleged that when we tell men to believe in Jesus and they will be saved, they will go on in sin—they will despise good works—they will, perhaps, grow immoral! The answer is this. *Do they? Do they?* I quoted a very homely proverb just now. I will quote another quite as homely. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." And truly the proof of the doctrine is in the practical results.

Do the people that believe in Jesus Christ for salvation, renouncing all trust in their good works, plunge deeper into sin and make this a reason for licentiousness? Answer honestly. Turn to the pages of history and see, on a large scale, the aspect of society. What do you think of the cavaliers of King Charles's day? They certainly were not Believers in justification by faith! I do not know, exactly, what they *did* believe in. But I suppose had there been a preacher of good works and the whole duty of man who adorned moral essays with graceful language, sparkling wit and aphorisms from heathen authors, these gallant gentlemen would have listened to the court preacher with a listless satisfaction and gone home to their ladies to tell what a profitable sermon they had heard.

But where do you look for social virtue among men, holy living before God and noble sacrifices for the public good? Why, among your Puritans! Among the rough men that would do anything *but* sin, who feared no man's face in the day of battle and who feared God in the sanctities of their private chambers and the secret recesses of their own hearts! Around Cromwell's campfires at night there may be many disputes about doctrines but never a dispute about this question—that we are justified by faith in Jesus Christ! All the world knows that the men who cry up good works have not got any stock in hand, or even a *sample* to show—while those who preach up faith in Jesus Christ are, themselves, the very people whose biographies will bear to be written and who exhibit the very works which this doctrine is supposed to destroy!

Judge, therefore, by facts! But if the doctrine of faith is such a wonderfully easy way of salvation and when it is accepted men just go on as they did before, why do not all the licentious people receive it? Why do you not hear in the theater and the saloon the song sung—

***“I do believe—I will believe—
That Jesus died for me”?***

If Free Grace is such a potent factor in the merchandise of free living, why not introduce it more freely among your harlots? Why does it not find favor among the gay and giddy, the fast and frivolous? Do men do that? No! Because the world knows that our faith will not blend with their filth! If any man among you would like to come up here and say, “I, for one, believe in Jesus Christ and yet I lead a licentious life,” he would become known as a hypocrite among the sensuous and the Sybarites! It is all very well to bribe false witnesses who say that it leads to that. You know it does not. The licentious are the last persons to talk about the Atonement of Jesus Christ!

Yet if it were so, if the expiation of Christ pleased in ever so small a degree, the Epicurean of the world, it would surely be one of the doctrines which the self-indulgent would seize upon with the greatest eagerness. No, Sir, the man that lives in vice and violates every precept of the Decalogue is just the man to make conscience of going on Good Friday to his church—there he takes the sacrament and believes that he, somehow or other, gets absolution! At our Agricultural Hall services and noonday Prayer Meetings they will sneer because, they say, it is encouraging hypocrisy instead of putting down immorality, and so on. Yes, we know

where the talk comes from—from men who lack a morality of their own! If they were to look at their true lives it would suffice.

Again, suppose we were to change the system of preaching and preach that men were to be saved by good works—entirely by what they did. You say, “That would set them working!” Perhaps it would, or perhaps it would not—most likely the latter, for as a general rule it never has produced much result. Dr. Chalmers’ experience was that he preached morality till he had not any moral people left—and he did not see anybody converted to Jesus Christ. I believe you may preach against sin, but if you do not, at the same time, proclaim the way of salvation, you prevent shame and leave men accusing one another and excusing themselves. Your model sermons would become monstrous travesties of honesty! In plain English, you would be preaching up *selfishness*.

You say to these people, “Do this, that you may be saved.” What is, then, to be the objective of their life? *Self*-salvation. That is the one thing they are to live for—that they may somehow *merit* Heaven. But it is a doctrine that will pay extremely well! If you happen to be a priest and want something that will really pay you for your services, I do not know anything better than to tell them that they will get to Heaven by their benevolent actions, their deeds of charity and *especially* their alms to the church! And, of course, you need to remind them that in their departing moments it will be *extremely useful* to leave a large sum of money for the benefit of the church and much to the advantage of their souls! Oh, it is an excellent plan of picking their pockets!

If men give in that way, they are giving to God, they say. It is a bald-faced lie! They are giving to *themselves*—seeking their own salvation. It is a pure system of selfishness from beginning to end and he that lives to save himself is living with a mean purpose! I wonder how he can look himself in the face, and say, “God made me, and yet I am not living to His glory, but I am living to save myself.” I say, Sir, that if your system could be worked out and produce the best possible effect that could come of it, it would only be to reduce mankind into a race of self-seeking men, seeking, indeed, self in a very fine garb, but still seeking self.

“How about faith?” you say. Why, faith in Jesus Christ saves us from self! We believe in Him and we are saved from that day, for we live not for *self*-salvation. We are saved and now, out of love to Him who saved us, we live unto His praise and glory, this being our grand motive—that we might glorify Him, not seeking a reward, but, “As you have loved me, O ever loving Lord, so would I love You!” This is something better than selfishness. This is, in fact, salvation from self, which is no mean part of salvation from our sins. Push the matter still closer home. I would like to ask another question. You say that to tell a big evil sinner that God forgives him on the spot when he believes in Jesus is to encourage him in sin.

Come, then, and defend your hypothesis! Suppose that the man is led to believe that God has forgiven him, what will be the effect upon him? Think a little. Have you never heard of the effect of kindness upon men? Do you not believe in it? Some men are all for whips and chains. Flog them! Give them a term of penal servitude! Exile them! That is the law and

it is supposed to be capable of working a wonderful reformation in their characters. But have you never heard of the effect of *kindness*? I will tell you a story of a Quaker. Isaac Hopper was in the streets of Philadelphia and he heard a waiter swearing awfully. This waiter waited upon him in a hotel and he swore there.

“Well,” said Hopper, “I must stop this man’s swearing.” So he brought him up, (it was many years ago), before the Philadelphian court, which then had a law that anybody who cursed God should be fined. So Cain got fined. Some years afterwards Hopper was in Philadelphia and he saw Cain, not in the white cravat of the waiter, but in rags. He had evidently been living a life of drunkenness. Now Hopper had desired this man’s good, so he said to the man, “Cain, you have not much improved since I saw you last.”

No, he had not and he had some bad ways. Hopper asked him if he did not remember when he had him brought before the Philadelphian court and fined for using bad language. Remember it?! He certainly did remember it! He should never forget the nasty trick that the Quaker had played on him. “Now,” Hopper said, “Friend Cain, I meant your good. I really did desire your good.” Cain said, “And I cursed at you dreadfully, afterwards.” So Hopper put his hand into his pocket with all the calculation of business and he said, “Friend Cain, you were fined so much and the interest upon it since then is so much. I can assure you I only meant your good and now I give you this back.”

Then he proceeded to speak to him very kindly till big tears stood in Cain’s eyes. And Cain said, “After all, Mr. Hopper, there is something better in the world than I thought there was.” And it was the means of reclaiming the man. The fining did not do him good, as we generally believe it does on those of whom we speak as “worthless characters.” Kindness—that’s what set him right! A more remarkable case was that of Penel, the master of the lunatic asylum in Paris, in the days of the Convention. There were hundreds of people chained to the floor and Penel sued the Convention that they would allow him to set them loose.

He proposed to let loose fifty furious savages first. Caithon, the president, said, “I will come down tomorrow and see these creatures. And if you are concealing any of the enemies of the republic, death to you at the guillotine.” And when Caithon went down they howled at him, like so many wild beasts, and he said, “I think you are maddest of all of them, but you may do as you like, though I am sure you will be the victim of it.” There was one English captain in the house who had been chained there 40 years—chained down to the ground because he had got one of his hands loose and had killed a keeper—a savage, morose beast of the worst kind that could be.

Penel went to him and he said, “Captain, if I set you free will you act like a rational being?” “Ah, that I would,” said the man, “but you are all afraid of me—all of you.” “No, I am not,” said Penel, “I have got these men here who could manage you very well, but I will trust you, if you behave yourself rationally.” Oh, he would behave very well, that he would—the very man who killed his keeper! And when his chains were taken from

him he strove to rise, poor man, but for many minutes he could not stand, because he had been chained down so long. At last he got up and looked up at the sky and could only say, "Beautiful! Beautiful! Beautiful!"

And he became not only calm, quiet and tractable, but made himself a sort of superintendent over the rest. I believe Penel was the means of bringing all the poor creatures who had been let loose back to sober reason and something like reasoning obedience of the laws under which they lived—simply by *kindness*. And has that been done by madmen? Why, it has been done by some of us, who were worse than mad—mad with sin! We have trusted them, forgiven them, been kind to them and conquered them! And do you believe, if the everlasting God says to a sinner, "Now, you will destroy yourself if you go on. I am angry with your sin and though I hate your sin, I do not hate you. I have laid your sin on Christ. Believe it." And will you believe, if the man believes it—he will rise up to be worse than he was before?

Human nature is bad enough, but, after all, this is not the way of man! The cords of love hold us and the bands of a man restrain us. I will ask you, Sir, that makes the objection, if you could be met on the Tabernacle steps tonight or at your own door by an angel, who should say to you, "I have brought you this scroll fresh from the hands of the Eternal God: on it is written, 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn you, I have bought you with My precious blood: your sins, which are many, are all forgiven.'"—Sir, would the effect of that upon you be to make you live a worse life than you did before?

You would be a devil—worse than a devil—if such were to be the consequence! But it could not be so. "I feel I must begin a new life"—that is what I want you to feel. And, therefore, I preach to you tonight, not as an angel with a scroll, but as a man, like yourself, with the Christ-inspired volume before me! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall have pardon for the past and you shall, with the reception of that pardon, find a change come over your nature which shall inspire you with nobler purposes and make you another man than you are at present! I might thus continue to speak, but I refrain. If the objection is not driven away by my feeble sentences, may God drive it away by His mighty Spirit!

Now my closing effort shall be to show the comparative power of faith. Paul says that faith works. It works by love—not by dread or fear, but by *love*. Oh, blessed machinery is this! Love shall be the great communicator—the great band which connects the mighty engine of faith with our lives—faith which works by love. Do you ask how faith works by love? Why, when a man believes God's Testimony and sees that, notwithstanding all his offenses, God loves him and has provided His own dear Son to be a ransom for him, the man says, "My views of God are changed. I never understood that God was like this. I thought, surely, that He was very angry with me, that I should be utterly destroyed and that without remedy.

"Has God given *me* His only-begotten Son and did that only-begotten Son bear for me what I ought to have borne? Then I cannot be His enemy. It was ignorance of what He is that made me indifferent to Him. My indifference begat insolence and that made me oppose Him. Love has come

into my soul, now, and I see who God is. God is Love. God is Light and in Him there is no darkness at all." The man's mind is, by that very fact, changed in regard to God. And having effected this revolution of feeling, you have gone a long way towards changing the man's actual life. The next step after that is repentance. The man says, "Well, I struggled against a mighty God who had made Laws which I have broken and only knew that He would punish me. I feared the worst. I felt case-hardened. I said, 'I will go on, for there is no hope.'

"But now I perceive that God has never done anything towards me for which I should hate Him. He has never viewed me in a malicious spirit, but He has always regarded me with an eye to my good. I hate myself to think that I should have offended Him. Wretch that I am, that I should have lived 40 years denying the existence of One who has never forgotten me a single day! Wretch that I am, that I should have taken that name in vain which is a name above every name—the name that is to be my everlasting joy. O, my Father, my Father, how could it be that I, Your child, should be Your foe? My Savior, my bleeding Savior, how was it that I could revile Your people, despise Your Cross and trample on Your blood? I grieve, for I have grieved You! I hate the sins that made You mourn, now that I see that You forgive—and I thank You."

There is a change, you see, of the view the man takes of God and then a change in the views which he takes of his own actions—and he repents in dust and ashes when he discovers the love of God. Yes, and Faith works by love yet farther, for Faith leads to the foot of the Cross and says, "Look there." And the soul stands and looks up! And as it looks, it lives! And as it lives, it loves! And as it loves, it weeps! And as it weeps, it gazes upon Christ, again, and says, "Yes, He is the Son of God and yet the greatest sufferer that ever lived! He was offended, yet He died! He it is whose Laws were broken, yet the punishment of our sin was upon Him!

And as we look into those wounds and read those griefs, and as our eyes begin to penetrate within His flesh to see the heartbreak which He endured. And as the ear catches the sound of, "Eloi! Eloi! Lame Sabac-thani." And as our heart gazes into the side and sees His heart that was broken, we begin to love and weep—and love and weep again. And then we say to ourselves, "What should I do for Him who died to save my wretched soul?" Sin becomes hateful and we ask, "How can I please Him? How can I serve Him?" Then we wish we could die for Him and as He does not ask us to do that, we pray that we may *live* for Him. Love to Him becomes the strongest incentive, the mightiest impulse, the motive power that sways our entire being!

Oh, I wish you felt it to be so in your own souls! It has been so in some of us and now, forever more, to us, to live is Christ! Now for the love we bear to His name, Christ has become the great object of our being! And so faith, leading us by the way of gratitude up to the standpoint of love, begets in us a desire to please Him and also a desire to imitate Him—for love, somehow, always grows like its object. You cannot love a thing without becoming something like it, in proportion to the force of love. And just in proportion as you love Jesus, you must become like He. Oh, Objector,

would it hurt the world if men were to grow like Christ? Whatever you may think about the religion we have taken from His lips, I know you cannot speak against the life which He lived!

And if faith in Him will make men like He—and it *has* made them like He and *is making* them like He every day—it cannot be an evil and a licentious thing! It must, in fact, be the greatest power for morality, the greatest strengthener of social law and order and the very best principle a patriot might desire to spread throughout the nation in which he lives! Talk no more about morality, I pray you. O bleeding Lamb, the best morality is love to You! And where is it but in those who trust You with their soul, their All in All?

You will always find that those who thus, out of gratitude, desire to imitate Christ, inevitably become lovers of their fellow men. When we imitate Christ, we cannot be men-haters. To hate is not Christ, but the very opposite of Christ. Our blessed Lord and Master is no man-hater. When I listen to a cynic I know that Christ is not of his school. When I read the sharp and cutting satire. When I have heard men spoken of in terms which make them to be brutes—at least a few dozen generations back—I know that that doctrine was not learned of Christ. My Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, was the poor man's Friend!

Never a syllable fell from His lips which would make a tyrant feel at ease in His despotism. Never did He utter a syllable that would make the oppressive master feel that he had any right to tread down his workmen. Never did He utter a line that would make the workman feel that he had the right to be envious of those who possess more talents or enjoy higher privileges than he had. His teaching was justice and His life was love. If you ask me for a man that all might respect—such a man as one would wish all men to be with whom we dwell—I can only commend you to the Person and Character of my Lord! And if you are to become imitators of Him, the husband will be the kindest husband and the most loving of fathers! The mother will be the most tender and amiable of mothers and of wives!

If you have been forgiven by Christ and so love Him mightily and imitate Him diligently—well, you will be such men and women that no pastor need be ashamed to say, “They belong to my flock!” And no fellow Christians will need be ashamed to acknowledge you as one of their fraternity! Oh, Beloved, there is growing up in this country, I fear, more and more a feeling of alienation, the one from the other. I cannot speak, as some do, of “the good old times,” for I believe the times were never so old as they are now and never so good. But I do grieve to see that different classes are positioned against each other. It will be ill for our country if this jealousy goes on, for rivalries provoke resentments.

God has given us preeminence among the sons of men in many respects and if the house would not be divided against itself it would prosper. If we will, every one of us, resolve to love his neighbor as himself and to seek his brother's good, each one seeking and satisfied with that which is just and equal, whether occupying the higher or the lower or the middle place, from how many districts, manifold distractions would be averted!

Yes, but if we will, each one do more, and be generous and kind and loving, we shall be benefactors, indeed, and bless our country! I do not know by what process we can be brought to do this so surely and so reasonably, as by our believing in Jesus Christ! Feeling gratitude and love to Him, then imitating Him, and then becoming like He, we shall verify, in our triumph over the world, the virtue of that faith whereby, alone, the victory can be won!

One other remark. If you would have faith in Christ as the ground of justification, do not mix up this gift in your thoughts with anything else that has nothing at all to do with it. "Neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision." These outward distinctions are of no consequence. They might have made a great difference at another time and under other circumstances, but, "from now on know we no man after the flesh." "If any man is in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." Now, there may be, and most likely there are, not a few of my hearers who are enquiring the way of salvation but cannot understand it because they distract themselves with thoughts about themselves that are totally irrelevant.

I think I can read the thought which is just now passing through the minds of many of you. "Oh," you say, "I should like a few minutes conversation with the pastor!" And why? Have you any questions to ask? Is there any matter I have failed to make plain? Do you not understand, one and all of you, that, entirely irrespective of anything about your birth, your bringing up, or your business, the simple direction of the Gospel is, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." Suppose I listened to you. It would not be very difficult for me to conjecture what everyone would have to say. "Well," says one, "I wanted to tell you, Sir, that I was trained in the Established Church and christened before I was three months old." That means nothing.

"Alas, Sir!" says another, "You could not imagine the disadvantages of my childhood. My parents were no church-goers. They never had me sprinkled or dedicated, or anything else. I was reared like a heathen." Well, that is no detriment—it means nothing. "Why, Sir," says one, "I could repeat the Catechism and I knew by heart all the collects before I was four years old." "Alas!" says another, "I *never* was taught *anything*." Know assuredly, my Friends, that there is but one salvation for white men, or black men, for Pharisees or publicans! When you believe in Jesus, you are born-again! Every trace of your former self is wiped out. I would that you counted yourselves dead and buried, that you might live the new life and say with the Apostle, "The life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God."

Some of you have been converted during the last few weeks. I hope a good many of you have. Some of you have been converted to God in this place. There are here present, I doubt not, those who have been brought to believe in Christ under various agencies piously and prayerfully conducted at this time in our metropolis. We greet you cordially. Our adversaries watch you narrowly. They say, "Well, but will they stand? Will they last?" "Is their conversion worth anything?" Now, I do pray that you who

profess to have found Christ, do not make a sham of it. Do let it be salvation from sin that you have got. Salvation from Hell—is that what you want? That is *not* the salvation you ought to try after. It is salvation from *sin*. That will bring salvation from Hell!

You know, every thief would like to get salvation from going to prison, but that would not be of any particular use to him. The salvation that is worth having is the salvation from *thieving* any more. Mr. Thief, if you get *that*, you will get salvation from prison, too! Salvation from Hell is not the issue, but salvation from *sinning*. Now let us see how you live, you converts. You go home, Sir, and growl at your wife. You go home, Madam, to be snappish with your servant. You go home, housemaid, to be slovenly in your duties. You go home, working man, resolved to give half a day's work for a whole day's wage. You go home, master, to act the tyrant over your men. Well, you have been converted, have you?

I pray God to *undo* such a conversion and begin again with you! There are lots of people who need to be *unconverted* before they are converted—to have the rubbish they have built up themselves pulled down before Christ can begin. Suppose you have some freehold ground and it has an old remarkable building on it. With a new edifice in view, you must clear away every vestige of the former house. There are plenty of people who have a good-for-nothing conversion that needs sweeping away before God can do anything with them.

Pray to the Lord in this way—"Lord, I beseech You save me from my sin. Let me have a perfect faith which works, not a faith that sends me to sleep, not a faith that gives me a dose of opium and says, 'There, your conscience was like an aching tooth and would not stop aching, but I have stopped it.'" Now, ask the Lord to extract that which causes pain—to take away that which causes the mischief—not to give you quietness for a time. Ask for a right spirit and a new heart. Remember, you must be born-again. Though it is quite true as we say and sing, "Only believe and you shall be saved," yet if that, "only believing" is of a sort which merely asserts without intelligence of the mind, without emotion of the heart, there is nothing in it.

It leaves you what you were before—it is not the faith, pure and simple, that will save your soul. Evidently it will not save you, for it has left you still slaves to your sin. True, real, childlike faith in Jesus Christ saves us because it works by love. The Lord grant you to possess this precious prize which we persistently preach—the faith which works by love.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 3:20.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—351, 544, 406.**

[The original title of this sermon was *A Remonstrance and a Rejoinder*.]

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FAITH WORKING BY LOVE

NO. 1553

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 15, 1880,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Faith which works by love.”
Galatians 5:6.***

ALL ways of justification by human works and outward forms are set aside by the Apostle. In one sentence he closes up every road which is cast up by man and opens up the way of the Lord, even the way of salvation by Grace through faith in Christ Jesus. Some hope to be saved by ritualism—their hopes are struck hip and thigh by these words, “Neither circumcision avails anything.” On the other hand, many are relying upon their freedom from all ceremonies and place their reliance upon a sort of anti-ritualism—they are struck by the words, “nor uncircumcision.” As Jews relied upon circumcision, so do many depend upon Baptism and sacraments—to these the Apostle gives no quarter. Others glory in uncircumcision—they have practiced no rites nor ceremonies—their mode of worship is plain even to unsightliness, free almost to disorder and of this they are apt to make a righteousness.

It is quite as easy to make a self-righteousness out of the plainness of the Quaker as out of the gaudiness of the Romanist and the one confidence will be as fatal as the other. You and I, as Baptists, may glory in the simplicity of our worship and the Scripturalness of our Baptism, but if we think that outward things will save us because they are Scripturally simple, we shall err as much as they do who multiply gorgeous services and pompous processions. Let the whole sentence be quoted! Paul says, “Neither circumcision avails anything,” but he does not stop there, for he adds, “nor uncircumcision.” The outward, whether decorated or unadorned; whether fixed or free, touches not the saving point—the only thing which can save us is *faith in Jesus Christ*, whom God has set forth as a Propitiation for sin.

Faith brings us into contact with the healing fountain and so our natural disease is removed. It appropriates, on our behalf, the result of the Redeemer's service and sacrifice and so we become accepted in Him. But anything short of this must fail—it is the tearing of the garment while the heart is unbroken—the washing of the outside of the cup and platter while the inner part is very filthiness. The Apostle, however, does more than merely condemn other foundations than those of faith—he distinguishes here between faith, itself, and its many imitations. It is not every sort of faith that will save the soul.

True faith, undoubtedly, will save a man though it is but as a grain of mustard seed. But it must be *true* faith—the genuine silver and not a

mere plated article. “Money answers all things,” says the wise man, but then it must be current coin of the realm, for *counterfeit* money will answer for nothing except to condemn the man who has it in his possession! Real faith will save us, but forgeries of it will increase our peril. Assurance is of God, but presumption is of the devil. The test of true faith is that it works—“Faith which works,” says the text. To that end it must, first of all, live, for it is clear that a dead faith cannot work. There must be heart in our faith and the Spirit of God breathing in it, or it will not be the living faith of a living child of God.

Being alive, true faith must not sleep, but must awaken itself as a child of the day, for a slumbering faith is matter for heart-searching, since sleep is a cousin to Death. A wakeful faith becomes *active* and in its activity lies much of its proof. “By their fruits you shall know them” is one of Christ’s own rules for testing men and things—and we are to know faith by that which comes of it—by what it does for us and in us and through us. Faith is not worth having if it is fruitless. It has a name to live and is dead. If it works not at all, it lives not at all and cannot justify its possession. A dead god may be served by a dead faith, but only a living, waking, working faith can please the ever-living, ever-working Jehovah. God save us from a dreaming faith and a talking faith and give us “faith which works.”—

**“Not words alone it cost the Lord
To purchase pardon for His own.
Nor will a soul by Grace restored
Return the Savior words alone.”**

A further distinction is also set forth, namely, that true faith “works by love.” There are some who do many works as the result of a kind of faith who, nevertheless, are not justified. As for instance, Herod, who believed in John and did many things and yet murdered his minister. His faith worked, but it worked by dread and not by love—he feared the stern language of the second Elijah and the judgments which would come upon him if he rejected the Baptist’s warnings and so his faith worked through *fear*. The great test of the working of saving faith is this—it “works by love.” If you are led by your faith in Jesus Christ to love Him and so to serve Him, then you have the faith of God’s elect. You are, then, undoubtedly, a saved man and you may go your way and rejoice in the liberty with which Christ has made you free.

It shall be joy to you to serve the Lord, since love is the mainspring of your service. That is the point we are going to speak upon this morning—the connection which exists between faith and love—“Faith which works by love.” We may be helped to test both our faith and love while we are speaking of the intermingling and intertwisting of the roots and branches of these two Divine Graces and it will do us good to perform a thorough self-examination. It never does any man harm to overhaul himself and to see in what a state he is—whether he is really right or not—whether he is prospering in soul or not.

I am afraid of our taking our good estate for granted, but I am not afraid of the most searching self-enquiry. May God the Holy Spirit bless our ministry to this end this morning!

I. Our first observation will be this—FAITH ALWAYS PRODUCES LOVE—“Faith which works by love.” When faith has anything to do, she walks to the field with Love at her side. The two Divine Graces are inseparable. Like Mary and Martha, they are sisters and abide in one house. Faith, like Mary, sits at Jesus’ feet and hears His Words and then Love diligently goes about the house and rejoices to honor the Divine Lord. Faith is light, while Love is heat and in every beam of Grace from the Sun of Righteousness you will find a measure of each. True faith in God cannot exist without love to Him, nor sincere love without faith. They are united, like Siamese twins, and where you meet the one the other is sure to be present.

This happens by a necessity of faith’s own nature. The moment a man believes in Jesus Christ, he loves Him as a matter of course. It is possible to trust in another person and not love him, but from the peculiar circumstances of the case, our Lord, having loved us and given Himself for us out of the infinite charity of His heart, we are compelled to love Him the moment we repose upon Him. To trust the bleeding Lamb and not love Him is a thing not to be imagined! Faith is a gold ring which, in every case, the heavenly Jeweler sets with the beryl of love. Water faith with a drop of God’s own dew and it blossoms into love!

The first steps of the prodigal, when he comes to himself, are all towards his father’s house and heart. When he gets home he may make many steps here and there about his father’s estate, but at the first, at any rate, his face is distinctly towards his father. Did he not say, “I will arise and go unto my father”? The first steps of the soul, when it begins to believe in God, are desires after Him in which there is a measure of love. The affections are awakened and drawn towards God as soon as there is the slightest degree of faith in the soul. Every Believer here knows that. Look back to the day when you first saw the Lord, if you can remember it—the hour you looked to Him and were lightened—did you not love Him immediately?

Love Him? Yes! We sometimes fear we loved Him better then, than now, though I hope that it is not the case. If anyone had asked me, in the first flush of my joy when first I beheld my bleeding Lord, “Do you love Him?” I should not have hesitated, but replied, “I love Him as my very soul, for He has redeemed me from going down into the Pit.” Faith creates love as summer breeds flowers! Our first love came with our first faith by a necessity of nature which can never change. Love grows out of faith yet farther by the discoveries of beauty in Christ which faith is sure to make. Faith is the soul’s eye and its telescope by which it sees that which is so far off as to otherwise be invisible. Holy faith gazes upon the *Character* of the Lord Jesus Christ, realizes His Person and discerns His matchless work and so creates knowledge out of which comes love.

Faith stands like the cherubim upon the golden Mercy Seat, looking downward always upon the blood-sprinkled Propitiatory, admiring and wondering, spying out something fresh every hour and thus filling itself with ever-increased delight with those things which the angels desire to look into. Out of this gracious discernment comes admiring love. Faith delights to unveil the superlative beauties of the Well-Beloved before the gaze of Love and then Faith and Love unite in crying out, "Yes, He is altogether lovely!" Those who believe can say, "We see Jesus," and those whose hearts are won by Him can add, "We loved Him because He first loved us." O that we knew our Lord better! O that we believed in Him more! Then should we be knit to Him as the heart of Jonathan was knit to David.

Faith creates love, next, by its appropriation of that which it discerns, for while faith is the soul's eye, it is also the mind's hands by which it grasps the blessing. Faith sees the love of Christ and then says, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." Faith sees the wounds of Jesus and perceives His Deity through those windows of ruby and immediately appropriates Him and cries, "My Lord and my God." Love is sure to arise out of a sense of possession. Does not a mother love her child very much because it is her own?

When we have an interest in a person so as to call him, "my brother," "my husband," "my son," then a sense of property increases our sense of affection. This made the Psalmist sing, "O God, You are my God, early will I seek You." Why, even in dead things, such as gold and silver and goods and lands, when they are a man's own they are apt to be loved, for the affections cling to that which is possessed—"Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." And therefore, the danger which attends worldly things, lest our heart be bird-limed with them and so be held captive, instead of mounting upward towards God. This tendency is clearly seen in reference to higher possessions and especially with regard to Christ. If Christ is yours and Faith can say, "Jesus is mine," Love alters the sentence and cries, "This is my Beloved and this is my Friend."

When the faith of Thomas saw Jesus as Lord and God, his love gave a musical ring to his exclamation by joying in personal possession and calling Him, "my Lord and my God." Love rejoices in Jesus as her own possession, triumphs in Him and right sweetly sings of love to Him because He is her own Husband and Lord. Thus you see faith creates love from a necessity of its nature, from the discoveries which it makes and from its appropriation of the good things that are in Christ. Dear Hearer, do you know anything about these matters? Faith further excites love by another step, namely, by its enjoying the mercy and then leading the heart to a grateful acknowledgment of the source of the mercy. There are two links in the chain in this case—faith wins the mercy by *prayer*—the mercy is enjoyed and then out of the enjoyment of the gift springs love to Him who gave it.

Brothers and Sisters, what innumerable favors faith has already brought to us! Some of you, I trust, do not look upon the Covenant as a

locked-up storeroom from which nothing is to be taken until you come to die. But the key of David has been put into your hands by faith and you have enjoyment, even now, of the fat things full of marrow and the wines on the lees well-refined which the Lord has prepared for them that love Him. At this moment you know that you are justified; you know that you are adopted into the family of God—do you not, therefore, love the Lord? I know you do! You feel, at this moment, that you are enjoying the privileges of heirship with Christ—does not this bind you fast to your elder Brother?

Every day you are receiving Providential mercies. I hope you keep your eyes open to see them—every day you are receiving preserving mercies, restoring mercies, instructive mercies, sealing mercies—do you not love God for all these priceless gifts? Spiritual blessings are coming to you from the God of All Grace and you are filled with joys, like your Savior's grief—immense, unknown—surely this cements your soul to your Redeemer! Unless your heart is altogether out of order, you love God better and better because He is manifesting His love to you more and more. Is it not so? Faith told you that the Lord was good and then she cried, "I will prove it to you," and she handed out of the Covenant store-house mercies rich and rare and laid them at your feet! And since you have possessed them and lived upon them as your own, you have blessed the Giver and loved Him more than you ever did before.

Thus Faith receives promises and feeds Love on the fruit of them. It does this even more sweetly by the familiarity with God which it breeds in the heart, for Faith is in the habit of going to God with all her burdens and coming away with her load removed. Faith has the daily practice of pleading promises with God, speaking to Him face to face as a man speaks with his friend and receiving favors from the right hand of the Most High which make even her expectant soul to wonder! Faith commences with God in the morning, as Abraham did, and walks with Him in the field at evening, as Isaac did. Faith houses herself with God as the swallow built her nest under the eaves of the temple. Faith's life is in God, even as the life of a fish is in the sea.

The bosom of Jesus Christ is the pillow of faith and the heart of God is the pavilion of faith. Because faith thus keeps us near to God, it causes us to love Him. Oh, poor blind Soul, if you could see Jesus, you would love Him! You who are most opposed to Him would become His friends if you knew Him! It is not possible for a Believer to be in Christ's company an hour without feeling his heart warmed. The pilgrims to Emmaus said, "Did not our hearts burn within us while He spoke with us by the way?" Those who have known and believed His love towards them must feel His spell upon their affections holding them captive. There is none like He among the sons of men—His beauties ravish the heart! If Jesus does but lift the veil and let us have a glimpse of one of His eyes for a moment, our hearts are melted within us—

***"Where can such sweetness be
As I have tasted in Your love,***

As I have found in Thee?"

Because faith thus makes us familiar with our Divine Lord, it must inevitably produce love in the soul. And here again, are two links instead of one—our familiarity with Christ soon begets congeniality of disposition and spirit, for that we are much *with* Christ—we become much *like* Christ. He who lies on a bed of spices will naturally find his garments smell of the same. A mirror upon which the sun is shining is, itself, bright and flashes its reflected rays afar. He that walks with wise men will be wise, but he that dwells with the Infinite Wisdom shall be taught of God! Doubtless, happy couples who live together in mutual affection and confidence become very much like each other—the one becomes the other's self—they have the same aims and objectives, they are often surprised to find that they have thought the same thoughts and are about to say the same words at the same moment.

So do the saint and the Savior grow like each other after years of acquaintance, only the growth is all on one side—we grow up unto Him in all things who is the Head. Oh that our likeness to Christ were as clear and complete as our likeness to our dear companions below! You see how love is thus nurtured in the soul by a growing likeness of disposition. Wherever there is congeniality of taste, mind, view, disposition and spirit, love becomes strong and well established. And thus faith, by begetting in us likeness to Christ, causes love to Christ to become a mighty power in the soul! Surely all these points sufficiently show that faith creates love in the soul wherever it really dwells.

Do not, I pray you, begin to say, "I am afraid I do not love the Lord as I ought," and so on. Take it for granted that you do not love Him to the fullest of His infinite deserts. Instead of raising questions about the degree of your love, ask yourself whether you *believe* in Him. Are you trusting in the Lord Jesus? Are you confiding in Him? Because if the root is there, the flower will appear before long. If you believe that Jesus is the Christ, you are born of God and all who are born of the God of Love must, themselves, love God. Do not talk of *trying* to love God. You cannot force yourself to love anybody—who in his senses would ever dream of such a thing? Such attempts would be utter folly.

Love must be free-born, it cannot be bought or forced. We cannot tell what love is though we feel it. It is a mysterious something not to be described by the cold maker of definitions, but it is always a product of something else which goes before it. If you believe, you will love. If you do not believe you will never love till you believe. Go to the root of the matter. Do not try to grow the hyacinth of love without the bulb of faith. Do you trust Jesus with all your heart and are you confiding your soul's eternal interests with Him? Then I know that you love Him, though you may, for a while, be occupied with other pursuits.

Love slumbers in you like fire in a flint, or rather, it smolders like fire in smoldering turf. But before long it will burn vehemently like coals of juniper! Look well to your faith and your love will not fail. Remember the lines of a sweet poet and pray that you may sing them out of your own soul—

**“Hallelujah! I believe!
 Now, O Love! I know your power,
 You have no false or fragile fetters,
 Nor the rose-wreaths of an hour.
 Christian bonds of holy union
 Death itself does not destroy;
 Yes, to live and love forever,
 Is our heritage of joy.”**

II. Let me now enlarge upon a second remark—LOVE IS ENTIRELY DEPENDENT UPON FAITH. “Faith which works by love.” Love, then, does not work of itself, except in the strength of faith. Love is so entirely dependent upon faith that, as I have already said, it cannot exist without it! No man loves a Savior in whom he reposes no confidence. There may be an admiration of the Character of Christ, but the emotion which the Scripture treats as, “love,” only comes into the heart when we *trust* in Jesus. “We love Him because He first loved us.” When we have a belief in His love and a sense of it, then we begin to love Jesus—but love to Jesus cannot exist without *faith* in Him.

Certainly love cannot flourish except as faith flourishes. If you doubt your Lord, you will think harsh thoughts of Him and cease to love Him as you should. If you fall into trouble and you doubt His wisdom, or His goodness in sending it, the next thing will be that your heart will be cold towards Him—you will begin to think your Lord to be tyrannical and harsh to you and you will quarrel with Him. The two Graces must diminish or increase together! If you attain to a simple, childlike confidence which rests in Christ as a babe on its mother’s bosom reposes entirely in her care, then shall your love be made perfect! But if you need to trust *yourself* a little and you begin judging your God and do not repose entirely in Him, then it is that you have to ask yourself whether you love Him or not. May God the Holy Spirit work in us a mighty strength of faith that we may have a vehement love, strong as death, immortal as Divinity!

Love, again, as it cannot *flourish* without faith, so it cannot *work* without it. Love is a great designer and planner, but how to perform, it finds not unless faith shows the way. Love sits down and says, “I wish the world were converted to Christ!” But Faith goes out and preaches the Gospel. Love cries, “I would to God that the children knew of Jesus and that their hearts were renewed even while they are yet little!” But Faith opens the Sunday school and teaches the young and trusts in God that He will bless the Word to their salvation. Love must have faith to give it muscle, sinew and strength—therefore take right good care of your faith.

Longfellow says, “Therefore love and believe, and works will follow spontaneously, even as the day the sun.” Love is as Solomon’s lily, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh. How fair to look upon! Stand and admire its charms. Know, O gazer, that yon lovely flower could not be thus arrayed were it not joined by its stalk to a living root which is hidden underground! Faith is the necessary bulb out of which comes love as the perfection of beauty. You look over the fair city of Mansoul and you see a gilded dome glittering in the sun—that dome is love and it rests upon founda-

tions of faith which are laid deep upon the rock—otherwise the dome would fall in ruins. Love to God, if it is worthy of the name, must be soundly based on confidence in Jesus. It cannot abide without it, but is carried away by wind and flood, like the house on the sand.

Therefore we are disposed to judge with prudence the outbursts of emotion which we see in certain excitable persons. We hear them sing, “Oh, yes, I love Jesus,” but we are not so sure of it when we watch their lives. We are pleased with such emotions if they arise out of the knowledge of Christ and genuine faith in Him, but we have too often seen the semblance of ardent affection without knowledge and without humility—without penitence and without childlike faith—and therefore we rejoice with trembling. We fear lest the building which rises up in a night should vanish like “the baseless fabric of a vision” and disappear like the soap bubble of a child, which, though it is adorned with all the colors of the rainbow, dissolves in an instant.

See, then, to your faith, since love is entirely dependent upon it. See that you are rooted and grounded and settled, lest the high tower of professed love should soon lie in ruins and only indifference remain.

III. Thirdly, I advance to another observation which comes more closely home to the text though our previous thoughts have been necessary to bring us up to it—FAITH DISPLAYS ITS POWER BY LOVE. “Faith which works by love.” For a moment you must permit me to compare faith to a craftsman in metals who is about to prepare some magnificent work which cunning smiths were known to produce in the days of worked iron, when skill and hand labor were thought much of and articles were produced which are almost worth their weight in silver.

Faith, as a smith, strong and vigorous, has love to be her arms. Faith lifts not a finger without love—it is her arm every morning. Faith believes and resolves and then it proceeds to action, but the power with which it can work lies in love. Faith without love would be a cripple without arms. More than this—it is not only Faith’s arms but her tools. “Faith works by love.” This is Faith’s hammer and file and anvil—her every implement. You have seen a screw hammer which can be made to fit every nut and bolt, however large or small—love is just such a tool—for love will teach a little child or evangelize a nation!

Love can stand and burn at the stake, or it can drop two mites that make a farthing into the offering box. Love hopes all things, endures all things—nothing comes amiss to it. A wonderfully handy tool is this sacred Grace which Faith has adopted to work with! It can strike and it can cut, it is good for uniting and good for breaking, it will avail for anything which Faith wishes to perform. Only let Faith wield love as its instrument and it can fashion whatever Divine Wisdom tells it to form. More than that, love is Faith’s furnace. All the tools in the world will not suffice the smith unless he can blow the coals and create a fervent heat.

What is there, Brethren, that can kindle the heat of enthusiasm like earnest love to God? Faith believes God and rejoices in God and then comes in love and the heart grows hot as Nebuchadnezzar’s furnace! The

melting fire burns right gloriously and sparks of joy leap upward from it. What is there that cannot be performed if we have enough love? This is the great fire which burns in human hearts when God the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of Jesus—by its heat all things are fused. This fire will yet consume all sin and melt all hardness. None can quench it, *everything* must yield before it! That consecrated craftsman called Faith, blows the coals of Love and, plunged into its glowing flame, tasks difficult as iron is hard become easily workable! Thus, “Faith works by love.”

Love is more than this, for, when all is melted and ready to flow, love is faith’s mold—it pours out all it does into the mold of God’s Love—fashioning its works according to the Divine pattern of Love in Christ Jesus. As Jesus loved us, even so should we love one another. And as He loved the Father and for love of the Father, that He might glorify Him, fulfilled the Law and made Himself a Sacrifice, even so are we willing to lay down our lives for the Brethren and for the Father’s honor. Thus Love becomes Faith’s mold into which she carefully seeks to pour out her whole being. What is more, she is Faith’s metal, for into the mold of love, Faith pours love itself. Love thus “answers all things.”

Love is the substance of every good work. Melt it down in the refining pot and holiness is love. If there is any virtue, zeal, consecration or holy daring, its *substance* is love. All the grand deeds which the heroes of the Cross have performed are composed of the solid metal of love to Jesus Christ. Be it great or be it little, he who has served God aright has always brought into the sanctuary an offering of pure love comparable to the gold of Ophir. Love, also, is Faith’s burnisher and file and with it she finishes all her work right carefully. Have you never lovingly gone over all your work to give it the finishing touches? Have you not wished to perfect all that you have attempted? I know well what it means.

My rough castings—how very coarse they are—and when I fix them I look at them and say, “That will not do, for I see *self* there. That will not do, *unbelief* is there. This will not do, too much of *self-will* is there.” And then I have with tearful love, filed down and polished my poor efforts and found love to be an excellent burnisher, ready to my hand. When Augustine went over all his works to write his *Retractations*, it was Love removing roughness from her work. If we loved more, we might have more of retractation work to do. Thus Faith works by love—love is Faith’s arm, Faith’s tools, Faith’s furnace, Faith’s metal, Faith’s mold and Faith’s burnisher.

My Hearer, if you are working for God in any other way than this, you will make a mess of it! The Law can never help you to such work as God will accept. It is fitted to produce bars for a prison but not pillars for a temple. You must work for God because you love Him—no other labor except the labor of love can be acceptable with Him. Some people serve God because they are in religious society and they must not be thought lacking—therefore that blessed guinea, squeezed out by all the ten-pound subscriptions on the list at the top of it—respectable people must put down something, you know.

That occasional going out to week-night services is often done because it is expected of you and not because it is a delight. Even Sabbath assemblies grow to be a weariness and worship is regarded as a task. This is not gold, but gilded dross—take it away! This is *forced* service, devoid of the life-blood of obedience! This is fruit without flavor or scent. That which is done because a man loves God, because he loves to yield his heart to his God, however humble the service may be, is accepted of God. True affection to Him who redeemed you from going down to the Pit never fails to present an acceptable tribute before the living God! May you abound in this to your own comfort and to the Glory of Christ.

IV. I close with the fourth remark, which is this—LOVE REACTS UPON FAITH AND PERFECTS IT. While Love owes everything to Faith, Faith, by-and-by, becomes a debtor to Love. Love leads the soul into admiration and so increases Faith. Having loved Christ, having become enamored of Him, Love, which has dove's eyes which can see everything that is fair, spies out, daily, more and more of Christ's perfections and thus she aids the eye of Faith. Love sees among the rest of the Lord's perfections His power, His faithfulness, His immutability—and Faith at once concludes, "Then I can trust Him more than ever."

Knowing more of His power, more of His faithfulness, more of His unchangeableness, I can depend upon Him without wavering. So if Faith's eyes first look to Jesus, Love's eyes see yet more and discover further excellences. Faith is that other disciple which outran Peter, but Love is the disciple which enters in and spies out details. Love, moreover, forbids unbelief and so helps Faith, for Love says, "How can we grieve Him by doubts?" Does not true love in every heart, when exercised towards a man or a woman, forbid distrust? Fear in the form of distrust has torment and, therefore, love casts it out.

The lack of mutual confidence in married life is the death of love, but love is instinctively tender of showing anything like suspicion towards a dear and faithful lover. Even when it supposes that there is an error, love puts it down as by no means a willful fault, but concludes that there may be a sense in which it is right, for love believes all things, endures all things and will not tolerate mistrust which it knows to be a worm at the very core of the heart. So you see, where there is great love of Christ, it forbids doubt and thus kills the foxes of distrust which spoil the tender vines of Faith. Love to Jesus feels that it were better to distrust all men and angels than doubt the dear Redeemer who poured out His blood to prove His love! Distrust the heavens, for they shall pass away. Distrust the earth, for it shall be utterly burned up. Distrust man, for he is as a broken reed! But never distrust the faithful God! Lean on Him with your whole weight! Repose in Him with your undivided confidence. So Love teaches and Faith learns her lesson.

Moreover, perfect Love casts out fear because fear has torment and when perfect Love has cast out fear, then Faith has room to display its strength. Love has not learned to be afraid, nor will she permit the work of Faith to become the labor of a shrinking, crouching slave. Dread? Where

can that find a lodging in the heart that loves? You hear very proper people sometimes cry out against certain of us because they say we speak as if we were on the best of terms with God and were familiar with the Lord Jesus. Sarcastically they speak what is soberly true—in their blindness they have hit the truth—it is even so. To them God is a stranger and I doubt not that the language which we use may well seem to them strange and almost profane.

It would be profane if they were to use it, being what they are. I do not accuse them of open sin, but I do say and will say that he who is not a child of God cannot fitly use expressions which are most becoming from the lips of those who *are* the sons of God. A child may say to his father what no one else may dare say and yet he has more reverence for him than anyone else. Your child shall rightly behave towards you in a manner which you could not tolerate in a stranger. Look at the judge on the bench—with that big wig and those solemn robes—the prisoner at the bar and the court and the jury must all be very respectful and distant. But I guarantee you when his lordship reaches home, his grandchild has no dread of grandpapa or his robes!

Love gives boldness and is yet most reverent—reverently familiar. Chilliness and coldness are not for the children of God—they are called to close communion with their heavenly Father and the Meeting Place is not at Sinai, but at Calvary! Faith and Love are home-living children and not out-of-door pensioners. They dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Oh Beloved, this is the joy of love, that it brings us into such close personal communion with God in Jesus Christ! That trembling, slavish fear is gone and, loving God, we are familiar with Him and trust Him implicitly. Oh, dear Friends, trust your God with everything! Trust Him in little things! Trust Him in great things! Trust Him in your joys to keep you sober! Trust Him in your sorrows to keep you from despair! Oh, that you may possess much of this love, for it is an eminent Grace. “Faith is child-like,” says Dr. Eadie. “Hope is saint-like, but love is God-like.” May we reach this God-like virtue through faith in God Himself!

My final word is this—let us, dear Friends, as a Church and people, be *working* people. Faith works. Let us work because we have faith. I wish that every member of this Church were at work for Jesus. I have very few complaints, however, because I believe that the majority of the dear Brothers and Sisters associated here are hard at it—but if there are any of you who are not serving the Lord—I pray you, bestir yourselves! You must work or your faith will be questioned and your love will be suspect! We are a hive of bees, but what will happen if, instead of making honey, the workers all turn to drones? Why, they will next turn to wasps!

If such a change cannot take place in Nature, it certainly occurs in morals and spirituals, for we have seen companies of good, hard-working Christians suddenly break out into factions and quarrel furiously! When bees turn to wasps there is nothing but fighting. May our good Lord save us from such a calamity! I do not mind being like the queen bee in the hive, king of the bees. But a leader of wasps I cannot be! Dear Friends, get

to work for the Master—you, I mean, who stand idle all the day. Go work, today, in the Savior's vineyard. Oh, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, I beseech you, do not relax your energies! Continue to be a lively, energetic Church.

Now that so many Sunday schools need teachers, I charge our friends not to let that blessed part of the service lag behind. There are dozens of schools crying out for teachers! The children come and there are none to instruct them. Should it be so? If you are to be a working Church, you must be a loving Church because faith works by *love*. You must love one another much and love Christ more and love the souls of perishing sinners! Yes, love them so that you will not let them perish if you can do anything towards their salvation. Personal doing of good to men is needed if love is to be real. The love of Jesus made Him seek and save the lost and if ours is worth the name, we shall be engaged in the same holy endeavor.

But if you are to be a working Church and a loving Church you must be a *believing* Church, for that is the bottom of it all. Faith works by love. Get home, then, to prayer and renew your faith in Jesus. May the Holy Spirit lead you anew to the dying love of Jesus. I often go straight away back to the Cross from which I started when I set out for Heaven. The devil says to me, "*You are no Christian.*" I do not think he knows much about it, but I have, before now, tried to show him some evidences that I am a Christian and he has only puffed at them. I find the better way is to go right away to the Cross and say, "I rest on Jesus only."

Satan cannot deny but what you are a Christian when you stand *there!* Go and do your first works and believe in Jesus just as you did at the first and abide in Him forevermore. As sinners, cling to Jesus and let Him be everything to you. Constant faith will create fervent love and fervent love will do persevering work—so shall we be a people zealous for good works! The Lord bless every one of you, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE LUTHER SERMON AT EXETER HALL NO. 1750

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BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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*“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything,
nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love.”
Galatians 5:6.*

PAUL makes a clean sweep of that trust in the externals of religion which is the common temptation of all time. Circumcision was a great thing with the Jew and, oftentimes he trusted in it. But Paul declares that it avails nothing. There might be others who were glad that they were not Jews, but Paul declares that their *uncircumcision* avails no more than its opposite! Certain matters connected with godliness are external and yet they are useful in their places—especially is that the case with Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the assembling of ourselves together, the reading of the Word of God and public prayer and praise. These things are proper and profitable, but none of them must be made, in any measure or degree, the ground of our hope of salvation, for this text sweeps them all away and plainly describes them as availing nothing if they are made to be the foundations of our trust.

In Luther's day superstitious confidence in external observances had overlaid faith in the Gospel. Ceremonies had multiplied excessively under the authority of the Pope. Masses were said for souls in “purgatory” and men were actually selling indulgences for sin in the light of day! When God raised up Martin Luther, who was born four centuries ago, he bore emphatic testimony against salvation by outward forms and by the power of priestcraft, affirming that salvation is by faith, alone, and that the whole Church of God is a company of priests, every Believer being a priest unto God.

If Luther had not affirmed it, the doctrine would have been just as true, for the distinction between clergy and laity has no excuse in Scripture, which calls the saints, “God's kleros”—God's clergy, or heritage. Again we read, “You are a royal priesthood.” Every man that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is anointed to exercise the Christian priesthood and, therefore, he need not put his trust in another, seeing the supposed priest is no more than any other man. Each man must be accountable for himself before God. Each one must read and search the Scriptures for himself and must believe for himself—and when saved, he must offer up himself as a living sacrifice unto God by Jesus Christ, who is the only High Priest of our profession.

So much for the negative side of the text, which is full of warning to this Ritualistic age. The chief testimony of our great Reformer was to the justification of a sinner in the sight of God by faith in Jesus Christ and by that alone. He could fitly have taken this as his motto, “In Jesus Christ

neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision but faith which works by love." He was in the Augustinian monastery at Wittenberg, troubled and perturbed in mind, and he had there, in an old Latin Bible, this text, "The just shall live by faith." It was a new idea to him and by its means spiritual light entered his soul in some degree. But such were the prejudices of his up-bringing and such the darkness of his surroundings, that he still hoped to find salvation by outward performances.

He therefore fasted long, till he was found swooning from hunger. He was exceedingly zealous for salvation by works. At last he made a pilgrimage to Rome, hoping to find, there, everything that was holy and helpful. He was disappointed in his search, but yet found more there of what he looked for. On the pretended staircase of Pilate, while in the act of climbing it upon his knees, the Wittenberg text again sounded in his ears like a thunderclap—"The just shall live by faith." Up he started and descended those stairs, never to grovel upon them again! The chain was broken, the soul was free! Luther had found the L of God and, therefore, from that day on it became his life's business to flash that Light upon the nations, crying evermore, "The just shall live by faith."

The best commemoration which I can make of this man is to preach the doctrine which he held so dear. And you who are thus saved can best assist me by believing the doctrine and proving its truth in your own cases. May the Holy Spirit cause it to be so in hundreds of instances!

I. First, let us inquire WHAT IS THIS FAITH? We are always talking about it, but what is it? Whenever I try to explain it, I am afraid lest I should confuse rather than expound. There is a story told concerning John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Good Thomas Scott, the Commentator, wrote notes to it. He thought the "Pilgrim's Progress" a difficult book and he would make it clear. A pious cottager in his parish had the book and she was reading it when her minister called. He said to her, "Oh, I see, you are reading Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. Do you understand it?" She answered innocently enough, "Oh, yes Sir, I understand Mr. Bunyan very well, and I hope that one day I shall be able to understand your explanations."

I am afraid lest you should say when I have done, "I understand what faith is, as I find it in the Bible, and one day, perhaps, I may be able to understand the preacher's explanation of it." Warned by this, I will speak as plainly as I can! And first, it is to be remembered that faith is not a mere creed-holding. It is very proper to say, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth," and so forth. But you may repeat all that and be no "Believer" in the Scriptural sense of that term. Though the creed is true, it may not be true to *you*—it would have been the same to you if the opposite had been true, for you put the truth away like a paper in a pigeon-hole and it has no effect upon you. "A very proper doctrine," you say, "a very proper doctrine," and so you put it to sleep. It does not influence your *heart*, nor affect your life.

Do not imagine that professing an orthodox creed is the same thing as faith in Christ! A truthful creed is desirable for many reasons, but if it is a dead, inoperative thing, it cannot bring salvation. Faith is belief of the

Truths of God, but it is more. Again, faith is not the mere belief that there is a God, though that we *must* have, for we cannot come to God except we “believe that He is and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” We are to believe in God—that He is good, blessed, true, right and, therefore, to be trusted, confided in and praised. Whatever He may do, whatever He may say, God is not to be suspected, but believed in. You know what it is to believe in a man, do you not? To believe in a man so that you follow him and confide in him and accept his advice?

In that same way faith believes in God—not only believes that He is, but finds rest in His Character, His Son, His promise, His Covenant, His Word and everything about Him. Faith livingly and lovingly trusts in her God about everything! Especially must we believe in what God has revealed in Scripture—that it is verily and, indeed, a sure and Infallible testimony to be received without question. We accept the Father’s witness concerning Jesus and take heed, thereto, “as unto a light that shines in a dark place.” Faith has specially to believe in Him who is the sum and substance of all this Revelation, even Jesus Christ, who became God in human flesh that He might redeem our fallen nature from all the evils of sin and raise it to eternal felicity.

We believe *in* Christ, *on* Christ, and *upon* Christ—accepting Him because of the record which God has given to us concerning His Son—that He is the Propitiation for our sins. We accept God’s unspeakable Gift and receive Jesus as our All in All. If I wanted to describe saving faith in one word, I should say that it is *trust*. It is so believing God and so believing in Christ that we trust ourselves and our eternal destinies in the hands of a reconciled God. As creatures we look up to the great Father of Spirits. As sinners we trust for the pardon of our sins to the Atonement of Jesus Christ. As being weak and feeble we trust to the power of the Holy Spirit to make us holy and to keep us so. We venture our eternal interests in the vessel of Free Grace, content to sink or swim with it. We rely upon God in Christ.

The Word employed to set forth faith in the Scriptures sometimes signifies to *lean*. We lean with all our weight upon our God, in Jesus Christ. We hang upon Christ as a vessel hangs upon a nail. “Recumbency” was a term by which the old Puritans used to describe faith—a lying, or leaning upon something out of ourselves. Guilty as I am, I believe God’s Word that, “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” Trusting to that blood I know that I am cleansed from all sin. God sets forth Christ to be a Propitiation—we believe that He is a Propitiation and we take Him to be our Propitiation. By that appropriation our sin is covered and we are free! Faith is the grasping, the appropriating, the receiving into one’s self of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I sometimes illustrate it by that passage of Paul where he says, “The word is near you, even in your mouth.” When a morsel is in your mouth, if you desire to possess it so as never to lose it, what is the best thing to do? Swallow it! Let it go down into the inward parts. Now the word that we preach is, according to the Apostle, “in your mouth”—suffer it, then, by God’s Grace, to go down into your heart, and you shall find it true that,

“with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” This is the faith which saves the soul.

II. In the second place we will consider WHY FAITH IS SELECTED AS THE WAY OF SALVATION. I would remind you that if we could not answer this question it would not matter—since the Lord has appointed believing as the way of Grace, it is not ours to challenge His choice. Beggars must not be choosers! Let us trust, if so the Lord ordains. But we can answer this question in a measure. First, it is clear that no other way is possible. It is not possible for us to be saved by our own merits, for we have already broken the Law of God and, future obedience, being already due, cannot make up for past defects—

***“Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no respite know,
All for sin could not atone
You must save, and You alone.”***

The road of good works is blocked up by our past sins and it is sure to be further blocked up by future sins—we ought, therefore, to rejoice that God has commended to us the open road of faith! God has chosen the way of faith that salvation might be by Divine Grace. If we had to do anything in order to save ourselves, we would be sure to impute a measure of virtue to our own doing, or feelings, or prayers, or almsgivings and we would thus detract from the pure Grace of God. But salvation comes from God as a pure favor—an act of undeserved generosity and benevolence—and the Lord will, therefore, only put it into the hand of faith, since faith arrogates nothing to herself. Faith, in fact, disowns all idea of merit, and the Lord of Grace therefore elects to place the treasure of His love in the hands of faith.

Again, it is of faith that there may be no boasting, for if our salvation is of our doing or feelings, we are sure to boast. But, if it is of faith, we cannot glory in self. “Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.” Faith is humble and ascribes all praise to God. Faith is truthful and confesses her obligation to the Sovereign Grace of God. I bless the Lord that He has chosen this way of faith because it is so suitable for poor sinners. Some among us, tonight, would never have been saved if salvation had only been prepared for the good and righteous. I stood before my God guilty and self-condemned. No youth ever had a keener sense of guilt than I had.

When I was convicted of sin, I saw my thoughts and desires to be vile in the sight of God—and I also became vile in my own eyes. I was driven to despair and I know that I could never have been cheered by any plan of salvation except that which is of faith. The Covenant of Works by reason of our weakness affords us no suitable way of hope at any time and, under certain circumstances, we see this very vividly. Suppose that you were in the last article of death? What good works could you do? Yonder dying thief found it a happy thing that by faith he could trust the Crucified One—and before the sun set could be with Him in Paradise! Faith is a suitable way for sinners and especially for sinners who are soon to die!

In some sense we are all in that condition and some of us, perhaps, are especially so. What man among us knows that he will see tomorrow’s

dawn? I bless God, again, that the way of salvation is by faith because it is a way open to the most unlearned. What fine theology we get nowadays—deep thinking they call it. The men go down so deep into their subjects and so stir the mud at the bottom, that you cannot see them and they cannot see themselves! I apprehend that teachers of a certain school do not, themselves, know what they are talking about. Now, if salvation were only to be learned by reading through huge folios, what would become of multitudes of poor souls in Bow, and Bethuel Green, and Seven Dials? If the Gospel had consisted of a mass of learning, how could the unlearned be saved?

But now we can go to each one of them and say, “Jesus died”—

“There is life in a look at the Crucified One!

There is life at this moment for you!”

However little you may know, you know that you have sinned. Know, then, that Jesus has come to put away sin and that whoever believes in Him is immediately forgiven and enters into eternal life. This brief and blessed Gospel is suitable to all cases, from princes to peasants, and we wonder not that faith was selected as the way of salvation.

III. But now, thirdly, I want to say a good deal, tonight, upon another question—HOW DOES FAITH OPERATE? For according to our text, it is, “Faith which works by love.” It is a living, laboring, loving faith which, alone, saves the soul. I cannot tell you what hard things I have heard about this doctrine of Salvation by Faith. They say that it is immoral. I have heard immoral men say so and surely they ought to know! They say that it will lead to sin and those who say so would, I should think, be rather pleased with it for that reason if they believed their own statement. I have never heard a *holy* man charge faith with leading him into sin. I know no man that follows after God and lives near to Him who is under fear that faith in God will tempt him to sin!

The fact is, faith does nothing of the kind! Its action is most distinctly the reverse. Like the prudent wife in Proverbs, faith will do a man good and not harm all the days of his life. First, it touches the mainspring of our nature by creating love within the soul. What is needed, now, for the degraded classes in London? Sanitary regulations? Certainly, if they are not allowed to be a dead letter for the need of someone to carry them out. New houses? By all manner of means—the more the better. Lower rents? Assuredly, for no one has a right to get an excessive rent for unhealthy accommodations. Higher wages? Certainly, we could all of us do with a little more.

Many other things are needed. While yonder gin-palaces remain at the corners of the streets, you will not make much headway in lifting up the masses and I suppose the drink-shops will always flourish while the taste for drink remains. Suppose the licensed poison-shops were shut up—would that suffice? I think not. There are men and women in London, and thousands of them, who, if they were put into the cleanest houses and were a mile away from a gin-shop, would still drink and still turn their houses into pigsties! What is needed? Oh, if you could make Christians of them! Suppose they could be born-again? Suppose they could be made to

love the things which they now hate, and hate the things which they now love? New hearts and right spirits are the need of London's outcasts!

How can these be produced? In the hand of God, the Holy Spirit—this is exactly what faith works in the heart! Here is a watch. "It needs cleaning." Yes, clean it. "It does not work. It needs a new crystal." Well, put in a new crystal. "It still does not work. It needs new hands." Get new hands by all means! Still it does not run. What is the matter with it? The maker says that it needs a mainspring. There's the seat of the evil—nothing can be right till that is rectified. Set all other matters going, but do not forget that the mainspring is the chief part of the business! Faith supplies the soul with a powerful spring of action. It says to the man, "You are forgiven through the blood of Christ who died for you—how do you feel towards Him?"

The man replies, "I love the Lord for redeeming me." Loving Jesus, the man has now within his soul the seed of every good. He will become a holier and a better being, for he has begun to love, and love is the mother of holiness. Is any service in the world like the service of love? You have a servant in your house, fawning and obsequious, but if you were to reduce his wages, he would show you the rough side of his tongue and seek another employer! You do not expect any more of him than that, but if you did, you would not get it. How different was an old servant I have heard of, who, when his master went down in the world, was content with half-pay! And when he was sorrowfully told that he must go, for his master could not afford him clothes, he made his old ones last him, for he would not leave his master in his old age.

He would rather have earned bread *for* his old master than have left him! He was an attached servant worth his weight in gold! There are few such servants nowadays, for there are not many such *masters*. This kind of service cannot be purchased, but its price is above rubies. When the Lord leads us to believe in Jesus, we become, from then on, His loving servants and serve Him not for reward, but out of gratitude! It is no longer with us so much work and so much pay—we do not fear the threat of Hell for disobedience, nor do we look to Heaven as won by works. No, no, our salvation is a free gift! It is furnished for us through infinite love and supreme compassion and, therefore, we return our heart's warmest affection. Our heart clings to that dear side which was opened for us. We feel a tender love to those dear pierced feet. We could kiss them every day.

Those blessed hands of the Crucified! If they do but touch us, we are strengthened, honored, comforted. Jesus is altogether lovely to us, our bosom Friend and Lord! Faith, instead of being a poor, paltry thing, as some imagine, is the grandest cause of love and so of obedience and holiness. Know, again, that faith puts us into a new relation. We are bound by nature to be the servants of God, but faith whispers in our ear, "Say, 'Our Father,'" and when the heart has received the Spirit of adoption, the aspect of service is entirely changed—mercenary service is succeeded by loving obedience and our spirit is altered! To become an heir of God, a joint-heir with Jesus, is to elevate work into delight, labor into fellowship with

God! The Law is no fetter to a child of God—it is his delight! Faith removes from the heart that form of selfishness which before seemed necessary.

So you hope to be saved by what you do, do you? May I ask you, Friend, whom you are serving in all this? I will tell you. You are serving yourself! All that you do is to win happiness for yourself. How, then, are you serving God? You are living a selfish life, though it is tinged with the color of spirituality. What is done by you in the matter of religion has no objective but that you may be saved and go to Heaven. Your most zealous work is all for *self*. Suppose I say to you, “I know that I am saved. I know that Jesus has put away my sin. I know that He will not permit me to perish”? Why, then, there is room in my case for the serving of the Lord because of what He has done for me! Now I have not myself to *save*—I have Christ to *serve*!

Gratitude is the motive of the Gospel and under its power, unselfish virtue is possible, but not upon the ground of legal service. Pure virtue, it seems to me, is a sheer impossibility till a man is saved because it always must partake, till then, of the low and groveling view of benefiting himself by what he is doing. When once the great transaction is done, and you are saved, then you are lifted up into a nobler sphere and you say—

***“Then why, O blessed Jesus Christ,
Should I not love You well?
Not for the hope of winning Heaven,
Nor of escaping Hell!
Not with the hope of gaining anything,
Not seeking a reward,
But as You have loved me,
O ever-loving Lord,
So would I love You, dearest Lord,
And in Your praise will sing
Solely because You are my God,
And my Eternal King.”***

Therefore faith inspires us with a higher motive than the Law can suggest. Faith soon creates love for man, for, if the Lord Jesus has saved you, my Brothers and Sisters, you will speedily desire that others may be saved, also. You have tasted of this honey and the sweetness upon your own tongue prevails you to invite others to the feast. He who has been brought into the liberty of Free Grace would set free every captive sinner if he could.

When well worked out, faith means harmony with God. It creates an agreement with the Divine will, so that whatever pleases God pleases us. If the Lord should set the Believer on a dunghill with Job, he would still bless His name. Faith agrees with the Divine Precept which it desires to obey; with the Divine Doctrine which it desires to know and publish. Yes, whatever is of God, Faith says, “It is the Lord, let Him command, teach, or do what seems Him good.” I have shown you that faith is not the trifling principle which its deprecators describe as, “Only believe.” Oh, that they knew what it is to only believe! It is the setting free of the mind from fetters. It is the dawn of Heaven’s own day. It is a lifelong struggle, this “Only believe.” It is “the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent.”

Brothers and Sisters, I believe that a humble, persevering faith in God is one of the highest forms of adoration that ever reaches the Throne of God. Though cherubim and seraphim salute the Lord with their, "Holy, holy, holy;" though the whole host of shining ones surround the Throne of God with perpetual hallelujahs, there is no more hearty reverence given to God than when a poor sinner, black as night, cries believingly, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." To believe in the pardon of sin is a wonderful adoration of the mercy and power of God! To believe in a constant Providence is a sweet way of worshipping God in His power and goodness!

When a poor laborer in his cottage, needing bread for his children, kneels down and cries, "Lord, it is written, 'Your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure!' I believe Your Word and, therefore, I look to You in my necessity." He renders a homage to the truth and faithfulness of God such as Gabriel could not give, for Gabriel never knew the pinch of hunger. To believe that God will keep us to the end and raise us to His Glory is more honoring to God than all the hymns of the glorified! From us dying sons of earth, when we confide in His promise, there arises up to Heaven incense of a sweet smell, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

To my mind there is also this about faith—that it has a marvelous power over God. Do you ask me to retract that expression? Let it stand! I will explain it. Faith overcomes the Highest upon His Throne. Faith in an inferior can hold a superior fast. Some years ago I was walking in the garden, one evening, and I saw a stray dog about whom I had received information that he was in the habit of visiting my grounds and that he did not, in the least, assist the gardener and, therefore, his attentions were not desired. As I walked along one Saturday evening, meditating upon my sermon, I saw this dog busily doing mischief. I threw my stick at him and told him to go home. But what do you think he did? Instead of baring his teeth at me, or hurrying off with a howl, he looked at me very pleasantly, took up my stick in his mouth and brought it to me! And then, wagging his tail, he laid the stick at my feet!

The tears were in my eyes—the dog had beaten me. I said, "Good dog! Good dog, you may come here when you like after that." Why had the dog conquered me? Because he had confidence in me and would not believe that I could mean him any hurt. To turn to grander things—the Lord Himself cannot resist humble confidence. Do you not see how a sinner brings, as it were, the rod of Justice to the Lord, and cries, "If You smite me, I deserve it; but I submit to You." The great God cannot spurn a trustful heart. It is impossible! He were not God if He could cast the soul away that implicitly relies on Him! This is the power of faith, then, and I marvel not that the Lord should have chosen it, for believing is a thing most pleasing to God!

O that you would all trust Him! God lifts His sword against you—run into His arms! He threatens you—grasp His promise! He pursues you—fly to His dear Son! Trust at the foot of the Cross in His full Atonement and you must be saved!

IV. Now, I am going to finish in a way suitable to this Luther memorial. You have heard a great deal about Luther's preaching salvation by faith

alone. Now, LET US TURN TO LUTHER'S LIFE and see what Luther himself meant by it. What kind of faith did Luther himself exhibit by which *he* was justified? First, in Luther's case, faith led him to an open avowal of what he believed. Luther did not mean to go up to Heaven by the back stairs, as many young men hope to do. You wish to be Christians on the sly, so as to escape the offense of the Cross. Luther did not refuse to confess Christ and take up his cross and follow Him. He knew that he, who with his heart believes, must also with his mouth make confession—and he did so right nobly.

He began teaching and preaching the Truth of God which had enlightened his own soul. One of his sermons displeased Duke George of Saxony, but as it saved a lady of high rank, Luther did not fret. He was not the man to conceal the Truth of God because it was dangerous to avow it. Tetzel came with his precious indulgences and his releases for souls in "purgatory." Thousands of good Catholics were indignant, but no one would bell the cat. Luther called Tetzel, "servant of Pope and of the devil," and declared, "As he came among us practicing on the credulity of the people, I could not refrain from protesting against it and opposing his odious career." Without mimicking words, or attempting to speak politely, Luther went at him, fearless of the consequences. He believed in the blessings of Grace, "without money and without price," and he did not conceal his convictions! He nailed his Theses to the Church door where all might read them.

When astronomers require a new constellation in the heavens let it be "the hammer and nails." O you who make no profession, let this man's outspoken faith rebuke you! His dauntless valor for the Truth of God caused him to be greatly hated in his own day with a ferocity which has not yet died out. Luther is still the best hated man in certain quarters. Witness the vile tracts which have been produced, during the last fortnight, to the disgrace of the press which they defile! I can say no worse nor better of them than that they are worthy of the cause in whose interest they are issued. Mention the name of Luther and the bond-slaves of Rome gnash their teeth! This intense ill-feeling proves Luther's power. Young men, I do not know what your ambition may be, but I hope you do not wish to be in this world mere chips in the porridge, giving forth no flavor whatever.

My ambition does not run in that line. I know that if I have no intense haters, I can have no intense lovers—and, by His Grace, I am prepared to have both. When right-hearted men see honest love of the Truth of God in a man, they cry, "He is our Brother. Let him be our champion!" When the wrong-hearted reply, "Down with him!" we thank them for the unconscious homage which they thus pay to decision of character. No child of God should court the world's approbation. Certainly Luther did not. He pleased God and that was enough for him. His faith was of this kind, also—that it moved him to a hearty reverence for what he believed to be Holy Scripture. I am sorry that he was not always wise in his judgment of what the Bible contains, but to him Scripture was the last court of appeal.

If any had convinced Luther of error out of that Book, he would gladly have retracted.

But that was not their plan—they simply said, “He is a heretic. Condemn him or make him retract.” To this he never yielded for an instant! Alas, in this age numbers of men are setting up to be their own inspired writers. I have been told that every man who is his own lawyer has a fool for his client, and I am inclined to think that when any man sets up to be his own savior and his own revelation, much the same thing occurs. That conceited idea is in the air at this present time—every man is excogitating his own bible. Not so Luther! He loved the Sacred Book! He fought by its help. It was his battle-ax and his weapon of war. A text of Scripture fired his soul, but the words of tradition he rejected. He would not yield to Melancthon, or Zwingli, or Calvin or whoever it might be—however learned or pious. He took his own personal faith to the Scripture and, according to his light, he followed the Word of the Lord. May many a Luther be in this place!

The next thing I note was the intense activity of his faith. Luther did not believe in God doing his work, so as to lie by in idleness. Not a bit of it! A disciple once said to Mohammed, “I am going to turn my camel loose and trust in Providence.” “No,” said Mohammed, “trust in Providence, but tie up your camel carefully.” This resembled Oliver Cromwell’s Puritan precept, “Trust in God, but keep your powder dry.” Luther believed above most men in keeping his powder dry. How he worked! By pen, by mouth, by hand! He was energetic almost beyond belief. He seemed a many-handed man. He did works which would have taxed the strength of hundreds of smaller men. He worked as if everything depended upon his own activity and then he fell back in holy trust upon God as though he had done nothing! This is the kind of faith which saves a man both in this life and in that which is to come.

Again, Luther’s faith abounded in prayer. What supplications they were! Those who heard them tell us of his tears, his wrestling, his holy arguments. He would go into his closet, heavy at heart, and remain there an hour or two, and then come forth singing, “I have conquered, I have conquered!” “Ah,” he said one day, “I have so much to do today that I cannot get through it with less than three hours’ prayer.” I thought he was going to say, “I cannot afford to give even a quarter of an hour to prayer”—but he *increased* his prayer as he increased his labor. This is the faith that saves—a faith that lays hold on God and prevails with Him in private supplication.

His was a faith that delivered him entirely from the fear of man. Duke George is going to stop him. “Is he?” said Luther. “If it were to rain Duke Georges, I would go.” He is exhorted not to go to Worms, for he will be in danger. If there were as many devils in Worms as there were tiles on the housetops, he would be there! And he was there, as you all know, playing the man for the Gospel and for his God. He committed himself to no man, but kept his faith in God pure and unmingled! Popes, emperors, doctors, electors were all as nothing to Luther when they stood against the Lord. Be it so with us, also! His was a faith that made him risk all for the Truth

of God. There seemed no hope of his ever coming back from Worms alive. He was pretty sure to be burned like John Russ—and the wonder is that he escaped. His very daring brought him safety from peril! He expressed his regret that the crown of martyrdom would, in all probability, be missed by him, but the faith which is prepared to die for Jesus was within him. He, who in such a case saves his life, shall lose it, but he that loses his life for Christ's sake shall find it unto life eternal! This was the faith that made Luther a man among men and saved him from priestly affectations.

I do not know whether you admire what is thought to be very superior religion. It is a thing of beauty, but not of use. It ought always to be kept in a glass case—it is made up for drawing-rooms and religious meetings, but would be out of place in a shop or on a farm. Now, Luther's religion was with him at home—at the table as well as in the pulpit. His religion was part and parcel of his common life and that life was free, open, bold and unrestrained. It is easy to find fault with him from the superfine standpoint, for he lived in an honest fearlessness. My admiration kindles as I think of the hearty openness of the man! I do not wonder that even ungodly Germans revere him, for he is all German, and all man! When he speaks, he does not take his words out of his mouth to look at them, and to ask Melancthon whether they will do. No, he hits hard and he has spoken a dozen sentences before he has thought whether they are polished or not!

Indeed, he is utterly indifferent to criticism and speaks what he thinks and feels. He is at his ease, for he feels at home. Is he not everywhere in his great Father's house? Has he not a pure and simple intent to speak the Truth of God and do the right? I like Luther with a wife and children. I like to see him with his family and a Christmas tree, making music with little Johnny Luther on his knee. I love to hear him sing a little hymn with the children and tell his pretty boy about the horses in Heaven with golden bridles and silver saddles. Faith had not taken away his manhood, but sanctified it to noblest uses. Luther did not live and move as if he were a mere cleric, but as a brother to our common humanity!

After all, Brothers and Sisters, you must know that the greatest divines have to eat bread and butter like other people. They shut their eyes before they sleep and they open them in the morning, just like other folks! This is matter of fact, though some stilted gentleman might like us to doubt it. They feel and think like other men. Why should they seem as if they did not? Is it not a good thing to eat and drink to the glory of God and show people that common things can be sanctified by the Word of God and prayer? What if we do not wear canonicals and so on? The best canonicals in the world are thorough devotion to the Lord's work! And if a man lives aright, he makes every garment a vestment, every meal a sacrament and every house a temple! All our hours are canonical! All our days holy days! Every breath is incense, every pulse music for the Most High!

They tell us that Luther ignored good works. It is true he would not allow good works to be spoken of as the means of salvation, but of those who professed faith in Jesus he demanded holy lives! Luther abounded in

prayer and charity. What an almsgiver Luther was! I fear he did not, at all times, dimly regard the principles of the Charity Organization Society! As he goes along, if there are beggars, he empties his pockets for them. Two hundred crowns have just come in, and, though he has a family about him, he cries, "Two hundred crowns! God is giving me my portion in this life." "Here," he says to a poor Brother minister, "take half! And where are the poor? Fetch them in. I must be rid of this!" I am afraid that his Catherine was forced, at times, to shake her head at him, for, in truth, he was not always the most economical husband that might be. In almsgiving he was second to none and in all the duties of life he rose far beyond the level of his age. Like all other men, he had his faults, but as his enemies harp on that string and go far beyond the truth, I need not dwell upon his failings. I wish that the detractors of Luther were half as good as he. All the glory of his grand career was unto the Lord, alone!

Lastly, Luther's faith was a faith that helped him under struggles that are seldom spoken of. I suppose that never man had greater soul-conflict than Luther. He was a man of heights and depths. Sometimes he went up to Heaven and he sang his hallelujahs. And then he went down, again, into the abyss with his "Miserere." I am afraid that great, vigorous man that he was, he had a bad liver. He was grievously afflicted in body in ways which I need not mention. And he was sometimes laid aside for months together, being so racked and tortured that he longed to die. His pains were extreme and we wonder how he endured them so well. But always, between the attacks of illness, Luther was up again preaching the Word of God. Those desperate struggles with the devil would have crushed him but for his faith. The devil seems to have been constantly assailing him and he was constantly assailing the devil.

In that tremendous duel he fell back upon his Lord and, trusting in Omnipotence, he put Satan to rout. Young men, I pray that a Luther may spring up from your ranks. How gladly would the faithful welcome him! I, who am more a follower of Calvin than of Luther, and much more a follower of Jesus than of either of them, would be charmed to see another Luther upon this earth! God bless you, Brothers and Sisters, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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CIRCUMCISION AND UNCIRCUMCISION

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A SERMON
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**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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***“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything
nor uncircumcision, but faith which works by love.”
Galatians 5:6.***

MAN appears to the most superficial observer to have, at any rate, two parts—his outward bodily form and constitution—and his inward, invisible, but essential self. There are some persons who care nothing for the inner man, who think that to educate the body and to have it in the finest state for athletic exercises is sufficient, but these persons are very few and very foolish, for the commonsense of mankind now holds that the mind must be trained, that the mental faculties must be put into healthy order and that the inner man must be cared for as well as the outer man. Who shall venture to say that the flesh is more important than the soul? He would be foolish who would attach no importance to the body. “Verily, bodily exercise profits a little,” says the Apostle, though it may be but a little. We are not to despise the body, nor to neglect it. We are not to consider it as a thing utterly unworthy of our regard in any respect. “Know you not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit” and, therefore, are neither to be despised, nor to be defiled? But, still, wisdom tells us that the inner man is more important than the outer and that we must care for that at all hazards, and see to its interests, come what may of the interests of the body.

Now true religion I may compare, in this respect, to man. *It*, too, has its two parts—the outward and the inward. I suppose every religion must have some outward way of displaying itself. Even our Quaker friends, who give up both Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, yet show their religiousness, even more conspicuously than most of us do, by a certain form of dress. And if there were nothing else, the mere sitting still in the meeting house for an hour would be an outward form—and I believe it is one which has a tendency to become as formal as any other method of worship. All religion, whether true or false, must have an outward part to it, that is, its body, and this outward part of religion, the body, is not to be despised, but is to be cared for and thoughtfully observed. But the tendency with most men is to put the outward form of religion into the

highest place and to think the most of it, just as I have said some think more of the body than they do of the mind.

Now this is all idle and foolish, for the outward form of religion, after all, is nothing without the inward spirit. No, it is worse than nothing—it is hypocrisy! It is an insult to Heaven and is more likely to bring a curse upon those who practice it, than it is to obtain for them a blessing! Inward worship, when it does not show itself outwardly, is acceptable to God, for, “God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth”—and spiritual worship, when it does show itself outwardly, is equally acceptable to Him, for He receives it for the sake of the Spirit which gives it life. But outward religion without the inward spirit is always to be classed under the list of offenses rather than of excellencies, for we believe an outward worship which does not carry the heart with it, to be abhorrent to God—

***“For God abhors the sacrifice
Where not the heart is found.”***

Yet, understand, the outward is to be observed, but without the inward it is nothing!

And now for our text. The Apostle first speaks about the outward part of religion, and then he tells us what the inward part of it is. In the first place we will have a few words on—

I. THE OUTWARD PART OF RELIGION.

Paul here speaks of it after that fashion. He says, “In Jesus Christ, neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision.” Before our Savior came into the world, circumcision was a thing of meaning. It was the seal of the Covenant. God had ordained it to be the outward token of the inward possession of certain remarkable privileges with which He had endowed the seed of Abraham. But after Christ came, circumcision lost its force and availed nothing—for this reason only—namely, that it had lost all *spiritual* meaning and was no longer the type of spiritual blessings and benefits. The Savior had been pleased to institute other ordinances which better set forth the spiritual Truth which He came to reveal, and circumcision, therefore, having no more any spiritual teaching in it, became a dead thing and the Apostle says that it avails nothing. Of course, it was, in Paul’s day, the outward mark of a firm believer in Judaism. The man who still held to the old faith was not to be led away by the innovations, as he supposed them to be, of Jesus of Nazareth, but still held that it was essential, first and foremost, that the seed of Israel should bear in the flesh the ordained mark. But the Apostle said that “circumcision avails nothing.” He put it on to the side. But what is remarkable, as showing the force of the Apostle’s meaning, is that he should have added, “Nor uncircumcision,” for while there were some who said, “I have received the seal of the Covenant—I am circumcised”—the Apostle said to them, “It avails nothing.” “Oh,” says another, but I, being a Jew, refuse to be circumcised. I, as a Jew, have come out and said that

my children shall no longer be initiated into the Jewish faith according to the Jewish custom. I have repudiated it—shall not I be saved? I have no faith in the customs of my fathers—surely it is well with me, for by this I have declared myself to be a follower of the Savior.” “No,” says the Apostle, “it makes no difference! You who are circumcised get no good by it and you who are uncircumcised get no good—neither the one nor the other is of any good to you!” He sweeps away the whole of the Jewish ceremony, both in its observance and in its non-observance! And so he gives it a twofold blow and lays it dead!

Now I do not think that the Apostle meant here to speak merely of circumcision, but of all other rites and ceremonies! I believe he would have us understand that while there is any spiritual meaning connected with them, they are valuable just as circumcision might have been valuable while there was any spiritual meaning connected with it—but that when we are not Believers, when we merely receive them outwardly, without knowing their spiritual meaning, or comprehending and receiving the spiritual Grace which they typify, they avail nothing—they are of no service, and that, indeed, in and of themselves, they are of no use whatever apart from that “faith which works by love.” Whether you were sprinkled in your infancy, or have been immersed as Believers, supposing you not to have been Believers, that immersion is as much a mistake as your previous sprinkling! You have not received any benefit from either, for there is nothing in either. The true essence of the thing lies in the *faith* which works by love, and if you have received it without faith, you have received nothing at all! You have received only the mere outward ceremony and there has no good come to your soul. You may have come to the Lord’s Supper. You may have received it kneeling, or received it standing, or received it sitting—if you have received it by faith, you have been enabled by faith to feed upon Christ to eat His flesh and to drink His blood. But if you have received it without faith, you have received nothing! No, you have done worse than that, for you have eaten and you have drank condemnation unto yourselves—you have taken the bread of the children, not being a child, and so you have stolen from the Father’s Table! You have entered into the court of the priests without being a priest and so you have committed the sin of Uzza—you have ventured to perform a sacrifice for which you were not fit— and it is a marvel of God’s long-suffering mercy that you have not received a curse for having intruded where you were never called! If you have come to Baptism and to the Lord’s Supper with the faith which works by love, you have doubtless received benefits by the ordinances—but if you have come without that faith—Baptism or no Baptism avails nothing whatever! There is nothing in any of those outward forms and ceremonies in themselves! They are only a dead and killing letter, a mystifying ceremony which drags men down to the things which are apparent. But when faith comes, it quick-

ens them and makes them live—it transforms them into blessed means of Grace and then God, in them, communes with the soul. I think it would be difficult to say too broadly or too strongly that outward ceremonies profit nothing in themselves. I know we are likely to be misunderstood, and that there would be some who would say that they would neglect these things altogether. If you wish to misunderstand us, you will. We wish to speak very plainly, but if we were misunderstood in that point, we would not regret it so much as we would if we were misunderstood upon the other, namely, that the outward form of religion is nothing but death, the mere letter, and not the spirit, and that only true vital faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can really bless the soul!

Now let us try to bring out this thought still more fully, that “neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision”—that is to say, that outward forms do not avail to change the life.

The change of the outward life is a very great part of salvation. A man cannot be saved from a sin in which he still indulges. It is clear that if a man is saved in the Scriptural sense, he is saved from his sins. The drunk becomes sober, the harlot becomes chaste, the unrighteous become religious. Now it is a matter of commonsense which I will put to anybody—whether there is any tendency in an outward ceremony to make a thief honest, or to make a drunk sober? Whether, in fact, sprinkling, or immersion, or receiving bread, or drinking of wine *have any tendency, in themselves, to produce any sort of moral effect upon the man?* When St. Francis Xavier went to India, he converted thousands of people, and made them Christians—and how do you think he did it? Why, by having on his belt a little pot of water and a large brush—as he went along, he sprinkled the people with the water and they were christened! They were Christianized, baptized and he put them all down as converts. Very well, legitimately so they were, I have no doubt, as much benefited by that as people are by infant baptism, and as much as people are by immersion, if they are immersed without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! We laugh at the thing when it is done on a large scale, and wonder that people can receive it—but we may equally laugh at it with scorn in any one individual instance! My dear Hearer, if you could really prove that an outward ceremony changed men, oh, how diligently would we practice it! If the consecrated wafer really does make men holy, oh, turn your houses into ovens and let there be bakers in every street! Happy bakers who can convert the minds of men! Happy wheat that can be ground so as to change sinners into saints! But where is the connection? Where is the connection between bread and the conscience? Where is the connection between water, either in drops or in floods, and the heart, the affections and the reason of man? Oh, Beloved, we know better than this! How is it, then, that men’s minds can cling to such superstitions? “You must be born-again” in order that an effect may be produced upon your minds

and hearts! You must know another influence than that which is outward! There must come upon you an unseen and invisible power which shall enlighten your understandings, control your souls, change your affections and so make your lives to be different from what they were! But oh, these outward things are but clumsy appliances! You might as well turn gas upon a fire to put it out, as try to save a soul by these outward forms! Circumcision and uncircumcision—neither of them avail anything in the moral life of man—and everybody knows that!

But, then, it is equally true that *they do not do anything to comfort a real awakened and quickened conscience*. I have no doubt that a great many people do derive a degree of comfort from going to church and chapel. You come here and sit in your pews and are very comfortable. Perhaps some of you go to sleep, but that does not lessen your comfort, but rather increases it. If the sermon were never so dull, perhaps it would be all the better for you, but it prevents your being quite as comfortable because it happens to be personal, and to be plainly and boldly spoken. I know there are hundreds and thousands of people in this country who would be greatly troubled in their minds if they did not go to church or chapel twice on Sundays—and they get comfort in this because their conscience is dead! If their conscience were really awakened, they would understand that there is no connection between conscience and outward forms. A conscious sinner, an awakened sinner, never can be lulled to sleep, again, except by that same voice which first awakened it! Conscience finds peace concerning sin when it finds sin laid upon the Savior. It gets peace concerning guilt when it sees Him smarting and bleeding unto death. When faith comes, conscience has peace with God through Jesus Christ, but I am certain that no conscience which God ever awakened from the dead found peace through Baptism, or through the Lord's Supper, or through any outward form! The conscience which is once awakened cries, "These things are good enough for saints. They may minister comfort to them, but I need salvation itself! I need Christ Himself—not things *about* Christ, but Christ—not merely to worship with His people, but to be one of them! "Putting aside the crucifix as it was held up to his eyes in his dying moments, and refusing the last unction, a dying monk cried out, "Tua vulnera Jesu! Tua vulnera Jesu!"—"Your wounds, O Jesus! Your wounds, O Jesus!" And this is what every awakened conscience will have to cry! It must be the blood of Jesus, not the sacramental wine! The washing of the bath that was filled with His Atonement—not any outward washing for the cleansing of the flesh! The reception of God the Holy Spirit into our souls, as a priest coming into a temple! The receiving of the love of Jesus into our hearts as an altar fire into a censor! The receiving of the love of God, Himself, our Father, so that we can say—

"Abba Father! Cry

With an unfaltering tongue.”

It is all this which the conscience needs and it will not be satisfied with anything short of this. “Faith which works by love” will quiet the conscience, but all else that you can do is but as singing a song to one that is of a sad heart—it yields no comfort to the soul.

If a man were very hungry, very hungry, indeed, I can imagine that if a person should say to him, “Sit down. I am going to play you a tune,” he would answer, “Oh, but give me something solid! Give me something substantial!” What would the other say? “Not pleased with music? Come, then, I will give you some painting. Look at that window, there, is not that finely done?” “Give me something solid! Oh, give me something solid!” “Well, but here comes a procession—are not these gentlemen very prettily arrayed? Is it not a gaudy show, worthy of any baby?” “Yes,” replies the man, “but I need something solid! I can eat neither processions, nor painted windows, nor music! I need something solid.” “Oh,” says the man, “but I must give you a rule to live by—here is one which was settled long ago by bishops—will not that satisfy you?” “No. Your rules and regulations may be all very good, but I need something solid, something to receive now.” Now the guilty conscience has an awful hunger within itself that cannot be satisfied with ritualism of the best and finest sort, but the conscience cries, “I need something to satisfy me! Tell me, how can God be Just, and yet be the justifier of the ungodly? That is the question. Tell me, how can God punish sin and yet forgive it? Tell me, what is to become of me while I am covered with all these iniquities? Tell me how I can get free from them.” Well, the Gospel comes and says, “The Lord Jesus Christ suffered in the place of all who believe on Him, and the moment you believe in Him you are completely saved! Your sin is gone, you are a child of God, your feet are on the Rock of Ages and you can never perish.” “Oh,” says the conscience, “that is what I need! That is the very thing I have been longing for! Here is the gracious God turning to me and saying, ‘I have blotted out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your iniquities.’” Ah, may God give us such a spiritual hunger as that, and there will be no fear that we shall ever be mystified about circumcision or uncircumcision, for we shall feel that neither of them avail anything! If we once get the faith that works by love, we shall be satisfied with favor and filled with the goodness of the Lord!

But now it remains for us to say that, as outward religion neither changes the morals of men, nor gives peace to an awakened conscience, *so neither can these outward things avail to take us to Heaven.* You will be deceived at the last, rest assured of that, if you rest on anything which only concerns these eyes of ours, these hands and these feet. If you are depending upon the things which are seen, they are, every one of them, temporal—they cannot be of any use to you when you come into the land of the things that are not seen—which are eternal! Oh, Soul, if you rest

upon a mortal hope, or a mortal thing, or an outward ceremony, or an outward form, you are resting on that which cannot have any efficacy in the unseen world! And when your soul comes to the grave and you look across the narrow stream of death into the dim eternity, you will then have no hope! It is very strange how God makes liars tell the truth. The priests do not pretend to offer you any hope, for what do they tell you? Do they ever say that these ceremonies will take you to Heaven? Not they! It seems as if God would not let Satan fabricate the lie, perfectly, for he has left a weak part in it. Where does the best believer in outward ceremonies go? Ask the priest, and he will tell you that he goes to “purgatory!” Did not Cardinal Wiseman go there? Did they not put upon the lid of his coffin, “Pray for the repose of his soul,” and was not that a proof that they believed he went where he needed to be prayed for and where he had no repose for his soul? Do not all the mightiest and greatest men of that church go there? Do not even the Popes go there? It is a poor consequence—that is all you can get, if you get anything! They cannot offer you anything better than this! But oh, if you get the “faith which works by love,” I will tell you what you will have—you shall have a good hope through Divine Grace, not of “purgatory,” not of the “limbos patrum,” but of being with Christ in Heaven as soon as your eyes are closed in death and, confident of this, you shall come to your dying bed, you shall lie there as long as God is pleased to spare you in your sickness, without doubt or fear! And when the last hour comes you shall have Grace to die, if not triumphantly, at least hopefully! You shall have preludes of the everlasting song, foretastes of the coming Glory and you shall die with some such song as this on your lips—

***“Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me!
Now shall my labors have an end
In joy, and peace, and thee!”***

It is singular, and strangely indicative of a trembling conscience, that those who preach up circumcision and uncircumcision dare not offer Heaven—but those who declare that salvation is by faith in Jesus can boldly say to every trembling sinner, “Fear not! If you believe in Jesus when you die, yet shall you be with Him in Paradise, ‘for there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus’ for they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand! Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is.” We shall not be in “purgatory,” but we shall be with Him, for His prayer to His Father for us was, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory.”

Thus have we said enough to show you that the outward form of religion avails nothing. Now we come to speak, in the next place, concerning—

II. THE INWARD PART OF RELIGION.

The text tells us that the inward part of religion is “faith which works by love.” Now what is faith? In one word, it is trust—the trusting of the soul in God’s promise made in Christ Jesus. My faith is that which enables me to believe that God is true, to believe that He sent His Son in the flesh to suffer for my sins, to believe that through the merit of His blood and the virtue of His holy life, I am saved. To trust in Him to save me—this is faith. It is not the faith of God’s elect to merely believe dogmas and truths, to believe them to be true, but to rest upon them, to trust in them, to repose one’s soul thereon! The very essence of Christianity is trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. But mark, we are told that this is *faith of a certain kind*—it is “faith which works by love.” It is not a faith that merely talks, much less a faith that goes to sleep, or a faith that bolsters men up in presumption and makes them live in sin, but a faith which works by love, a practical faith. It is a faith which has arms and hands—not a crippled faith—but a living thing which cannot help working! It is not a frozen river that is like stone in its bed, but rolling on, increasing and swelling until it comes to the sea. It is a living thing, a working thing! My faith is no faith at all if it does not operate upon my daily life. If I believe that Jesus Christ has saved me and I trust in Him, there are a great many things I cannot do which other people can do—and many things that I love to do which other people would not do and do not wish to do! If my religion never comes across me when I am in the shop, and stops me, and never comes to me when I am in the market place, then it is a religion which is not worth a button—and the sooner I am rid of it the better! It must be a working religion, practically operating upon the entire man. And this is the way in which it operates—it operates by love. It works by making us love Christ for what He has done for us. It works by making us love God, so that we say, “Lord, what is Your will, for we wish to submit to it”? And this makes us cheerful, happy and resigned. It works, in fact, by making us love the Lord Jesus Christ. If you do not love Jesus, then your faith is no faith, for the very sound of His name is precious to those who have true faith! It works by love to Him who Himself loved us and gave Himself for us! It works by love to God, who gave His Son—

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

Then faith also works by love to *the Brothers and Sisters*. A man has no faith if he does not love faithful men. It is a mark of the child of God that he loves the rest of the family. “We know that we have passed from

death unto life because we love the brethren”—not only the brethren who happen to be called by our denominational name—that is very easy! A hypocrite can do that—but *all* the saints! Whenever, as St. Basil used to say, we can see anything of Christ, there we ought to give something of Christian love, so that genuine faith loves all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and desire the good and prosperity of all the branches of the vine. And, mark you, this faith will work by love, even to your enemies! If you are a genuine Christian, you will love those who do not love you. It is very little to love our own relatives, though there are some who do not do even that. But to love our enemies is the mark of a true Christian—to be prepared to bear and to forbear, to endure, but never to inflict, to be reviled, but not to answer, not to rebuke, but to heap coals of fire upon the head of our foes by endeavoring to do all that we can for the good of those who do us ill. It was said of Thomas Cranmer, “Do my lord of Canterbury an ill turn and he will be your friend and give you help.” And it was said of another, that if you wanted to get a favor from him, the best thing you could do was to do him an injury, because then, when you asked him for anything, he was quite certain to say, “I will do it for you because you have been my enemy.” Let us seek for something of the same spirit! Let us love even those who are unlovable and who love us not.

Then I may say that one mark of this faith is that *it loves sinners*. God deliver you, as a Church and congregation, from that unloving spirit which never cares for the souls of men! I believe that to be an accursed theology which makes a preacher say, “I have preached to the living people of God. As for the dead, I have nothing to say to them.” A theology which dries up the milk of human kindness makes a man a cynic towards his own kind. And to have no care for his own flesh and blood is a theology that never came from Heaven, but from a very different quarter! I have seen the dupes of this theology callous about the conversion of even their own children! And I have heard them boast that they never speak to their children about religion—boasting of it as though it were not the most disgraceful thing that could be said! The Christian that cares not for his own household is worse than a heathen and a publican! We have heard some of these say that God will do His own work and, therefore, they never speak about Christ, and though this were not degrading themselves below the very basest idolaters, for even an idolater will speak well of his god and endeavor to bring others to bow before his blocks of wood and stone! But these persons, stupefied by a fatalism which is far more Muslim than Christian, leaves undone the work which God would have them do and which, if they had genuine faith in their souls, they would do! May God give us not a frozen faith like that, but a faith which works by love to the souls of sinners! You do not love Christ if you do not love sinners! He came into the world to seek and to save

them, and if you do not try to bring them to Him, you do not know Christ! How dwells the love of God in you if you have never cared for poor dying men?

So, then, it seems that the very soul and essence of true religion is this—the possession of a trust in Christ which, through the passion called, “love,” affects my whole being, moves me to the greatest activity, and restrains me from sin. Now, dear Friends, have you got this faith that works by love? “Oh, I am not baptized,” says one. Now I never asked you that question! I did not indeed. I only asked you, Have you got the faith which works by love? “Oh, Sir, I have been baptized.” I did not ask you that! I asked if you have got the faith which works by love? “Well, Sir, I am a member of the church.” What does that matter? That is not the point—the point is, have you the faith which works by love? If you have got that, you are going to Heaven! If you have not, you are on the high-road to Hell! If you have the faith which works by love, you may have a great many errors, you may make a great many mistakes, but your face is towards Jerusalem and you will get there! But if you have not the faith which works by love, you may be as orthodox as the Bible, itself, and you may be sound in theology as the Holy Spirit—and yet, even if all this were possible—you could never enter Heaven if you have not the faith which works by love. That is the essential thing, the one thing necessary.

I was struck, when thinking over this text, to find that in the next Chapter (Galatians 6:15) you get this truth in another shape. By comparing one text with another, you often get fresh light, and here you have it—“For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but”—but what? The faith which works by love? No, “but a new creature.” Well, then, these two things must be the same! My having the faith which works by love implies that I am a new creature! Now some of you have been puzzling yourselves about whether you have been born-again, whether you are new creatures. Have you got the faith that works by love? If so, you are a new creature, for you never saw a man in a natural state who had faith that works by love! He may have faith, a faith which makes him tremble like the devil, but the faith that works by love to Jesus Christ, no hypocrite ever did have or ever could have! What are you to apprehend, my dear Friends, if you love the Lord Jesus Christ and are trusting in Him? Do not let the devil perplex you by saying that perhaps you have not experienced regeneration, perhaps you have not felt this and have not felt that! You are right, and must be right, if you have the faith which works by love, for, according to the Scriptures, that is so evident a proof of being a new creature that it is tantamount to it! Hear how our Savior puts it. There were some who wanted to do the work of God and who said, “What shall we do that we may work the works of God?” What do you think Christ said to them? Did He say, “You must feel this, or feel that,” and so on? No! He said, “This is the work of God,

that you believe on Jesus Christ, whom He has sent.” This is the greatest work that God ever does—to make a man believe in His Son! Wherever a man is made to believe in Jesus Christ and to trust Him, you may see the finger of God. You may imitate 20 things in religion, but you cannot give a man true faith—it must be an act of Grace. No dead sinner ever did trust Christ! No unregenerate soul ever possessed the faith which works by love! And it may stand to you as a certain evidence of the new birth, if you have got the faith which works by love.

As I studied the subject farther, I was struck to find that in another text (Colossians 3:11) you get the same sentiment—“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” Now there are some who say, “I hope I am a new creature, but I am sometimes afraid whether Christ is mine.” Well, but it is the same thing! Christ is all and in all to you, and you are the very same people who are new creatures, and who have the faith that works by love! Then, dear Heart, if you are trusting in Christ, Christ is your All-in-All, and you need not say—

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

You are His, if you are trusting in Him with the faith that works by love! Oh, I think there are some of you who can say, “Well, I do trust Him. I have nowhere else to trust. I cannot trust in myself. I dare not rely on my prayers. I cannot depend upon any mortal thing, but the Lord knows that I do rest upon the blood of Jesus Christ. I am not deceived about that and, what is more, I do love Him, not as I want to love Him, not as I ought to love Him, but I do love Him. The sound of His name is sweet to me. I could not live without it and when I am at a distance from Him I cannot be happy. There was a time when I could be very happy and very contented without the Savior—when I could enjoy the theater, the ballroom and all the pleasures of the world, but I cannot now. It is all emptiness and vanity—vanity of vanity! I must have Christ! If others can do without Him, I cannot. I must have Him.”

Well, then, dear Soul, He is yours! He is your All-in-All. I spoke last Sunday of the limpets at the seaside, sitting on the rocks. It does not prove that the rocks belong to the limpets because the limpets sit there, but in your case you are just like a poor little thing flying to Christ—and that proves that Christ belongs to you, that He is yours in this world, and will be yours in the world to come! Then if I take hold of Christ, I know that He is mine! There was never a sinner who took Christ and then found that he had made a mistake. The woman who came to the Savior and touched the hem of His garment, and asked to receive a cure of the Savior, did not take the cure away, but He said, “Your *faith* has

saved you; go in peace.” If you can get Christ, Christ is yours. Trust Him with your soul, now, Sinner! You have no qualification. You have no goodness. You have no merits. Perhaps you have no good feelings, nor anything that is commendable. Well now, trust Him! Do you believe that He can save such a sinner as you are? Can you do Him the credit, Sinner, that such a lost and almost condemned sinner as you are can be saved by Him? If you have the power thus to believe in Him, it proves that you are saved, for you could not thus have believed unless He had visited you and given you Grace to do it! Can you do it now? The greater you feel your sin to be, the blacker you persuade yourself that you are tonight, the more can you honor Christ by casting yourself wholly on Him!

He who has no disease cannot honor the physician by saying he believes he can cure him, but he who has a disease through and through him, so that he is given up—when he says to the physician, “Sir, I believe that you can exterminate this disease and make me a healthy man”—does honor to his physician by his faith. You great sinners, you black sinners, you lost, ruined and undone sinners, the Lord help you now to trust Christ, and then you will honor Him, and give Him glory, and that is the best proof that He is in you and that you shall be with Him in the day of His appearing! It is faith that works by love that is the grand thing, and that is the same thing as being a new creature, and the same thing as having Christ to be our All-in-All.

May God give this to those of you who are seeking it, so that, having begun in the spirit, you do not end in the flesh, but walk in the liberty wherewith Christ shall make you free. Amen.

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

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

“THE OFFENSE OF THE CROSS”

NO. 2594

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, OCTOBER 30, 1898.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK,
ON A LORD’S-DAY EVENING IN THE YEAR 1856.**

*“And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer
persecution? Then is the offense of the Cross ceased.”
Galatians 5:11.*

THE religion of Jesus is the most peaceful, mild and benevolent religion which was ever promulgated. When we compare it with any set of dogmas invented by men, there is not one of them that can stand the least comparison with it for gentleness, mildness and love. As for the religion of Mohamed, it is the religion of the vulture—but the religion of Jesus is that of the dove—all is mercy, all is mild. It is, like its Founder, an embodiment of pure benevolence, Grace and truth.

And yet, strange to say, gentle as the Gospel is, and inoffensive as its professors have always proved themselves to be, when they have acted rightly—not resisting evil, but submitting to it, whatever it might be—yet there has never been anything which has caused more disturbance in the world than the Christian religion! It is not a sword and yet it has brought war into the world. It is not a fire and yet it has consumed many old institutions—and has burned much that men thought would last forever. It is the Gospel of peace and yet it has parted the dearest friends and caused terrible feuds and confusions everywhere! Though in itself it is all gentleness, yet it seems as if the standard of the dove were the standard of battle and as if raising up the peaceful Cross had been the signal for war, like the blood-red fiery Cross which of old they passed through Scotland to summon the clans to battle! Strange, yet strangely true it is, that the Cross of Christ has always been an offense and that it has provoked the fiercest battles and the sternest strifes which men have ever had with their fellow men.

In considering our text I shall, first, speak to you a little concerning *what “the offense of the Cross” is*. Secondly, as to *how men show their offense against the Cross*. Thirdly, I shall have a little to say to *those who are offended at the Cross*, to show them their folly. And, lastly, I shall conclude *by an inference or two, for the special benefit of Christian ministers and the Church at large*.

I. Let us enquire, first, WHEREIN DOES “THE OFFENSE OF THE CROSS” CONSIST?

Our limits forbid any attempt to be elaborate and we commence by saying that “the offense of the Cross” lies, *first, in the way in which it*

deals with all human wisdom. The philosopher puts his glasses to his eyes, looks at the Cross and then says, “I cannot see anything so very wonderful in it—even with these splendid glasses of mine, which can see more than that poor, humble peasant! I do not care about such a system of religion as that—any simpleton can understand the Cross.” So he passes by and merely sneers at it.

The man who loves controversy comes to the Gospel and finds that there is in it pure dogmatism. Such things are said to be true and sinners must believe them—or else be damned. “I shall not do so” he says. “I shall not yield implicit faith to the Gospel. I like disputing upon points of doctrine. I like to argue against them. I shall not listen to your preacher who says, ‘This is the Truth of God, the whole Truth of God and nothing else but the Truth.’ I will not hear the man who speaks thus authoritatively! I like men who will give me margin enough to doubt, who let me believe what I like and no more. I prefer to use my reason and common sense.” When you come to talk with him about the religion which says, “Believe that or else be lost. Believe that or else be shut out of the pale of salvation,” he turns on his heels and says, “I will not believe any such thing!” And when he asks what it is he is to believe, he professes himself to be wiser than the Word of God! “What?” he says, “believe in the Atonement? I can’t—it is contrary to my common sense. Believe the Doctrine of Election? Why, it shocks my humanity! Believe in the total depravity of human nature and the impossibility of being saved without being born again? Why, I cannot receive such teaching for a single moment! It is contrary to all that the scholars have ever taught and different from what any philosopher ever would have invented! So I shall not receive it.”

And he turns away with an anathema against the Cross. He cannot bear it because of its great simplicity! If he could describe it as being so amazing that he could by no means make the common people comprehend it—and that it was only because of his gigantic intellect that he was able to understand it, himself—he would not mind accepting it! But as it is so plain and simple, he turns away from it in disgust. He cannot bear the Gospel of the Cross—it has not worldly wisdom enough in it for him—and he either does not know or he forgets that the knowledge of Christ Crucified is the most excellent of all the sciences, and that never is reason so glorified as when it humbly sits down under the shadow of the Cross!

But there is something in the Cross of Christ which hurts men’s pride even more than this! And that is, *it is opposed to all their notions of human ability.* The man who is relying for salvation on his own strength does not like the Doctrine of the Cross. If anyone preaches a gospel which tells the sinner that he has power to save himself—if he preaches a gospel which says that Christ, having died to put all men in a salvable condition, they have only to exercise the power they have and they will be able to deliver themselves—if a man thus preaches something which exalts the skill and strength of the *creature*—he will never offend his unregenerate hearers! But if he once begins to cast the sinner down in the dust and to teach what Christ Himself taught—“No man can come to Me

except the Father which has sent Me draw him”—and that, in the Scriptures, all men are declared to be “dead in trespasses and sins,” then the proud sinner will turn away and say, “I am not going to be so insulted, to have all my powers leveled to the ground! Am I to be made into a mere machine, or into a piece of clay and to lie passive in the Potter’s hands? I will not submit to such an indignity!” If the minister will give him a little to do, himself, and let him sacrifice a little to his own idol, he will drink down the false doctrine as the ox drinks down water! But since we tell him he is powerless, like the poor bleeding man when the Samaritan met him, he says, “I will have nothing to do with you!”

And the Cross offends men, yet again, because *it goes clean contrary to their ideas of human merit*. There is not a soul in all the world that, by nature, loves to be stripped of all merit. No, the last thing a man likes to part with is his righteousness. I have known poor sinners stand on Sinai’s top until their knees knocked together, yet they have clung to their self-righteousness even there! I have known men stand where God’s earthquakes were shaking the ground under their feet and the thunder and lightning were playing above their heads, yet they *still* held fast to their self-righteousness! It is a hard thing to get that away from men. You know how Bunyan says that when Great-Heart slew Giant Despair, the giant “had, as they say, as many lives as a cat.” And I am sure that self-righteousness has many more lives than that—it is the hardest thing in the world to kill! You may cut the evil weed, self-righteousness, up, but when you think you have got to the last root of it, it will be shooting up again before you can sharpen your knife to cut it up once more! This evil thing is bred in man’s nature. When you preach against it, see how men will roar at you—they cannot bear that teaching!

I sometimes receive letters from persons who say, “We would not be surprised if all your congregation were to live in sin because you are always preaching against man’s righteousness and inviting poor sinners to come to Christ by simple faith—and to be saved by Grace, alone.” I dare say they would not be surprised if such a thing were to happen, but I would be surprised if my people, as a whole, lived in sin! I bless God that I have no cause to wonder about that matter, for a holier people you will not find this side of Heaven than those who receive into their hearts the Doctrine of Christ’s Imputed Righteousness. This I will say of them, that Grace has worked good fruits in them, that they walk in the fear of the Lord, in love to one another and in the practice of uprightness and godliness. But men of the world cannot stand this teaching because it makes nothing of the merits of which they think so much! Tell men that they are a very good sort of folk—they love to hear that! Give people a good compliment of themselves and they will like to listen to you—but that self-conceit is the ruin of tens of thousands! I am sure it is only when we begin to say—

**“I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my All-in-All”**

—that we are saved. But as long as we are content with ourselves in our natural sinful condition, there is not the slightest hope for us. So, you

see, this is “the offense of the Cross,” that we do not let men trust in their own merits!

But there is another offense which is a very grievous one and the world has never forgiven the Cross that “offense” yet—*it will not recognize any distinctions between mankind*. The Cross makes moral and immoral persons go to Heaven by the same road! The Cross makes rich and poor enter Heaven by the same door! The Cross makes the philosopher and peasant walk on the same highway of holiness! The Cross procures the same crown for the poor creature with one talent that the man with 10 talents shall receive. Therefore, the wise man says, “What? Am I to be saved by the same Cross which saves a man who does not know his letters?” Your fine lady asks, “Am I to be saved in the same fashion as my servant girl?” The gentleman says, “Am I to be saved the same way as that chimney-sweep?” And he who boasts of his self-righteousness cries, “What? Am I to jostle against a harlot, to elbow a drunk on the road to Heaven? Then, I will not go to Heaven at all.” Then, Sir, you will be lost! There are no two roads to Heaven—it is the same road for everyone who goes there—and therefore, the Cross has always been offensive to men of mark and might. Few kings and queens have ever bent humbly before it. Men have covered up the Cross with some fine decorations and they have said that they loved it—but it was not the Cross they cared for—it was the gaudy ornaments! If it had been the simple Cross, they would have dragged it through the streets, as Mohamed’s people did with the cross at Jerusalem.

II. This brings me now to tell you, in the second place, HOW PERSONS SHOW THEIR OFFENSE AGAINST THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

In olden times they did it by burning, torturing and tormenting Christians, making them suffer all kinds of indescribable agonies. But that method did not work, so the devil now adopts other measures. He found that the more he oppressed them, like Israel in Egypt, the more they multiplied—so now he acts in another fashion. How does he do it? Not exactly by open persecution, but “the offense of the Cross” shows itself, sometimes, by *private persecution*. You do not, all of you, hear of the persecution that is going on with regard to the Lord’s people. Every now and then things of this sort come to my notice, though you may not know of them. How many drunk husbands there are who persecute their wives almost incessantly because they cleave fast to God? How many a young man, how many a young woman is there who is called to suffer persecution from father and mother and sister and brother, for Christ’s sake? Persecution is not over—it works slyly and comes not out openly before the world. It comes not out into Smithfield, as it did of old, though there may be many a house in the neighborhood of Smithfield that reeks with it. It comes not out in an honest garb, but watches for its prey in a covert way. It is not the lion, but the prowling jackal, though it is as wild and as ravenous as ever.

And when persecution does not display itself in positive acts, it operates by means of jeers and scoffs—by the shrug of the shoulder and, let me say, more men have been ruined by this practice than by the worse

slanders! Men who shrug their shoulders generally do a deal of mischief, though they may not know it. When, sitting at table, I have mentioned a person's name and someone has shrugged his shoulders and said, “Oh”—the man's character was half gone! If the person had anything to say against the other, why could he not say it right out and not leave us in the dark to surmise all manner of iniquities? Another man will say, “I don't wish to persecute you. You can go to Chapel as often as you like.” Yet there is, on his face, the cold sneer and on his lips, the cruel jest or slander! Every idle rumor is circulated and everything that can be invented against the minister of the Gospel and against Christian people—all still showing that there is now—as there was in the days of the Apostles, an “offense of the Cross.”

But I will tell you what is the favorite plan, nowadays. It is not to oppose the Cross, but *to wind round the Cross and try to get the Cross to alter its shape a little*. Men who hate the Doctrines of the Cross, say, “We, too, preach the Gospel.” They alter it. They misshape it. They make it “another gospel, which is not another.” Let others say, if they will, that yes and no can meet together, that fire and water can kiss each other, that Christ and Belial can be twins—the true minister of Jesus Christ cannot do that! Truth is Truth and whatever is the opposite of it cannot be truth. The Truth of God is one and that which opposes it must certainly be error and falsehood. But it is the fashion to try to blend the two things together. Look at very many of the churches—they say that they hold to the Truth of God. Look at their articles—they have all the five points of Calvinism. And if you ask the ministers whether they believe the Doctrine of Election—“Certainly,” they reply. If you ask them whether they believe all the great cardinal Truths of the Gospel, they say, “Oh, yes, certainly we believe them! But we do not think they ought to be preached to the common people.”

Ah, Sirs! You have a fine notion of yourselves if you do not think that “the common people” are as good as you are and that they can receive the Doctrines of Grace as well as you can! “Oh, but those doctrines are dangerous! They drive the people to Antinomianism” They say this, but when we write to them, they reply, “Oh, we are as sound as you are!” Yes, but it is one thing to be sound, and another thing to preach sound Truth! I will never believe a man to be better than what he preaches. If a man does not proclaim “the Truth of God, the whole Truth of God, and nothing but the Truth,” we like him none the better, but 10 times worse because he says that he believes it! We would rather he did not believe it at all than that he should conceal his real sentiments. Such men, who hide the Truth of God, prove that they are as much offended with the Cross as if they openly tried to refute its doctrines! God send us the day when the pure, unadulterated Doctrines of the Grace of God, which is in Christ Jesus, shall be proclaimed in every church and heard in every street and received by every professed Christian!

III. Now I come, in the third place, TO SAY SOMETHING TO THOSE WHO ARE OFFENDED AT THE CROSS.

First, let me say that *it is very foolish of a man who does not believe the Gospel to oppose those who do*. If a man does not, himself, love the Gospel, he should leave alone other people who do. You have often heard the old fable of the dog in the manger, but here is something worse—here is the dog *out* of the manger—he does not even lie on the hay, and yet he barks at those that come to feed upon it! He does not love the Gospel and because others do, he hates them! Why, surely, what you do not want yourselves, you might let other people have in quietness! You need not oppose them for carrying away what you count worthless rubbish! Why should you be so offended and endeavor to make a stand against the Truth of God, since you cannot, in your present condition, get anything out of it and may burn your fingers for your pains?

Then, next, *how foolish it is to be offended at the Cross, seeing that you cannot stop its progress!* He who should place himself before Juggernaut's car to be crushed would be as wise as you who are opposing the Gospel. If it is true, remember, “The Truth of God is mighty and must prevail.” Who are you to attempt to stand against it? You will be crushed, but let me tell you that when the car goes over you, the wheel will not be raised even an inch by your size! For what are you? A tiny gnat, a creeping worm which that wheel will crush to less than nothing and not leave you even a name as having been an opponent of the Gospel! There have been men who have stood up and said, “We will stop the chariot of Christ.” Thousands have looked at them and have been afraid. Their trumpets have blown loud and long and some poor Christians have said, “Stand aside! Here comes a man who will stop the chariot of the Lord Jesus.”

At one time, it was Tom Paine. Then it was Robert Owen. But what became of them? Did the chariot stop for them? No, it went on just as if there had never been a Tom Paine or a Robert Owen on the earth! Let all the infidels in the world assuredly know that the Gospel will win its way, whatever they may do. Poor creatures! Their efforts to oppose it are not worthy of our notice and we need not fear that they can stop the Truth of God! As well might a gnat think to quench the sun! Go, tiny insect, and do it, if you can! You will only burn your wings and die. As well might a fly think it could drink the ocean dry. Drink the ocean, if you can—more likely you will sink in it and so it will drink you! You who despise and oppose the Gospel, what can you do? It comes on “conquering and to conquer.” I always think that the more enemies the Gospel has, the more it will advance. As the old warrior said, “The more enemies there are, the more there are to be killed, the more there are to be taken prisoners and the more there are to run away.” Double your hosts, you opposers! Come on against us with a still mightier power! Rage yet more loudly! Slander us yet more foully! Do what you can, victory is ours, for it is predestinated! The massive column of Divine Predestination stands firm and on its top there are the eagle wings betokening victory for every Believer and for the whole Church of Christ! God's Truth must and shall conquer, therefore, do *you*, foolish creature, hope to oppose the Gospel because it

offends you? The Stone cut out without hands cannot be broken by you—but if it fall upon you, it will grind you to powder!

But another thought, and I have done with this part of my subject. O man, if you hate the Gospel, let me solemnly say to you how *doubly foolish you are to be offended with Christ, who is the only One who can save you!* As well might the drowning man be offended with the rope which is cast to him and which is the only means of his escape! As well might the dying patient be offended with the cup of medicine which is put to his lips and which, alone, can save his body from death! As well might the man whose house is burning be offended with the fireman who roughly puts the fire escape ladder against his window—as that you should be offended with Christ! Offended with Him who would snatch you as “a brand from the burning”? Offended with Him who, alone, can quench for you the fire of Hell? Offended with Him whose blood, alone, can wash you white and give you a place with Him in Glory everlasting? Offended with Him? Then you are mad, indeed! Not Bedlam, itself, can produce a maniac more foolish than you are!

Ah, you despisers, you shall wonder and *perish!* You are offended with the Gospel because it says that you have not any merit, but you have not any—then why are you offended? You are offended at the Gospel because it does not ask anything of you in order that you may be saved, yet if it did demand anything of you as a condition of your salvation, you would be lost! It is just the Gospel for you—it is made on purpose—it fits your condition! It is adapted to your case and yet you are offended with it? Oh, how can you be so foolish? Did you ever hear of a man who was offended with a coach that was carrying him because it had wheels? Why should you be offended with the Gospel chariot because it could not advance except on the wheels of Free Grace? What? You are offended with the Gospel because it lays you low? Don't you know that it is the very best place for you? The devil would have you very high if he could, but that would be only that he might ruin you!

My dear Friends, I beseech you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, think about why you are offended with the Gospel! I know it goes against your prejudices. When you first hear it, you do not love it, but, remember, it is your only hope of salvation. Are you offended with that which alone can save you? Offended with that which can put a crown on your head, a palm branch in your hand and give you bliss forever? Then, I think when you sink to Hell, you will look up to Heaven and say, “Ah, Christ! I was offended with You, but now I see that You are the only Savior. I hated Your name, of which it is written, ‘At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow.’ I hated that Savior who was the only Savior to redeem sinners from sin.”

IV. Lastly, I am TO DRAW ONE OR TWO INFERENCES.

The first is this, *If the Cross of Christ is an offense and always was an offense, what is the reason why so many professed Christians go on so easily from January to December and never have any trouble about it?* Old John Berridge said, “If you do not preach the Gospel, you may sleep soundly enough. But if you preach it faithfully, you will hardly have a

sound place in your skin, for you will soon have enemies enough assailing you.” How is it that we never hear of any slander against a great many ministers? Everything goes easily and comfortably with them. Nobody is ever offended with their preaching. People go out of their chapel doors and say, “What a nice sermon! It was just the thing for everybody, and nobody could be offended.” They do not fully preach the Gospel, or they would be sure to offend some people! Suppose that somebody says to me, “Do you know that Mrs. So-and-So was fearfully offended with your last sermon?” That is no trouble to me if I know that I have preached the Truth of God! A celebrated preacher was once told that he had pleased all his hearers. “Ah,” he said, “there is another sermon lost.”

The most effective sermons are those which make opposers of the Gospel bite their lips and gnash their teeth. “That preaching is worth little,” Rowland Hill used to say, “that cannot make the devil roar. He preaches but very little of the Truth of God who does not set the old lion roaring against him.” Depend upon it, Satan does not like the Gospel any better than he did—and the world does not like the Gospel any better than it did—and if there is not, nowadays, so much persecution and hatred as there used to be, it is because men do not proclaim the plain, simple Truth of God as their forefathers did! People go to hear nice velvet-tongued preachers. They like the minister to prophesy smooth things to them! “I won’t go to hear Mr. So-and-So,” says one, “for he will be sure to offend me.”

Now what is the reason for this? It is because he preaches the whole Gospel, the pure Truth of God! But do men imagine that we *want* to offend them? No, God knows the hard things we often say cause us more pain than they cause to our hearers. But it is a good thing when we care little for the opinion of men and when we have learned to live above the world. Once let ministers faithfully proclaim the plain, simple Gospel, and we shall soon hear the laughter, scorn and jeers. It was an ill day when the sons of God made affinity with the daughters of men. And it will be an ill day for the Church of Christ when the world speaks well of it and everybody commends it. The denomination that is most spoken against is usually the one where Christ most dwells! But the denomination that is flowing in plenty and dandled on the knees of honor is usually the most corrupt! Preach the Gospel boldly, steadfastly, steadily, strongly, out-and-out—and you will not be long without hearing something about “the offense of the Cross.”

My last remark is this. O my Brothers and Sisters, *how many reasons we have to bless and extol our gracious God if the Cross of Christ is not an offense to us!* I hope many here can unite with me in saying that there is nothing in the Bible that offends us and there is nothing in the Gospel that now offends us. If there is anything you do not understand, you do not hate it—if it seems dark and mysterious, you do not reject it, but you are willing to learn all you can about it. Ah, my God, if all I have ever preached is false, I stand prepared to disown it when You shall teach me better! If all I have ever learned is a mistake and I have not learned it from You, I will not be ashamed to recant it in that hour when You shall,

Yourself, teach me and show me my error. We are not ashamed to bring ourselves wholly into the mold of Scripture, to take it just as it stands, to believe it and to receive it. And if you are in that state, mark you, you are saved, for no man can say that he accepts the Gospel wholly, loves it all, and receives it in his heart—and can yet be a stranger to it!

I have heard preachers ignorantly talk about “natural” love to the Gospel—there cannot be such a thing! I heard someone say that there was a “natural” love to Christ—it is all rubbish! Nature cannot beget a love to Christ, nor love to *any* good thing—that must come of God, for all love is from Him! There is nothing good in us by nature. Every conviction must, in some way or other, come from the Holy Spirit. Even if it is a temporary one, it must be traced to Him if it is good. Oh, let us adore, exalt and magnify the mighty Grace that has made us love the Gospel! For I am sure, with some of us, there was a time when we hated it as much as any people in all the world ever did. Old John Newton used to say, “You who are called Calvinists—though you are not merely Calvinists, but the old, legitimate successors of Christ—you ought, above all men, to be very gentle with your opponents, for, remember, according to your own principles, they cannot learn the Truth of God unless they are taught of God. And if you have been taught of God, you ought to bless His name—and if they have not, you should not be angry with them, but pray to God to give them a better education.” Do not let us make any extra “offense of the Cross” by our own ill humor, but let us show our love to the Cross by loving and trying to bless those who have been offended with it.

Ah, poor Sinner, what do you say? Are you offended with the Cross? No, you are not, for it is there that you wish to lose your sins. Do you desire this moment to come to Christ? You say, “I have no offense against Christ. Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! I would come, even, to His seat.” Well, if you want Christ, Christ wants you; if you desire Christ, Christ desires you! Yes, more! If you have one spark of desire after Christ, Christ has a whole burning mountain of desire after you. He loves you more than you can ever love Him! Rest assured that you are not first with God. If you are seeking Jesus, He has first sought you. Come, then, you destitute, weary, lost, helpless, ruined, chief of sinners! Come, put your trust in His blood and His perfect righteousness, and you will go on your way rejoicing in Christ, set free from sin, delivered from iniquity, rendered as safe, though not as happy, as the very angels that now sing high hosannas before the Throne of the Most High!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: GALATIANS 1.

Verse 1. *Paul, an Apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead).* Paul begins this Epistle by stating his commission as an Apostle. In Galatia he had been subjected to the great sorrow of having his Apostleship called in question. Does he, therefore, give up his claim to the office and retire

from the work? No, not for a moment! He begins his letter to the Galatians by declaring himself to be “an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ.” His enemies had said, “Paul was never one of the Savior’s 12 Apostles. He is not like those who were trained and educated by Christ, Himself. No doubt he has borrowed his doctrine from them and he is only a retailer of other men’s goods.” “No, no,” says Paul, “I am an Apostle as truly as any other of the twelve! ‘Not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.’”

2. *And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia.* Paul always loved to associate others with him in his Christian service. He was not one who wanted to ride the high horse and to keep himself aloof from his Brethren in Christ. He frequently mentions the true-hearted men who were with him, even though they were far inferior to him in talent and also in Grace. He often joins with himself such men as Timothy and Silvanus, and here he puts in, “all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia.”

3. *Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.* It is the genius of the Gospel to wish well to others. Hence Paul begins the actual Epistle with a benediction—“Grace be to you and peace.” Dear Friends, may you all have a fullness of these two good things! Grace rightly comes first and peace afterwards. Peace before Grace would be perilous—no, more, it would be ruinous! But may you always have enough of Grace to lead you on to a deep and joyful peace! The two things go together very delightfully—Grace and peace—and it is the best of Grace, and the best of peace, since they come “from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.”

4. *Who gave Himself for our sins.* There is the Doctrine of the Atonement which Paul always brings into his preaching and writing as soon as he can—“Who gave Himself for our sins.” Well does Luther say, “Christ never gave Himself for our righteousness, but he gave Himself for our sins because there was no other way of saving us except by a Sacrifice for sin.” The substitutionary Character of Christ’s death is always to be noticed. “Who gave himself for our sins.”

4, 5. *That He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.* Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself puts away our sin in order that we may rise out of it and may become a pure and holy people, delivered from this present evil world and brought into obedience to the will of God. Now we come to quite another topic.

6. *I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that called you into the Grace of Christ, unto another Gospel.* The Galatians were a very fickle people. Some have said that they were a colony from Gaul—Galatians—and that they partook somewhat of the fickleness which is attributed to the character of the Gaul. I know not how true that may be, but, certainly, they seem very soon to have left the Gospel—to have adulterated it and to have fallen into Ritualism—into Sacramentarianism, into salva-

tion by works, and all the errors into which people usually fall when they go away from the Gospel.

7. *Which is not another. But there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.* “Another Gospel, which is not another,” for there are not two gospels, any more than there are two gods. There is one only message from God, of good news to men, and if you turn away from that, you turn away to a lie, to that which will bring you trouble, to that which will pervert you and lead you astray!

8. *But though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* Paul is no fanatic, no raving enthusiast, yet he cannot endure the notion of a false Gospel! In his solemn anathema, he includes himself and all the Brothers with him, yes, and the very angels of God if they “preach any other Gospel.” Let him be accursed, he says, and so he is.

9. *As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed.* The modern style of speaking is, “Let us fraternize with him. He is a man of original thought. Surely, you would not bind all men down to one mode of speech. Perhaps if he has made mistakes, you will bring him round to your way of thinking by receiving him kindly into your fellowship.” “No, no,” says Paul, “As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed.”

10. *For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.* He would not be the servant of Christ if he pleased men. Those whom we try to please are our masters! If a man tries to please the populace, or to please the refined few, those are his masters and he will be their slave. But if he tries to please his God, then is he a free man, indeed!

11, 12. *But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.* Paul foresaw what would be said about him later and truly, to this day, the fiercest attack upon Christianity is always made upon the teaching of the Apostle Paul. The men who creep in unawares among us talk glibly about having great reverence for Christ, but none for Paul. Yet Paul is Christ’s Apostle! Paul speaks only what was personally revealed to Him by the Lord, Himself, and he is, in everything, to be accepted as speaking by Divine Revelation.

13, 14. *For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure, I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.* He was an out-and-out Jew. He never took up anything without going through with it thoroughly. So, while he believed in Judaism, he really did believe it. He was no hypocrite, no pretender—he fought for it tooth and nail! This was the man who afterwards preached the Christianity he had received from Christ! Evidently he did not borrow it from his parents, for they had taught him quite differently. His religion was not

the product of his training, but it came to him from God—to him who seemed to be the most unlikely person in the whole land to ever receive it!

15, 16. *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His Grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.* He felt Divinely called to preach the Gospel. Christ revealed Himself to him on the way to Damascus. As soon as he was converted, he did not wait for anybody to ordain him, or to teach him further, but he says, “I conferred not with flesh and blood.”

17. *Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me, but went into Arabia.* What he did there, we do not know, but probably he had a time of quiet meditation and prayer, all alone. “I went into Arabia.” The best thing we can do, sometimes, is to get away from the voices of men and listen only to the voice of God. “I went into Arabia.”

17. *And returned again unto Damascus.* To bear witness for Christ in the very city where he had gone to persecute the saints!

18. *Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.* That is, “after three years,” which showed that he did not go there to receive any commission from Peter. He had been, for three years, working for his Lord and Master before he ever saw the face of an Apostle!

19. *But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother.* He had an interview with the Apostle James. James was probably the chief minister of the Church at Jerusalem, so Paul went and had a conversation with him.

20. *Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.* “I did not derive my knowledge of Christ from any one of these holy men, therefore I am not an imitator of any other Apostle. I was sent out by Christ, Himself, and instructed by Him by Revelation, so I am an Apostle of Christ as much as any of them.”

21, 22. *Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia and was unknown by face unto the Churches of Judea which were in Christ.* They did not know him. It is evident that he had not been there to be taught by them, or else they would have recognized their illustrious pupil.

23, 24. *But they had heard only that he which persecuted us in times past now preaches the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me.* Brothers and Sisters, may you and I so live that Christian people may glorify God in us! May they often wonder at the mighty Grace which has worked such a change in us! And as they see us zealous and fervent, may they marvel at the amazing Grace of God which has brought us to be so consecrated to Christ!

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

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT—JOY

NO. 1582

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 6, 1881,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is joy.”
Galatians 5:22.

OBSERVE, “the fruit of the Spirit,” for the product of the Spirit of God is one. As some fruits are easily divisible into several parts, so you perceive that the fruit of the Spirit, though it is but one, is threefold, no, it makes three times three—“love, joy, peace; longsuffering, gentleness, goodness; faith, meekness, temperance”—all one! Perhaps “love” is put first not only because it is a right royal virtue, nearest akin to the Divine perfection, but because it is a comprehensive Grace and contains all the others. All the commandments are fulfilled in one word and that word is “love.” And all the fruits of the Spirit are contained in that one most sweet, most blessed, most heavenly, most God-like Grace of love. See that you abound in love to the great Father and all His family, for if you fail in the first point, how can you succeed in the second? Above all things, put on love, which is the bond of perfectness.

As for joy, if it is not the first product of the Spirit of God, it is next to the first, and we may be sure that the order in which it is placed by the Inspired Apostle is meant to be instructive. The fruit of the Spirit is love, first, as comprehensive of the rest—then joy rising out of it. It is remarkable that joy should take so eminent a place! It attains unto the first three and is but one place lower than the first. Look at it in its high position and if you have missed it, or if you have depreciated it, revise your judgment and endeavor with all your heart to attain to it, for depend upon it—this fruit of the Spirit is of the utmost value!

This morning, as I can only speak upon one theme, I leave love for another occasion and treat only of joy. May its Divine Author, the Holy Spirit, teach us how to speak of it to our profit and His Glory! It is quite true that the Spirit of God produces sorrow, for one of His first effects upon the soul is holy *grief*. He enlightens us as to our lost condition, convicting us of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. And the first result upon our heart is astonishment and lamentation. Even when we look to Christ, by the work of the Spirit one of the first fruits is sorrow—“They shall look on Him whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for Him, and be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.”

But this sorrow is not the ultimate objective of the Spirit's work—it is a means to an end. Even as the travail of the mother leads up to the joy of birth, so do the pangs of repentance lead up to the joy of pardon and acceptance. The sorrow is, to use a Scriptural figure, the blade, but the full corn in the ear is joy. Sorrow helps the fruit on, but the fruit, itself, is joy. The tears of godly grief for sin are all meant to sparkle into the diamonds of joy in pardoning love. This teaches us, then, that we are not to look

upon bondage as being the objective of the work of the Spirit of God, or the design of the Lord in a work of Grace. Many are under bondage to the Law—they attempt to keep the commands of God—not out of love, but from slavish fear. They dread the lash of punishment and tremble like slaves. But to Believers it is said, “You are not under the Law, but under Grace” and, “You have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

To be in bondage under the Law, to be afraid of being cast away by God and visited with destruction on account of sin after we have trusted in Jesus—this is *not* the work of the Spirit of God in Believers, but the black offspring of unbelief or ignorance of the Grace of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! Neither is a painful dread or a servile terror a fruit of the Spirit. Many worship the Lord Jesus, Himself, at a distance—they know not that Believers are “a people *near* unto Him.” They are afraid of God and they never delight in Him. They attend to worship, not because they rejoice in it, but because they think it must be done. Their secret feeling is—“What a weariness it is,” but necessity compels. They know nothing of a child’s joy in sure and full forgiveness, spoken by the Father’s own lips as He pressed them to His bosom.

His kiss was never warm upon their cheek. The ring was never on their finger, nor the best robe upon their shoulders. The music and the dancing of the joyous family who are in harmony with the father’s joy over the lost son have never charmed their ears. They are still under dread, which is the fruit of *superstition* rather than “the fruit of the Spirit.” Many things they do and suffer and all in vain—if the Son did but make them free, they would be free, indeed! I know some whom I am very far from despising, but whom, on the contrary, I greatly value, whose religion, sincere as I know it is, is sadly tinged with gloomy colors. They are afraid of Assurance, for they dread presumption! They dare not speak of their own salvation with the certainty with which the Bible saints were known to speak of it—they always say, “I hope,” and, “I trust.”

They would seem to be total abstainers from joy! They are suspicious of it lest it should be carnal excitement or visionary hope. They hang their heads like bulrushes and go mourning all their days as if the religion of Christ knew no higher festival than a funeral and all its robes were the garments of despair! Brothers and Sisters, despondency is *not* the fruit of the Spirit! Make no mistake, depression is frequently the fruit of indigestion, or of satanic temptation, or of unbelief, or of some harbored sin, but, “the fruit of the Spirit is joy.” Constantly looking within your own self instead of looking alone to Christ is enough to breed misery in any heart.

I have also known gloomy expressions to be the fruit of affectation, the fruit of the unwise imitation of some undoubtedly good person who was of a downcast spirit. Some of the best of men have had a melancholy turn, but they would have been better men if this had been overcome. Imitate their many *virtues*—but take the pot of ointment and pick out the dead flies. O my Brethren, look well to it that you bring forth the genuine, holy, sacred, delicious fruit of the Spirit which, in one of its forms, is “joy.” Do not covet the counterfeit of earthly joy, but seek to the good Spirit to bear the true fruit in you.

I. In speaking upon this joy I shall notice, first, the fact that IT IS BROUGHT FORTH. Brothers and Sisters, the Spirit of God is not barren! If He is in you, He must and will inevitably produce His own legitimate fruit—and “the fruit of the Spirit is joy.” We know this to be a fact because we, ourselves, are witnesses of it. Joy is our portion and we are cheered and comforted in the Savior. “What?” you ask, “are we not depressed and sorrowful at times?” Yea, verily, and yet what Christian man or woman among us would make an exchange with the happiest of all worldlings? Your lot is somewhat hard, my Brother, and sometimes your spirit sinks within you. But do you not count yourself to be, even at your worst, happier than the worldling at his best? Come, would you not take your poverty, even with your mourning, rather than accept his wealth with all his hilarity and give up your hope in God?

I am persuaded you would—you would not change your blest estate for a monarch’s crown! Well, then, that which you would not change is a good thing and full of joy to your heart. Brothers and Sisters, we experience extraordinary joys at times. Some are of an equable temperament and they are almost to be envied, for a stream of gentle joy always glides through their spirit. Others of us are of a more excitable character and, consequently, we fall very flat at times. Yes, but then we have our high days and holidays and mounting times—and then we outsoar the wings of eagles! Heaven itself can hardly know more ecstatic joy than we have occasionally felt! We shall be vessels of greater capacity in Heaven, but even here we are, at times, full to the brim with joy—I mean the same joy which makes Heaven so glad.

At times God is pleased to inundate the spirit with a flood of joy and we are witnesses that, “happy is the people whose God is the Lord.” We do not dance before the Ark every day, but when we do, our joy is such as no worldling can understand—it is far above and out of his sight. Besides our own witness, the whole history of the Church goes to show that God’s people are a joyful people. I am sure that if in reading the history of the first Christian centuries you are asked to point out the men to be envied for their joy, you would point to the Believers in Jesus. There is a room in Rome which is filled with the busts of the emperors. I have looked at their heads—they look like a collection of prizefighters and murderers—and I could scarcely discover on any countenance a trace of joy.

Brutal passions and cruel thoughts deprived the lords of Rome of all chance of joy. There were honorable exceptions to their rule, but taking them all round you would look in vain for moral excellence among the Caesars. And lacking this thing of beauty, they missed that which is a joy. Turn, now, to the poor, hunted Christians and read the inscriptions left by them in the catacombs! They are so calm and peaceful that you say instinctively—a joyous people were known to gather here! Those who have been most eminent in service and in suffering for Christ’s sake have been of a triumphant spirit, dauntless because supported by an inner joy! Their calm courage made them the wonder of the age. The true Christian is a different type of manhood from the self-indulgent tyrant. There is almost as much advance from the coarseness of vice to holiness as there is from the chimpanzee to the man!

I do not know how much Tiberius and Caligula and Nero used to sing. Happy men they certainly were not. I can hardly imagine them singing except at their drunken orgies and then in the same tone as tigers growl! But I do know that Paul and Silas sang praises unto God with their feet in the stocks and the prisoners heard them! And I know, also, that this was the mark of the Christians of the first age, that, when they assembled on the Lord's Day, it was not to groan but to sing praises to the name of one Christos, whom they worshipped as God. High joys were common, then, when the Bridegroom comforted His bride in the dens and caves of the earth. Those pioneers of our holy faith were destitute, afflicted, tormented—yet were they men of whom the world was not worthy—and men who counted it all joy to suffer persecution for Christ's sake.

Now, if in the very worst times God's people have been a happy people, I am sure they are so now. I would appeal to the biographies of men of our own day and challenge any question as to the statement that their lives have been among the most desirable of human existences for they possessed a joy which cheered their sorrows, blessed their labors, sweetened their trials and sustained them in the hour of death. With some Christians, this fruit of the Spirit is perpetual, or almost so. I do not doubt that many walk with God as Enoch did throughout the whole day of their life, always peaceful and joyful in the Lord. I have met with some dear Brothers and Sisters of that kind, whose breath has been praise, whose life has been song! How I envy them and chide my own heart that I cannot always abide in their choice condition! It is to be accomplished and we will press forward till we are "always rejoicing."

But with others, joy is *not* constant and yet it is frequent. David had his mourning times when tears were his meat, day and night, and yet God was his exceeding joy. How thankful we ought to be for the portrait of David's inner self which is presented to us in the Book of Psalms. With all his grief, what joys he had! David was, on the whole, a joyous man. His Book of Psalms has in it lyrics of delight—the most glad hymns that ever leaped from human tongues! David is, I believe, the type of a great majority of the people of God who, if not, "always rejoicing," are yet often so. Please remember that the utmost fullness of joy can hardly be enjoyed always in this mortal life. I believe that the human frame is not, in this world, capable of perpetual ecstasy.

Look at the sun, but look not too long lest you are blinded by excessive light. Taste of honey, but eat not much of it or it will no longer please the palate. Let your ears be charmed with the Hallelujah chorus, but do not *dream* that you could endure its harmonies all the hours of the day—before long you would cry out for eloquent pauses and sweet reliefs of silence! Too much, even, of delight will weary our feeble hearts and we shall need to come down from the mountain. Our bodies require a portion of sleep and that which is inevitable to the flesh has its likeness in the spirit—it must be quiet and still. I believe it is inevitable, also, more or less, that the loftiest joy should be balanced by a sinking of heart. I do not say that depression is certain to follow delight, but usually some kind of faintness comes over the finite spirit after it has been lifted up into communion with the Infinite.

Do not, therefore, set too much store by your own *feelings* as evidences of Divine Grace. “The fruit of the Spirit is joy,” but you may not, at this moment, be *conscious* of joy. Trees are not always bearing fruit and yet “their substance is in them when they lose their leaves.” Some young people say, “Oh, we know we are saved because we are so happy.” It is by no means a sure evidence, for joy may be carnal, unfounded, unspiritual. Certain Christians are afraid that they cannot be in a saved state because they are *not* joyous, but we are saved by *faith* and not by joy! I was struck with the remark of Ebenezer Erskine when he was dying and someone said to him, “I hope you have, now and then, a blink to bear up your spirit under affliction.” He promptly replied, “I know more of words than of blinks,” that is to say he had rather trust a promise of God than his own glimpses of Heaven! And so would I.

The Word of God is a more sure testimony to the soul than all the raptures a man can feel! I would sooner walk in the dark and hold hard to a promise of my God than trust in the light of the brightest day that ever dawned!. Precious as the fruit is, do not put the fruit where the root should be. Please remember that joy is not the root of Grace in the soul—it is the *fruit* and must not be put out of its proper position. “The fruit of the Spirit is joy” and it is brought forth in Believers, but not alike in all. But to all Believers there is a measure of joy.

II. Secondly, THIS JOY IS OF A SINGULAR CHARACTER. It is singular for this reason, that it often ripens under the most remarkable circumstances. As I have already said, the highest joy of Christians has often been experienced in their times of greatest distress. Tried Believers have been happy when smarting under pain, or wasting away with disease. Sick beds have been thrones to many saints—they have almost feared to come out of the furnace because the Presence of the Lord in the midst of the fire has made it none other than the gate of Heaven to their souls! Saints in poverty have been made exceedingly rich and when they have eaten a dry crust they have found a flavor in it which they never discovered in the dainties of their abundance.

Many children of God, even when driven away from the outward means of Grace, have, nevertheless, enjoyed such visits of God, such inlets of Divine Love, that they have wondered from where such joy could come! In the wilderness, waters leap forth as do streams in the desert. Believers are not dependent upon *circumstances*. Their joy comes not from what they *have*, but from what they *are*—not from *where* they are, but from *Whose* they are—not from what they enjoy, but from that which was suffered for them by their Lord. It is a singular joy, then, because it often buds, blossoms and ripens in winter time and when the fig tree does not blossom and there is no herd in the stall. God’s Habakkuks rejoice in the God of their salvation!

It is a singular joy, too, because it is quite consistent with spiritual conflict. He that is an heir of Heaven may cry, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” And yet, before the sigh is over, he may sing, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing! Straggling, yet always victorious! Cast down, but not destroyed! Persecuted, but not forsaken! Troubled and yet, all the

while triumphant! Such is the mingled experience of the saints. Oh, this is the wondrous Grace, this joy which can live side by side with conflict of the sorest sort. This joy is special because at times it is altogether beyond description. One who was of a sober disposition called it “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” “Full of glory!”

That is a wonderful expression! A drop of glory is sweet, but, oh, to taste a joy that is *full* of glory—is that possible here? Yes and some of us bear witness that it is so—we have felt joy that we dare not tell and could not tell if we dared—men would turn and tear us apart, condemning us as utterly fanatical or out of our minds if we were to cast these pearls before them! But, oh, if they could guess what delicious drafts are held within the jeweled chalice of Divine Communion with our Master, they would be ready to wade through Hell, itself, to drink from them! Our joy is altogether unspeakable joy at times.

One more singularity there is in it, for it is all the while solid, thoughtful, rational joy. The joy of the ungodly is like the crackling of thorns under a pot—noisy and flashy—but soon over. The ungodly man feels merry, but really, if you come to look into his mirth, there is nothing in it but flame without fuel, sparkle without solidity. But the Christian’s joy is such that he has as much reason for it as if it were a deduction from mathematics. He has as just a right to be joyful as he has to eat his own bread! He is certain of his pardon, for God has told him that a Believer in Christ is not condemned! And he is sure of his acceptance, for he is justified by faith. He knows that he is secure, for Christ has given him *eternal* life and said that His sheep shall never perish! He is happy, not for causes at which he guesses, but by *Infallible* reasons plainly revealed in God’s Word! This makes Him joyful in the Lord when others wonder that he is so, for he perceives arguments for happiness which are unknown to the thoughtless crowd.

That word, “joyful,” is a very sweet and clear one. “Happiness” is a very dainty word, but yet it is somewhat insecure because it begins with a “hap,” and seems to depend on a chance which may happen to the soul. We say “happy-go-lucky,” and that is very much the world’s happiness—it is a kind of thing that may hap and may not hap—but there is no hap in the fruit of the Spirit which is joy! When we are joyful, or full of joy, and that of the best kind, we are favored, indeed! No man takes this joy from us and a stranger meddles not with it—it is a *celestial* fruit and earth cannot produce its like.

III. Thirdly, I would now refresh your memories and by the help of the Spirit of God bring back former joys to you—THIS JOY IS EXPERIENCED BY THE CHRISTIAN UNDER VARIOUS FORMS. Sometimes he experiences it in hearing the Word of God—it is written concerning Samaria there was great joy in that city because Philip went down and preached the Gospel to them. Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound! However, joy of hearing lies in *believing* what you hear. We get joy and peace in *believing*. When you get a grip of the Word of God—when the glad tidings becomes a message to your own soul and the Spirit speaks it to your own heart, then you say, “Go on, man of God! Your sermon will not be too long today, for the Lord is laying it home to my soul.”

The reason why people grumble at long sermons is often because they do not feed on them. Very seldom the hungry man murmurs at having too big a meal. It is a delightful thing to hear the Word faithfully preached. Have you not sometimes exclaimed, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings glad tidings”? That is one occasion of joy. But what joy there is, dear Friends, in the salvation of God when we heartily receive it! Oh, how we bless the God of our salvation and how we praise Him that He has saved us from our sins and from the wrath to come by giving us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace, by the sacrifice of His dear Son!

Frequently we revel in the privileges of the Covenant. The joy of my heart, when I think of the doctrine of Election, is quite inexpressible. That hymn which begins—

**“In songs of sublime adoration and praise,
You pilgrims to Zion who press,
Break forth and extol the great Ancient of Days
His rich and distinguishing Grace,”**

is often with me and makes my heart merry. Then the doctrine of Redemption, of which I tried to speak last Lord’s Day [*Silver Sockets—Redemption the Foundation*, Volume 27, Sermon #1581] how joyous it is! What bliss to know that the Redeemer lives! “Unto you that believe He is precious” and a fullness of joy flows forth at every remembrance of Him. Then that doctrine of Justification is the marrow of joy! Oh, to think that we are *just* in the sight of God through Jesus Christ!

All the Doctrines of Grace, especially that of Final Perseverance, are joyful Truths of God! I declare that if you take Final Perseverance from me, you have robbed the Bible of one of its crowning attractions! Jesus has not given us a transient salvation, but His salvation shall be forever! I will quote again those matchless words of His—“I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” Honey flows here as in the woods of Jonathan! Put it to your mouth and your eyes shall be enlightened! The joy of God’s people, when they can get half-an-hour alone and sit down and crack a dish of those nuts called the Doctrines of Grace, is such as philosophical worldlings might well desire! But the *modern gospel* has no such wines on the lees well-refined.

But, Brothers and Sisters, our most grand joy is in God Himself! Paul says, “and not only so, but we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Oh, to think of the great Father! What a melting of spirit comes over the child of God if at midnight he looks up at the stars and considers the Heavens and cries, “What is man, that You are mindful of him?” To think that He is not only mindful of us, but that He has taken us to be His sons and daughters! To feel the Spirit within our heart crying, “Abba, Father! Abba, Father!” Oh, this is joy in the most profound sense! How sweet to think of Jesus Christ the Son, the glorious Incarnate God, the Surety, the Satisfaction, the Representative, the All in All of His people! We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Nor do we miss the joy of the Spirit when we know that He dwells in us. He sanctifies us, comforts us and guides us in the road to Heaven. Oh Brothers and Sisters, this is a sea of bliss, the infinite deeps of the eternal

godhead! Leap from all your miseries into this sea of Glory! Plunge into the joy of your Lord! This being so, we have a joy in all God's ordinances—"with joy do we draw water out of the wells of salvation." What a joy prayer is—I hope you find it so. The Lord has said, "I will make them joyful in My house of prayer." And what a joy it is to get answers to our petitions, even as our Lord says, "Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." Has not your joy been full till your eyes have been dim with tears and you have not hardly dared to tell how wondrously God has answered you? The Mercy Seat is lit up with joy.

What a joyous ordinance is that of praise! We come up to the sanctuary and bring our offering to God and present Him our oblation, just as the Jew of old brought his bullock or his lamb—and we joyfully present our gift unto the Most High. Then we begin to sing His praises and our joy is the chief musician upon our stringed instruments. How our spirits rise as we adore the Lord! The amount of happiness felt in this Tabernacle when we have been singing unto the Lord, can never be measured! For my own part, I have seemed to stand just outside the wall of the New Jerusalem joining in the hymns which are sung within the gates of the Eternal City! One joy note has helped another and the volume of sound has affected every part of our being and stirred us up to vehemence of joy!

And oh, what joy there is in coming to the Lord's Table! May we experience it tonight, as we have often done before. The Lord is known to us in the breaking of bread and that knowledge is blissful. But I have scarcely begun the list, for we have a great joy in the salvation of other people! Perhaps one of the choicest delights we know is when we partake in the joy of the good Shepherd over His lost sheep when He calls us together, for we, also, are His friends and His neighbors. And He bids us rejoice that He has found the sheep which was lost! Especially do we joy and rejoice if the poor wanderer has been brought back by our means. The jewels of an emperor are *nothing* compared with the riches we possess in winning a soul for Christ! "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." The joy of harvest is great, the joy of the man who comes again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Do you know this joy, Brothers and Sisters? If you do not, awaken yourselves and may this sweet fruit of the Spirit yet be yours. Oh, the joy of seeing Christ exalted! John the Baptist said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." He called himself the Bridegroom's friend, and rejoiced greatly in the Bridegroom's joy. We can sympathize with him when we can bring about a marriage between Christ and any poor soul—and help to put the ring on the finger. The joy we feel is of the purest and loveliest order, for it is unselfish and refined. Let Jesus be exalted and we ask no more! If He reigns, we reign! If He is lifted up, our hearts are more than satisfied! Brethren, if we ever become perfect in heart, we shall joy in all the Divine will, whatever it may bring us.

I am trying, if I can, to find a joy in rheumatism, but I cannot get up to it yet. I have found a joy when it is over—I can reach *that* length—and I can and do bless God for any good result that may come of it. But when the pain is on me, it is difficult to be joyous about it and so I conclude that my sanctification is incomplete and my conformity to the Divine will

is sadly imperfect. Oh, the splendor of God's will! If a man were as he ought to be, God's will would charm him and he would not wish for the smallest change in it! Poverty, sickness, bereavement, death—all are to be rejoiced in when our will is merged in the will of God!

What? Would you alter God's infinitely wise appointment? Would you wish to change the purpose of unerring Love? Then you are not wholly reconciled to God, for when the head gets quite right the heart climbs where Paul was when he said, "We glory in tribulations, also, knowing that tribulation works patience, and patience experience." It needs a Samson to kill the lion of affliction and you cannot get honey out of it until it is conquered. But we might all be Samsons if we would but lay hold on the strength of God by faith! Dear Brothers and Sisters, the list of joys which I am even now only *commencing*, contains the joy of an easy conscience, the joy of feeling you have done right before God, the joy of knowing that your objective, though misunderstood and misrepresented, was God's Glory! This is a jewel to wear on one's breast—a quiet conscience.

Then there is the joy of communion with Christ, the joy of fellowship with His saints, the joy of drinking deep into Christ's spirit of self-sacrifice. There, too, is the joy of expecting His glorious Advent when He and His saints shall reign upon the earth and the joy of being with Him forever! The joy of Heaven, the joy of which we have been singing just now. These joys are countless, but I will pause here and leave you to make a fuller catalog when you are at home. May the Holy Spirit not only refresh your memories concerning old joys, but bring forth out of His treasury new delights that your joy may be full!

IV. I must notice, in the fourth place, that THIS FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT MAY BE CHECKED IN ITS GROWTH. Some of you may have muttered while I have been speaking of this joy, "I do not know much about it." Perhaps not, friend—shall I tell you why? Some people are too full of the joy of the *world*, the joy of getting on in business, the joy of a large family, the joy of health, the joy of wealth, the joy of human love, or the joy which comes of the pride of life. These joys may be your *idols* and you *know* the joy of the Lord will not stand side by side with an idolatrous delight in the things of this world! See to that. Dagon must fall if the Ark of the Lord is present—the world must lose its charms if you are to joy in Christ Jesus.

Our joy is sadly diminished by our unbelief. If you will not believe, neither shall you be established. Ignorance will do the same to a very large extent. Many a Christian has a thousand reasons for joy which he knows nothing of. Study the Word and ask for the teaching of the Spirit of God that you may understand it and so shall you discover wells of delight! Joy is diminished, also, by walking at a distance from God. If you get away from the fire, you will grow cold—the warmest place is right in front of it and the warmest place for a believing heart is close to Christ in daily fellowship with Him. It may be that indulged in sin is spoiling our joy. "This little hand of mine," as Mr. Whitfield once said, "can cover up the sun as far as my eyes are concerned."

You have only to lift a naughty, rebellions hand and you can shut out the light of God, Himself—any known sin will do it. Trifling with sin will prove a killjoy to the heart. I believe that many lose the joy of the Lord be-

cause they do not put it in the right place. See where it lives. Look at my text—"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy and peace." There joy stands in the center—"love" is on one side and "peace" on the other! Find a man who never loved anybody and you have found a joyless man. This man's religion begins and ends with looking to his own safety. The only point he longs to know is—is *he* saved? He never knows joy, poor creature, how can he? As to peace, where is it? He has none because wherever he goes he growls, grumbles, snarls and barks at everybody. There is no peace where he is! He is always quarrelling and then he says, "I have little joy."

He does not live in the right house for joy! Joy dwells at No. 2. "Love" is No. 1—"joy" is No. 2—"peace" is No. 3 and if you pull down either of the houses on the side, No. 2, in the middle, will tumble down! Joy is the center of a triplet and you must have it so or not at all—"Love, joy, peace." Thus I have shown how the growth of joy can be checked. I pray you do not allow such an evil thing to be worked in *your* heart.

V. But, lastly, IT OUGHT TO BE CAREFULLY CULTIVATED. There is an obligation upon a Christian to be happy. Let me say it again—there is a responsibility laid upon a Christian to be cheerful! It is not merely an invitation, but it is a *command*—"Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous." "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice." Gloomy Christians who do not resist despondency and strive against it, but who go about as if midnight had taken up its abode in their eyes and an everlasting frost had settled on their souls are not obeying the commands of God! The command to rejoice is as undoubted a precept of God as to love the Lord with all your heart. The vows of God are upon you, O Believer, and they bind you to be joyful!

In this joyfulness you shall find many great advantages. First, it is a great advantage, in itself, to be happy. Who would not rejoice if he could? Who would not rejoice when God commands him? Rejoicing will nerve you for life's duties. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." A man who goes about Christ's work in an unwilling, miserable spirit will do it badly and feebly. He may do it earnestly, but there will be no life or energy about him. Hear how the sailors, when they pull the rope, will shout and sing and work all the better for their cheery notes! I do not believe our soldiers would march to battle with half their present courage if they tramped along in silence. Beat the drums! Let the trumpet sound forth its martial note! Every man is eager for the fray while soul-stirring music excites him. Let your heart make music unto God and you will fight valiantly for the Kingdom of your Lord.

Holy joy will also be a great preventive. The man who feels the joy of the Lord will not covet worldly joy. He will not be tempted to make a God of his possessions or of his talents, or of anything else. He will say, "I have joy in God. These things I am very thankful for, but they are not my joy." He will not crave the aesthetic in worship, for his joy will be in God and His Truth—not in external forms. Some people's idea of joy in religion lies in fine singing, charming music, pretty dresses, splendid architecture, or showy eloquence. They need this because they do not know the secret joy of the Lord, for when *that* holy passion reigns within, you may sit inside four whitewashed walls and not hear a soul speak for a whole hour and a

half and yet you may have as intense a joy as if you listened to the most earnest oratory or the sweetest song!—

***“Joy in God is suitable to our condition!
Why should the children of a king
Go mourning all their days?”***

What are we doing now, some of us? We have been hanging our harps on the willows—let us take them down—the willow limbs will bend! Thank God we did not break the harps, though we did hang them there. Let us get into our right position—children of the happy God should, themselves, be happy. Joy is certainly the best preparation for the future. We are going where, if we learn to groan ever so deeply, our education will be lost, for melancholy utterances are unknown up there! We are going where, if we learn to sing with sacred joy, our education will be useful, for the first thing we shall hear when we get into Heaven will undoubtedly be, “Hallelujah to God and the Lamb!” And if we have been joyful on earth we shall say, “Ah, I am at home here!”

To enter Heaven with a joyful soul is only to rise from downstairs to the upper chamber where the music knows no discord. It is the same song in both places, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood.” Joy in the Lord will be very helpful to you as to usefulness. I am sure a Christian man’s usefulness is abridged by dreariness of spirit. What nice Sunday school teachers some Christians I know of would make! “Come you children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the miseries of religion!” And the dear Brother begins by telling the children about the Slough of Despond, Giant Despair and the Valley of the Shadow of Death! He wonders, when he gets home, that the dear children are not attracted to the ways of godliness! Are they likely to be? A member of a Church who has no joy of the Lord is little likely to encourage or influence others—they edge away from him.

Even those who try to comfort him find it is to no purpose and so they give him a wide berth. You hear him stand up to address an assembly of Believers, to tell his experience, and after a very little of it you feel you have had enough. Those who drink wine will tell you that half a dozen drops of vinegar are more than they need in a glass of wine and those who carry the cruet about wherever they go are not choice company! I do not find fault with gloomy souls, but they might be more useful if they could live more in the sunlight! The joy of the Lord is the most injurious to Satan’s empire of anything. I am of the same mind as Luther, who, when he heard any very bad news, used to say, “Come, let us sing a Psalm and spite the devil.”

There is nothing like it! Whenever anything happens that is rough and ugly and seems to injure the Kingdom of Christ, say to yourself, “Bless the Lord, glory be to His name.” If the Lord has been dishonored by the falling away of a false professor, or the failure of the ministry in any place, let us give Him all the more honor, ourselves, and in some measure make up for all that has happened amiss. And, lastly, holy joy is very pleasing to God. God delights in the joy of His creatures. He made them to be happy! His first and original design in the creation of all beings is His own Glory in their happiness. When His people rejoice He rejoices.

Some of you spent Christmas day in the bosom of your families. Possibly you have a large family—10 or 12 were at home on that day, with a grandchild or two. I will tell you what was your greatest joy on that day—it was to see the happiness of your children and to mark how they enjoyed what you had provided for them. They are only little children, some of them, creeping about on the floor, but they pleased you because they were so pleased themselves! The joy of a little child delights your heart to hear it, for it gives us joy to behold joy in those we love. Suppose your sons and daughters had all come marching in on Christmas day in a very gloomy state of mind—cold, loveless, joyless—suppose that they did not enjoy anything, but grumbled at you and at one another? You would be quite sad and wish the day to be soon over and never come again for the next seven years!

Thus in a figure we see that our heavenly Father delights in the delight of His children and is glad to see them grateful and happy and acting as children should do towards such a Parent! Now, Brothers and Sisters, rise as one man and sing—

***“Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry!
We’re marching thro’
Immanuel’s ground
To fairer worlds on high.”***

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THE FIRST FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

NO. 1782

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 25, 1884,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love.”
Galatians 5:22.

THE worst enemy we have is the flesh. Augustine used to frequently pray, “Lord, deliver me from that evil man, myself.” All the fire which the devil can bring from Hell could do us little harm if we had not so much fuel in our nature. It is the powder in the magazine of the old man which is our perpetual danger. When we are guarding against foes outside, we must not forget to be continually on our watchtower against the foe of foes within. “The flesh lusts against the Spirit.” On the other hand, our best Friend, who loves us better than we love ourselves, is the Holy Spirit. We are shockingly forgetful of the Holy Spirit and, therein, it is to be feared that we greatly grieve Him. Yet we are immeasurably indebted to Him—in fact, we owe our *spiritual existence* to His Divine Power.

It would not be proper to compare the love of the Spirit with the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, so as even, by implication, to set up a scale of degrees in love—for the love of the regenerating Spirit is infinite, even as is the love of the redeeming Son. But yet, for a moment, we will set these two displays of love side by side. Is not the indwelling of the Spirit of God equal in loving kindness to the Incarnation of the Son of God? Jesus dwelt in a pure Manhood of His own—the Holy Spirit dwells in *our* manhood, which is fallen and, as yet, imperfectly sanctified. Jesus dwelt in His human body, having it perfectly under His own control, but, alas, the Holy Spirit must contend for the mastery within *us*, and though He is Lord over our hearts, yet there is an evil power within our members, strongly entrenched and obstinately bent on mischief.

“The flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.” Our Lord Jesus dwelt in His body only for some 30 years or so, but the blessed Spirit of All Grace dwells in us through all the days of our pilgrimage—from the moment when He enters into us by regeneration He continues in us, making us qualified to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. You sing—

“Oh, ‘tis love, ‘tis wondrous Love,”

in reference to our Lord Jesus and His Cross—sing it, also, in reference to the Holy Spirit and His long-suffering! He looks at us from within and, therefore, He sees the chambers of imagery where hidden idols still abide. He sees our actions—not from the outside, for there, perhaps, they might

be judged favorably. But He discerns them from *within*—in their springs and in the *pollution* of those springs—in their main currents and in all their side eddies and back waters.

Brothers and Sisters, it is amazing that this blessed Spirit should not leave us in indignation! We lodge Him so evilly. We honor Him so little. He receives so little of our affectionate worship that He might well say, “I will no longer abide with you.” When the Lord had given up His people to the Roman sword, there was heard in the Temple at Jerusalem a sound as of rushing wings and a voice crying, “Let us go from here.” Justly might the Divine Presence have left us, also, because of our sins! It is matchless love which has caused the Holy Spirit to bear with our ill manners and bear our vexatious behavior! He stays though sin intrudes into His temple! He makes His royal abode where evil assails His palace! Alas, that a heart where the Spirit deigns to dwell should always be made a thoroughfare for selfish or unbelieving traffic!

God help us to adore the Holy Spirit at the commencement of our discourse and to do so even more reverently at its close! The Holy Spirit, when He comes into us, is the Author of all our desires after true holiness. He strives against the flesh in us. That holy conflict which we wage against our corruption comes entirely of Him. We would sit down in *willing* bondage to the flesh if He did not bid us strike for liberty. The good Spirit also leads us in the way of life. If we are led of the Spirit, says the Apostle, we are not under the Law. He leads us by gentle means, drawing us with cords of love and bands of a man. “He leads me.” If we take a single step in the right road, it is because He leads us. And if we have persevered, these many years, in the way of peace, it is all due to His guidance—even to Him who will surely bring us in and make us to enjoy the promised rest!—

**“And every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness,
Are His alone.”**

The Holy Spirit not only creates the inward contest against sin and the agonizing desire for holiness, but He leads us onward in the way of life. And He remains within us, taking up His residence and more—for the text suggests a still more immovable steadfastness of residence in our hearts since, according to the figure, the Spirit strikes root within us. The text speaks of, “fruit,” and fruit comes only of a *rooted* abidance—it could not be conceived of in connection with a transient sojourning, like that of a wayfaring man. The stakes and tent pins that are driven into the ground for an Arab’s tent bear no fruit, for they do not remain in one place. And, inasmuch as I read of the, “fruit of the Spirit,” I take comfort from the hint and conclude that He intends to abide in our souls as a tree abides in the soil when fruit is borne by it!

Let us love and bless the Holy Spirit! Let the golden altar of incense perfume this earth with the sweet savor of perpetual adoration to the Holy Spirit! Let our hearts heartily sing to Him this solemn doxology—

***“We give You, sacred Spirit, praise,
Who in our hearts of sin and woe
Makes living springs of Grace arise,
And into boundless glory flow.”***

I. Now, coming to our text, I shall notice the matters contained in it. The first thing which my mind perceives is A WINNOWING FAN. I would like to be able to use it, but it is far better that it should remain where it is, for, “the fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor.” The handle of this winnowing fan is made of the first word of the text, that disjunctive conjunction, that dividing monosyllable, “*But.*” “*But* the fruit of the Spirit is love”! That, “*but,*” is placed there because the Apostle had been mentioning certain works of the flesh, all of which he winnows away like chaff. And then he sets forth in opposition to them, “the fruit of the Spirit.”

If you will read the chapter, you will notice that the Apostle has used no less than 17 words—I might almost say 18—to describe the works of the *flesh*. Human language is always rich in bad words because the human heart is full of the manifold evils which these words denote. Nine words are used to express the fruit of the Spirit. But to express the works of the *flesh*—see how many are gathered together! The first set of these works of the flesh which have to be winnowed away are the *counterfeits of love to man*. Counterfeited love is one of the vilest things under Heaven. That heavenly word, love, has been trailed in the mire of unclean passion and filthy desire. The licentiousness which comes of the worship of Venus has dared to take to itself a name which belongs only to the pure worship of Jehovah.

Now, the works which counterfeit love are these—“*adultery*, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness.” To talk of “love” when a man covets his neighbor’s wife, or when a woman violates the command, “You shall not commit adultery,” is little less than sheer blasphemy against the holiness of love! It is not love, but *lust*—love is an angel and lust a devil! The purities of domestic life are defiled and its honors are disgraced when once the marriage bond is disregarded. When men or women talk of religion and are unfaithful to their marriage covenant, they are base hypocrites! Even the heathen condemned this infamy—let not Christians tolerate it!

The next fleshly work is “*fornication*,” which was scarcely censured among the heathen, but is most sternly condemned by Christianity. It is a wretched sign of the times, that in these corrupt days some have arisen who treat this crime as a slight offense and even attempt to provide for its safer indulgence by legislative enactments! Has it come to this? Has the civil ruler become a panderer to the lusts of corrupt minds? Let it not be once named among you, as it becomes saints. “*Uncleanness*” is a third work of the flesh and it includes those many forms of foul offense which defile the body and deprive it of its true honor. We bring up the rear with, “*lasciviousness*,” which is the cord which draws on uncleanness and includes all *conversation* which excites the passions, all *songs* which sug-

gest lewdness, all *gestures* and *thoughts* which lead up to unlawful gratification.

We have sadly much of these evils in these days, not only openly in our streets, but in more secret ways. I loathe the subject! All works of art which are contrary to modesty are here condemned and the most pleasing poetry, if it creates impure imaginations. These unclean things are the works of the flesh in the stage of putridity—the very maggots which swarm within a corrupt soul. Bury these rotten things out of our sight! I do but uncover them for an instant that a holy disgust may be caused in every Christian soul and that we may flee from them as from the breath of pestilence! Yet remember, O you that think yourselves pure and imagine you would never transgress so badly, that even into these loathsome and abominable criminalities high professors have fallen!

Yes, and sincere Believers, trusting in themselves, have slipped into this ditch from where they have escaped with infinite sorrow—to go with broken bones the rest of their pilgrimage. Alas, how many who seemed to be escaped from pollution have so fallen that they have had to be saved so as by fire! Oh, may we keep our garments unspotted by the flesh! And this we *cannot* do unless it is in the power and energy of the Spirit of Holiness. He must purge these evils from us and cause His fruit to so abound in us that the deeds of the flesh shall be excluded forever.

The winnowing fan is used next against the *counterfeits of love to God*. I refer to the falsities of superstition—“Idolatry and witchcraft”—“but the fruit of the Spirit is love.” Alas, there are some that fall into *idolatry*, for they trust in an arm of flesh and exalt the creature into the place of the Creator—“their God is their belly and they glory in their shame.” The golden calf of *wealth*, the silver shrines of *craft*, the goddess of *philosophy*, the Diana of *fashion*, the Moloch of power—these are all worshipped instead of the living God! Those who profess to reverence the true God, yet too generally worship Him in ways which He has not ordained. Thus says the Lord, “You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: you shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them.”

Yet we have Christians (so called) who say they derive help in the exercise of devotion from images and pictures! Look how their places of assembly are rendered gaudy with pictures, images and things which savor of old Rome! What idolatry is openly carried on in certain buildings belonging to the National Church! What sensuous worship is now approved! Men cannot worship God, nowadays, unless their eyes, ears and noses are gratified! When these senses of the flesh are pleased, they are satisfied with themselves! “But the fruit of the Spirit is love.” Love is the most perfect architecture, for “love builds up.” Love is the sweetest music, for without it we become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Love is the choicest incense, for it is a sacrifice of sweet smell. Love is the most fit vestment—“Above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”

Oh, that men would remember that the fruit of the Spirit is not the finery of the florist, the sculptor, or the milliner, but the love of the heart! It ill becomes us to make that gaudy which should be simple and spiritual. The fruit of the Spirit is not idolatry—the worship of another god—or of the true God after the manner of will worship! No, that fruit is obedient love to the only living God. “*Witchcraft*,” too, is a work of the flesh. Under this head we may rightly group all that prying into the unseen; that rending of the veil which God has hung up; that interfering with departed spirits; that necromancy which calls itself spiritualism and pays court to familiar spirits and demons—this is no fruit of the Spirit, but the fruit of a bitter root! Brother and Sister Christians, modern witchcrafts and wizardry are to be abhorred and condemned—and you will be wise to keep clear of them, trembling to be found acting in concert with those who love darkness rather than light—because their deeds are evil!

Idolatry and witchcraft are caused by a lack of love to God and they are evidences that the Spirit’s life is not in the soul! When you come to love God with all your heart, you will not worship God in ways of your own devising, but you will ask, “How shall I draw near unto the most high God?” And you will take your direction from the Lord’s Inspired Word. The service which He prescribes is the only service which He will accept! The winnowing fan is at work right now—I wonder whether it is operating upon any here present?

But next, this great winnowing fan drives away, with its, “*but*,” all the forms of hate. The Apostle mentions, “*hatred*,” or an habitual enmity to men, usually combined with a selfish esteem of one’s own person. Certain men cherish a dislike to everybody who is not of their clique, while they detest those who oppose them. They are contemptuous to the weak, ready to take offense and care little whether they give it or not. They delight to be in minorities of one and the more wrong-headed and pugnacious they can be, the more are they in their element. “*Variance*,” too, with its perpetual dislikes, bickering and quarrelling, is a work of the flesh. Those who indulge in it are contrary to all men, pushing their angles into everybody’s eyes, and looking out for occasions of fault-finding, and strife.

“*Emulations*”—that is, jealousy—jealousy in all its forms, is one of the works of the flesh. Is it not cruel as the grave? There is a jealousy which sickens if another is praised and pines away if another prospers. It is a venomous thing and stings like an adder! It is a serpent by the way, biting the horse’s heels, so that his rider falls backward. “*Wrath*” is another deed of the flesh—I mean the fury of angry passion and all the madness which comes of it. “But I am a man of very quick temper,” says one! Are you a Christian? If so, you are bound to master this evil force or it will ruin you! If you were a saint of God to the very highest degree in all but in this one point, it would pull you down! Yes, at any moment an angry spirit might make you say and do that which would cause you life-long sorrow.

“*Strife*” is a somewhat milder, but equally mischievous form of the same evil. It burns not quite so fast and furiously, yet it is a slow fire kindled by the same flame of Hell as the more ardent passion. The continual love of

contention; the morbid sensitiveness; the overbearing regard to one's own dignity which join together to produce strife are all evil things. What is the proper respect which is due to poor creatures like ourselves? I suppose that if any one of us got our "proper respect," we would not like it long—we would think that bare justice was rather scant in its appreciation! We desire to be flattered when we cry out for, "proper respect!" Respect, indeed! Why, if we had our just due, we would be in the lowest Hell!

Then our Apostle mentions, "*seditions*," which occur in the State, the Church and the family. As far as our Church life is concerned, this evil shows itself in an opposition to all sorts of authority or law. Any kind of official action in the Church is to be railed at because it is official! Rule of any sort is objected to because each man desires to have the preeminence and will not be second! God save us from this evil leaven! *Heresy* is that kind of hate which makes every man set up to create his own religion, write his own bible and think out his own gospel. We have heard of, "every man his own lawyer," and now we are coming to have, "Every man his own god, every man his own bible, every man his own instructor."

After this work of the flesh, come "*Envyings*"—not so much the desire to enrich one's self at another's expense, as a wolfish craving to impoverish him and pull him down for the mere sake of it. This is a very acrid form of undiluted *hate* and leaves but one stronger form of hate. To desire another's dishonor merely from envy of his superiority is simply devilish and is a sort of murder of the man's best life. The list is fitly closed by, "*murders*"—a suitable cornerstone to crown this diabolical edifice—for what is hate but murder? And what is murder but hate bearing its full fruit? He who does not love has, within him, all the elements that make a murderer! If you have not a general feeling of benevolence towards all men and a desire to do them good, the old spirit of Cain is within you and it only needs to be unrestrained and it will strike the fatal blow and lay your brother dead at your feet! God save you, Brothers and Sisters, every one of you, from the domination of these dark principles of hate which are the works of the flesh in its corruption. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love."

Next time you begin to boil over with wrath, imagine you feel a hand touching you and causing you to hear a gentle voice whispering, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love." Next time you say, "I will never speak to that man again, I cannot stand him," imagine you feel a fresh wind fanning your fevered brow and hear the Angel of Mercy say, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love." Next time you are inclined to find fault with everybody, set your brethren by the ears and create a general scuffle, I pray you let the chimes ring out, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love!" If you wish to find fault, it is easy to do so—you may begin with me and go down to the last young member that was admitted into the Church—and you will not have to look long before you can spy out something which needs improvement!

But to what end will you pick holes in our coats? Whenever you are bent on the growling business, pause awhile and hear the Scripture admonish you—"The fruit of the Spirit is love." When you become indignant because you have been badly treated and you think of returning evil for

evil, remember this text—“The fruit of the Spirit is love.” “Ah,” you say, “it was shameful!” Of course it was! And therefore do not imitate it—do not render railing for railing—but contrariwise, blessing, for, “the fruit of the Spirit is love.” The winnowing fan is at work—may God blow your chaff away, Brothers and Sisters, and mine, too!

The next thing which the winnowing fan blows away is *the excess of self-indulgence*—“drunkenness, reveling and such like.” Alas, that Christian people should ever need to be warned against these animal offenses! And yet they do. The wine cup still has its morgues for professors! Nor is this all—it is not merely that you *drink* to excess, but you may *eat* to excess, or clothe your body too sumptuously—or there may be some other spending of money upon your own gratification which is not according to sober living. Drunkenness is one of those trespasses of which Paul says, “they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” The reveling which makes night hideous with its so-called songs—call them howling and you are nearer the mark—the reveling which spends hour after hour in entertainment which heats the blood, hardens the heart and chases away all solid thought, is not for us who have renounced the works of darkness—for us there is a better joy, namely, to be filled with the Spirit—“the fruit of the Spirit is love.”

II. The second thing which I see in the text is A JEWEL—that jewel is *love*. “The fruit of the Spirit is love.” What a priceless diamond this is! It is altogether incalculable in value. What a heavenly Grace love is! It has its center in the heart, but its circumference sweeps, like Omnipresence, around everything! Love is a Grace of boundless scope. We love God—it is the only way in which we can fully embrace Him. We can *love* the whole of God, but we cannot *know* the whole of God! Yes, we love God, and even love that part of God which we cannot comprehend or even know. We love the Father as He is. We love His dear Son as He is. We love the ever-blessed Spirit as He is. Following upon this, for God’s sake, we love the creatures He has made! It is true, in a measure, that—

**“He prays best that loves best
Both man and bird and beast.”**

Every tiny fly that God has made is sacred to our souls as God’s creature. Our love climbs to Heaven, sits among the angels and soon bows among them in lowliest attitude, but, in due time, our love stoops down to earth, visits the haunts of depravity, cheers the attics of poverty and sanctifies the dens of blasphemy, for it loves the lost! Love knows no outcast London—it has cast out none! It talks not of the “lapsed masses,” for none have lapsed from its regard. Love *hopes* good for all and *plans* good for all—while it can soar to Glory, it can descend to sorrow. Love is a Grace which has to do with eternity, for we shall never cease to love Him who *first loved us!*

But love has also to do with this present world, for it is at home in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, nursing the sick and liberating the slave. Love delights in visiting the fatherless and the widows and thus it earns the encomium—“I was hungry and you gave Me meat: I was thirsty

and you gave Me drink: I was a stranger and you took Me in: naked, and you clothed Me: I was sick and you visited Me: I was in prison and you came unto Me.” Love is a very practical, home-spun virtue, and yet it is so rich and rare that God, alone, is its Author. None but a heavenly Power can produce this fine linen—the love of the *world* is sorry stuff! Love has to do with friends. How fondly it nestles in the parental bosom! How sweetly it smiles from a mother’s eyes! How closely it binds two souls together in marriage bonds! How pleasantly it walks along the ways of life, leaning on the arm of friendship! And love is not content with this—she embraces her *enemy*, she heaps coals of fire upon her adversary’s head—she prays for them that despitefully use her and persecute her. Is not this a precious jewel, indeed?

What earthly thing can be compared to it? You must have noticed that in *the list of the fruits of the Spirit, it’s the first*—“The fruit of the Spirit is love.” It is first because, in some respects, it is best. First, because it leads the way. First, because it becomes the motive principle and stimulant of every other Grace and virtue! You cannot conceive of anything more forceful and more beneficial and, therefore, it is the first. But *see what follows at its heels*. Two shining ones attend it like maids of honor, waiting upon a queen! “The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace”—he that has love, has joy and peace! What choice companions! To love much is to possess a deep delight, a secret cellar of the wine of joy which no man may otherwise taste.

He that loves is like to God, who is the God of Peace. Truly the meek and loving shall inherit the earth and delight themselves in the abundance of peace! He is calm and quiet whose soul is full of love. In his boat the Lord stands at the helm, saying to the winds and waves, “Peace! Be still!” He that is all love, though he may have to suffer, yet shall count it all joy when he falls into different trials. See, then, what a precious jewel it is that has so many shining brilliants set at its side. Love has this for its excellence, that it fulfils the whole Law of God—you cannot say that of any other virtue! Yet, while it fulfils the whole Law, it is not legal. Nobody ever loved because it was *demand*ed of him—a good man loves because it is his nature to do so. Love is free—it blows where it will—like the Spirit from which it comes. Love, indeed, is the very essence of heart liberty! Well may it be honored, for while it is a true Grace of the Gospel, it nevertheless fulfils the whole Law. If you would have Law and Gospel sweetly combined, you have it in the fruit of the Spirit, which is love.

Love, moreover, is Godlike, for God is Love. Love it is which prepares us for Heaven where *everything* is love. Come, sweet Spirit, and rest upon us till our nature is transformed into the Divine Nature by our becoming burning flames of love! Oh, that it were so with us this very day! Mark, Beloved, that the love we are speaking of is *not* a love which comes out of men on account of their *natural constitution*. I have known persons who are tenderly affectionate by nature—and this is good, but it is not *spiritual* love—that is the fruit of *nature* and not of Grace! An affectionate disposition is admirable, but it may become a danger by leading to inordinate af-

fection, a timid fear of offending, or an idolatry of the creature. I do not condemn natural amiability—on the contrary, I wish that all men were naturally amiable—but I would not have any person think that this will *save* him, or that it is a proof that he is renewed.

Only the love which is the fruit of the Spirit may be regarded as a mark of Grace. Some people, I am sorry to say, are naturally sour—they seem to have been born at the season of crabapples and to have been fed on vinegar. They always take a fault-finding view of things. They never see the sun's splendor and yet they are so clear-sighted as to have discovered his spots. They have a great specialty of power for discerning things which it were better not to see. They do not remember that the earth has proved steady and firm for centuries, but they have a lively recollection of the earthquake, and they quake, even now, as they talk about it.

Such as these have need to cry for the indwelling of the Spirit of God, for if He will enter into them His power will soon overcome the tendency to sourness, for, "the fruit of the Spirit is love." Spiritual love is nowhere found without the Spirit and the Spirit is nowhere dwelling in the heart unless love is produced. So much for this jewel!

III. I see in the text a third thing, and that is A PICTURE—a rich and rare picture painted by a Master, the great Designer of all things beautiful—the Divine Spirit of God. What does He say? He says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love." We have seen many fine pictures of fruit and here is one. The great Artist has sketched fruit which never grow in the gardens of earth till they are planted by the Lord from Heaven! Oh, that every one of us might have a vineyard in his bosom and yield abundance of that love which is "the fruit of the Spirit!" What does this mean? "Fruit"—how is love a *fruit*? The metaphor shows that love is a thing which comes out of life. You cannot fetch fruit out of a dead post. The pillars which support these galleries have never yielded any fruit and they never will—they are of hard iron and no life-sap circulates within them.

A dead tree brings forth no fruit. God implants a spiritual life in men and then, out of that life, comes love, as the fruit of the Spirit. Love appears as a *growth*. Fruit does not *begin* perfectly ripe from the tree all at once. First comes a flower; then a tiny formation which shows that the flower has set. Then a berry appears, but it is very sour. You may not gather it. Leave it alone, a little while, and allow the sun to ripen it. By-and-by it fills out and there you have the apple in the full proportions of beauty—and with a mellow flavor which delights the taste. Love springs up in the heart and increases by a sure growth. Love is not produced by casting the mind in the mold of imitation, or by fastening the Grace to a man's manner as a thing outside of himself. Little children go to a shop where their little tastes are considered and they buy sticks upon which cherries have been tied—but everybody knows that they are not the fruit of the *sticks*—they are merely bound upon them! And so have we known people who have borrowed an affectionate mannerism and a sweet style—but they are not natural to them—they are not true love.

What sweet words! What dainty phrases! You go among them and, at first, you are surprised with their affection! You are a, “*dear* Sister,” or a, “*dear* Brother,” and you hear a, “*dear* minister.” And you come to the “*dear* Tabernacle” and sing *dear* hymns to those *dear* old tunes. Their talk is so sweet that it is just a little sticky—and you feel like a fly which is being caught in molasses! This is disgusting! It sickens me! Love is a fruit of the *Spirit*—it is not something assumed by a man—but something growing out of his heart. Some men sugar their conversation very largely with pretentious words because they are aware that the fruit it is made of is unripe and young. In such a case their sweetness is not affection but affectation! But *true* love, *real* love for God and man comes out of a man because it is *in* him, worked within by the operation of the Holy Spirit whose fruit it is. The outcome of regenerated manhood is that a man lives no longer unto himself but for the good of others.

Fruit, again, calls for care. If you have a garden, you will soon know this. We had a profusion of flowers upon our pear trees this year and, for a few weeks, the weather was warm beyond the usual heat of April. But nights of frost followed and cut off nearly all the fruit. Other kinds of fruit which survived the frost are now in danger from the dry weather which has developed an endless variety of insect blight so that we wonder whether any of it will survive! If we get over this trial and the fruit grows well, we shall yet expect to see many apples fall before autumn because a worm has eaten into their hearts and effectually destroyed them. So is it with Christian life! I have seen a work for the Lord prospering splendidly, like a fruitful vine, when suddenly there has come a frosty night and fond hopes have been nipped. Or else new notions and wild ideas have descended like insect blights and the fruit has been spoiled! Or if the work has escaped these causes of damage, some immorality in a leading member, or a quarrelsome spirit has appeared unawares like a worm in the center of the apple—and down it has fallen, never to flourish again.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love.” You must take care of your fruit if you wish to have any laid up in store at the end of the year. And so must every Christian be very watchful over the fruit of the Spirit, lest in any way it should be destroyed by the enemy. Fruit is the reward of the husbandman and the crown and glory of the tree. The Lord crowns the year with His goodness by giving fruit in due season—and truly the holy fruit of love is the regard of Jesus and the honor of His servants. How sweet is the fruit of the Spirit! I say, “fruit,” and not *fruits*, for the text says so. The work of the Spirit is *one*, whether it is known by the name of love, or joy, or peace, or meekness, or gentleness, or temperance. Moreover, it is constant—the fruit of the Spirit is borne continually in its season. It is reproductive, for the tree multiplies itself by its fruit, and Christianity must be spread by the love and joy and peace of Christians.

Let the Spirit of God work in you, dear Brothers and Sisters, and you will be fruitful in every good work, doing the will of the Lord—and you will rear others like you, who shall, when your time is over, occupy your place and bring forth fruit to the great Husbandman!

IV. Lastly, you see in my text, A CROWN. “The fruit of the Spirit is love.” Let us make a diadem out of the text and lovingly set it upon the head of the Holy Spirit, because He has produced, in the people of God, this precious thing which is called, “Love.” How comes heavenly love into such hearts as yours and mine? It comes, first, because the Holy Spirit has given us a new *nature*. There is a new life in us that was not there when we first came into the world. And that new life lives and loves. It must love God, who has created it, and man, who is made in His image. It cries, “My Father,” and the essence of that word, “My Father,” is love!

The Spirit of God has brought us into new relationships. He has given us the spirit of adoption towards the Father. He has made us to feel our brotherhood with the saints and to know our union with Christ. We are not in our relationships what we used to be, for we were “heirs of wrath even as others.” But now we are “heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ” and, consequently, we cannot help loving, for love, alone, could make the new relation to be fully enjoyed. The blessed Spirit has also brought us tender new *obligations*. We were bound to love God and serve Him as creatures, but we did not do it—now the Holy Spirit has made us to feel that we are debtors to infinite love and mercy through redemption. Every drop of Jesus’ blood cries to us to love! Every groan from yonder dark Gethsemane cries love! The Spirit of God works in us so that every shiver of yonder Cross moves us to love!

The love of Christ constrains us—we *must* love, for the Spirit has taken of the things of the loving Christ and has revealed them to us. The Spirit of God has so entered into us that He has caused love to be our delight! What a pleasure it is when you can preach a sermon full of love to those to whom you preach! Or when you can visit the poor, full of love to those you relieve! To stand on the street corner and proclaim of Jesus’ dying love—why, it is no irksome task to the man who does it lovingly—it is his joy and his recreation! Holy service in which the emotion of love is indulged is as pleasant to us as it is to a bird to fly, or to a fish to swim! Duty is no longer bondage, but choice! Holiness is no longer restraint, but perfect liberty! And self-sacrifice becomes the very *crown* of our ambition—the loftiest height to which our spirit can aspire! It is the Holy Spirit that does all this.

Now, my dear Hearer, have you this love in your heart? Judge by your relation to God. Do you live without prayer? Do you very seldom read God’s Word? Are you getting indifferent as to whether you go and worship with His people? Ah, then, be afraid that the love of God is not in you! But do you feel that you love everything that has to do with God—His work, His service, His people, His Day, His Book—and that you do all you possibly can to spread His Kingdom, both by prayer, by word of mouth, by your liberality and by your example? If you love, you can easily see it, I think, and there are many ways by which you can test yourself.

Well, suppose that to be satisfactorily answered, then I have this further question—Do you and I—who can say, “Lord, you know that I love You”—do we sufficiently bless the Holy Spirit for giving us this jewel of

love? If you love Christ, then say, “This love is *given* to me. It is a rare plant, an exotic. It never sprang out of my natural heart. Weeds will grow there, but not this fair flower.” Bless the Holy Spirit for it! “Oh, but I do not love God as I ought!” No, Brother, I know you do not, but bless Him that you love Him at all! Love God for the very fact that He has led you to love Him—and that is the way to love Him more! Love God for letting you love Him! Love Him for taking away the stone out of your heart and giving you a heart of flesh! For the little Grace that you see in your soul, thank God!

You know when a man has been ill, the doctor says to him, “You are not well by a long way, but I hope you are on the turn.” “Yes,” says the man, “I feel very ill, but still, I think I am a little better—the fever is less and the swelling is going down.” He mentions some little symptom and the doctor is pleased because he knows that it indicates much—the disease is past the crisis. Bless God for a little Grace! Blame yourself that you have not more Grace, but praise Him to think you have any! Time was when I would have given my eyes and ears to be able to say, “I love God.” And now that I do love Him, I would give my eyes and ears to love Him more! I would give all I have to get more love into my soul! But I am grateful to think I have a measure of true love and I feel its power.

Do be grateful to the Holy Spirit. Worship and adore Him specially and peculiarly. You say, “Why specially and peculiarly?” I answer—Because He is so much forgotten. Some people hardly know whether there is a Holy Spirit! Let the Father and the Son be equally adored, but be careful in reference to the Holy Spirit, for the failure of the Church towards the Holy Trinity lies mainly in a forgetfulness of the Gracious work of the Holy Spirit! Therefore I press this upon you and I beg you to laud and magnify the Holy Spirit and sedulously walk in all affectionate gratitude towards Him all your days. As your love increases, let your worship of the Holy Spirit become daily more and more conspicuous because love is *His* fruit although it is your vital principle. To the God of Love I commend you all. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians 5.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—23, 651, 649.**

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**MESSRS. MOODY AND SANKEY DEFENDED;
OR, A VINDICATION OF THE DOCTRINE
OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH
NO. 1239**

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

***“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”
Galatians 5:24.***

FROM several quarters we have heard intensely earnest objections, lately, to *the matter and tenor* of the preaching of the evangelists from America who have been working among us. Of course their teaching, as well as our own, is open to honest judgment and they, we feel sure, would rather court than shun investigation of the most searching sort. Criticisms upon their style of speaking and singing, and so on, are so unimportant that nobody has any need to answer them. “Wisdom is justified of her children.” It is a waste of time to discuss mere matters of taste, for no men, however excellent, can please all, or even become equally adapted to all constitutions and conditions. Therefore we may let such remarks pass without further observation.

But upon the matter of doctrine very much has been said and said, also, with a good deal of temper not always of the best kind. What has been affirmed by a certain class of public writers comes to this, if you boil it down—that it cannot really do any good to tell men that simply by believing in Jesus Christ they will be saved. And that it may do people very serious injury if we lead them to imagine that they have undergone a process called *conversion* and are now safe for life. We are told by these gentlemen, who ought to know, for they speak very positively, that the doctrine of immediate salvation through faith in Christ Jesus is a very dangerous one. They say that it will certainly lead to the deterioration of the public morality since men will not be likely to set store by the practical virtues when faith is lifted up to so very lofty a position. They say if it *were* so it were a grievous fault and woe to those who lead men into it!

That it is not the fact, we are sure, but meanwhile let us survey the field of battle. Will you please notice that this is no quarrel between these gentlemen and our friends Messrs. Moody and Sankey, alone! It is a quarrel between these objectors and the whole of us who preach the Gospel. For, although differing, as we do, in the *style* of preaching it, we are all ready to set our seal to the clearest possible statement that men *are* saved by faith in Jesus Christ and saved the moment they believe! We all hold and teach that there *is* such a thing as conversion—and that when men are converted they become other men than they were before—and a new life begins which will culminate in eternal glory.

We are not so dastardly as to allow our friends to stand alone in the front of the battle, to be looked upon as peculiar persons holding strange notions from which the rest of us dissent. So far as salvation through faith in the atoning blood is concerned, they preach nothing but what we have preached all our lives! They preach nothing but what has the general consent of Protestant Christendom. Let that be known to all and let the archers shoot at us all alike! Then, further, if this is the point of objection, we should like those who raise it to know that they do not raise it against us, merely, and these friends who are more prominent, but against the Protestant faith which these very same gentlemen most probably profess to glory in!

The Protestant faith, in a nutshell, lies in this very same justification by faith which they hoot at. It was the discovery that men are saved by faith in Jesus Christ which first stirred up Luther. That was the ray of light which fell upon his dark heart and by the power of which he came into the liberty of the Gospel! This is the hammer by which popery was broken in old times and this is the sword with which it still is to be smitten—the very “Sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” Jesus is the all-sufficient Savior and, “He that believes in Him is not condemned.” Luther used, in fact, to say—and we endorse it—that this matter of Justification by Faith is the article by which a Church must stand or fall.

That so-called Church which does not hold this doctrine is not a Church of Christ! And it is a Church of Christ that does hold it, notwithstanding many mistakes into which it may have fallen. The contest lies really between the Popish doctrine of *merit* and the Protestant doctrine of Grace! And no man who calls himself a Protestant can logically dispute the question with us and our friends. We shall go somewhat further than this. The objection is not against Messrs. Moody and Sankey, but against all evangelical ministers! It is not against them, only, but against our common Protestantism! And yet more—it is against the Inspired Word of God—for if this Book teaches *anything* under Heaven, it certainly teaches that men are saved by faith in our Lord Jesus!

Read the Epistle to the Galatians and your judgment may be very perverse, but you cannot, by any common wresting of words, expel the doctrine of Justification by Faith from the Epistle. It was written on purpose to state that Truth of God plainly and defend it fully. Neither can you get rid of that doctrine from the whole New Testament. You shall find it not merely seasoning all the Epistles, but positively saturating them! And, as you take chapter by chapter, you may wring out of them, as out of Gideon’s fleece, this one Truth—that justification before God is by *faith*—not by the works of the Law. So the objection is against the Bible—and let those who shoot their errors, understand that they fight against the Eternal Spirit of God and the witness which He has borne by His Prophets and Apostles! Deny Inspiration and you have no ground to stand on. But while you believe the Bible you must believe in Justification by Faith.

But now let us look this matter in the face. Is it true, or not, that persons who believe in Jesus Christ become worse than they were before? We are not backward to answer the inquiry and we stand in a point of observation which supplies us with abundant data to go upon. We solemnly

affirm that men who believe in Jesus become purer, holier and better. At the same time, I confess that there has been a good deal of injudicious and misleading talk, at times, by uninstructed advocates of Free Grace. I fear, moreover, that many people think that they believe in Jesus Christ, but do nothing of the sort. We do not defend rash statements, or deny the existence of weak-minded followers. But we ask to be heard and considered.

Some persons say, “You tell these people that they will be saved upon their believing in Christ.” Exactly so. “But will you kindly tell me what you mean by being saved, Sir?” I will, with great pleasure. We do *not* mean that these people will go to Heaven when they die, irrespective of character. But, when we say that if they believe in Jesus they will be saved, we mean that they will be saved from living as they used to live—saved from being what they now are—saved from licentiousness, dishonesty, drunkenness, selfishness and any other sin they may have lived in. The thing can readily be put to the test! If it can be shown that those who have believed in the Lord Jesus have been saved from living in sin, no rational man ought to entertain any objection to the preaching of such a salvation!

Salvation from wrongdoing is the very thing which every moralist should commend and not censure—and that is the salvation which we preach. I am afraid that some imagine that they have only to believe something or other, and they will go to Heaven when they die. And that they have only to feel a certain singular emotion and it is all right with them. Now, if any of you have fallen into that error, may God, in His mercy, lead you out of it, for it is not every faith that saves, but only the faith of God’s elect. It is not any sort of *emotion* that changes the heart, but the work of the Holy Spirit.

It is a small matter to go into an inquiry-room and say, “I believe.” Such an avowal as that proves nothing at all! It may even be false. It will be proved by this—if you have rightly believed in Jesus Christ you will become, from that time forward, a different man from what you were. There will be a change in your heart and soul, in your conduct and your conversation. And, seeing you thus changed, those who have been honest objectors will right speedily leave off their objections, for they will be in the condition of those who saw the man that was healed standing with Peter and John and, therefore, they could say nothing against them.

The world demands *facts* and these we must supply! It is of no use to cry up our medicine by *words*—we must point to *cures*. Your change of life will be the grandest argument for the Gospel, if that life shall show the meaning of my text—“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” Let us discuss this text in an apologetic manner, hoping to overcome prejudice, if God permits.

I. Notice, first of all, that THE RECEPTION OF JESUS CHRIST BY FAITH IS, IN ITSELF, AN AVOWAL THAT WE HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH WITH THE AFFECTIONS AND LUSTS. If faith is such an avowal, why say that it is not connected with holy living? Let me show that this is the case. Faith is the accepting of Jesus Christ. In what respects? Well, principally as a Substitute. He is the Son of God and I am a guilty sinner. I deserve to

die—the Son of God stands in my place and suffers for me. And when I believe in Him I accept Him as standing for me.

To believe in Jesus was very beautifully set forth in the old ceremony of the Law, when the person bringing a sacrifice laid his hands upon the head of the bullock or the lamb and thereby accepted the victim as standing in his place, so that the victim's sufferings should be instead of his sufferings. Now, our faith accepts Jesus Christ as standing in our place. The very pith and marrow of faith's confidence lies in this—

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

Christ for me, Christ in my place. Now, try to catch the following thought. When you believe, you accept Christ as standing instead of you and profess that what He did, He did for you—and what did Christ do upon the tree? He was crucified and died. Follow the thought and note well that by faith *you regard yourself as dead with Him*—crucified with Him.

You have not really grasped what faith means unless you have grasped this. With Him you suffered the wrath of God, for He suffered in your place. You are now *in Him*—crucified *with Him*, dead *with Him*, buried *with Him*, risen *with Him* and gone into Glory *with Him*—because He represents you and your faith has accepted the representation. Do you see, then, that you did, in the moment when you believed in Christ, register a declaration that you were, from that moment on, dead unto sin? Who shall say that our Gospel teaches men to *live* in sin, when the faith which is essential to salvation involves an avowal of *death* to it? The convert begins with agreeing to be regarded as dead with Christ to sin—have we not, here, the foundation stone of holiness?

Observe, also, that if he follows the commands of Christ, the very first step which a Christian takes after he has accepted the position taken up by the Lord Jesus on his behalf is another avowal more public than the first, namely, *his Baptism*. By faith he has accepted Christ as dead, instead of him, and he regards himself as having died in Christ. Now, every dead man ought to be buried, sooner or later. And so, when we come forward and confess Christ, we are “buried with Him in baptism unto death, that like as Jesus Christ rose from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also might rise to newness of life.”

Though Baptism does not mean *anything* as a ceremony, having no power or efficacy in and of itself, yet as a *sign* and *symbol* it teaches us that true Believers are dead and buried with Christ. So, you see, the two ways in which, according to the Gospel, we actually and avowedly give ourselves to Christ, are by faith and Baptism. “He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved.” Now, the essence of faith is to accept Christ as representing me in His death. And the essence of Baptism is to be buried with Christ because I am dead with Him. Thus at the very doorstep of the Christian religion, in its first *inward act* and its first *outward symbol*, you get the thought that Believers are, from now on, to be separated from sin and purified in life.

He who truly believes and knows what it is to be really buried with Christ, has begun—no, he *has*, in a certain sense, effected completely—what the text describes as the crucifixion of the

flesh with the affections and lusts. For, dear Friends, let it never be forgotten that the grand object for which we lay hold on Christ is the death of sin! If there are any among us who have believed in Christ that he might escape the pangs of Hell—O, Brothers and Sisters, you have but a very poor idea of what Jesus Christ has come into the world to do! He is proclaimed to be a Savior who “shall save His people *from their sins*.” This is the object of His mission! True, He comes to give pardon, but He never gives pardon without giving *repentance* with it!

He comes to justify, but He does not justify without also sanctifying. He has come to deliver us, not from you, O Death, alone! Nor from you, O Hell, alone! But from you, O Sin, the mother of Death, the progenitor of Hell! The Redeemer lays His axe at the root of all the mischief by killing Sin and thus, as far as we are concerned, He puts an end to Death and Hell! Glory be to God for this! Now, it does seem to me that if the very commencement of the Christian faith is so manifestly connected with death to sin, they do us grievous injustice who suppose that in preaching faith in Jesus Christ we ignore the moralities or the virtues, or that we think little of sin and vice! We do not so, but we proclaim the only method by which moral evil can be put to death and swept away! The reception of Christ is an avowal of the crucifixion of the flesh with the affections and lusts—what more can the purest moralist propose? What more could he avow, himself?

II. But secondly, AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE RECEPTION OF CHRIST IS ATTENDED WITH THE CRUCIFIXION OF SIN. I shall now state my own experience when I believed in Jesus. And while I am doing so I rejoice to remember that there are hundreds, if not thousands in this place who have experienced the same. And there are millions in this world and millions more in Heaven who know the Truth of what I declare. When I believed that Jesus was the Christ and rested my soul in Him, I felt in my heart, from that moment, an intense hatred to sin of every kind. I had loved sin before, some sins particularly, but those sins became, from that moment, the most obnoxious to me and, though the propensity to them was still there, yet the love of them was clean gone.

And when I at any time transgressed I felt an inward grief and horror at myself for doing the things which before I had allowed and even enjoyed. My relish for sin was gone. The things I once loved I abhorred and blushed to think of. Then I began to search out my sins. I see, now, a parallel between my experience in reference to sin and the details of the crucifixion of Christ. They sent Judas into the garden to search for our great Substitute, and just in that way I began to search for sin, even for that which lay concealed amid the thick darkness of my soul. I was ignorant and did not know what sin was, for it was night in any soul, but, being stirred up to destroy the evil, my repenting spirit borrowed lanterns and torches, and went out as against a thief.

I searched the garden of my heart through and through, with an intense ardor to find out every sin. And I sought God to help me, saying, “Search me, O God, and try me, and know my ways.” Nor did I cease till I had spied out my secret transgressions. This inward search is one of my most constant occupations. I patrol my nature through and through to try and arrest these

felons, these abhorred sins, that they may be crucified with Christ! O you in whom iniquity lurks under cover of your spiritual ignorance, arouse yourself to a strict scrutiny of your nature and no longer endure that your hearts should be the lurking-places of evil!

I remember when I found my sin. When I found it, I seized it and I dragged it off to the Judgment Seat. Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, you know when that occurred to you—and how stern was the judgment which Conscience gave forth. I sat in judgment on myself. I took my sin to one court and to another. I looked at it as before men and trembled to think that the badness of my example might have ruined other men's souls! I looked at my sin as before God and I abhorred myself in dust and ashes. My sin was as red as crimson in His sight and in mine, also. I judged my sin and I condemned it—condemned it as a felon to a felon's death. I heard a voice within me which, Pilate-like, pleaded for it—"I will chastise him and let him go! Let it be put to shame just a little. Let not the wrong deed be done quite so often. Let the lust be curbed and kept under."

But, ah, my soul said, "Let it be crucified! Let it be crucified!" And nothing could shake my heart from this intent, that I would slay all the murderers of Christ, if possible, and let not one of them escape, for my soul hated them with a deadly hatred and would gladly nail them all to the tree. I remember, too, how I began to see the shame of sin. As my Lord was spit upon, mocked and despitefully used, so did my soul begin to pour contempt upon all the pride of sin, to scorn its promises of pleasure and to accuse it of a thousand crimes! It had deceived me. It had led me into ruin. It had well-near destroyed me! I despised it and poured contempt upon its bribes and all it offered of sweetness and of pleasure.

O Sin, how shameful a thing did you appear to be! I saw all that is base, mean and contemptible concentrated in you! My heart scourged sin by repentance, smote it with rebukes and buffeted it with self-denials. Then was it made a reproach and a scorn. But this sufficed not—sin must *die*. My heart mourned for what sin had done and I was resolved to avenge my Lord's death upon myself. Thus my soul sang out her resolve—

*"Oh, how I hate those lusts of mine
That crucified my God!
Those sins that pierced and nailed His flesh
Fast to the fatal wood!
Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die!
My heart has so decreed:
Nor will I spare the guilty things
That made my Savior bleed."*

Then I led forth my sins to the place of crucifixion. They would gladly have escaped, but the power of God prevented them and like a guard of soldiery, conducted them to the gallows of mortification. The hand of the Lord was present and His all-revealing Spirit stripped my sin as Christ was stripped!

He set it before my eyes, even my secret sin in the light of His Countenance! O, what a spectacle it was as I gazed upon it! I had looked, before, upon its dainty apparel and the colors with

which it had painted itself to make it look as fair as Jezebel when she painted her face. But now I saw its nakedness and horror—and I was well-near ready to despair! But my spirit bore me up, for I knew that I was forgiven, and I said, “Christ Jesus has pardoned me, for I have believed in Him. And I will put the flesh to death by crucifying it on His Cross.” The driving of the nails, I remember, and how the flesh struggled to maintain its liberty. One, two, three, four—the nails went in and fastened the accursed thing to the wood with Christ so that it could neither run nor rule—and now, glory be to God, though my sin is not dead, it is crucified and must eventually die!

It hangs up there. I can see it bleeding out its life. Sometimes it struggles to get down and tries to wrench away the nails, for it would go after vanity. But the sacred nails hold it too fast—it is in the grasp of Death and it cannot escape. Alas, it dies a lingering death, attended with much pain and struggling! But still it dies. And soon its heart shall be pierced through with the spear of the love of Christ and it shall utterly expire. Then shall our immortal nature no more be burdened with the body of this death, but, pure and spotless, it shall rise to and behold the face of God forever.

Now, I am not talking allegorically of things which *ought* to be realized, but, as a matter of fact, remain mere ideas. I am describing in figure what happens in reality—for every man who believes in Jesus immediately bestirs himself to get rid of sin. And you may know whether he has believed in Jesus Christ or not by seeing whether there is a change in his motives, feelings, life and conduct. Do you say that you doubt this? You may doubt what you like, but facts speak for themselves. There will come before me, I dare say, before this week is over, as there have almost every week of my life, men who have been slaves to intoxication made sober, at once, by believing in Jesus Christ!

Women, once lost to virtue, who have become pure and chaste by believing in Jesus, will come, and so will men and women who were fond of all manner of evil pleasures, who have turned instantly from them, and have continued to resist all temptation because they are new creatures in Christ Jesus! The phenomenon of conversion is singular, but the effect of conversion is more singular, still! And it is not a thing done in a corner—it can be seen every day. If it were merely an excitement in which men felt a distress of mind and then, by-and-by, thought they were at peace and became happy because self-satisfied, I should not see any particular good in it. But if it is true that regeneration changes men’s tastes and affections, that it, in fine, changes them *radically*, making them altogether new creatures! If it is so, I say, then may God send us thousands of conversions! And that this *is* so, we are quite sure, for we see it perpetually.

III. Thirdly, we go a step farther and say that THE RECEPTION OF JESUS CHRIST INTO THE HEART BY SIMPLE FAITH IS CALCULATED TO CRUCIFY THE FLESH. When a man believes in Jesus, the first point that helps him to crucify the flesh is that *he has seen the evil of sin*, inasmuch as he has seen Jesus, his Lord, die because of it. Men think that sin is nothing,

but what will sin do? What will it *not* do? The virus of sin, what will it poison? Yes, what will it *not* poison? Its influence has been baleful upon the largest conceivable scale.

Sin has flooded the world with blood and tears through red-handed war! Sin has covered the world with oppression and so has crushed the manhood of many, and broken the hearts of myriads! Sin begat slavery, tyranny, priestcraft, rebellion, slander and persecution! Sin has been at the bottom of all human sorrows. But the crowning culminating point of sin's villainy was when God, Himself, came down to earth in human form—pure, perfect, intent on an errand of love—came to work miracles of mercy and redemption. Then sinful man could never rest till he had crucified his Incarnate God! They coined a word when the Parliamentary party executed the king in England. They called the king's destroyers "regicides," and now we must make a word to describe sin—sin is a *deicide*.

Every sinner, if he could, would kill God, for he says in his heart, "No God." He means he *wishes* there were none. He would rejoice, indeed, if he could learn for certain that there was no God. In fact, that is the bugbear of his life, that there *is* a God—a just God who will bring him into judgment! His secret wish is that there were no religion and no God, for he might, then, live as he pleased. Now, when a man is made to see that sin in its essence is the murderer of Emmanuel, God with us, his heart being renewed, he hates sin from that very moment! "No," he says, "I cannot continue in such evil! If that is the true meaning of every offense against the Law of God—that it would put God, Himself, out of His own world if it could—I cannot bear it."

His spirit recoils with horror, as he feels—

*"My sins have pulled the vengeance down
Upon His guiltless head!
Break, break, my heart, oh burst my eyes!
And let my sorrows bleed.
Strike, mighty Groom, my flinty soul,
Till melting waters flow,
And deep repentance drowns my eyes
In undissembled woe."*

Then *the Believer* has also seen, in the death of Christ, an amazing instance of the great Grace of God, for if sin is an attempt to murder God—and it is that—then how wonderful it is that the creatures who committed this sin were not destroyed at once! How remarkable that God should consider it worth His while to devise a plan for their restoration! And He did, with matchless skill, contrive a way which involved the giving up of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son. Though this was an expense unequalled, yet He did not withdraw from it. He "so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life." And this for a race of men who were the enemies of their good and gracious God!

"From now on," says the believer in Christ, "I can have nothing to do with sin, since it does despite to so gracious a God. O, you accursed Sin, to drive your dagger at the heart of Him who was all Grace and Mercy! This makes sin to be exceedingly sinful." Further, *the Believer* has had

a view of the justice of God. He sees that God hates sin intensely, for when His only-begotten Son took sin upon Himself, God would not spare, even Him! That sin was not His own—in Him was no sin! But when He voluntarily took it upon Himself and was made a curse for us, the Judge of all the earth did not spare Him! Down from His armory of vengeance He took His thunderbolts and hurled them at His Son, for His Son stood in the sinner's place.

There was no mercy for the sinner's Substitute. He had to cry as never one cried, before or since, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Torrents of woe rushed through His spirit. The condemnation of sin overwhelmed Him. All God's waves and billows went over Him. Now, when a man sees this amazing fact, he can no longer think lightly of transgression. He trembles before the thrice holy Jehovah and cries in his secret heart, "How can I sin if this is God's opinion of it? If in His justice, He smote it so unsparingly, even when it was only laid by imputation upon His Son, how will He smite it when its actual guilt lies on me? O God deliver me from it." The Believer has also had one more sight which, perhaps, more effectually than any other changes his view of sin.

He has seen the amazing love of Jesus. Did you ever see it, my Hearer? If you have seen it, you will never love sin again! O, to think that He who was Master of all Heaven's majesty came down to be the victim of all man's misery! He came to Bethlehem and dwelt among us, offering 30 years and more of toilsome obedience to His Father's will. And at the close He reached the crisis of His griefs, the crowning sorrow of His Incarnation—His bloody sweat and agonizing death on the Cross! That was a solemn Passover which He ate with His disciples, with Calvary in full view. Then He arose and went to Gethsemane—

*"Gethsemane, the olive press,
(And why so called let Christians guess).
Fit name, fit place, where vengeance strove,
And gripped and grappled hard with love.
'Twas there the Lord of Life appeared
And sighed, and groaned, and prayed, and feared;
Bore all Incarnate God could bear
With strength enough, and none to spare."*

Behold how He loved us! He was taken to Pilate's Hall and there was scourged—scourged with those awful Roman whips weighted with little bullets of lead and made of the intertwined sinews of oxen, into which they also inserted small slivers of bone, so that every blow, as it fell, tore off the flesh! Our beloved Lord had to suffer this again and again, being scourged often as that verse seems to intimate which says—

*"He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities:
The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.
And with His stripes we are healed."*

Yet He loved us, still loved us! Many waters could not quench His love, neither could the floods drown it. When they nailed Him to the tree, He still loved us. When, every bone being dislocated, He cried in sad soliloquy, "I am poured out like water, all My bones are out of joint," He

loved us still! When the dogs compassed Him and the bulls of Bashan beset Him round, He still loved us.

When the dread faintness came upon Him till He was brought into the dust of death and His heart melted like wax, He still loved us! When God forsook Him and the sun was blotted out, and midnight darkness covered the midday and a denser midnight veiled His spirit—a darkness like that of Egypt, which might be felt—He loved us still! Till He had drunk the last dregs of the unutterably bitter brew, He still loved us! And when the light shone on His face and He could say, “It is finished,” that light shone on a face that still loved us! Now, every man to whom it has been given to believe in Jesus and to know His love, says, “How can I offend *Him*? How can I grieve *Him*? There are actions in this life which I might otherwise indulge in, but I dare not now, for I fear to vex my Lord.”

And if you say “*Dare* not, are you afraid of Him?” The answer will be, “I am not slavishly afraid, for into Hell I can never go.” What am I afraid of, then? I am afraid of that dear face, on which I see the guttering of tears which He once shed for *me*. I am afraid of that dear brow which wore the crown of thorns for *me*. I cannot rebel against such kindness— His bleeding love enchains me. How can I do so great a wickedness as to put my dying Lord to shame?” Do you not feel this, my beloved Brothers and Sisters? If you have ever trusted the Lord Jesus, you crouch at His feet and kiss the prints of His nails for very love! And if He would use you as a footstool, if it would raise Him any higher, you would count it the highest honor of your life!

Yes, if He bade you go to prison and to death for Him, and would say it Himself, and put His pierced hands on you, you would go there as cheerfully as angels fly to Heaven! If he bade you *die* for Him, though the flesh is weak, your spirit would be willing! Yes, and the flesh would be made strong enough, too, if Jesus did but look upon you, for He can, with a glance, cast out selfishness and cowardice, and everything that keeps us back from being whole burnt-offerings to Him! Is it not so?—

*“Speak of morality!
You bleeding Lamb
The best morality
Is love to You!”*

When we are once filled with love to You, O Jesus, sin becomes the dragon against which we wage a lifelong warfare! Holiness becomes our noblest aspiration and we seek after it with all our heart and soul and strength! If candid minds will but honestly consider the religion of Jesus Christ, they will see that Christians must hate sin if they are sincere in their faith. I might go farther into that, but I will not.

IV. The last thing of all is this. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS WITH THE GOSPEL AND WHERE HE IS, HOLINESS MUST BE PROMOTED. Let it never be forgotten that while the reception of Jesus Christ by simple faith is an avowal of death to sin and brings with it an experience of hating sin—and is calculated to do so—there is one thing more. If, dear Friends, in any work of revival, or ordinary ministry, there was nothing more than you could see or hear, I think that

many criticisms and quibbles might be, at least, rational, but they are not so! One grand fact makes them forever unreasonable.

Wherever Jesus Christ is preached, there is present One sublime in rank and high in degree. You will not suppose that I am speaking of any *earthly* potentate. No, I am speaking of the Holy Spirit—the ever blessed Spirit of God! There is never a Gospel sermon preached by an earnest heart but what the Holy Spirit is there, taking of the things of Christ and revealing them unto men. When a man turns his eyes to Jesus and simply trusts Him—for we adhere to that as being the vital matter—there is accompanying that act—no, I must correct myself, there is as the *cause* of that act a miraculous, supernatural power which in an instant changes a man as completely as if it flung him back into nothingness and brought him forth into new life! If this is so, then believing in Christ is something very marvelous.

Now, if you will turn to the third chapter of John's Gospel and also to his Epistles, you will see that faith is *always* linked with regeneration, or the new birth, which new birth is the work of the Spirit of God. That same third of John which tells us, "You must be born again," goes on to say, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Wherever there is faith in Jesus Christ, a miracle of purification has been worked in the heart! Deny this and you deny the testimony of the Scriptures, which say plainly, that, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." "And whoever is born of God sins not; but he that is begotten of God keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not."

Why do you doubt, for we who are personal examples can assure you that it has been so in our case? I mean not that myself and one or two others affirm this, but the witnesses may be met with by hundreds and thousands—and they all agree in asserting that the power of the Holy Spirit has changed the current of their desires and made them love the things which are holy, just, and true. Therefore, Sirs, whether you believe it or not, you must be so kind as to understand one thing from us very decidedly, namely—that if to preach salvation through faith is vile, we purpose to be still viler! Surely you cannot blame us for acting as we do if our central point of our argument is correct!

If the preaching of the Cross, though it is to them that perish, foolishness, is, to them that believe in Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God, we shall not give up preaching Christ for you! If it is so that men are made new creatures—that, while others are talking about morals, our Gospel plants and produces them—we shall not give up work for talk, nor the efficient agency of the Gospel for the inventions of philosophy! To the front, my Brothers and Sisters, with the Cross, more and more! In your schools and in your pulpits set forth Christ Crucified as the sinner's hope more and more plainly! Bid the sinner look to Jesus! Look and live!

The Gospel is the great promoter of social order, the great reclamer of the waifs and strays of society, the elevator of the human race! This doctrine of free pardon and gracious renewal, freely given to the most worthless upon their *believing in Jesus Christ*, is the hope of mankind!

There is no balm in Gilead and never was—but this is the balm of Calvary, for *there* is the true medicine—and Jesus Christ is the Infallible Physician. Do but try it, Sinners! Do but try it! Look to Jesus and the passions which you cannot overcome shall yield to His cleansing power! Believe in Jesus and the follies which cling to you, and crush you as the snakes engirdled Laocoon and his sons, you shall be able to untwist!

Yes, they shall die at Jesus' glance and shall fall off from you. Believe in Jesus and you have the spring of excellency, the hat of purity, the source of virtue, the destruction of evil, the bud of perfection! God grant us, still, to prove the power of the Lord Jesus in ourselves and to proclaim His power to all around us!—

*“Happy if, with our last breath,
We may but gasp His name;
Preach Him to all,
And cry in death,
Behold, behold, the Lamb!”*

Amen and amen!

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians 5.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—278, 317, 432
AND “SAFE IN THE ARMS OF JESUS.”***

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MESSRS. MOODY AND SANKEY DEFENDED—OR, A VINDICATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH NO. 1239

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

***“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”
Galatians 5:24.***

FROM several quarters we have heard intensely earnest objections, lately, to *the matter and tenor* of the preaching of the evangelists from America who have been working among us. Of course their teaching, as well as our own, is open to honest judgment and they, we feel sure, would rather court than shun investigation of the most searching sort. Criticisms upon their style of speaking and singing, and so on, are so unimportant that nobody has any need to answer them. “Wisdom is justified of her children.” It is a waste of time to discuss mere matters of taste, for no men, however excellent, can please all, or even become equally adapted to all constitutions and conditions. Therefore we may let such remarks pass without further observation.

But upon the matter of doctrine very much has been said and said, also, with a good deal of temper not always of the best kind. What has been affirmed by a certain class of public writers comes to this, if you boil it down—that it cannot really do any good to tell men that simply by believing in Jesus Christ they will be saved. And that it may do people very serious injury if we lead them to imagine that they have undergone a process called *conversion* and are now safe for life. We are told by these gentlemen, who ought to know, for they speak very positively, that the doctrine of immediate salvation through faith in Christ Jesus is a very dangerous one. They say that it will certainly lead to the deterioration of the public morality since men will not be likely to set store by the practical virtues when faith is lifted up to so very lofty a position. They say if it *were* so it were a grievous fault and woe to those who lead men into it!

That it is not the fact, we are sure, but meanwhile let us survey the field of battle. Will you please notice that this is no quarrel between these gentlemen and our friends Messrs. Moody and Sankey, alone! It is a quarrel between these objectors and the whole of us who preach the Gospel. For, although differing, as we do, in the *style* of preaching it, we are all ready to set our seal to the clearest possible statement that men *are* saved by faith in Jesus Christ and saved the moment they believe! We all hold and teach that there *is* such a thing as conversion—and that when men are converted they become other men than they were before—and a new life begins which will culminate in eternal glory.

We are not so dastardly as to allow our friends to stand alone in the front of the battle, to be looked upon as peculiar persons holding strange notions from which the rest of us dissent. So far as salvation through faith in the atoning blood is concerned, they preach nothing but what we have preached all our lives! They preach nothing but what has the general consent of Protestant Christendom. Let that be known to all and let the archers shoot at us all alike! Then, further, if this is the point of objection, we should like those who raise it to know that they do not raise it against us, merely, and these friends who are more prominent, but against the Protestant faith which these very same gentlemen most probably profess to glory in!

The Protestant faith, in a nutshell, lies in this very same justification by faith which they hoot at. It was the discovery that men are saved by faith in Jesus Christ which first stirred up Luther. That was the ray of light which fell upon his dark heart and by the power of which he came into the liberty of the Gospel! This is the hammer by which popery was broken in old times and this is the sword with which it still is to be smitten—the very “Sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” Jesus is the all-sufficient Savior and, “He that believes in Him is not condemned.” Luther used, in fact, to say—and we endorse it—that this matter of Justification by Faith is the article by which a Church must stand or fall.

That so-called Church which does not hold this doctrine is not a Church of Christ! And it is a Church of Christ that does hold it, notwithstanding many mistakes into which it may have fallen. The contest lies really between the Popish doctrine of *merit* and the Protestant doctrine of Grace! And no man who calls himself a Protestant can logically dispute the question with us and our friends. We shall go somewhat further than this. The objection is not against Messrs. Moody and Sankey, but against all evangelical ministers! It is not against them, only, but against our common Protestantism! And yet more—it is against the Inspired Word of God—for if this Book teaches *anything* under Heaven, it certainly teaches that men are saved by faith in our Lord Jesus!

Read the Epistle to the Galatians and your judgment may be very perverse, but you cannot, by any common wresting of words, expel the doctrine of Justification by Faith from the Epistle. It was written on purpose to state that Truth of God plainly and defend it fully. Neither can you get rid of that doctrine from the whole New Testament. You shall find it not merely seasoning all the Epistles, but positively saturating them! And, as you take chapter by chapter, you may wring out of them, as out of Gideon’s fleece, this one Truth—that justification before God is by *faith*—not by the works of the Law. So the objection is against the Bible—and let those who shoot their errors, understand that they fight against the Eternal Spirit of God and the witness which He has borne by His Prophets and Apostles! Deny Inspiration and you have no ground to stand on. But while you believe the Bible you must believe in Justification by Faith.

But now let us look this matter in the face. Is it true, or not, that persons who believe in Jesus Christ become worse than they were before? We are not backward to answer the inquiry and we stand in a point of observation which supplies us with abundant data to go upon. We solemnly affirm that men who believe in Jesus become purer, holier and better. At the same time, I confess that there has been a good deal of injudicious and misleading talk, at times, by uninstructed advocates of Free Grace. I fear, moreover, that many people think that they believe in Jesus Christ, but do nothing of the sort. We do not defend rash statements, or deny the existence of weak-minded followers. But we ask to be heard and considered.

Some persons say, "You tell these people that they will be saved upon their believing in Christ." Exactly so. "But will you kindly tell me what you mean by being saved, Sir?" I will, with great pleasure. We do *not* mean that these people will go to Heaven when they die, irrespective of character. But, when we say that if they believe in Jesus they will be saved, we mean that they will be saved from living as they used to live—saved from being what they now are—saved from licentiousness, dishonesty, drunkenness, selfishness and any other sin they may have lived in. The thing can readily be put to the test! If it can be shown that those who have believed in the Lord Jesus have been saved from living in sin, no rational man ought to entertain any objection to the preaching of such a salvation!

Salvation from wrongdoing is the very thing which every moralist should commend and not censure—and that is the salvation which we preach. I am afraid that some imagine that they have only to believe something or other, and they will go to Heaven when they die. And that they have only to feel a certain singular emotion and it is all right with them. Now, if any of you have fallen into that error, may God, in His mercy, lead you out of it, for it is not every faith that saves, but only the faith of God's elect. It is not any sort of *emotion* that changes the heart, but the work of the Holy Spirit.

It is a small matter to go into an inquiry-room and say, "I believe." Such an avowal as that proves nothing at all! It may even be false. It will be proved by this—if you have rightly believed in Jesus Christ you will become, from that time forward, a different man from what you were. There will be a change in your heart and soul, in your conduct and your conversation. And, seeing you thus changed, those who have been honest objectors will right speedily leave off their objections, for they will be in the condition of those who saw the man that was healed standing with Peter and John and, therefore, they could say nothing against them.

The world demands *facts* and these we must supply! It is of no use to cry up our medicine by *words*—we must point to *cures*. Your change of life will be the grandest argument for the Gospel, if that life shall show the meaning of my text—"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Let us discuss this text in an apologetic manner, hoping to overcome prejudice, if God permits.

I. Notice, first of all, that THE RECEPTION OF JESUS CHRIST BY FAITH IS, IN ITSELF, AN AVOWAL THAT WE HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH WITH THE AFFECTIONS AND LUSTS. If faith is such an avowal, why say that it is not connected with holy living? Let me show that this is the case. Faith is the accepting of Jesus Christ. In what respects? Well, principally as a Substitute. He is the Son of God and I am a guilty sinner. I deserve to die—the Son of God stands in my place and suffers for me. And when I believe in Him I accept Him as standing for me.

To believe in Jesus was very beautifully set forth in the old ceremony of the Law, when the person bringing a sacrifice laid his hands upon the head of the bullock or the lamb and thereby accepted the victim as standing in his place, so that the victim's sufferings should be instead of his sufferings. Now, our faith accepts Jesus Christ as standing in our place. The very pith and marrow of faith's confidence lies in this—

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

Christ for me, Christ in my place. Now, try to catch the following thought. When you believe, you accept Christ as standing instead of you and profess that what He did, He did for you—and what did Christ do upon the tree? He was crucified and died. Follow the thought and note well that by faith *you regard yourself as dead with Him*—crucified with Him.

You have not really grasped what faith means unless you have grasped this. With Him you suffered the wrath of God, for He suffered in your place. You are now *in Him*—crucified *with Him*, dead *with Him*, buried *with Him*, risen *with Him* and gone into Glory *with Him*—because He represents you and your faith has accepted the representation. Do you see, then, that you did, in the moment when you believed in Christ, register a declaration that you were, from that moment on, dead unto sin? Who shall say that our Gospel teaches men to *live* in sin, when the faith which is essential to salvation involves an avowal of *death* to it? The convert begins with agreeing to be regarded as dead with Christ to sin—have we not, here, the foundation stone of holiness?

Observe, also, that if he follows the commands of Christ, the very first step which a Christian takes after he has accepted the position taken up by the Lord Jesus on his behalf is another avowal more public than the first, namely, *his Baptism*. By faith he has accepted Christ as dead, instead of him, and he regards himself as having died in Christ. Now, every dead man ought to be buried, sooner or later. And so, when we come forward and confess Christ, we are “buried with Him in baptism unto death, that like as Jesus Christ rose from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also might rise to newness of life.”

Though Baptism does not mean *anything* as a ceremony, having no power or efficacy in and of itself, yet as a *sign* and *symbol* it teaches us that true Believers are dead and buried with Christ. So, you see, the two ways in which, according to the Gospel, we actually and avowedly give ourselves to Christ, are by faith and Baptism. “He that believes, and is

baptized, shall be saved.” Now, the essence of faith is to accept Christ as representing me in His death. And the essence of Baptism is to be buried with Christ because I am dead with Him. Thus at the very doorstep of the Christian religion, in its first *inward act* and its first *outward symbol*, you get the thought that Believers are, from now on, to be separated from sin and purified in life.

He who truly believes and knows what it is to be really buried with Christ, has begun—no, he *has*, in a certain sense, effected completely—what the text describes as the crucifixion of the flesh with the affections and lusts. For, dear Friends, let it never be forgotten that the grand object for which we lay hold on Christ is the death of sin! If there are any among us who have believed in Christ that he might escape the pangs of Hell—O, Brothers and Sisters, you have but a very poor idea of what Jesus Christ has come into the world to do! He is proclaimed to be a Savior who “shall save His people *from their sins*.” This is the object of His mission! True, He comes to give pardon, but He never gives pardon without giving *repentance* with it!

He comes to justify, but He does not justify without also sanctifying. He has come to deliver us, not from you, O Death, alone! Nor from you, O Hell, alone! But from you, O Sin, the mother of Death, the progenitor of Hell! The Redeemer lays His axe at the root of all the mischief by killing Sin and thus, as far as we are concerned, He puts an end to Death and Hell! Glory be to God for this! Now, it does seem to me that if the very commencement of the Christian faith is so manifestly connected with death to sin, they do us grievous injustice who suppose that in preaching faith in Jesus Christ we ignore the moralities or the virtues, or that we think little of sin and vice! We do not so, but we proclaim the only method by which moral evil can be put to death and swept away! The reception of Christ is an avowal of the crucifixion of the flesh with the affections and lusts—what more can the purest moralist propose? What more could he avow, himself?

II. But secondly, AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE RECEPTION OF CHRIST IS ATTENDED WITH THE CRUCIFIXION OF SIN. I shall now state my own experience when I believed in Jesus. And while I am doing so I rejoice to remember that there are hundreds, if not thousands in this place who have experienced the same. And there are millions in this world and millions more in Heaven who know the Truth of what I declare. When I believed that Jesus was the Christ and rested my soul in Him, I felt in my heart, from that moment, an intense hatred to sin of every kind. I had loved sin before, some sins particularly, but those sins became, from that moment, the most obnoxious to me and, though the propensity to them was still there, yet the love of them was clean gone.

And when I at any time transgressed I felt an inward grief and horror at myself for doing the things which before I had allowed and even enjoyed. My relish for sin was gone. The things I once loved I abhorred and blushed to think of. Then I began to search out my sins. I see, now, a parallel be-

tween my experience in reference to sin and the details of the crucifixion of Christ. They sent Judas into the garden to search for our great Substitute, and just in that way I began to search for sin, even for that which lay concealed amid the thick darkness of my soul. I was ignorant and did not know what sin was, for it was night in any soul, but, being stirred up to destroy the evil, my repenting spirit borrowed lanterns and torches, and went out as against a thief.

I searched the garden of my heart through and through, with an intense ardor to find out every sin. And I sought God to help me, saying, "Search me, O God, and try me, and know my ways." Nor did I cease till I had spied out my secret transgressions. This inward search is one of my most constant occupations. I patrol my nature through and through to try and arrest these felons, these abhorred sins, that they may be crucified with Christ! O you in whom iniquity lurks under cover of your spiritual ignorance, arouse yourself to a strict scrutiny of your nature and no longer endure that your hearts should be the lurking-places of evil!

I remember when I found my sin. When I found it, I seized it and I dragged it off to the Judgment Seat. Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, you know when that occurred to you—and how stern was the judgment which Conscience gave forth. I sat in judgment on myself. I took my sin to one court and to another. I looked at it as before men and trembled to think that the badness of my example might have ruined other men's souls! I looked at my sin as before God and I abhorred myself in dust and ashes. My sin was as red as crimson in His sight and in mine, also. I judged my sin and I condemned it—condemned it as a felon to a felon's death. I heard a voice within me which, Pilate-like, pleaded for it—"I will chastise him and let him go! Let it be put to shame just a little. Let not the wrong deed be done quite so often. Let the lust be curbed and kept under."

But, ah, my soul said, "Let it be crucified! Let it be crucified!" And nothing could shake my heart from this intent, that I would slay all the murderers of Christ, if possible, and let not one of them escape, for my soul hated them with a deadly hatred and would gladly nail them all to the tree. I remember, too, how I began to see the shame of sin. As my Lord was spit upon, mocked and despitefully used, so did my soul begin to pour contempt upon all the pride of sin, to scorn its promises of pleasure and to accuse it of a thousand crimes! It had deceived me. It had led me into ruin. It had well-near destroyed me! I despised it and poured contempt upon its bribes and all it offered of sweetness and of pleasure.

O Sin, how shameful a thing did you appear to be! I saw all that is base, mean and contemptible concentrated in you! My heart scourged sin by repentance, smote it with rebukes and buffeted it with self-denials. Then was it made a reproach and a scorn. But this sufficed not—sin must *die*. My heart mourned for what sin had done and I was resolved to avenge my Lord's death upon myself. Thus my soul sang out her resolve—

***"Oh, how I hate those lusts of mine
That crucified my God!
Those sins that pierced and nailed His flesh***

***Fast to the fatal wood!
Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die!
My heart has so decreed:
Nor will I spare the guilty things
That made my Savior bleed.”***

Then I led forth my sins to the place of crucifixion. They would gladly have escaped, but the power of God prevented them and like a guard of soldiery, conducted them to the gallows of mortification. The hand of the Lord was present and His all-revealing Spirit stripped my sin as Christ was stripped!

He set it before my eyes, even my secret sin in the light of His Countenance! O, what a spectacle it was as I gazed upon it! I had looked, before, upon its dainty apparel and the colors with which it had painted itself to make it look as fair as Jezebel when she painted her face. But now I saw its nakedness and horror—and I was well-near ready to despair! But my spirit bore me up, for I knew that I was forgiven, and I said, “Christ Jesus has pardoned me, for I have believed in Him. And I will put the flesh to death by crucifying it on His Cross.” The driving of the nails, I remember, and how the flesh struggled to maintain its liberty. One, two, three, four—the nails went in and fastened the accursed thing to the wood with Christ so that it could neither run nor rule—and now, glory be to God, though my sin is not dead, it is crucified and must eventually die!

It hangs up there. I can see it bleeding out its life. Sometimes it struggles to get down and tries to wrench away the nails, for it would go after vanity. But the sacred nails hold it too fast—it is in the grasp of Death and it cannot escape. Alas, it dies a lingering death, attended with much pain and struggling! But still it dies. And soon its heart shall be pierced through with the spear of the love of Christ and it shall utterly expire. Then shall our immortal nature no more be burdened with the body of this death, but, pure and spotless, it shall rise to and behold the face of God forever.

Now, I am not talking allegorically of things which *ought* to be realized, but, as a matter of fact, remain mere ideas. I am describing in figure what happens in reality—for every man who believes in Jesus immediately bestirs himself to get rid of sin. And you may know whether he has believed in Jesus Christ or not by seeing whether there is a change in his motives, feelings, life and conduct. Do you say that you doubt this? You may doubt what you like, but facts speak for themselves. There will come before me, I dare say, before this week is over, as there have almost every week of my life, men who have been slaves to intoxication made sober, at once, by believing in Jesus Christ!

Women, once lost to virtue, who have become pure and chaste by believing in Jesus, will come, and so will men and women who were fond of all manner of evil pleasures, who have turned instantly from them, and have continued to resist all temptation because they are new creatures in Christ Jesus! The phenomenon of conversion is singular, but the effect of conversion is more singular, still! And it is not a thing done in a corner—it

can be seen every day. If it were merely an excitement in which men felt a distress of mind and then, by-and-by, thought they were at peace and became happy because self-satisfied, I should not see any particular good in it. But if it is true that regeneration changes men's tastes and affections, that it, in fine, changes them *radically*, making them altogether new creatures! If it is so, I say, then may God send us thousands of conversions! And that this *is* so, we are quite sure, for we see it perpetually.

III. Thirdly, we go a step farther and say that THE RECEPTION OF JESUS CHRIST INTO THE HEART BY SIMPLE FAITH IS CALCULATED TO CRUCIFY THE FLESH. When a man believes in Jesus, the first point that helps him to crucify the flesh is that *he has seen the evil of sin*, inasmuch as he has seen Jesus, his Lord, die because of it. Men think that sin is nothing, but what will sin do? What will it *not* do? The virus of sin, what will it poison? Yes, what will it *not* poison? Its influence has been baleful upon the largest conceivable scale.

Sin has flooded the world with blood and tears through red-handed war! Sin has covered the world with oppression and so has crushed the manhood of many, and broken the hearts of myriads! Sin begat slavery, tyranny, priestcraft, rebellion, slander and persecution! Sin has been at the bottom of all human sorrows. But the crowning culminating point of sin's villainy was when God, Himself, came down to earth in human form—pure, perfect, intent on an errand of love—came to work miracles of mercy and redemption. Then sinful man could never rest till he had crucified his Incarnate God! They coined a word when the Parliamentary party executed the king in England. They called the king's destroyers "regicides," and now we must make a word to describe sin—sin is a *deicide*.

Every sinner, if he could, would kill God, for he says in his heart, "No God." He means he *wishes* there were none. He would rejoice, indeed, if he could learn for certain that there was no God. In fact, that is the bugbear of his life, that there *is* a God—a just God who will bring him into judgment! His secret wish is that there were no religion and no God, for he might, then, live as he pleased. Now, when a man is made to see that sin in its essence is the murderer of Emmanuel, God with us, his heart being renewed, he hates sin from that very moment! "No," he says, "I cannot continue in such evil! If that is the true meaning of every offense against the Law of God—that it would put God, Himself, out of His own world if it could—I cannot bear it."

His spirit recoils with horror, as he feels—

***"My sins have pulled the vengeance down
Upon His guiltless head!
Break, break, my heart, oh burst my eyes!
And let my sorrows bleed.
Strike, mighty Groom, my flinty soul,
Till melting waters flow,
And deep repentance drowns my eyes
In unrelenting woe."***

Then *the Believer has also seen, in the death of Christ, an amazing instance of the great Grace of God*, for if sin is an attempt to murder God—and it is that—then how wonderful it is that the creatures who committed this sin were not destroyed at once! How remarkable that God should consider it worth His while to devise a plan for their restoration! And He did, with matchless skill, contrive a way which involved the giving up of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son. Though this was an expense unequalled, yet He did not withdraw from it. He “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.” And this for a race of men who were the enemies of their good and gracious God!

“From now on,” says the believer in Christ, “I can have nothing to do with sin, since it does despite to so gracious a God. O, you accursed Sin, to drive your dagger at the heart of Him who was all Grace and Mercy! This makes sin to be exceedingly sinful.” Further, *the Believer has had a view of the justice of God*. He sees that God hates sin intensely, for when His only-begotten Son took sin upon Himself, God would not spare, even Him! That sin was not His own—in Him was no sin! But when He voluntarily took it upon Himself and was made a curse for us, the Judge of all the earth did not spare Him! Down from His armory of vengeance He took His thunderbolts and hurled them at His Son, for His Son stood in the sinner’s place.

There was no mercy for the sinner’s Substitute. He had to cry as never one cried, before or since, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Torrents of woe rushed through His spirit. The condemnation of sin overwhelmed Him. All God’s waves and billows went over Him. Now, when a man sees this amazing fact, he can no longer think lightly of transgression. He trembles before the thrice holy Jehovah and cries in his secret heart, “How can I sin if this is God’s opinion of it? If in His justice, He smote it so unsparingly, even when it was only laid by imputation upon His Son, how will He smite it when its actual guilt lies on me? O God deliver me from it.” The Believer has also had one more sight which, perhaps, more effectually than any other changes his view of sin.

He has seen the amazing love of Jesus. Did you ever see it, my Hearer? If you have seen it, you will never love sin again! O, to think that He who was Master of all Heaven’s majesty came down to be the victim of all man’s misery! He came to Bethlehem and dwelt among us, offering 30 years and more of toilsome obedience to His Father’s will. And at the close He reached the crisis of His griefs, the crowning sorrow of His Incarnation—His bloody sweat and agonizing death on the Cross! That was a solemn Passover which He ate with His disciples, with Calvary in full view. Then He arose and went to Gethsemane—

**“Gethsemane, the olive press,
(And why so called let Christians guess).
Fit name, fit place, where vengeance strove,
And gripped and grappled hard with love.
‘Twas there the Lord of Life appeared**

**And sighed, and groaned, and prayed, and feared;
Bore all Incarnate God could bear
With strength enough, and none to spare.”**

Behold how He loved us! He was taken to Pilate’s Hall and there was scourged—scourged with those awful Roman whips weighted with little bullets of lead and made of the intertwined sinews of oxen, into which they also inserted small slivers of bone, so that every blow, as it fell, tore off the flesh! Our beloved Lord had to suffer this again and again, being scourged often as that verse seems to intimate which says—

**“He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities:
The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.
And with His stripes we are healed.”**

Yet He loved us, still loved us! Many waters could not quench His love, neither could the floods drown it. When they nailed Him to the tree, He still loved us. When, every bone being dislocated, He cried in sad soliloquy, “I am poured out like water, all My bones are out of joint,” He loved us still! When the dogs compassed Him and the bulls of Bashan beset Him round, He still loved us.

When the dread faintness came upon Him till He was brought into the dust of death and His heart melted like wax, He still loved us! When God forsook Him and the sun was blotted out, and midnight darkness covered the midday and a denser midnight veiled His spirit—a darkness like that of Egypt, which might be felt—He loved us still! Till He had drunk the last dregs of the unutterably bitter brew, He still loved us! And when the light shone on His face and He could say, “It is finished,” that light shone on a face that still loved us! Now, every man to whom it has been given to believe in Jesus and to know His love, says, “How can I offend *Him*? How can I grieve *Him*? There are actions in this life which I might otherwise indulge in, but I dare not now, for I fear to vex my Lord.”

And if you say “*Dare* not, are you afraid of Him?” The answer will be, “I am not slavishly afraid, for into Hell I can never go.” What am I afraid of, then? I am afraid of that dear face, on which I see the guttering of tears which He once shed for *me*. I am afraid of that dear brow which wore the crown of thorns for *me*. I cannot rebel against such kindness—His bleeding love enchains me. How can I do so great a wickedness as to put my dying Lord to shame?” Do you not feel this, my beloved Brothers and Sisters? If you have ever trusted the Lord Jesus, you crouch at His feet and kiss the prints of His nails for very love! And if He would use you as a footstool, if it would raise Him any higher, you would count it the highest honor of your life!

Yes, if He bade you go to prison and to death for Him, and would say it Himself, and put His pierced hands on you, you would go there as cheerfully as angels fly to Heaven! If he bade you *die* for Him, though the flesh is weak, your spirit would be willing! Yes, and the flesh would be made strong enough, too, if Jesus did but look upon you, for He can, with a

glance, cast out selfishness and cowardice, and everything that keeps us back from being whole burnt-offerings to Him! Is it not so?—

**“Speak of morality!
You bleeding Lamb
The best morality
Is love to You!”**

When we are once filled with love to You, O Jesus, sin becomes the dragon against which we wage a lifelong warfare! Holiness becomes our noblest aspiration and we seek after it with all our heart and soul and strength! If candid minds will but honestly consider the religion of Jesus Christ, they will see that Christians must hate sin if they are sincere in their faith. I might go farther into that, but I will not.

IV. The last thing of all is this. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS WITH THE GOSPEL AND WHERE HE IS, HOLINESS MUST BE PROMOTED. Let it never be forgotten that while the reception of Jesus Christ by simple faith is an avowal of death to sin and brings with it an experience of hating sin—and is calculated to do so—there is one thing more. If, dear Friends, in any work of revival, or ordinary ministry, there was nothing more than you could see or hear, I think that many criticisms and quibbles might be, at least, rational, but they are not so! One grand fact makes them forever unreasonable.

Wherever Jesus Christ is preached, there is present One sublime in rank and high in degree. You will not suppose that I am speaking of any *earthly* potentate. No, I am speaking of the Holy Spirit—the ever blessed Spirit of God! There is never a Gospel sermon preached by an earnest heart but what the Holy Spirit is there, taking of the things of Christ and revealing them unto men. When a man turns his eyes to Jesus and simply trusts Him—for we adhere to that as being the vital matter—there is accompanying that act—no, I must correct myself, there is as the *cause* of that act a miraculous, supernatural power which in an instant changes a man as completely as if it flung him back into nothingness and brought him forth into new life! If this is so, then believing in Christ is something very marvelous.

Now, if you will turn to the third chapter of John’s Gospel and also to his Epistles, you will see that faith is *always* linked with regeneration, or the new birth, which new birth is the work of the Spirit of God. That same third of John which tells us, “You must be born again,” goes on to say, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” Wherever there is faith in Jesus Christ, a miracle of purification has been worked in the heart! Deny this and you deny the testimony of the Scriptures, which say plainly, that, “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” “And whoever is born of God sins not; but he that is begotten of God keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not.”

Why do you doubt, for we who are personal examples can assure you that it has been so in our case? I mean not that myself and one or two

others affirm this, but the witnesses may be met with by hundreds and thousands—and they all agree in asserting that the power of the Holy Spirit has changed the current of their desires and made them love the things which are holy, just, and true. Therefore, Sirs, whether you believe it or not, you must be so kind as to understand one thing from us very decidedly, namely—that if to preach salvation through faith is vile, we purpose to be still viler! Surely you cannot blame us for acting as we do if our central point of our argument is correct!

If the preaching of the Cross, though it is to them that perish, foolishness, is, to them that believe in Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God, we shall not give up preaching Christ for you! If it is so that men are made new creatures—that, while others are talking about morals, our Gospel plants and produces them—we shall not give up work for talk, nor the efficient agency of the Gospel for the inventions of philosophy! To the front, my Brothers and Sisters, with the Cross, more and more! In your schools and in your pulpits set forth Christ Crucified as the sinner's hope more and more plainly! Bid the sinner look to Jesus! Look and live!

The Gospel is the great promoter of social order, the great reclamer of the waifs and strays of society, the elevator of the human race! This doctrine of free pardon and gracious renewal, freely given to the most worthless upon their *believing in Jesus Christ*, is the hope of mankind! There is no balm in Gilead and never was—but this is the balm of Calvary, for *there* is the true medicine—and Jesus Christ is the Infallible Physician. Do but try it, Sinners! Do but try it! Look to Jesus and the passions which you cannot overcome shall yield to His cleansing power! Believe in Jesus and the follies which cling to you, and crush you as the snakes engirdled Laocoon and his sons, you shall be able to untwist!

Yes, they shall die at Jesus' glance and shall fall off from you. Believe in Jesus and you have the spring of excellency, the hat of purity, the source of virtue, the destruction of evil, the bud of perfection! God grant us, still, to prove the power of the Lord Jesus in ourselves and to proclaim His power to all around us!—

***“Happy if, with our last breath,
We may but gasp His name;
Preach Him to all,
And cry in death,
Behold, behold, the Lamb!”***

Amen and amen!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians 5.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—278, 317, 432
AND “SAFE IN THE ARMS OF JESUS.”**

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A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 17, 1903.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 26, 1886.

*“Bear you one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the
law of Christ...Every man shall bear his own burden.”
Galatians 6:2, 5.*

OBSERVE, dear Friends, that the Apostle says in the second verse of this chapter, “Bear you one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” These Galatians had been trying to bear the heavy burden of the Law of Moses. They had, as far as they could, put themselves, again, under the old Ceremonial Law. They had forsaken the Gospel way of justification by faith and had sought to be made perfect by their personal obedience to the Law of God. Now, the Apostle, as though he would expel one affection by another, says, “You want a law? You wish to be under a law? Well, here is the law of Christ—yield yourselves to it! Instead of observing the outward ceremonies of the Levitical law, here is a living law which touches the heart and influences the life—obey that law. You are Christians. You have come under law to Christ by the very fact that you are not your own, but have been bought with a price by Him—now see to it that you yield implicit obedience to the law of Christ.”

It is somewhat remarkable, I think, that many of those who are self-righteous and apparently pay much regard to the Law of Moses are usually quite forgetful of that which is the very essence and spirit of that Law. They are so righteous that they become stern, severe, censorious—which is being unrighteous—for the righteousness even of the Law of God is a righteousness of love, “for all the law is fulfilled in one word,” that is, “love.” A self-righteous man is not generally a man with a tender spirit. He looks at that which is hard and stern in the Law and he begins to be hard and stern himself—there is none of the softness, sweetness, gentleness and graciousness which even the Law, itself, required when it said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Paul did well, in the mood in which the Galatians were—as they wanted to be under law, to remind them of what is the essence of the Law of God and he did still better by reminding them that they *were* under law—to Christ, whose law emphasizes the love which even Moses, himself, had taught under the old dispensation!

These Galatians had most foolishly sought to burden themselves with a load which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear. After being

set free by the Gospel, they had gone back to the yoke of bondage, so the Apostle, in effect said to them, “As you have been so bewitched and fascinated that you want burdens to rest upon you, here are burdens for you—‘Bear you one another’s burdens.’ And, as you want law, here is law for you—so fulfill the law of Christ.” It was characteristic of that sacred craftiness, that holy ingenuity, which was so conspicuous in the Apostle Paul that he worded his argument thus, that he might draw the attention of these Galatians to it, fix it upon their memories and, if possible, reach and influence their consciences.

Should there be any of you here who desire to come under the yoke of bondage, or who wish to be burden-bearers, or who find great music in the word, “law,” I hope you will discover all these things in the text. I see in it, first of all, *community*—“Bear you one another’s burdens.” Then the latter part of the text teaches us *immunity*. You are not bound to consider other people’s burdens so much as your own, that you become responsible for them. No, “every man shall bear his own burden.” Then the third point, which will be a further opening up of the fifth verse, will be *personality*: “Every man shall bear his own burden.”

I. First, I see, in the text, A MARVELOUS COMMUNITY. “Bear you one another’s burdens.” What does this mean?

Well, dealing with it first, *negatively*, it does *not* mean that we are to burden one another. There are some whose religion consists in laying heavy burdens upon other men’s shoulders while they, themselves, will not carry them for a single yard. You recollect that sect of Pharisees with whom our Master was always in conflict—they have their representatives in these modern times. Why, even this text, itself, is twisted by some into a reason for burdening others. “Bear you one another’s burdens,” they say —“do you not see, Friend, that you *have* to help me?” Yes, friend number one, but do you not see that you are not to go and burden that other friend? It is true that you have to bear his burdens. Let the first application of this passage be to *yourself*, and be not eager to apply it to your neighbor from whom you want to draw something. You have begun by violating the spirit of the text, not only by not bearing your brother’s burden, but also by thrusting upon him your own burden without taking his in exchange! I say this because I have often found that men naturally draw this inference—“We are to help one another, therefore, please help me.” The proper inference would be, “We are to help one another—where is the man whom I am to help?” Is not that the most logical conclusion from the text? Yet such is the selfishness of our nature that we begin straightway to say, “This text is a cow, I will milk it,” not, “this text gives me something to *do*, so I will do it,” but, “This text gives me a chance of getting something and I am going to get it.” If you talk like that, it proves that you are out of gear with the text and have not entered into the spirit of it at all.

The text does *not* mean that we are to spy out our brother’s faults. Its context shows that the word, “burdens,” here means, “faults.” “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be

tempted. Bear you one another's burdens." To a good man, a fault is a burden. The worst burden that he has to carry is the fact that he is not perfect—that is what troubles him. Now, you and I are not to go about the world spying out everybody else's faults. "He is an excellent man," says one, "but." Now stop there! You have said already quite enough, you will spoil it if you say another word. "Ah," says another, concerning someone else, "she is an admirable woman, an earnest worker for the Savior." Stop there! I know what you are going to say something that might make it seem that you are about as good as she is and perhaps a little better, and you are afraid that the light of your star would not be seen unless you first covered up that other star! But it must not be so! "Bear you one another's burdens." Bear with one another's faults, but spy not out one another's faults.

I think I have heard a story of Mr. Wesley going several times to a certain town where he thought that there was a band of earnest Christian people, but he was met by a Brother who told him how dead they all were, what little life there was in their Prayer Meetings and how much of inconsistency there was among them. When he got there, he did not notice anything of this sort, so, the third time he went, he said to this Brother, "How is it that you always meet me and tell me of these things about the Brethren! Nobody else ever seems to say it." "Well, you see," he said, "Mr. Wesley, I have a rare gift of discerning spirits." "Oh," said the good man, "then wrap that talent up in a napkin and bury it, and you will have done the best thing possible with it. The Lord will never ask you what you have done with it if you will only keep it to yourself." I believe that there was great wisdom in that advice. There are still some who have only that gift of spying out other men's faults. That is shocking, dreadful, horrible! So, after all that, my Brother, shut your eyes and bend your back. If you know that the burden is there, bow down to help bear it, but do not stand and point at it, and seem as if you wished to do that Brother a discredit.

Further, the text does *not* mean that we are to despise those who have heavy burdens to bear. For instance, those who have the grievous burden of poverty. "Oh," some say, "there is a large number of persons attending at such-and-such a place, but they are all poor people." So you think little of poor people, do you? Then what poor souls you must be! "Oh, but," says one, "such-and-such a person is always afflicted and very sad." And do you despise the afflicted, especially the mentally afflicted, the desponding, the sorrowful among God's people? Do you turn away from them and say, "I cannot endure talking with persons of that sort—they are so sad in temperament and disposition"? But the Apostle says, "Bear you one another's burdens," which means—do not run away from other people because you see that they are burdened. If you say, "I like to be with the cheerful and the happy, I cannot go and spend my life in comforting the mourners in Zion"—is that mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who was meek and lowly, and who did not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax? O Brothers and Sisters, we need to be schooled in this matter of showing sympathy with the sorrow-

ful! No doubt it will drag our own spirits down if we really have fellowship with those whom God has sorely afflicted in mind, but we must be willing to be dragged down—it will do us good! If the Lord sees that we are willing to stoop to the very least of His people, He will be sure to bless us. I sometimes like to sing that verse that Dr. Doddridge wrote, and I hope I can sing it truly—

***“Have You a lamb in all Your flock
I would disdain to feed?
Have You a foe, before whose face
I fear Your cause to plead?”***

The second half of the verse is much easier than the first half. You might be able to stand up like young David before Goliath, himself, for there is something grand and noble in such an action as that. But to go looking after the poor little lambs of the flock that scarcely seem as if they are alive, is quite another matter. Yet that is what the text means—“Bear you one another’s burdens.” Carry the lambs in your bosom, be tender to such as are afflicted. Be, as your Master was, of a gentle, loving spirit, seeking to bear the infirmities of the weak, especially you who are strong, for, if you are like those fat cattle described by the Lord in the prophecy of Ezekiel that thrust the lean cattle with side and with shoulder, and pushed with their horns those of the herd that were sickly, then the Lord will order you to be taken to the slaughter-house, for that is the lot of the fed beasts that are so big and brutal! The tall tree is uprooted in the breeze which only bends the lowly willow. Blessed are they who never exalt themselves over the weak and afflicted among the children of God!

Nor do I think, dear Friends, that our text could be made to mean that any of us may dare to live as if all things existed for our own use. Are there not some people who seem to feel that they are the center of all creation and that all things were created for their honor and glory? The working people round about them are so many “hands” to be employed by them at the lowest possible rate. The whole stream of trade must be so directed as to conduct the golden liquid into their capacious reservoirs. Politics and everything else must be so arranged that they shall prosper, whoever else may suffer loss. As they go through the world, their great concern is to mind the main chance. “Every man for himself,” is the motto of their lives and they try to get as much as they can—and to keep as much as they can. Perhaps even their benevolence is only self-indulgence thinly veiled, for they give alms that they may be seen of men.

There are some Christian people—at least, I call them Christians by courtesy—whose main thought is about saving their own souls. Their favorite hymn is not in “Our Own Hymn Book”—

***“A change to keep I have,
A God to glorify—
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.”***

That is nothing but a kind of spiritual selfishness—living unto yourself! There is something that you want to get and that something is what you strive after. Blessed is that man who is saved beyond all fear and who, for the love he bears his Lord, lives wholly and only to prove the power of

the Grace of God that has been bestowed upon him—and earnestly seeks to be the means of saving the souls of others. The Doctrines of Grace do this for us, by delivering us from all fear with regard to the future and fixing us firmly upon the Rock of Ages. They turn our thoughts away from self to the service and the glory of our God. I delight to sing—

**“Tis done! The great transaction’s done.
I am my Lord’s, and He is mine”**

and to feel that as He will never lose me, nor permit me to lose Him, I can turn all my thoughts to the rescue of my fellow-sinners who are going down into the Pit. If God shall grant us Grace to enter into the true spirit of the Gospel, having been delivered from every burden—both of this life and of that which is to come—we shall be prepared to bear one another’s burdens and so to fulfill the law of that Christ who has set us free from the law of sin and death which was in our members.

I have thus shown you, negatively, what the text does *not* mean.

But, dear Friends, to take our text *positively*, we can see that it must mean, first, that we are to have great compassion upon those who are bearing the burden of sin. You cannot bear the burden of their sins for them—only Christ can do that—but you can help them to bear their burden. I mean this. Here is a troubled soul who has begun to seek the Lord and the poor creature is in great sorrow of heart. Get alongside that burdened one and say, “Now, dear Friend, I am very sorry for you. I feel as burdened about you as if it were my own soul, not yours, that was in trouble.” Ask the Lord to help you when you have left that person—after speaking with much prayer and many tears, go home so grieved that you cannot sleep and keep on crying to God in secret about that soul. Then, when you get up in the morning with no burden concerning your own soul, because God has saved you, still feel that you have to carry the burden of this poor soul who does not know the Lord and, at last, you get to feel as if you could not live if that soul did not also live! If it will not repent, you seem to feel the burden of its guilt. If it will not believe in Christ, you wish you could believe for it. Of course you cannot repent and believe for it, but you *can* believe *about* it and you can, by faith and prayer, bring it to Jesus’ feet and lay it there! The Holy Spirit often draws sinners to the Savior by means of the love of Christians. We can love them to Christ and if we love them as the Apostle Paul did when he travailed in birth for them until Christ was formed in them, it will not be long before we shall see them converted. I am sure that it is so—and that one great secret of soul-winning lies in the bearing of the burdens of the unconverted.

But we must take special care, dear Friends, that we do this in the case of backsliders because the text, in its context, alludes to them most particularly—“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. Bear you one another’s burdens.” If that backslider has been awakened to a sense of his true condition, he will feel very unhappy—so be very sympathetic towards him. He may be afraid to come back into membership with the church—if so, go after him and encourage him to return. If he says, “I have brought disgrace upon

the name of Christ,” try to bear part of the shame that he feels. If he says, “I cannot face So-and-So,” say to him, “I will stand between you. Or I will go and plead for you.” Take to yourself, as far as you can, the shame and the disgrace which belong to the backslider. Try to get right into his place. I am sure that there is no other way of setting broken bones that is equal to this. There is no way of bringing back the wandering sheep like that which the good shepherd took when he lifted the poor creature right up on his own shoulders. It was too worn and weak, and weary for him to lead it back, or drive it back, so he carried it all the way! And, Brothers and Sisters, let us carry the backsliders on our own shoulders in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. As far as it is possible, let us compel them to come in once more that God’s House may be filled—and let us take the burden of their grief and of their shame, upon ourselves. Thus shall we carry out the injunction of the text—“Bear you one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

Next, the text seems to me to mean, “Be very patient with the infirmities of your brethren.” “Oh, but, So-and-So is very quick tempered!” I hope that it is a burden to him to be quick tempered and if so, that is an additional reason why you should bear with him. “But So-and-So is really very bitter in spirit.” Yes, alas, there are still some people of that sort, but you are to bear with them. I hope it is a burden to them if they have even a tinge of bitterness in their nature, so bear with it. “I do not see why I should,” says one. Well, then, open your eyes and read the text! “And so fulfill the law of Christ.” If the Lord Jesus Christ can put up with *you*, you ought to be able to put up with *anybody*! “Oh, but some people are so exacting!” Yes, some of you know that I am sometimes very exacting. When I am suffering very greatly from gout, if anybody walks heavily and noisily across the room, it gives me pain. Well, then, what do you think happens? Why, they go across the room on tiptoe—they do not say to one another, “We cannot help it that he is ill and that our noise gives him pain. We shall walk just as we always do—we have a right to walk like that.” No, no, they do not need even to be asked to move about quietly, but they say, “Poor man, he is so ill that we must be as gentle as we can with him.” Could not you look in that kind of spirit upon Brothers and Sisters who are not quite all that you would like them to be, and say, “They are not well spiritually,” and deal very gently with them, “and so fulfill the law of Christ”? We who are Christians are to live together in Heaven forever, so do not let us fall out by the way. Come, my Brother, I have to bear a great deal from you and you have to bear a great deal from me, so let it be give and take all the way through. “Bear you one another’s burdens,” not I bear yours without you bearing mine, but I bear yours and you bear mine—you put up with me, and I put up with you. And in that way we shall both “fulfill the law of Christ.”

Does not the text also mean that we are to bear one another’s burdens by having a deep sympathy with one another in times of sorrow? Oh, for a sympathetic heart! Seek after it, beloved Christians! Seek to have large hearts and tender hearts, for the world is full of sorrow and one of the sweetest balms to sorrow is the sympathy of Christ flowing through the

hearts of His own redeemed ones. Be tender, be full of pity, be full of compassion.

But this sympathy must show itself by actual assistance, rendered wherever it is possible. "Bear you one another's burdens." Let the burden of poverty be borne by those of you who have no poverty of your own. Succor your brethren in their times of need. Light their candle when their house grows dark. Blessed are those men and women who addict themselves to the ministry of the saints and who seek, wherever they can, to lighten the burdens of life for their fellow-Christians, lending their shoulders whenever they can give support to the weak.

Brothers and Sisters, we should also bear one another's *spiritual* burdens by helping one another in our soul-struggles. I am afraid that in some places of worship Christian men and women come up to the House of Prayer and go home again without ever speaking to one another! I do not think that is the case, here, but it is the case in many places, especially in very respectable places of worship. There they go in and out as if they were all self-contained and could not speak to one another, especially if they happen to be half-sovereign people and a half-crown person is anywhere near—they cannot speak to him at all. This is all contrary to the mind of Christ. In our Church fellowship, there should be *real* fellowship and we should converse with one another. In the olden times, "They that feared the Lord spoke often, one to another," and Christian people should do the same today—and you who are elders in the church might often say a word that would help a poor young friend who is struggling to do right. You who are joyous might often lend some of your sunbeams to those who are in the dark. And you ought to do so—it would be to your own profit as well as to the profit of others. Trade produces wealth and the inter-trading of Christians, exchanging their good things, one with the other, would tend to the spiritual enrichment of the entire body. God help you to do so by fellowship with one another!

"Bear you one another's burdens" also by much prayer for the other. When you have prayed for yourself, do not end your supplication. Keep a little list of people to be prayed for and try to put down, on your list, certain things which you know trouble them and which also trouble you—and bring them before the Lord. In some way or other, bear you those burdens which God lays upon your brethren!

II. The time flies so quickly that I can only speak very briefly upon the second point, that is, IMMUNITY. "For every man shall bear his own burden."

Let us always, for our comfort, remember that there is a point beyond which we cannot go in bearing one another's burdens. After you have prayed for anyone and conversed with him—and he still continues in sin, you are ready to break your heart about him. Yes, it is right to feel like that, but *do not be so unwise as to take his sin actually to yourself*. If you have warned, prayed, instructed and set a godly example—and men will still sin—their sin is their own and their blood will be upon their own head.

And, next, *do not take the shame of other people's sins upon yourself beyond a certain point.* I have known a good man ashamed to come to the House of God because his son had disgraced himself. Well, his sin does dishonor his father, but, still, as you did not commit the sin and you did not do anything to contribute to it, do not feel ashamed as that! I have known some Christian people very seriously injured by the shame which they have felt because some distant relative or some near relative has misbehaved himself. Go to God with it, but recollect that it is not your sin and it is not your shame, either. Bear it so as to sympathize and pray about it, but not so as to be, yourself, ashamed and depressed because of it!

Remember, also, that *we cannot take other people's responsibilities upon ourselves.* I am responsible for faithfully preaching the Gospel, but I am not responsible for your reception of it. If I preach the Truth of God and there is not a soul saved by it, I am not responsible for that. And if you, dear teacher in the Sunday school or if any of you Christian workers have labored in vain, if you have been faithful to God, I do not think that will happen—but if it does and it may happen in some measure—do not seem to bear that responsibility, for the text says, “Every man shall bear his own burden.” I find it difficult to make young Brothers, when they begin to preach, feel sufficiently the burden of souls. But every now and then, I have met with a Brother who has felt the burden of souls so much that he has scarcely been able to preach at all! That is a pity, because, after all, the salvation of souls lies not with *us*, but with God. And if we have faithfully declared the whole counsel of God and can call God to witness that we have not kept back anything of His Truth that we knew, or failed in faithfulness or earnestness, we must leave the matter there and fall back upon the eternal purpose of God and throw the responsibility of the result upon our unbelieving hearers.

III. I have not time to speak as I would like upon the last point. That is, PERSONALITY. “Every man shall bear his own burden.”

That is to say, *every man, if he has any religion at all, must have personal religion.* You cannot get to Heaven by your mother's godliness, or by your father's graciousness—there must be a work of Grace in your own souls. No man can be a sponsor for another in spiritual things. There is no more gigantic lie than that one person should promise that another shall do this and that, which he cannot even do himself! No, “every man shall bear his own burden.” Everyone must come, with his own sin, to his own Savior and, by his own act of faith, must find peace through the blood of Jesus Christ. Do not trust to any national religion, for it is utterly worthless. It is only *personal* religion that can save you. If the blood of saints is flowing in your veins, it brings you nothing except greater responsibility, for salvation is not of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God, and of God alone.

And every man should bear his own burden *by personal self-examination.* I would never think of asking another man to give me his opinion of me and I hope you will not do so. Search your own souls, “examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith.” “Oh, I do not like self-

examination!” says one. So the bankrupt said—he did not like casting up his accounts. But when a man in business does not cast his accounts up, his accounts will soon cast him up—and when a man does not like to examine his own heart, depend upon it, the time will come when Another will examine him and he will be found lacking and be cast away as worthless!

Next, this text means that *there must be personal service*. “Every man shall bear his own burden.” That is, if you and I are saved, we must, each one, have a work of his own and we must set to work and do it personally. The Lord has put each one of us into a position where there is something we can do which nobody else can do—and we are bound to do it and not to begin thinking of how little others do, or how much others do, but to say to our Lord, “What will You have me do?” Let each Christian Levite bow his shoulder and carry some burden for the Lord’s House.

And every man should *make a personal effort to bear his own burden*. We have a certain number of persons about who seem as if they never can do anything for themselves—they have to be carried wherever they go. I think I have told you of a set of portraits that I have at home—they represent my two sons, taken on their birthdays while they were quite little boys, and then taken every birthday till they had grown to be young men. Well, at first, they are in a baby carriage and it is very interesting to see how they have grown every year. But there are some of you who have been in baby carriages ever since I knew you—and you are still in baby carriages—and I have to keep wheeling you about! Oh, I wish you would grow up! We are all pleased to have dear little children and we do not mind how little they are at first. But if, after they were fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, or 20 years old, our boys were the same size as they were when they were a year old, we should feel that we were the parents of poor little dwarfs and it would be a great trial to us. And it is a great trial to us spiritual parents when we are the fathers of dwarfs! Oh, that you would grow up, Brothers and Sisters! God help you to grow out of yourselves, your inactivity and your listlessness, that every man and woman shall say, “I am big enough to bear my own burden. By the goodness of God, I will get so much Grace and so much help that I will do some work for the Lord, and do it thoroughly. I will bear my own burden—not sit on the top of it and fret and cry, and ask somebody else to bear it for me—but I will bear my own burden.”

I will finish by saying that the text indicates that *everybody has own burden*. “Every man shall bear his own burden.” You look at somebody else and you say, “Ah, I wish I had his load to carry!” I do not think that I ever met with more than one person in the world with whom, upon mature consideration, I would change places in all respects. I have thought, once or twice, that I might do so, but soon there has been a hitch somewhere, and I have said, “No, I will go back into my own shell, after all.” I think, sometimes, that I would not mind changing places with George Muller for time and for eternity, but I do not know anybody else of whom

I would say as much as that. But I daresay that even he has his own burden, though he has not told me about it when I have talked with him.

And that good woman who always looks so smiling, God bless her! She has a skeleton at home in the closet. And that good Brother who is always so bright and cheery—yes, he has a burden, too. There is a cross for everyone and I want you to feel that it is so, because it would take away all thought of envy whenever you meet with another who seems so much happier than yourself! That Bother has the sense to turn the smooth side of his coat outside—he wears the rough side of it inwards—a very sensible thing to do. Do not, therefore, begin to say, “Oh, but I am so much worse off than he is!” You do not know what he has to endure, “for every man shall bear his own burden.” Let us end the whole matter by not envying others, or caring or wishing to be other people, but just saying, “What can I do to help somebody else? What I can do to help *anybody*? I will do it by the Grace of God.”

But what can some of you do in carrying burdens for other people? Why, even while I have been talking, you have said, “I do not care to do that. What have I to do with other people?” You are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity while you talk like that! Any man who is selfish is an unsaved man, for the chief point in salvation is to save us from ourselves. As long as you live simply within your own ribs, you live in a dungeon. You will never come into the palace where the many mansions are—the liberty of our great Father’s House—until you can say, “I love others more than I love myself. Above all, I love the great Burden-Bearer who took my burden of sin upon His shoulders and carried it up to the Cross and away from the Cross and now, through love to Him, the love of self is gone and I will live to glorify His name forever and forever.”

God bless you, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
GALATIANS 5:13-26; 6:1, 2.**

Galatians 5:13. *For, brethren, you have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love, serve one another.* Do not turn your liberty into license. The Apostle, in this Epistle, had begun urging the Christians of Galatia to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, and never to be, again, entangled with the yoke of legal bondage. He warned them against that error into which many have fallen. But you know that it is often our tendency, if we escape from one error, to rush into another. So the Apostle guards these Christian against that Antinomian spirit which teaches us that freedom from the law allows indulgence in sin—“Use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love, serve one another.”

14. *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this—You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* Oh, if that “one word” were so engraved on our hearts as to influence all our lives, what blessed lives of love to God and love to men we should lead!

15. *But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another.* When dogs and wolves bite one another, it is according to their nature, but it is indeed bad when sheep take to biting one another. If I must be bitten at all, let me be bitten by a dog rather than by a sheep. That is to say, the wounds inflicted by the godly are far more painful to bear and last much longer than those caused by wicked men. Besides, we can say with the Psalmist, “It was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it.” It is natural that the serpent’s seed should nibble at our heel and seek to do us injury, but when the bite comes from a Brother—from a child of God—then it is peculiarly painful. Well might the Apostle write, “If you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another.” I have lived long enough to see churches absolutely destroyed, not by any external attacks, but by internal contention.

16. *This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.* If your life is guided by the Spirit of God—if you are spiritual men and women, and your actions are worked in the power of the Spirit, “you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

17. *For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.* They will never agree—these two powers are always contrary, one to the other. If you think that you can help God by getting angry, you make a great mistake. You cannot fight God’s battles with the devil’s weapons. It is not possible that the power of the flesh should help the power of the Spirit!

17, 18. *And these are contrary, the one to the other: so that you cannot do the things that you would. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.* The Law of God is always to you the blessed rule by which you judge your conduct, but it is not a law of condemnation to you—neither are you seeking salvation by it.

19-21. *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these—Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envies, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like.* The list is always too long to be completed! We are obliged to sum up with a kind of *et cetera*—“and such like.”

21. *Of which I tell you beforehand, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* A very solemn, searching, sweeping declaration! Let each man judge himself by this test! “The fruit of the Spirit” is equally manifest, as the Apostle goes on to say.

22, 23. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.* Neither human nor Divine! Good men make no law against these things, nor does God, for He approves of them. What a wonderful cluster of the grapes of Eshcol we have here! “The fruit of the Spirit”—as if all this were but one, after all—many luscious berries forming one great cluster. Oh, that all these things may be in us and abound, that we may be neither barren nor unfruitful!

24. *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.* It is not yet dead, but it is crucified. It hangs up on the cross, straining to break away from the iron hold, but it cannot, for it is doomed to die. Happy, indeed, shall that day be when it shall be wholly dead.

25, 26. *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.* Do Christian people need to be talked to like this? Yes, they do, for the best of men are but men at their best—and the godliest saint is liable to fall into the foulest sin unless the Grace of God prevents it. Oh, that we could expel from the Church of Christ all vain-glorying, all provoking of one another and all envying of one another! How often, if one Christian Brother does a little more than his fellow workers, they begin to find fault with him! And if one is blessed with greater success than others are, how frequently that success is disparaged and spoken of slightly! This spirit of envy is, more or less, in all of us, and though, perhaps, we are not exhibiting it just now, it only needs a suitable opportunity for its display and it would be manifested. No man here has any idea of how bad he really is. You do not know how good the Grace of God can make you, nor how bad you are by nature, nor how bad you might become if that nature were left to itself!

Galatians 6:1. *Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a fault.* If he travels so slowly that his faults catch up with him and knock him down. “If a man is overtaken in a fault.”

1. *You who are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.* Set his bones for him if they have been broken. Put him in his proper place again.

1. *Considering yourself, lest you also be tempted.* What would you wish others to do to you if you were in the position of this fallen one? The Apostle does not say, “Considering yourself lest you *also be overtaken* in a fault.” No, but, “lest you also be *tempted*”—as much as to say, “It only needs the temptation to come to you and you will yield to it.”

2. *Bear you one another's burdens, and fulfill the law of Christ.*

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

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NO. 3355

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 22, 1913.**

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 16, 1867.***

***“For every man shall bear his own burden.”
Galatians 6:6.***

IN pondering Scripture Truth, we must not strain metaphors, nor use figures of speech as though they were literal statements. You have an instance of the truth of this remark in this Chapter. In one verse the Apostle says, “Bear you one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ,” while in the verse of our text, he says, “Every man shall bear his own burden.” Still, he is not contradicting himself. He would be if he were speaking literally of burdens, but he is speaking metaphorically and, consequently, he uses the figure first in one way and then in another. It may be useful to us, Brothers, to learn never to draw arguments and doctrines from metaphors. Many do and there are many supposed doctrines which really have no better ground-work than mere metaphors. I remember hearing one contending against the chastening of God’s people and he urged that the Church was the bride of Christ and that it was impossible that Christ, as the Husband of the Church, should in any way chasten or strike His own spouse, which would be a very reasonable thing to say of a man. If the metaphor ran on four legs, the argument might have been correct, but as no metaphor is intended so to do, and is only to be understood in the sense intended by the person employing it, the argument is fallacious and valueless! I have heard others say that true Christians are citizens of Heaven and, consequently, we ought not to exercise our votes in political matters! This is another piece of utterly illogical reasoning because we might as well say to Christians that they ought not to eat animal food as they form the Lord’s flock, and sheep must not, and cannot, eat animal food! The fact is, the reasoning from metaphor is always risky and sometimes proves quite absurd!

I mention this because I am quite sure that very much of it does prevail in the Christian world and that people use the language of Scripture in a manner in which they would not use the same language if found in other books. The Word of God is, however, not to be treated with less, but *more* veneration in our reading and study of it, and yet in the same simple, common-sense fashion as that in which we would treat any other

book. The truth is there are burdens which may be shared and which should be shared. The burden of grief, the burden of pecuniary need, the burden of heart trouble may sometimes be borne, but on the other hand, there are burdens which no man can share with his fellow, nor ought he even to *think* of sharing, but where each man must stand apart and alone before God—and no one can assist him.

Of these burdens we shall speak tonight, and they shall be our first point. Then, lest we should become burdensome to you, we shall offer a few considerations which may tend to take out the weight of the burdens which we must unavoidably carry, each one for himself. And then we shall close by endeavoring to find something practical to be done tonight as the result of the text. First, then, we have to speak of—

I. CERTAIN BURDENS WHICH EACH MAN WILL BE QUITE CERTAIN TO HAVE TO BEAR FOR HIMSELF.

In speaking of the first three burdens which I shall have to mention, I shall address myself to you all, whether saints or sinners, for there are some Truths of God which are common to all men as men. And such is the first burden—the *burden of original sin*. The burden of our natural depravity, the burden of our fallen nature, the burden of our constitution which is perverted by evil—these we shall, each one of us, have to carry for himself. It may be said that this is not our burden, but Adam's—but the burden of the father, if he brings the whole household into poverty—becomes the burden of the family and each individual member of it. If the head should ache, it is no use for the hand to say, "It is no business of mine." There is, too, so vital and intimate a connection between the whole body of humanity, between Adam the head, and all the members of the body corporate, that Adam's Fall becomes ours, Adam's ruin our ruin and the taint in the blood is to be found in us all. Some of you are "dead in trespasses and sins" and, therefore, this burden is no more a burden to you than the heavy clods of the churchyard are to the bodies that lie beneath them. But if ever you are quickened by Divine Grace, you will soon find that "the body of this death," as Paul calls *indwelling sin*, is a very heavy burden to battle with and you will have to personally fight out the conflict within your own soul. You will have to call in the aid of Divine Power, or you will never get the victory, but—mark you—in the conquest of your own corruption, in the overcoming of your own besetting sins and of those evils which are more powerful in you than they are in others because you are constitutionally inclined to them—in that battle you will have to fight for yourselves! You may get some assistance from other people's experience, but still, the struggle and the conflict must be with you.

Young people, never imagine that all the training in the world can rid you of your evil without an earnest struggle on your own part! Don't conceive that a mother's prayers will give you tenderness of conscience un-

less you also learn of Christ for yourselves. Do not conceive that the rebukes of a father can conquer that evil temper unless you struggle against it. And if you habitually have a tendency to pride, do not conceive that the preacher's homilies against pride can overcome pride in you! No, in the name of God you must go to the armory and ask for the sword of the Spirit, that you may personally, girded with Divine Strength, which you may obtain by earnest prayer, overcome in your own soul your besetting sins! In this respect, then, you will have to bear your own burden. I know I have to bear mine and I do not know that any of you could help me. And I believe that each one of you, quickened by Divine Grace, must feel there is something peculiar about your case—some sin, perhaps, which you would not like to whisper into another's ear—perhaps only a sin of thought, but still it is a burden. I hope it will become more and more a burden to you, for the more burdensome it becomes, the more likely are you to conquer it! But you will have to bear it yourself and in the strength of the Holy Spirit you will have to conquer it, too, and get rid of it. You will have to pluck out the right eye and tear off the right arm. It were better for you, remember, to enter into life crippled and maimed than to keep these and be cast into eternal Hell! It is for you, in God's name, personally to do battle with your personal depravity!

Each man must, each man alone can bear his own burden here. Again, each man must also bear *his own burden of personal sin* unless, (here comes in the grand and gracious proviso), unless the sin is blotted out or is utterly removed! Every man who has sin to carry must bear his own burden. There is no shifting the sin from you to a sponsor. No fellow creature can stand for you and take your offenses. The Lord Jesus Christ did take His people's sins, as He was their Covenant Head, Surety and Representative—and they who are in Christ are free from sin—their sin being utterly removed and having ceased to be, having been cast by the tremendous power of Christ into the depths of the sea, so that if they are sought for, they shall never be found against the Lord's people any more forever! But do remember, dear Hearer, that if you are not a pardoned soul, you have got a burden to carry and you will have to bear it. You will have to bear it now, for "he that believes not is condemned already." You will have to bear it when you come to die and you will have enough to do to die having this burden of sin pressing upon your heart. Worst of all, you will have to bear it when your spirit is disembodied and your naked soul is called before your Maker. Ah, it will be a dreadful thing to go there with the blackness and defilement of sin about you! And you will have to bear it, too, in the day of the Resurrection and in the solemn article of judgment! And then, last of all, you will have to bear your own burden in the eternal future—and there it will sink you, sink you, sink you beyond all hope of rescue or escape!

Now, while there is life there is hope. "All manner of sin and iniquity shall be forgiven unto men. If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," but unless the sin is removed, it must remain our own burden forever and forever! You will not get rid of it by joining a church. You cannot be rid of it by passing through rites and ceremonies. It will be no help to you to have been a citizen of a Christian nation, so-called, and to have worshipped in a Christian assembly. "Every man shall bear his own burden." We came through the gates of life into this world alone—we shall go back through the iron gates of death, each man alone. And the judgment, though crowds will be gathered, will be the judgment of so many individuals, each weighed in the scale, alone, either to hear the verdict that they are "accepted in the Beloved," or else to hear it said, "Tekel"—"You are weighed in the balances and found wanting." How I wish that all my hearers would lay this to heart! Do not try to hide away in the crowd, for God will search and bring you out individually and you shall be tested and tried apart from others! If you take ever so many sovereigns to the bank, it is not very likely you will pass one bad one, for they would very soon discover it. That might be done, however, on earth, but it could not be done in Heaven! "Every man shall bear his own burden," and if the burden of sin is upon him, it shall crush him beyond all hope!

Once again, while thus speaking to both saints and sinners, "Every man shall bear his own burden" *of the Law*. By sin we do not escape from the Law. The Law of God is binding upon every man of woman born, unless, by being dead to the Law through Christ, he escapes from under its yoke and bondage. Now, the Believer is not under Law. Do not misunderstand me. I mean that he is not under Law in the sense in which the sinner is under it. He is not under its condemning power! He is not under Law, but he is under Grace! The principle of Law does not bind him—it is the principle of love which rules and governs his spirit. Now, every man who is under the Law is bound to keep it, and to keep it personally. Look, my dear Friends—you who have never fled to Christ—look where you are. The Law of God is such a Law that Adam failed to keep it, though innocent. How, then, shall you keep it while imperfect? It is a spiritual Law, a Law touching not only your actions, but your words and your thoughts—how can you keep it? And yet, if you keep it not, it brandishes its great whip with the thongs and brings it down upon the conscience with terrible effect. If you keep not the Law, remember the sentence, "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them." Happy is the man who has escaped from the territories of the Law of God and come into the dominions of Divine Grace! But so long as we are under the Law, its burden is ours and here comes in this grimly solemn Truth of God that it is a burden which each man must carry on his own shoulders, but carry it he cannot and, there-

fore, it will crush us and the curse of God must come upon us through the Law!

And now we shall leave those three points which are common to all men and simply speak to Believers of the burdens which they have to carry and which they ought joyfully to shoulder, each man for himself!

And first, my Brothers and Sisters, when we have been quickened and awakened, we shall find daily necessity for *the confession of sin* and here, "every man shall bear his own burden." A general confession may be very proper in the congregation, but it is only acceptable to God as it becomes an individual and particular confession in the case of each one using the words. Repentance is peculiarly a private and personal Grace. Lamentation for sin is a thing for one's own chamber—the husband apart, and the wife apart—the daughter apart and the mother apart. Into confession in its fullness, no two can enter. As far as the sin has been common they may confess together, but in so far as the guilt in each case is personal and particular, so must confession be. My dear Friends, let us not hesitate, whatever it may be that is upon our minds, tonight, to come and acknowledge it before our Father, who is in Heaven. We do not confess now like condemned criminals who confess before execution because they must—we confess like the returned prodigal, with our heads on our dear Father's bosom, conscious that we are forgiven, quite sure that His love is set upon us and that we shall not be driven from Him on account of sin, but hating sin all the more because of this love—and weeping bitterly because of that wondrous Grace which has had such compassion upon us! Let us be very marked in our acknowledgment of sin in private. I believe the Lord often withholds from His people a sweet sense of perfect acceptance until their confession shall be more precise—until they learn to "call a spade a spade," as we say, and so make a clean breast of the matter before the Most High.

Further, my Brothers and Sisters, there is another burden we have to carry and which we must cheerfully shoulder, and that is *the yoke of Christ*. Jesus says, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me." And then He adds, "for My yoke is easy and My burden is light." We are bound to obey Christ. He is the Captain—we are His soldiers. There should be maintained in the Church a sacred military discipline—we should obey spontaneously the commands of our great Leader! He is our Shepherd, we must keep close to Him—walking in His footprints and delighting in His company. He is the Physician—we must follow His prescription, not hesitating, even though the draught He gives is very bitter. Perfect obedience is what Jesus Christ has a right to claim from us! Oh, that He would give us Grace that He might receive according to His rights! Is there any duty, my Brothers and Sisters, which you have not yet fulfilled and which presses upon your conscience? Or is there some other duty on which your conscience is but partially enlightened? Ask for a quickened

conscience and when you obtain it, never tamper with it! Oh, to have a conscience quick as the apple of the eye, tender and delicate, that will not even bear the slightest dust of sin! Oh, to walk before God as Caleb did, of whom the Lord said, "My servant Caleb has followed Me fully." There were some of whom it was said, "They walked before the Lord, but not with all their heart, as did David." May we have the whole-heartedness of the most consecrated towards the Savior and whatever form the yoke of Christ may take, may we count it our highest joy to bear it! Since He carried our sorrow, let us be willing to carry out His commands to their utmost letter, desiring that not so much as a jot or a tittle shall be left unheeded of the Master's will!

Further, Brothers and Sisters, I think we ought, each one of us, to feel that we have a *burden of prayer* to carry to the Mercy Seat. "Every man shall bear his own burden" in this respect. I wish we did this in our assemblies. I am afraid that you often let me pray, but some of you do not pray yourselves. I am afraid, too, that private prayer is neglected by a very large number of Christians—not that the form of it is absolutely renounced, but the vigor of it is not maintained. I wish I could say this without a blush concerning myself, but I do feel that very many of us do grievously fail here. We give the Lord some scanty five or ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, whereas our Puritan forefathers prayed sometimes for hours! But it would matter little about the time if we did but give the spirit. It is poor work, sometimes, our praying! Oh, that we wrestled with the Angel and prevailed! My Brothers and Sisters, we have, everyone of us, something to take before God in prayer—and we rob the Church of our contributions to her treasury of intercession if we do not put our share into it!

Some of you ought to pray for the Sunday school more than you do. Some of you should bear in prayer the burden of the young of the congregation. The preacher has his burden of prayer—a heavy one. My Brothers and Sisters, the deacons and elders should be—I trust they are—peculiarly men of prayer! They have a burden to carry—a burden of prayer for the Church. And you aged fathers in our Israel and you, my dear Sisters who are matrons in our midst, it often seems to me to be peculiarly your office to be intercessors for the Church. It may be possible that many of you could not preach and could not be very serviceable in many active labors, but you can be the very strength and sinews of war for the Church militant by your prayers! No, no—it is not the whole Church praying that you are to think of just now, but you, yourself—praying—each man and woman taking his own share of the great common burden which we have to take before the Mercy Seat and leave there!

So, too, must each of us take our own burden of *witnessing for Christ*. All saints cannot witness to all Truth since nobody knows all the Truth of

God but God! Some of our hyper-Calvinistic friends also know it all, according to their own understanding—but at any rate we think that nobody else does! Finite minds can only grasp part of the Truth. The Infinite alone can lay hold of the whole of Truth. If we were altogether Infallible in our knowledge of Doctrine, we should be God, for only God can know all things and know all things thoroughly—know all things without admixture of error. But wherein we do know, each man is called to bear testimony to the Truth he does know. There are many things that I do not know—why should I, then, pretend to be a witness to them? But there are some two or three things I do know. I am quite sure about them—and if I do not speak positively upon them, I shall fail to bear my burden before the Lord. And there is some one Truth of God, perhaps, my Brother, about which you have a little Light of God, a little more Light than your neighbors. Do not hide the Light of God! God does not ever light a lamp to put it under a bushel. If you have received, either by experience or research, any special Light which is peculiar to you—spread it that it may be, as it should be, the common property of the Church of God, to the Glory of God! I wish that Christians in these days thought more of bearing their witness. The Scottish people in years gone by attached great importance to the bearing of witness—testifying—standing out at all costs to give evidence to the Truth of God. But nowadays Truth is cast into the street as though it were worthless! And Christians will honor a Truth and hold it, and yet will put their finger to their lips and say, “For peace’s sake, such a Truth is to be unspoken.” No! Peace is precious, but it has its price, and is not to be purchased at any price! Truth first! “First pure, then peaceable.” First, the Truth of God and then the peace of God. May we have both, but let us take care that we bear our own burden in witnessing for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, dear Brothers and Sisters, we have, each one of us, our own burden *in the matter of caring for souls*. You are placed, some of you, as working men amidst working men—your burden is manifestly your own class. Others of you move in other spheres. Do not forget that each sphere has its particular claim. You have ability? You have, then, a burden peculiar to a man of ability. You have wealth? There is a burden there. On the other hand, you live in obscurity. Your utmost sphere is your little children and your one or two rooms. Still remember that circles are prized not in proportion to their *size*, but in proportion to their *roundness*—and so we shall be honored and rewarded by Divine Grace—not according to the largeness of our sphere, but according to the way in which we have filled it for Christ! We must each bear the burden of our own sphere. Mother, no one else can be a mother to your children and do for them what you should do. Minister, if you are truly sent of God, no one can be a sponsor for you in your ministry—you must take that burden which God has put upon you, upon yourself! And you trader, mer-

chant, working man—there is something which you, each of you, must do and however earnest all the rest of Christians may be, they cannot, by the surplus of their zeal, if there is any, by any possibility make up for a deficiency in your case! The timber may be very strong in one part of the vessel, but the strength of the timber there is no recompense for a rotten portion in another part of the keel—it must be strong all over. We are all set, as it were, to forge a chain—and if the link that you shall forge is thoroughly strong and well welded, yet if I make a mess of my portion of the work, the chain will be injured all through! Let us remember this and discharge our own work in the strength of God, by the power of His Spirit, and we shall joy in ourselves by the Holy Spirit!

I might thus enlarge upon these burdens, but they all come to the same effect. There is one more word, however, which will be addressed, perhaps, to half a dozen here—probably not so many. Sometimes, upon some men, God casts a burden which He never puts on others. The Prophet speaks of “the burden of the Lord.” Probably we have all carried it at some time, but at any one particular time there will not be many who are bearing it. That burden may be something very extraordinary to others, though you have become so familiar with it that it seems ordinary to you. Perhaps tonight something is saying in your soul, “Go and speak to such an one.” Do not violate that monition! Believe me, there is more in spiritual impulses than some people think! You have all read the old story of the Quaker who felt moved to ride into a certain town, some 10 or 12 miles off at the dead of night—and to go to a certain house. He did so. He found the house and knocked at the door. No one came to the door. He knocked again and when, at last, a man came downstairs and opened the door and asked him what he wanted. The Quaker said, “Perhaps you can tell me, for I do not know. The Lord has sent me to you, but what for I know not.” Then the man produced a rope and said that just when the knock came to the door he was in the top room, planning to hang himself. God had evidently sent the Quaker just at that time to prevent him. If you and I were more obedient to these “burdens of the Lord” when they came, we might often do more good than we do. We must not be fanatical—there is a line to be drawn—but at the same time I am afraid we often check sacred impulses, which, if followed, might be fraught with the most blessed consequences! Do you feel called at this time, my dear Friend, to a work which you never undertook before? Consult not with flesh and blood! Do not be particular about asking help and assistance. “Every man shall bear his own burden.” Go in the strength of God! If, like Gideon, you need a sign, take it, and when you have it and your heart has become like Gideon’s fleece, wet clean through, even though it is with sorrow, so that you could wring it out, then go in this, your might, for if God has sent you, He will go with you. “As your days,

so shall your strength be.” This may be a word to somebody—I know not to whom—but it was a burden on me to say it—and there I leave it.

Now we turn to the second Truth of this theme! And with much greater brevity—

II. SOME THINGS WHICH LIFT THE WEIGHT OF THESE PRESSING BURDENS.

“Every man shall bear his own burden.” It is not pleasant to be talked to all this long time about your being a burden-bearer, but perhaps these things will make it more pleasant. The first thing of which to remind ourselves is this—that it is quite consistent with the Truth of God declared in our text, to remind you that Jesus Christ is *the great Burden-Bearer for all His saints*—that though, on the one hand, you will have to bear your own burdens, yet on the other hand Christ will bear all your burdens for you! Your burden of sin was laid upon Him as the scapegoat for your soul. That you know, and now your sin is put away! And now, tonight, whatever your burden is, come with it to your best Friend, the “Friend that sticks closer than a brother.” Tell Him the cause of your complaint. The disciples of John, when their master’s head was taken off, took up the body and “went and told Jesus.” Come and tell Jesus what it is that vexes you tonight! It is said of one sick child, “They brought him to Jesus.” Is your trouble a sick child, or is it you who is sick? Or what is it? Bring it to Jesus! All griefs either fly at His approach or else they change to joys! Or if they remain griefs, they minister to us an abundance of spiritual wealth—

**“Come, make your needs, your burdens known—
He will present them at the Throne!
And angel bands are waiting there,
His messages of love to bear.”**

You must remember that your burden is easy to bear when Christ is with you. When Jesus Christ has strengthened you with all strength in your inner man and put into you His own Omnipotence to be your succor, then shall the burden cease to be a burden to you any longer!

This also may tend to lighten the pressure, *that as every man has to bear his own burden, so every man has his own hope*. I would be afraid to change with anybody else. I have sometimes thought, when I have been much desponding, that I wished I had half as good a hope as some of my Brothers and Sisters, but when I come to think it over—I do not know—I do not know—I would be as happy as the least in the Lord’s family if I knew that I was really one of His, but I really should not like to change with any of the little ones, or the great ones, either, on the chance of their being His. No! I know my own hope and I will keep it!

And, blessed be God, as we have our own burden, *so we have our own joy*. The most miserable and unhappy Christian in the world, when you come to get into his secrets, will tell you—he will let it out somehow—

that he has a secret spring of joy which others have not. In fact, it is to be remarked that those who have deep griefs have generally proportionately deep joys! The man of superficial sorrow generally has superficial mirth—but the man whose heart has been bored through and through has a stream of joy springing up as from an artesian well that cannot be equaled for freshness by the mere land springs of superficial piety! Brothers and Sisters, we would not part with our joys nor with our hope. Though we have our sorrows to ourselves, yet we have our joys to ourselves, too! And, thank God, they cannot be taken away from us!

So, too, the Christian has Christ all to himself. I have sometimes tried to think of that. Here is the Lord Jesus Christ, able to save ten thousand times ten thousand sinners—and yet He is all mine! All Christ is mine! Here He is feeding the millions of His saints, and yet there is not a single crumb upon His table but what is mine! Nor a grain of corn in the granary of my Brother Joseph but what belongs to me! All Christ belongs to each one of God's people! You have got a burden to yourself, but you have also got God to yourself—think of that! Have you ever remembered that if you were the only creature in the world—the only creature in the universe—if there were no angels and no other men—have you ever thought of what an inspection God would have of you and how He would see you through and through? Well, at this present moment and at all times, you are as much an object of His inspection as if that were the case! For multitudes of objects do not divide the exercise of Omniscience upon each one. The Infinite Mind of God is such that the Infinite Care of God belongs to every individual throughout the entire universe! Yes, you have a God to yourself! Oh, what infinite supplies you have, Christian! Talk of your expenses! Look at your income! Speak of your poverty! Look at your wealth! You talk of your weakness—now estimate your strength! You can cast the plumb line to the bottom of your sorrows and measure the Atlantic waves of your grief, but you cannot measure Heaven above, nor the earth beneath, nor the depths of Hell! If you could measure these, God is greater than them all! Oh, why, then, do you despond because of the big burden, when you have peculiar help, peculiar joy, peculiar hope and peculiar strength? Rest in God and be joyful!

Once again, it is true that we, all of us, have a burden to carry, but *then we have not to carry that burden long*. You do not much pity a man who has to carry a load only during the twinkling of an eye. Well, the whole of life is not any more than that! Just think, my dear Friends, of eternity—and what is life? Imagine ourselves sitting down in Heaven in the midst of eternal blessedness, and what a moment life will seem! We shall know, then, what Paul meant when he said, "These light afflictions which are but for a moment." But for a moment! Oh, pluck up courage, Brothers and Sisters! You are nearer Home than you thought you were and every moment you are getting nearer! We find our horses quicken

their speed when we turn their heads homeward and they drag their loads with speed. Now, your head is homeward, Christian, you—

**“Nightly pitch your moving tent,
A day’s march nearer home.”**

Therefore, be of good comfort and let not the burden gall your shoulders.

Once more. If you have a burden to yourself, remember that *you will have your own place in Heaven which nobody else will have*. You have your own sorrows, but you will have your own joys there! I think there is a note in the heavenly song for each one of us to take. I do not suppose that Mary Magdalene sings precisely the same note as the dying thief. There will be her lofty voice taking some of the treble notes and we shall have him, it may be, taking the deeper bass. I believe that if one of us should be absent, the choir of Heaven would not be complete. In the noblest orchestra all the instruments and voices are needed for the completeness of the chorus, and so will it be in the orchestra of Heaven! Paul says that the saints that are gone before into Heaven are not perfect without us—that “they without us would not be made perfect.” That is to say the company would not be complete, but gaps appear. So long as there is one soldier in a squad who has not arrived, the battalion is not completely formed. So we must each get there to perfect, to complete the number of the saints in Heaven! Well, then, Beloved, as we are, each one, to have a place and portion in Heaven, each a mansion to himself or herself, we may well be content to bear our burdens here alone. And now to close. What is—

III. THE PRACTICAL INFERENCE AND RESULT?

I do not know what it may be, but oh, may God the Holy Spirit burn my text into your hearts! I do not want you to remember so much anything I have said—it does not matter about that—you can forget it all! But I do want you to recollect this one Truth of God—especially you Christians—that “every man shall bear his own burden.” *There is something for each one of you to do for Christ*. Oh, that notion that the minister can do it, that the united action of the Church can do it—it has ruined the Christian Church to a large extent! A personal, individual sense of responsibility is what we need—each Christian judging himself daily and hourly as to his capabilities, obligations and indebtedness to his Lord! Brother minister, you have got your burden to bear. Is there any new work you can undertake for Christ, or any old work that needs strengthening, into which you can throw yourself with greater zeal? Then I pray you do it! My Sister in the Lord, you have not done, perhaps, what you might do. Now say in your heart, before you leave the pew, “By God’s Grace, I will do whatever I can.” I can look round, round upon you here and see some who are really doing more than I could for a moment ask you to do, for you are “in labors more abundant.”

I thank God that there are such in this Church, but then I think of others. Oh, if all were like some, what a Church we would be! If all the vines in our vineyard bore such clusters as some of the vines do, oh, how the wine presses would burst with new wine! In the matter of liberality, the preacher must never judge—that is a matter for each man. “How much should you give unto your Lord?” In the matter of service, it is not for us to allot you your work, but what can you do? Now, what will you do tonight” “Oh, give me till the morning,” says one. No! No! We have not an hour that we can afford to waste! Let us serve God today—we will leave tomorrow to care for itself. Now is the accepted time for service, as well as salvation! Serve Him now! Do something to forward His Kingdom and honor His name now! The only way to serve Christ in the future is to serve Him in the present, for the future never comes, or, if it does, it ceases to be future and is the living present.

Now I ask you, you who are now washed in His cleansing blood, you who now bear in your body the marks of the Lord Jesus, you who have lain on His bosom, you who have been kissed with the kisses of His mouth, you who have been brought from under the apple tree and know how sweet His fruit is and how delightful His shadow is, you who are now one with Him, of His flesh and of His bones, you who expect soon to see Him, you who are longing to be with Him and hope to be caught up to dwell with Him, to see Him as He is, and to be like He is—I charge you by the roes and the hinds of the fields, by the lily beds wherein you had fellowship with your Lord, and by the garden of nuts wherein He has revealed Himself to you—I charge you, by His everlasting love, by the love you bear to Him, and by that sweet song you sang just now—

***“For He is mine, and I am His—
The God whom I adore!
My Father, Savior, Comforter,
Now and forevermore,”***

serve Him now! Serve Him forevermore and may the Lord bless you and make you blessed, and a great blessing to others, for Jesus' sake. 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.**

SOWING AND REAPING

NO. 3109

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1908.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 16, 1874.

***“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever
a man sows, that shall he also reap.”
Galatians 6:7.***

I FIND, on reference to Luther's Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, and to Calvin's Commentary on this passage, that both those learned expositors consider that this refers to the treatment of ministers by their people in the matter of their financial support. They very properly point out the connection between the 6th verse and the 7th—“Let him who is taught in the Word share with him who teaches in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.” I suppose that there was a need for such an injunction in Paul's day—and there is a need for it now. There were some hearers of the Gospel, then, who contributed generously towards the maintenance of the preacher and the Apostle says that what they gave would be like sowing good seed in return for which God would give to them an abundant harvest. But there were others who gave sparingly and who would, therefore, have a proportionately small return.

But I feel sure that the Apostle had a wider range than that and that these words express a general principle—“Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.” So I begin my discourse by reminding you that our present lives are of the utmost possible importance, for on these winged hours hang eternal issues. Our present actions are not trifles, for they will decide our everlasting destiny. Everything we do is, to some extent, a sowing of which eternity will be the reaping.

I. So I pray you to notice, first, that our text tells us that GOD IS NOT TO BE TRIFLED WITH. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.”

Some trifle with God by holding, practically, if not theoretically, that *there will not be rewards for virtue, nor punishment for sin*—that one end will come alike to all—that whatever the dignity or the degradation of character may be, we shall all go to the same place and sleep there in oblivion. Or that if there is any future life, it will be common to us all and that, in fact, the whole question concerning the hereafter is a matter so utterly unimportant that we can afford to regard it with complete indifference!

But, dear Friends, it is not so. There is an Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent God—and He is the moral Governor of the universe. He will not see His laws broken with impunity, His name deferred, His Gospel despised, His Son rejected. He is intensely sensitive to the actions

of mankind. He is not a god of granite or of steel. He takes note of the acts, words and even of the *thoughts* of those whom He has created! And if they are finally impenitent, sooner or later He will say, as He did in Isaiah's day, "I will ease Me of My adversaries and avenge Me of My enemies."

Others seem to suppose that, even if there is a future, an eternity of rewards and punishments—the reaping of which this life is the sowing—a *bare profession will suffice to save them*. They appear to imagine that if they only compliment their Maker with an occasional "Thank God!" and utter a few words of mere formal prayer, and are not grossly licentious, but live tolerably decent lives, that will satisfy God's requirements. Nothing can be more mistaken than such an idea as that! God in the highest heavens is Himself perfectly pure—His perfect Law is like Himself—and it is not for Him to accommodate His righteous Law to the wills of fallen man! Do not fancy that He will accept the mere external homage of your being. He must have your heart, soul, mind, and strength, or He will not be content. It is vain for anyone to attempt to mock God by supposing that anything will do for Him in place of that heart-surrender and heart-service that He demands.

There are others who seem to suppose that *if they make a profession of religion*, that will suffice. They think that if they attend the parish church or the dissenting chapel and subscribe regularly to religious and philanthropic societies, that is all that is required of them. *That is how they mock God*—that same God who came to the top of Sinai and there, amidst thunder and lightning—gave the Ten Commandments! But He is not to be satisfied by a bare profession of religion. To confess what we do not really feel is but to increase our sin—a hypocritical profession is a further aggravation of our sin. Does God accept your heartless sacrifices, your meaningless words and empty phrases? No! He is not to be mocked by mere outward religious forms and ceremonies.

Others imagine that God can be imposed upon *by a formal compliment when they are near death*. A man is dying and immediately the cry is, "Send for a minister!" They often send for a dissenting minister, though they have never attended his ministry! And they appear to imagine that by some sort of magic we can work wonders even for the poor creature who is probably unconscious before we get to him! And if he has not trusted in Christ before that time, no one can enable him to do it then. Yet his friends call us up in the middle of the night, thinking that we can do something for him. I am not now speaking of you who regularly hear the Gospel and who are, therefore, likely to know better—yet this opinion is very generally held. But I loathe the idea of having anything of priestly power imputed to me. I have not an atom more power than any of you, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ! I am only a preacher of the Gospel and I would gladly hear the Gospel message from any one of you! It is blasphemous to pretend that sacred unction can be imparted by a mortal man. You must yourselves repent and turn to God—I cannot do this for you. It is your own sowing, in this respect, that must bring you a blessed reaping—not anything that you can get a so-called "priest" or even a minister of the Gospel to sow for you! [See Sermon #1250, Volume 21—THE PRIEST DISPENSED WITH—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

II. Now, secondly, I want to remind you that GOD'S MORAL LAWS, AS WELL AS GOD, HIMSELF, ARE NOT TO BE TRIFLED WITH "Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap."

First, *it is so in nature*. If it were possible for God *not* to observe what man does, yet what man does is, of itself, full of a power which will be to him what the harvest is to the soil. And just what he sows, he will be sure to reap one of these days, or in eternity if not in time. If a man were to sow his field with garlic and expect to reap barley, he would be bitterly disappointed. If he were to sow tares, he might pray as long as he pleased for a crop of wheat, but he would not get it. God never so changes His Laws as to make tares come up wheat and He never will! The sowing always is, and always will be, the father of the reaping.

It is also so in Providence. A man is idle and neglects his business—he sleeps in the morning when he ought to be at work. He is dilatory and careless about his affairs and so, as the inevitable consequence, he goes from bad to worse and soon is a bankrupt. As he sows, so he reaps. Another indulges in the sins of the flesh. So, when you see him with a broken constitution and his whole being the very incarnation of misery, you are not surprised. Another gambles and wastes all his substance and, sooner or later, he comes to beggary. As he sows, so he reaps. If a man is a drunkard, the poison he swallows will take effect sooner or later, however strong a constitution he may have.

As it is in nature, and in Providence, *so it is in the general moral government of God*. Does not a man's own conscience tell him to expect that what he does will come home to him? And though a man strives to lull his conscience to sleep, yet now and then it wakes up and shakes him with its thunders and causes him to be ill at ease. How is it that graceless men cannot bear to be alone? It is because conscience shakes them and makes them think of the future and dread still grater misery than they at present endure! Just suppose, for a moment, that this Law of God could be reversed and that I could now say to you, "You may sin as you like, and no evil consequences will follow." Could you imagine any proclamation which would spread such alarm and terror? Why, the very fabric of society would be shattered in such a state of things! Suppose that I had to say, "There is nothing better in being generous and noble than there is in meanness and vice." Why, it would be enough to put out the least spark of virtue that might be in existence anywhere! But we have not to talk in that immoral fashion. There is a God who judges actions, words and even thoughts—and "he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." God's Word, which is our ultimate Court of Appeal, tells us that in the great reaping time that is coming, Christ will "gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." The Book of Revelation, foretelling the future, says that "the books were opened...and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." O you gay, light-hearted and frivolous ones, it is not we who say this, but it is the declaration of the Spirit of God that, after death, comes the judgment! And that, at that Judgment Seat you shall all appear! And for

the acts committed in your lives you shall all be tried! And as your lives have been, so shall your eternal destiny be fixed!

III. This leads me to my third remark, which is that EVIL SOWING WILL BRING EVIL REAPING. “Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.”

This is seen in the present result of certain sins. “He that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.” By “the flesh” is meant our corrupt human nature in such sins as are mentioned in the 19th verse of the 5th Chapter of this Epistle, where we read, “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” These are “the works of the flesh.”

I am not going to expound this passage [Mr. Spurgeon’s expositions of the whole passage, Galatians 5:13-26 will be found in Sermons #2632, Volume 45 and #2831, Volume 49—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] fully, but I want briefly to show you that there are four classes of sins mentioned here. First, Paul mentions sins of lust—*adultery*, which violates the most sacred ties—*fornication*, which defiles the body. *Uncleanness*, which is secret, not known to others, but which is fully known to God. Fleshly thoughts, fleshly words and fleshly acts—*lasciviousness*, the outward uncleanness which “society” condemns, yet often practices. He who is doing any of these things is sowing to his flesh and he will, most surely, “of the flesh reap corruption.” You who are true Christians, of course, hate all these things, as Jude says, “hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” But mind that you also hate all books in which these things are worked up into attractive narratives, for you cannot even casually glance at such books, much less read them, without polluting your whole being! But as for those who practice these sins, which the Apostle here enumerates, let them not dream that they can be saved while they continue to love that which God hates with a perfect hatred!

The next sins in the Apostle’s black catalog are idolatry and witchcraft. Idolatry, which is forbidden by the Second Commandment—“You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: you shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me: and strewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My Commandments.” To bow in worship before a so-called “altar,” or a cross, or an image or picture of a saint, or before a real or supposed “holy” relic, or anything of the kind, is nothing but sheer idolatry! Yet multitudes are committing this great sin under the notion that they are doing God service! There is a form of idolatry which is not so gross as this, yet it is also sinful—the idolatry of loving ourselves, or our wife, or husband, or child, or father, or mother, or sister, or brother more than we love the Lord.

Then the Apostle mentions witchcraft, by which is intended all real or pretended communion with evil spirits or with the dead. Necromancy, spiritualism and everything of the kind are absolutely forbidden to all who desire to “inherit the Kingdom of God.” Then follows a third set of evils which may be classed under the head of *sins of temper*—“hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders”—all kinds of acts and forms of feeling which are not in harmony with Christian love. If you really *want* to sow to the flesh, you have only to make these things your own—if you give way to a contentious spirit, foster disagreements, are filled with hatred and envy so that you cannot bear to know that others prosper more than you, and desire to drag them down to your level—if you give way to bursts of passion, or indulge in backbiting, for that is strife—you are sowing to the flesh. I grieve to say that these evil things abound all around us but, O men and women of God, keep clear of all these things!

Then, lastly, Paul mentions sins of appetite—“drunkenness, reveling and such like,” for you must include gluttony with drunkenness. All who commit any of the sins in this long black catalog are sowing to the flesh and not to the Spirit! And when a man sows to the flesh what will the harvest be? “He shall of the flesh reap corruption”—putridity, rottenness, death! The sin that the sinner thought was sweet as honey turns bitter as gall to him. There are many men and women in this world who have lived in sin till it has become its own punishment. But if it is not so in this world, it will be so in the world to come!

What a dreadful thing sin is when it comes to the full! If there were no fire that shall never be quenched and no worm that shall never die, you need not need any worse Hell than that of wicked men by themselves, with nobody to control them, no public opinion to hold them in check! You need not even turn the devil in with them—just leave them to themselves, with no restraint upon their wickedness—and I can hardly imagine that Hell itself can be worse than those sinners would soon become!

Ah, my Friend, if you go on living in sin, you will wake up, one day, surrounded by the fruition of your own guilt in all its awful enormity. On every hand the harvest of your sowing to the flesh will stare you in the face—and God will place in your hand a sharp sickle and will say to you, “Reap here! Reap there!” You will say, “I cannot do it.” But you sowed it, so you must reap it! What terrible misery there will be for you there! Yet it will only be your own sin in its ripeness, your own transgression fully developed—and that awful harvesting will be infinitely more than you will be able to bear. “Whatever a man sows, *that* shall he also reap.” The man who gripped the widow’s throat, the other day, and took away her few sticks of furniture, will look upon her tearful face to all eternity! The man who led a fellow creature to sin will see her pale sorrow-stricken face before him forever and ever! He may try to escape from it, but he will not be able to do so. Does that description fit anyone here? And does he complain that I am very personal in my remarks? That is what I am and what I mean to be, in the hope that he may repent of his great

transgressions and, looking to Jesus upon the Cross, may receive forgiveness of his sins before it is too late!

IV. But now, lastly, I have something better to say, and that is that **GOOD SOWING WILL BRING GOOD REAPING.**

I hear someone object, “But is not that salvation by works? Do you not preach that salvation is all of Grace through faith in Jesus?” Yes, of course I do, but it is still true that good sowing will bring good reaping. But what sort of sowing do I mean? Why, the sowing that is mentioned in the verse following our text—“He that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” When a man sows to the flesh, he deceives himself, for the flesh is his old fallen nature, and such sowing is nothing but evil! But to sow well is to sow under the influence of another Power and to sow in another manner! In fact it is, as the Apostle says, to “sow to the Spirit.”

First, *we must sow under the influence of another Power.* Sowing to the Spirit lifts our sowing altogether above the idea of human merit. He who sows to the Spirit is led and guided by the Spirit of God—led to repent of sin, led to believe in Jesus, led to a new life, led to holiness, led to sanctification and, therefore, he does not take any credit to himself for anything in him that is good, for he knows that it was all implanted there by the Holy Spirit! Ah, my dear Hearers, if we would have a good harvest, we must give up sowing to ourselves and must sow to the Spirit. And the Spirit is freely given to all who seek His aid at the foot of Christ’s Cross. Jesus said to His disciples, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” May the Spirit of God come upon you and prompt you so to pray that you may truly sow to the Spirit as to be regenerated in heart and renewed in life, for then you shall most assuredly “reap life everlasting.”

We are also to sow in another manner. When the Jews, at Capernaum, asked Jesus, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” He answered, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.” That is the first thing for you to do if you wish to sow to the Spirit—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” When you have rested upon the great atoning work which Christ forever finished on the Cross of Calvary, you will begin to walk in newness of life and you will seek in all things to be conformed to God’s will. So you “shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

In verses 22 and 23 of the 5th Chapter of this Epistle, the Apostle tells what “the fruit of the Spirit” is. Firstly, “love.” You are not really saved if you have not a loving spirit. Secondly, “joy.” Christians ought to exhibit a joyful cheerfulness, so that all around might see how happy they are. Thirdly, “peace”—the opposite of variance. Fourthly, “long-suffering”—patience under provocation. Fifthly, “gentleness”—consideration for others, readiness to help them in any way that we can. Sixthly, “goodness”—not any holiness of which you boast, but such “goodness” as other people can see and admire. Seventhly, “faith”—reliability, keeping good faith with others, so that they know that your word is as good as your bond. Eighthly, “meekness”—that does not push itself to the front and does not easily get provoked. Ninthly, “temperance”—which keeps

every passion under control, not only with respect to meats and drinks, but with regard to everything else.

Now, if you thus sow to the Spirit, you will “reap life everlasting.” The Apostle does not say that you will reap everlasting existence, but *everlasting life*, which is quite another thing. “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” That is the perfection of love and joy—you shall have that, and you shall ascend to successive stages of holiness and virtue through the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus and the sanctification of the Spirit—and one of these days you shall throw out the last trace of the slough of sin! And then your disembodied spirit shall dance before the flaming eyes of Him who is purer than the sun and, by-and-by, “the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout,” and your redeemed body shall rise, purified like the body of your own dear Lord and Savior, which could not see corruption because it contained no trace of sin—and then your perfected body and soul and spirit shall triumph and reign with Jesus here below in His millennial Glory! And after that you shall have the fullness of “life everlasting” in the Glory yet to be revealed. All this honor will be given to you, not because you have deserved it, but of the free, Sovereign Grace of God. It is only given to those in whom there is the Spirit of God and who, therefore, in their lives manifest that holiness of character, “without which no man shall see the Lord.”

May the Lord graciously give to all of us His Holy Spirit and may we all meet in Heaven to part no more forever, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
PSALM 80; MATTHEW 9:36-38; 10.**

Psalm 80:1-3. *Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, You that lead Joseph like a flock; You that dwell between the cherubims, shine forth. Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up Your strength and come and save us. Turn us again, O God, and cause Your face to shine; and we shall be saved.* To whom could Israel go, in times of distress, but unto her God? It was well that her Psalmists should teach her thus to pray. Notice the form of this prayer—“Come and save us. Turn us again, O God.” We cannot be saved except by being turned from the ways of sin into the path of holiness. But who shall turn us? What power can reverse the current of the human soul? As well might Niagara begin to ascend of its own accord as for man to turn to God except as God turns him!

4-7. *O LORD God of Hosts, how long will You be angry against the prayer of Your people? You feed them with the bread of tears, and give them tears to drink in great measure. You make us a strife unto our neighbors and our enemies laugh among themselves. Turn us again, O God of Hosts, and cause Your face to shine; and we shall be saved.* Israel was evidently in very deep distress, yet still God’s own. It is no evidence of our having ceased to be God’s people that we are made to drink deep draughts of tears. We are not to imagine that God has cast us off

because He chastens us. No, rather are we to argue the other way, “for whom the Lord loves, He chastens.”

8-15. *You have brought a vine out of Egypt: You have cast out the heathen, and planted it. You prepared room before it, and did cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. Why have You then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood does waste it, and the wild beast of the field does devour it. Return, we beseech You, O God of Hosts: look down from Heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which Your right hand has planted, and the branch that You made strong for Yourself.* Notice how a soul, in deep distress, usually gets to God. Under some aspect or other, by some way or another, the heart gropes its way till it finds Him out. If poor Israel is as a vineyard given up to the wild boar of the woods, there is still hope through that “righteous Branch” of whom the Lord said to Jeremiah, “In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely.”

16, 17. *It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of Your Countenance. Let Your hands be upon the Man of Your right hand, upon the Son of Man whom You made strong for Yourself.* “If You will not hear us, yet hear Him. If You will put no honor upon us, we will ask You to put the highest honors upon Him. Save us for His sake. Deliver Your vineyard from the wild boar and restore the hedges that have been broken down, for is not this the vineyard of red wine which all belongs to Him?”

18, 19. *So will not we go back from You: quicken us, and we will call upon Your name. Turn us again, O LORD God of Hosts, cause Your face to shine; and we shall be saved.*

Matthew 9:36. *But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.* The sight that Christ saw, deeply affected His heart—“He was moved with compassion for them.” The expression is a very strong one indicating that His whole being was stirred with an emotion which put every faculty into forceful movement.

37, 38. *Then said He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.* Pretenders were many, but real “laborers” were few. God only can thrust out or “send forth laborers.” Man-made ministers are useless, yet they abound all around us—but where are the instructive soul-winning ministries? Let us plead with the Lord of the harvest to care for His own harvest and to thrust out His own harvestmen.

Matthew 10:1. *And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.* They were first Christ’s disciples and then He sent them forth as His Apostles, clothed with power and authority very similar to His own.

2-4. *Now the names of the twelve Apostles are these. The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee,*

and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. The 12 Apostles linked the spiritual Israel with the 12 tribes of the literal Israel which had typified it. They are mentioned in pairs, but this last couple is not a pair, for Simon the Zealot had little in common with the cool, cunning, calculating Judas Iscariot. There were only 12 Apostles, yet one of them was a traitor! Among the leaders of the nominal Christian Church today, is it possible that there is one traitor in every twelve?

5, 6. *These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter you not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* This was “a mission to the Jews” only—meant for the general awakening of the chosen nation. It was a mission from Israel to Israel—not to the Gentiles, and not even to the people who were most like the Jews—“Into any city of the Samaritans enter you not.” After our Lord’s Resurrection, He gave the wider commission, “Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.”

7, 8. *And as you go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely you have received, freely give.* They were to be medical missionaries—preaching the Gospel and healing the sick—and it was all to be done “freely.”

9, 10. *Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.* The people at that time were favorably disposed to our Lord and thus His Apostles might expect treatment of a more generous kind than can be looked for in these times. Certain of these regulations were altered on a subsequent mission, when the people were less favorably disposed.

11-15. *And into whatever city or town you shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till you go thence. And when you come into an house, salute it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when you depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.* Disclaim all fellowship with those who will not have fellowship with your Lord. Let them know that you leave them because they refuse to receive your Master’s message. If they continue to reject the Savior, their doom will be even more terrible than that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

16. *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.* “Behold, I send you forth.” What power there is in the word of the King of kings! “I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.’ You are like sheep, helpless and defenseless; yet ‘I send you forth,’ and therefore it is right for you to go even into ‘the midst of wolves.’” We might have imagined that the wolves would have devoured the sheep, yet, at the present time,

there are a great many more sheep in the world than there are wolves. Sheep have always been weak and helpless, yet they have multiplied! Wolves have always been strong and savage, yet they have diminished until there is not one of them left in this land. And in many other countries the same thing has happened. So, the weak, the helpless who come under the care of “our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep,” shall be preserved from all the wolves that would devour them, and even from the devil, who, “as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour.”

16. *Be you therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.* “Be you harmless because you are like sheep, but be you wise as serpents because you have to dwell with wolves.” You, too, Beloved, ought to be very wise because of the wisdom which has been imparted to you by the Master who has sent you forth. And you ought to use your best wits in His service, yet never use that wisdom with any ill intent, for the Christ who sends you does no harm to men, but only good.

17, 18. *But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and you shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.* “Do not try to live on popular applause, ‘but beware of men.’ Expect ill treatment from them. If they can persecute you with the scourge, they will do so, but if that is out of their power, they will persecute you with their tongues. You will be misunderstood, misrepresented, maligned—expect such treatment for I, your Lord and Master, have had it before you.”

19, 20. *But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what you shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what you shall speak. For it is not you that speaks, but the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you.* It is very remarkable what wise answers many of the martyrs often gave. Illiterate men, when confronted by the learned ones of the earth, completely baffled them! And weak women nonplused their assailants and judges. A notable instance of that is recorded in the history of the brave Anne Askew. After they had tortured her upon the rack and her poor body was full of pain, she sat upon the cold slab of her prison and put such questions to the popish bishops and inquisitors as utterly confounded them! And Christ, still by His Holy Spirit, enables His faithful followers to triumph over all the craft and malice of men.

21, 22. *And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death. And you shall be hated of all men for My name’s sake: but he that endures to the end shall be saved.* When we give ourselves to Christ, we must do it without any reserve and be prepared to follow Him even to the bitter end if necessary. If all men should forsake us—if death should be our portion because of our allegiance to Christ—we dare not draw back! To do that would lead to our destruction—but to endure unto the end—this is eternal salvation!

23. *But when they persecute you in this city, flee you into another: for verily I say unto you, you shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man has come.* I suppose Christ here alludes to that wondrous coming of His in the destruction of Jerusalem. They had but a short time

in which to evangelize that land, so they had to be quick in gathering out the Lord's elect before He came in that terrible judgment. This same Truth of God ought to quicken the action of every servant of Christ today. Be quick about your work, for your Master is on the road and will soon be here. You may almost hear the rattling of His chariot wheels, for long ago He said, "Surely I come quickly." The trumpets are beginning to sound and you will scarcely have gone over all the cities of the world before the Son of Man shall come unless you hasten with the great task which He has entrusted to you.

24, 25. *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he is as his master, and the servant as his lord. They that have called the master of the house, Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?* I do not know what worse names they might give to us than they gave to our Master, but, no doubt, they might do so, for as the servants are worse and less than their master, the world might, if it acted upon the rule of proportion, apply much worse names to us than it has ever done to our blessed Lord and Master. Are we to be esteemed and revered in a world that persecuted and crucified Christ, our Lord and Savior? Be not so foolish as to think so! And when you receive scorn and contumely, accept it as being the lot of a follower of Christ.

26. *Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid that shall not be known.* When men slander you, they cannot take away your good name before God. There will be a resurrection of reputations as well as a resurrection of bodies. And good men, though their good names lie deeply buried, will certainly have a resurrection. There is Wycliffe—how little, comparatively, has ever been said about probably the greatest man since the time of the Apostle Paul! But his name and fame will yet arise and all history will ring with the praise of it. Depend upon it, no man who has faithfully served his Savior, shall miss the honor which he has truly deserved. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father"—so be content to wait.

27. *What I tell you in darkness, that speak you in light: and what you hear in the ear, that preach you upon the housetops.* There must first be that quiet lonely hearing—that calm sitting at the Master's feet to learn the lesson. And then afterwards must come the brave telling of it out—speaking out though kings should hear and never being silenced because of sinful shame.

28-31. *And fear not those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear you not, therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows.* Do you not see the force of this argument? These little creatures that are of so little account among men are watched over by your Heavenly Father! They cannot die—no, they cannot even light upon the ground without your Father noting it! Can He then forget you who

are worth so much more than many sparrows? Will He not deal very gently, and tenderly, and considerately with you?

32, 33. *Whoever, therefore, shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father who is in Heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father who is in Heaven.* You acknowledge Christ here and Christ will acknowledge you there. Dare to bear reproach for Him and you shall be glorified together with Him, by-and-by. But if the tenor of your life is that you do not claim Christ—if you practically live as if there were no Savior, ignoring Him, depriving Him of the trust which He deserves and the honor which He has earned—then, when He comes in the Glory of the Father, He will say, “you never knew Me, and I never knew you. Depart!”

34. *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.* That is to say, the first consequence of Christ’s coming will not be that we shall lead easy and comfortable lives, but, on the contrary, He comes to enlist us in His army and to make soldiers of us—and soldiers have to endure many hardships.

35, 36. *For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.* Many of the children of God have found this to be true, greatly to their sorrow. No foes can wound us so sorely as those of our own household. They get at our hearts and cut us to the very quick, while others can only give us flesh wounds. Well, it must be so. Wherever light comes, darkness will be opposed to it. Truth will always find error ready to devour it if it can. Expect this, and half the bitterness of it will be gone when it comes because you expected it. “To be forewarned” here “is to be forearmed.”

37-42. *He that loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that takes not his cross and follows after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that finds his life shall lose it; and he that loses his life for My sake shall find it. He that receives you receives Me, and he that receives Me receives Him that sent Me. He that receives a Prophet in the name of a Prophet shall receive a Prophet’s reward, and he that receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. And whoever shall give unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water to drink in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.* God’s great reward for little service are given, not of debt, but of Grace, “according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.”

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

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

THE CAUSE AND CURE OF WEARINESS IN SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS NO. 1383

**DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 8, 1877,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,**

[AT A CONVENTION OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.]

*“Let us not be weary in doing good: for in due season
we shall reap, if we faint not.”
Galatians 6:9.*

THIS verse occurs in the Epistle to the Galatians, which so plainly sets forth the grand doctrine of Justification by Faith and teaches us most plainly that salvation is not of works, but of Grace. As if to confuse forever those who say that the doctrine of Free Grace is unpractical, the Apostle, before he closes his Epistle, exhorts Believers to labor. And in the verse before us gives us a sentence worthy to be printed in letters of gold and hung up forever before the eyes of all Christian workers, “Be not weary in doing good.” It is true, my Brothers and Sisters, that you are not to save yourselves by doing good. Your motive is not selfish, but because you are saved *already*, you desire to manifest the power of *gratitude* and to prove to all the world that those who receive a free salvation are the very men who most cheerfully labor to please God and to bring glory to His name. O you who are debtors to infinite mercy, “Be not weary in doing good.”

The Apostle, at the time he wrote our text, had in his mind’s eye the doing good which, by its alms, does good unto all men and, also, that kindness which leads hearers of the Gospel to communicate in all good things unto him that teaches. Truly it is easy to be weary in these matters. Giving alms is certainly disheartening work. One is so continually being deceived that giving to the poor becomes a weary business. Impostors abound on all sides! This city of London swarms with impostors who would deceive Solomon himself. I do not wonder that men are driven to organize their charity—but which frequently means bringing it to an end!

The tendency is to excuse themselves because at some time or other they have been victimized. A cruel hardness is abroad which talks philosophy and renounces giving alms for fear of disturbing our delightful social economy. Alms giving, if we are to believe some men, has become a *crime* and the truly good man is he who never interferes with the work of the poor. To these people it seems odd that our Lord should have commended anything so inconsistent with political economy as giving to the poor! According to the modern school, we may expect those to be blessed who see people hungry and give them no meat, thirsty and give them no drink, sick and in prison and never visit them because hungry people should go to the parish and thirsty people to the pump!

I trust, however, that the Christian spirit which is pitiful to the poor will never die out among us and that, notwithstanding all the difficulties

under which we may have to labor, we may not be weary in doing good, for despite all deceits and impositions, in due season we shall reap if we faint not. I am sure I shall not be wrong in taking the text from its immediate connection and applying it to the work of Sunday schools, for, first of all, I am sure, Brothers and Sisters, that your work is well described in the text—it is doing good.

Secondly, I am equally clear that you are liable to the evils mentioned here, which are common to all Christian service—weariness and faintness. And it is equally clear that the consolation and encouragement of the text may truthfully be enjoyed by you. “In due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

I. First, then, I know you will all agree with me that YOUR WORK IS WELL DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT. It may be set forth in so many words as doing good. You entered upon it because you felt it to be so and you continue in it for the same reason. Another description of Christian work is implied in the promise of reaping—your work is sowing. Take the two ideas of doing good and sowing and they will both be found to be exceedingly well embodied in holy labor among the young. Sunday school work is doing good. How can it be otherwise, for it is an act of obedience! I trust you have entered upon it because you call Jesus your Master and Lord and you wish to fulfill the great command, “Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.”

You find children to be creatures—fallen creatures—but still lovable little things, full of vigor, life and glee. You see them to be a component part of the race and you conclude at once that your Master’s command applies to them. You are not like the disciples who would put them back, for you have learned from their mistake and you remember the words of their Master and yours, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.” You know, too, that “out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He has ordained strength because of the adversary,” so that you are sure that He included the little ones in the general commission when He said, “Preach the Gospel to every creature.”

You are doubly sure that you are obeying His will because you have certain special precepts which relate to the little ones, such as, “Feed My lambs” and, “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he shall not depart from it.” You know that it is our duty to preserve a testimony in the world and, therefore, you are anxious to teach the Word of God to your children that they may teach it to their children, that so, from generation to generation, the Word of the Lord may be made known. Be the task pleasant or irksome to you, it is not yours to hesitate, but to obey. The love which has redeemed you, also constrains you. You feel the touch of the sacred hand upon your shoulder, the hand which once was pierced, and you hear your Redeemer say, “As My Father has sent Me, even so send I you.”

And, because of that sending, you go forth to the little ones in obedience to His will. He who obeys is doing good and in this sense your service among the little ones is doing good. Doing good it is, again, because it brings glory to God. We must always continue to *receive* from God, who is the great Fountain of goodness and blessing, but yet, in infinite condescension, He permits us to give Him some return. As the dewdrop reflects

the beam with which the great sun adorns it, so may we, in our measure, make the light of our great Father to sparkle before the eyes of men. Our lives may be as the rivers which run into the sea from where they originally came. Whenever we attempt that which will clearly promote the Divine Glory, we are doing good.

When we make known Jehovah's Grace. When we work in accordance with His purposes of love. When we speak forth the Truth of God which honors His beloved Son. Whenever, indeed, the Holy Spirit, through us, bears witness to the eternal Truths of the Gospel, there is doing good towards God. We cannot increase His intrinsic Glory, but through His Spirit we can make His Glory to be more widely seen—and among the choicest ways of doing this we give a high place to the teaching of children the fear of the Lord in order that they may be a seed to serve Him and to rejoice in His salvation. And who shall doubt that Sunday school work is doing good towards man? The highest form of charity is to teach our fellow man the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

You may give bread to your fellow, but when he has eaten it, is gone. If you give him the Bread of Life, it abides with him forever. You may give him bread in plenty, but in due time he will die as his fathers have done before him. But if you give him the Bread of Heaven and he eats thereof, he shall live forever! God has enabled you to hand out to him immortal food, even Jesus, who is "that Bread from Heaven." What a blessing it is to a man if you are the instrument of changing his heart and so of emancipating him from vice and making him free unto holiness! To lead a soul to Christ is to lead it to Heaven!

It is assuredly a noble part of benevolence to deliver the Gospel to the sons of men and, if possible, this benevolence is of a still higher kind when you deliver the Truth of God to children, for as prevention is better than a cure, so is it better to *prevent* a life of vice than to *rescue* from it. And as the earlier a soul has light, the shorter is its night of darkness, so the earlier in life salvation comes to the heart, the better and greater is the benediction. To receive the dew of Grace while we are yet in the dew of youth is a double blessing! Brethren, your work is one of doing good of the most thorough and radical kind, for you strike at the very root of sin in the child by seeking his regeneration. You desire, by the Grace of God, to win the heart for Christ at the beginning of life and this is the best of blessings!

I hope you are not among those who only *hope* to see your children converted when they are grown up and feel satisfied to let them remain in their sins while they are children. I hope that you pray for the conversion of children as children and are working to that end by the Spirit's gracious aid. If you are doing so, I know of no service more fit to engage the angels of Heaven if they could be permitted to undertake it! Surely, if they could teach the Gospel to mankind and had their choice of learners, they might well pass those by who are already hardened in sin and who can only give their tottering age to Christ—and gather for Him the young whose day is but dawning! We may not set one work against another, but at any rate we may count ourselves happy if our sphere is among the young.

Let us gather the rosebuds for Jesus! Let us bring to Him the virgin in her earliest beauty and the young man in his first vigor before sin and age have spoiled them of their charms! Let us find for Him those who can give Him a whole life and honor Him from dawn till its eve! Oh, it is glorious to have such work for Jesus! Go to your youthful charges rejoicing in your work, for it is doing good! It is by no means difficult to see that Sunday school work is sowing. Upon this I will not speak much, for the emblem is easy to be understood. Your schools are the field, the Gospel is the seed and you are the sowers. Suffer me only to say that yours is a work in which there are great outgoings and apparent losses. Even as the sower casts his seed into the earth, buries it and it is lost to him, so do you spend your strength, your thought, your love, your talent, your time and, at first, see no return.

You are sacrificing your leisure and much of the religious privileges of your fellow Christians. You are, as some say, burying yourselves in the school—surrendering ease and repose for unremunerated work. I speak after the manner of men. You engage in these self-denials because you believe that the Truth of God, like a seed, ought to be sown and that it is your duty to sow it. It is frequently said that “truth is mighty and will prevail” but this must be qualified by the reflection that Truth does nothing by way of conquest till it is spoken out by earnest men. I doubt not that there are hundreds of great Truths of God, in the shape of social reforms, now lying on the shelf and having little or no power because they have not yet found a brave and earnest tongue to proclaim them. When the man shall come who is ordained to be their spokesman they will ring out like a clarion and hosts will gather to their standard, but meanwhile they lie like sleeping giants whose might sleeps with them.

There is power in the Truth of God, as there is life in seed, but it will be hidden till, like seed, it is sown in favorable soil! It needs a sower and feeling that the Truth ought to be sown, you consecrate yourselves to that work. You have, moreover, looked at the children and you have felt that the soil of their minds *ought* to be sown. You hope to find good soil, at least, in some cases, and it strikes you that to delay to sow will be culpable neglect. You are sure that if you do not sow, the devil will, and that weeds will spring up if wheat is not sown. And you wish, if you can, to get the start of some, at least, of the devil’s servants and drop in the seeds of Divine Truth before the grosser vices have come to maturity.

You know that abundant seed of noxious plants lies hidden in that plot of ground, by nature, as the result of the Fall, but still, before they have grown into rank luxuriance, you desire to choke the weeds with the rapid growth of Heaven’s own corn. Your present occupation is to sow the children’s minds. You are delighted when you see the seed spring up immediately, but where it tries your patience you still sow. When I had a little garden of my own and put in mustard and cress, I went the next morning to see if it was sprouting and was not satisfied to wait for the due season.

I turned over the dirt and I dare say I prevented the growth of the seed by my haste. It is quite possible for teachers to commit the same folly by an unbelieving hurry—expecting to reap tomorrow what they have sown today. Immediate fruit may come, for God works marvelously, but whether it does or not, your plain duty is to *sow*. Reap you shall, but meanwhile

you must be satisfied to go on sowing, sowing, sowing, even to the end. Reaping is your *reward*, but sowing is your work. Sowing, sowing, ever sowing till the hand is palsied in death and the seed basket is carried on another arm! Doing good by sowing the seed is your work.

II. Now, secondly, it appears from the text that in your service YOU WILL MEET WITH EVILS common to Christian workers of all descriptions. You will especially be liable to weariness and faintness. Take the first word as it stands in our version—you will be tempted to grow weary. Hard work, this teaching children! Some good souls seem born to it—they do it splendidly and enjoy it. To others it is a stern labor. Some are by constitution exceedingly inept at it, but I do not think that they should excuse themselves by that fact, but should educate themselves into loving the work—many people around us are very inept at anything which would cause them to sweat—but we call them lazy and goad them on.

It is no new thing for men to attempt to escape the army by pretending to be in bad health, but we must have none of this cowardly malingering in Christ's army—we must be ready for anything and everything! We must compel ourselves to duty when it goes against the grain. When it is a clear duty, obedience must master our aversion. I have no doubt, whatever, that teaching is, to some, very toilsome work, but then it has to be done, all the same. I delight to hear you speak, dear Brothers and Sisters, with holy enthusiasm for the privilege of teaching children and I fully believe in it! But I know, also, that it requires no small degree of self-denial on your part, self-denial for which the Church does not always give you due credit. To continue from Sunday to Sunday drilling some little Biblical knowledge into those noisy boys and trying to sober down those giddy girls is no light amusement or pretty pastime! It must be a toil and, therefore, it is not difficult to become weary.

Teachers may the more readily tire because the work lasts on year after year. If you are all Sunday school teachers I am very happy to perceive so many gray and bald heads among you. It looks well. I admire the veterans of your army! There ought to be an "Old Guard" as well as new regiments. Why leave this work to young beginners? Did not David say, "Come, you children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord," when he was in the prime of life? Why, then, do so many cease to teach when they are best qualified to do so? Have not many aged persons a gentleness and an impressiveness which peculiarly qualify them to arrest the attention of the young? As they know more by experience than most of us, should they not be all the readier to impart instruction?

It was always my delight to sit at my grandfather's feet when he told of his experiences of the Grace of God. When he was 80 years old or more, his witness to the faithfulness of God was worth going many miles to hear! There are scores of aged men and women whose life story ought to be often told among children. With their loving ways and cheerful manners they would be an acquisition to any school for the children's sake—while to the teachers their weight and wisdom would be an incalculable benefit! Die in harness, my Brothers and Sisters, if your mental and physical vigor will permit! Still, the long round of many years' labor must tend to make the worker weary—and the more so if the work is allowed to become monotonous—as it certainly is in some schools.

You go to the same dingy room and sit on the same chair before the same class of boys. It is true the boys are not the same boys, for though the proverb says, "Boys will be boys," I find that they will *not* be boys, but that they will be *men*—but still, one boy is so much like another boy that the class seems to be always the same. The lessons vary but the Truth is the same and the work of teaching is like the sowing of seed—very much the same thing over and over again. Lovers of change will hardly find, in regular Sunday school work, a field for their fickleness. The text says, "Be not weary." Come, Brother, are you tired out? How long have you been teaching? A thousand years? You smile and I smile, too, and say—do not be weary with any period of service short of that!

Our Lord deserves a whole eternity to be spent in His praise and we hope so to spend it! And, therefore, let us not be weary with the few years which constitute the ordinary life of man. I find the Greek word contains the idea of being "disheartened." "Let us not lose heart." This is a soul-weariness against which we must resolutely fight. It comes to many good workers and shows itself in different ways. Some think the work less important than they did at first. Others fear that their part of it will prove an utter failure. This is heart-weariness. When a Sunday school is going down—when there are not so many children as in former years, or, what is equally bad—when there are not enough teachers, the poor superintendent falls into great anxiety and the teachers at the teachers' meetings are not in the best of spirits.

By the way, I am not sure that you teachers always edify one another at those meetings, or that you always have the Spirit of God among you. I have heard otherwise, sometimes, and yet I cannot blame you, for I have heard of Church meetings, too, which have not been "like a little Heaven below," nor would I say of them, "I have been there and still would go." When the condition of the school is disorder and decline, the best of teachers become discouraged and weary. At such times, good teachers hardly know how to go to their work at all, for there is not that loving spirit in the school which renders it a happy family—neither is there that power in prayer which secures the great Father's Presence and, therefore, many become distressed and tire of the service.

Now comes in my text, "Be not weary in doing good." Pluck up courage! Do not be a coward! Hope on, hope always! Work on, even though the task becomes more and more trying to you. Do not despise your vocation, nor stay your hand, be not weary in doing good! Our text next speaks of our fainting. The original word has at its base the idea of being loosened. There is a girding up of the loins which means work and there is a loosening, not merely of garments, but of sinews, which means that the man will do no more. Some Sunday school teachers get, as the saying is, upon the loose. They display an utter lack of energy—they are unstrung. They do not teach their classes with all their heart, soul and strength—they get through in a "slipshod" fashion—like a man trudging along with loosened sandals.

They teach, but put no honest work into it—their heart is no longer bound to the altar. The school work is performed in routine fashion and it might almost as well have been left alone. I have seen a man at work in such a sleepy style that I have been ready to cry out, "Dear me! Dear me! I

cannot endure to see such crawling and creeping! Stand away! Give me your tools and let me have a turn at it!" And even so might one feel the same about certain teachers. A chapter is read and remarks made upon it which cost neither thought nor reading. Hymns are sung without the slightest sign of life and prayer offered without heart. A living Sunday school teacher standing by has been ready to weep to see how the children become indifferent because the teacher is trifling.

There must be life, force, fire, heart, energy and intensity put into your service or it will be valueless! Dear Friends, do not fall into a loose state! You shall bind your sheaves, soon, if you do not become loose in your own minds. You shall reap if you do not become languid and lethargic. How is it that we ever fall into that state? What are the excuses that we make for ourselves when we faint? At times we are tempted to give it all up. We feel that there is no good being done and, therefore, we cannot hold on any longer. What makes us talk so? Is it not the old Adam—our carnal nature? Should we not mortify him and say, "Now, old Adam, you want me to give up the Sunday school and I shall refuse to do so for that very reason"?

My idle flesh is saying to me, "Take things a little more leisurely. Do not take extra work upon yourself." Ah, Flesh, proud Flesh! If I bow to you I shall reap corruption! What a horrible thing it is, that reaping of corruption! The very word seems to swarm with living and moving abominations—its meaning is intensely abhorrent to the pure mind. We must at once reply, "No, Flesh, I cannot bow to you and reap corruption and, therefore, you must be denied. I shall mortify you and continue with my class at the school. I had thought of giving it up, but I will not indulge you so much. By God's Grace I will persevere."

Do you not think that, at times, our getting lax in Christian work arises from our being very low in Grace? As a rule, you cannot get out of a man that which is not in him. You cannot go forth, yourself, to your class and do your work vigorously if you have lost inward vigor. You cannot minister before the Lord with the unction of the Holy One if that unction is not upon you. If you are not living near to God and in the power of God, then the power of God will not go forth through you to the children in your care! Therefore I think we should judge, when we become discontented and down-hearted, that we are out of sorts spiritually. Let us say to ourselves, "Come, my Soul! What ails you? This faint heart is a sign that you are out of health. Go to the Great Physician and obtain from Him a tonic which shall brace you! Come, play the man! Have none of these whims! Away with your idleness! The reaping time will come, therefore thrust in the plow."

Is not another reason why we become down-hearted to be found in the coldness and indifference of our fellow Christians? We see others doing the Lord's work carelessly and when we are all on fire, ourselves, we find them to be cold as ice. We get among people in the Church who do not seem to *care* whether the souls of the children are saved or not and thus we are apt to be discouraged. The idleness of others should be an argument for our being more diligent ourselves. If our Master's work is suffering at the hands of our fellow servants, should we not try to do twice as much, ourselves, to make up for their deficiencies? Ought not the lag-

gards to be warnings to us lest we, also, come into the same lukewarm condition? To argue that I ought to be a sluggard because others loiter is poor logic.

Sometimes, too—I am ashamed to mention it—I have heard of teachers becoming weary from lack of being appreciated. Their work has not been sufficiently noticed by the pastor and praised by the superintendent. Sufficient notice has not been taken of them and their class by their fellow teachers. I will not say much about this cause of faintness because it is so small an affair that it is quite below a Christian. Appreciation! Do we *expect* it in *this* world? The Jewish nation despised and rejected their King and even if we were as holy as the Lord Jesus we might still fail to be rightly judged and properly esteemed. What does it matter? If *God* accepts us, we need not be dismayed though all should pass us by.

Perhaps, however, the work itself may suggest to us a little more excuse for being weary. It is hard work to sow on the highway and amidst the thorns—hard work to be casting good seed upon the rock, year after year. Well, if I had done so for many years and was enabled by the Holy Spirit, I would say to myself, “I shall not give up my work because I have not yet received a recompense in it. I perceive that in the Lord’s parable three sowings did not succeed and yet the one piece of good ground paid for all! Perhaps I have gone through my three unsuccessful sowings and now is my time to enjoy my fourth, in which the seed will fall upon good ground.”

It is a pity, dear Brother, when you have had some years of rough work, to give it all up. Why, now you are going to enjoy the sweets of your former labor! It would be a pity, my dear Sister, just when you have mastered your class and prepared the way for a blessing, for you to run away from it! There is so much less difficulty for you to overcome now that you already overcome so much! He who has passed so many miles of a rough voyage will not have to go over those miles again—do not let him think of going back! To go back, indeed, in this pilgrimage would be shameful—and as we have no armor for our backs—it would be dangerous. Putting our hand to this plow and looking back will prove that we were unworthy of the kingdom!

If there are a hundred reasons for giving up your work of faith, there are 50,000 for going on with it! Though there are many arguments for fainting, there are far more arguments for persevering. Though we might be weary and do sometimes feel so, let us wait upon the Lord and renew our strength and we shall mount up with wings as eagles, forget our weariness and be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might!

III. That observation brings me to the last part of my subject which is that WE HAVE ABUNDANT ENCOURAGEMENT in the prospect of reward which is afforded in the text, “In due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” The first remark upon that promise shall be that reaping time *will* come. Our chief business is to glorify God by teaching His Truth whether souls are saved or not. But still, I object to the statement that we may go on preaching the Gospel for years and years and even all our lifetime and yet no result may follow. They say, “Paul may preach and Apollos may water, but God gives the increase.” I should like them to find that passage in the Bible. In my English Bible it runs thus— “I, (Paul), *have* planted, Apollos watered, but God *gave* the increase.” There is not the slightest intent to

teach us that when Paul planted and Apollos watered God would arbitrarily refuse the increase!

All the Glory is claimed for the Lord, but honest labor is not despised. I do not say that there is the same relation between teaching the Truth of God and conversion as there is between cause and effect so that they are invariably connected. But I will maintain that it is the rule of the kingdom that they should be connected through the power of the Holy Spirit. Some causes will not produce effects because certain obstacles intervene to prevent. A person may teach the Gospel in a bad spirit—that would spoil it. A person may teach only part of the Gospel and He may put that the wrong way upwards. God may bless it somewhat, but yet the good man may greatly retard the blessing by the mistaken manner in which he delivers the Truth.

Take it as a rule that the Truth of God prayed over, spoken in the fear of the Lord and with the Holy Spirit dwelling in the man who speaks it, will produce the effect which is natural to it. As the rain climbs not up to the skies and the snow flakes never take to themselves wings to rise to Heaven, so neither shall the Word of God return unto Him void but it shall accomplish that which He pleases. We have not spent our strength in vain. Not a verse taught to a little girl, nor a text dropped into the ear of a careless boy, nor an earnest warning given to an obdurate young sinner, nor a loving farewell to one of the senior girls shall be without some result or other to the Glory of God! And, taking it all together as a whole, though this handful of seed may be eaten of the birds and that other seed may die on the hard rock, yet, as a whole, the seed shall spring up in sufficient abundance to plentifully reward the sower and the giver of the seed!

We know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord! I do not come into this pulpit with any fear that I shall preach in vain. It does not occur to me that such a thing can happen! I thought so once, when I thought more of *myself* than now—but now I am assured that if I speak out God's message in the best way I can—and with much prayer leave it all with God, He will take care of it! I expect to see people converted—not because there is any good in them, but because the Lord works as He pleases and will call whom He pleases and will give to His own Truth victory and honor. Go to your classes with this persuasion, "I shall not labor in vain, or spend my strength for nothing." "According to your faith, so is it unto you." Take a little measure and you shall have it filled with the manna of success, but take a great omer and in its fullness you shall have abundance! Believe in the power of the Truth you preach! Believe in the power of Christ about whom you speak! Believe in the Omnipotence of the Holy Spirit whose help you have invoked in earnest prayer! Go to your sowing and count upon reaping!

I want to call your particular attention to a word in the text which is very full of encouragement. "Let us not be weary, for we shall reap." We shall reap. Dear Brothers and Sisters, we shall reap. It is not, "We shall do the work and our successors shall reap after we are gone." We ought to be very pleased, even with that, and no doubt such is often the case. But we shall reap, too. Yes, I shall have my sheaves and you will have yours. The plot which I have toiled and wept over shall yield me my sheaves of harvest and I shall personally gather them. I shall reap. "I never thought

much of myself as a teacher," says one, "I always fear that I am hardly competent and I notice that the superintendent has only trusted me with the little children. But I am so glad to hear that I shall reap. I shall reap! I shall have a dear little one, saved in the Lord, to be my portion!"

I pray you, dear Friends, if you have never reaped yet, begin to hope. You teachers who are always punctual, I mean—of course, if you do not come on time, you do not care whether you reap or not. But I speak to punctual teachers. I speak, also, to earnest teachers—for if you are not earnest you will never reap. You punctual, earnest, prayerful teachers shall reap! Some teachers do not go in for reaping and they will not enjoy it. But I am speaking now to real, hard-working, earnest Sunday school teachers who give their hearts to it and yet have seen no results. According to the text, you shall reap! Come, my persevering comrades, let us not be discouraged—"In due season we shall reap," even we! You shall have your share with others. Though you feel as though you must give it up, you shall yet reap! After sowing all this while, do not cease from labor when reaping time is so near!

It I were a farmer, if I gave up my farm, it should be *before* I sowed my wheat. If I had done all the plowing and the sowing, I should not say to my landlord, "There are six weeks and then comes harvest, but I desire to let another tenant come in." No, no! I would want to stop and see the harvest gathered and the wheat taken to market! I would want to have my reward. So, dear Brothers and Sisters, wait for your recompense, specially you that have been discouraged—"In due time we shall reap, if we faint not." We who have thought least of our service and, perhaps, have exercised least faith and endured most searchings of heart and most groaning and crying before the Lord, we, also, "in due season, shall reap if we faint not."

This harvest will come "in due season." There is even among men a due season for a reward. They say, "He is a bad paymaster who pays beforehand." So he is. You must always keep a little in hand for Saturday night, or you may miss your man before the week is ended. Sometimes our Lord keeps back His people's reward that they may have something cheerful on before them, something, also, to try their mettle and to bring out all their powers. I like to see a brave man driven into a corner, baffled and defeated—and yet resolved to overcome—then his true heroism comes out. Hear him say, "I have been working that ragged school for months, but I make no impression upon the young roughs. There is a disturbance and disorder almost every night. I do not know what to do. I am at my wit's end—but there is one thing I know—if it is to be done it shall be done. In the name of God I will continue at work till a change is effected."

There you see the man strengthened by the Holy Spirit to labor! That is the man who will find out how to tame the Arabs! He the man who will draw teachers round him and build up a noble school. Our true manhood often lies deep and needs to be pursued into its den and stirred into action. When once it is thoroughly awakened, it is grand to see it leap forth in passionate earnestness to achieve its purpose. I love to hear a man say, "This is impossible to men, but God will enable me." This is the triumph of faith and blessed is he that believes, for the due season of reaping is near for him! The due season is often when you are in a right state—when your

faith has been tried, when your resolve has become fixed, when you are down on your face before God in prayer—when you are emptied out and have no strength of your own but go to God and cry to Him, alone, for help, then your due season will come! The due season for harvest is not the day after sowing the seed, but we must wait awhile and not be weary. The harvest will come as the Lord appoints. As all fruits are the sweeter for being in season, so is the reward of Christian service when it comes in God's time.

Now, lastly, when this reward comes, it will abundantly repay us. What is the reward of Sunday school teachers? Taking you, beloved Brothers and Sisters, on a broad scale, I would say that your reward lies chiefly in seeing the conversion of your children. There are a great many very excellent manuals upon the management of Sunday schools and I hope you will read them all and dwell with special attention upon the prize essays until your school is order, itself. Still I have heard of beautifully managed schools from which there are very few conversions. Order may be Heaven's first law, but it is not Heaven's first objective. Order is very desirable in a garden, but *fruit* is the main purpose.

I know a school which is generally in a muddle, but yet children are saved in it continually. I wish it were more orderly, but yet I do not fret much about it so long as the grand result is gained. You may form so many rules and orders that you may rule your hearts out of your work—mind you, do not fall into that error! Your great business is to have those children *saved*—systematically if you can—but *saved*. You must have those children convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit and led to Christ. You must not be satisfied to trim off your Sunday school in the neatest style unless there is real fruit unto the Lord. And what shall I say? What reward can equal the conversion of these young immortals? Is it not the highest joy that we can enjoy on earth, next to communion with our Lord, to see these little ones saved?

Taking the Sunday school, however, on a broad scale, I think your reward partly lies in rearing up a generation of worship-loving people. We cannot get at the great masses of London, do what we may. We shall open this house next Sunday night to all comers, but who will come? The great mass of them will be persons who have always gone to the house of prayer, but only a few of the outsiders will enter. Go into what evangelistic assembly you may, you will soon detect, from the manner of the singing, that the bulk of the people have been accustomed to sacred song. We do not know how to get at the great tens of thousands—but you do. You reach them while they are little and you send them home to sing their hymns to their fathers who will not come and sing them here.

They go and tell their mothers all about Jesus so that the children of London are the missionaries of our city! They are Christ's heralds to the families where ministers would be totally shut out! You are training them up and if you do this work well, (and I charge you to look well to the connecting link between your senior classes and the Church), if you do this work well we shall require more places of worship and more earnest ministers, for the people of London will take to coming to the house of prayer! When that day arrives there will be a grand time for the preachers of the Word. In some villages of England and especially in Scotland, you will

scarcely find a single person absent when the House of God is open! They all go to the Kirk, or to the meeting house!

Alas, it is not so in London! We have hundreds of thousands who forget the Sabbath. We have, I fear, more than a million of our fellow citizens who go so seldom to a place of worship that they may be said to be habitually absent. It will be a grand thing if you can change all this and give us Church-going millions! And then, I believe, Brothers and Sisters, that to you there will be another reward, namely, that of saturating the whole population with religious Truths of God. All children are now to be taught to read. Shall they read so as to grow up highwaymen and thieves, or shall they read so as to become servants of the living God? Very much of that must depend upon you. You will, in due subordination to all other objectives, take care to introduce your children to interesting but sound literature. Your boys must read and if *you* are the teacher of a boy who reads "Jack Sheppard," you will be sadly to blame if he continues to delight in such an abomination!

I trust that your leaven will leaven the whole lump of our country—that you will be the means of improving the moral tone of society—and as generation follows generation I trust we shall see a nation bright with religious knowledge, devout with religious thought and in all things exalted by justice and the Truth of God. What an army you are here tonight! May your Captain come into the midst of you and, as He reviews you, may He cast a look of love into the heart of every one of you and cheer you and send you away invigorated!

I am delighted to have had the opportunity of speaking this word to you, feeble though it is, for God may make it powerful by His Spirit. Go, Beloved, and train the children well! You have undertaken the work—be faithful in the discharge of it. It is worth doing well, for so much depends upon it. If you do it badly, the results will accuse you throughout eternity! Go and teach with all your heart, soul and might. Be not weary! Be not slack! Your reaping time is coming. The next generation will, even more than the present, show what you have been doing! And the next and the next will each more fully declare it till this blessed island, first gem of the sea, shall shine as a very priceless jewel in the diadem of Christ!

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THREE CROSSES

NO. 1447

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

***“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”
Galatians 6:14.***

WHENEVER we rebuke other people we should be prepared to clear ourselves of their offense. The Apostle had been rebuking those who wished to glory in the flesh. In denouncing false teachers and upbraiding their weak-minded followers, he used sharp language while he appealed to plain facts and maintained his ground with strong arguments. And this he did without fear of being met by a flank movement and being charged with doing the same things himself. Very fitly, therefore, does he contrast his own determined purpose with their plausible falseness. They were for making a fair show in the flesh, but he shrunk not from the deepest shame of the Christian profession. So far from shrinking, he even counted it honor to be scorned for Christ's sake, exclaiming, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Galatians and all others to whom his name was familiar, well knew how truly he spoke, for the manner of his life as well as the matter of his teaching had supplied evidence of this assertion, which none of his enemies could deny. There had not been in all his ministry any doctrine that he extolled more highly than that of “Christ crucified.” Nor any experience that he touched on more tenderly than this “fellowship with Christ in His sufferings.” Nor any rule of conduct that he counted more safe than following in the footsteps of Him who “endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.” His example accorded with his precept. God grant, of His Grace, that there may always be with us the same transparent consistency.

Sometimes when we notice an evil and protest as boldly and conscientiously as we can against it, we feel that our protest is too obscure to have much influence. It will then be our very best resource to resolutely abstain from the evil, ourselves, and so, at least in one person, to overthrow its power. If you cannot convert a man from his error by an argument, you can at least prove the sincerity of your reasoning by your own behavior. And thus, if no fortress is captured, you will at least “hold the fort” and you may do more—your faithfulness may win more than your zeal could have! Vow faithfully within your own heart and say frankly to your neighbor, “You may do what you will, but as for me, God forbid that I should remove the old landmarks, or seek out new paths, however inviting, or turn aside from that which I know to be the good old way.”

A determined resolution of that sort, fully adhered to, will often carry more weight and exert more influence on the mind of an individual, especially of a waverer, than a host of arguments. Your actions will speak

more loudly than your words. The Apostle in the present case warms with emotion at the thought of anybody presuming to set a carnal ordinance in front of the Cross by wishing to glory in circumcision or any other outward institution. The idea of a *ceremony* claiming to be made more of than *faith in Jesus* provoked him till his heart presently grew hot with indignation and he thundered forth the words, "God forbid!" He never used the sacred name with lightness, but when the fire was hot within him, he called God to witness that he *did not* and *could not* glory in anything but the Cross.

Indeed, there is, to every true-hearted Believer, something shocking and revolting in the putting of anything before Jesus Christ, be it what it may, whether it is an idol of superstition or a toy of skepticism—whether it is the fruit of tradition or the flower of philosophy! Do you need *new* Scriptures to supplement the true sayings of God? Do you need a new Savior who can surpass Him whom the Father has sent? Do you need a new sacrifice that can save you from sins which His atoning blood could not expiate? Do you need a modern song to supersede the new song of, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain"? "O foolish Galatians!" said Paul.

O silly Protestants, I am inclined to say! We might go on, in these times, to speak warmly to many of the parties around us—the dotting Ritualists, the puffed-up Rationalists and the self-exalting school of modern thought. I marvel not at Paul's warmth. I only wish that some who think so little of doctrinal discrepancies, as they call them, could but sympathize a little with his holy indignation when he saw the first symptoms of departure from godly simplicity and sincerity. Do you not notice that a little dissembling of a dear Brother made him withstand him to his face? When a whole company turned the cold shoulder to the Cross of Christ it made him burn with indignation! He could not stand it. The Cross was the center of his hopes—around it his affections curled—there he had found peace for his troubled conscience.

God forbid that he should allow it to be trampled on! Besides, it was the theme of his ministry. "Christ crucified" had already proven the power of God to salvation to every soul who had believed the life-giving message as he proclaimed it in every city. Would any of you, he asks, cast a slur on the Cross—you who have been converted—you before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth crucified among you? How his eyes flash! How his lips quiver! How his heart grows hot within him! With what vehemence he protests—"God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." He spreads his eagle wings and rises into eloquence at once, while still his keen eyes look fiercely upon every enemy of the Cross whom he leaves far beneath.

Oftentimes in his Epistles you observe this. He burns, he glows, he mounts, he soars, he is carried clean away as soon as his thoughts are in fellowship with his Lord Jesus, that meek and patient Sufferer who offered Himself a Sacrifice for our sins. When his tongue begins to speak of the glorious work which the Christ of God has done for the sons of men, it finds a sudden liberty and he becomes as "a hind let loose; he gives good words." May we have something of that glow within our breasts, tonight,

and whenever we think of our Lord. God forbid that we should be cold-hearted when we come near to Jesus! God forbid that we should ever view with heartless eyes and a lethargic soul the sweet wonders of that Cross on which our Savior loved and died!

Let us, then, in that spirit, approach our text—and we notice, at once, three crucifixions. These are the summary of the text. “God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” That is, *Christ* crucified. “By whom,” or, “by which,” (read it whichever way you like), “the world is crucified unto me.” That is, a crucified *world*. “And I unto the world.” That is, Paul, himself, or the *Believer*, crucified with Christ. I see, again, Calvary before me with its three crosses—Christ in the center and on either side of Him a crucified person—one who dies to feel the second death and the other who dies to be with Him in Paradise! At these three crosses let us proceed to look.

I. First, then, the main part of our subject lies in CHRIST CRUCIFIED, in whom Paul gloried. I call your attention to the language—“God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross.” Some popular authors and public speakers, when they have to state a Truth of God, count it necessary to clothe it in very delicate language. They, perhaps, do not quite intend to conceal its point and edge but, at any rate, they do not want the projecting angles and bare surfaces of the Truth to be too observable and, therefore, they cast a cloak around it—they are careful to scabbard the Sword of the Spirit.

The Apostle Paul might have done so, here, if he had chosen, but he disdains the artifice. He presents the Truth of God “in the worst possible form,” as his opponents say—“in all its naked hideousness,” as the Jew would have it—for he does not say, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the death of Christ,” but in the Cross. You do not realize, I think—we cannot do so in these days—how the use of that word, “cross,” would grate on ears refined in Galatia and elsewhere. In those days it meant the felon’s tree, the hangman’s gallows—and the Apostle, therefore, does not hesitate to put it just so—“Save in that gallows on which my Master died.” We have become so accustomed to associate the name of, “the Cross,” with other sentiments that it does not convey to us that sense of disgrace which it would inflict upon those who heard Paul speak.

A family sensitively shrinks if one of its members has been hanged and much the same would be the natural feeling of one who was told that his leader was crucified. Paul puts it thus baldly; he lets it jar thus harshly though it may prove to some a stumbling block and to others foolishness. But he will not cloak it. He glories in “the Cross!” On the other hand, I earnestly entreat you to observe how he seems to contrast the Glory of the Person with the shame of the suffering, for it is not simply the death of Christ, nor of Jesus, nor of Jesus Christ, nor of the Lord Jesus Christ, but of, “*our* Lord Jesus Christ.” Every word tends to set forth the excellence of His Person, the majesty of His Character and the interest which all the saints have in Him. It was a cross, but it was the Cross of our Lord—let us worship Him!

It was the Cross of our Lord Jesus, the Savior—let us love Him! It was the Cross of our Jesus Christ the anointed Messiah—let us reverence Him! Let us sit at His feet and learn of Him! Each one may say, “It was the Cross of *my* Lord Jesus Christ,” but it sweetens the whole matter and gives a largeness to it when we say, “It was the Cross of *our* Lord Jesus Christ.” Oh yes, we delight to think of the contrast between the precious Christ and the painful Cross—the Son of God and the shameful gallows! He was Immanuel, God With Us—yet did He die the felon’s death upon the accursed tree! Paul brings out the shame with great sharpness and the glory with great plainness. He does not hesitate in either case, whether he would declare the sufferings of Christ or the glory which should follow.

What did he mean, however, by the Cross? Of course he cared nothing for the particular piece of wood to which those blessed hands and feet were nailed, for that was mere materialism and has perished out of mind. He means the glorious *doctrine* of Justification—*free* justification—through the atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ! This is what he means by the Cross—the expiation for sin which our Lord Jesus Christ made by His death—and the gift of eternal life freely bestowed on all those who, by Grace, are led to trust in Him. To Paul the Cross meant just what the bronze serpent meant to Moses. As the bronze serpent in the wilderness was the hope of the sin-bitten and all that Moses had to do was to bid them look and live—so today the Cross of Christ—the Atonement of Jesus Christ, is the hope of mankind and our mission is continually to cry, “Look and live! Look and live!”

It is this doctrine, this Gospel of Christ crucified, at which the present age, with all its vaunted culture and all its vain philosophies, sneers so broadly—it is this doctrine wherein we glory! We are not ashamed to put it very definitely—we glory in Substitution, in the vicarious Sacrifice of Jesus in our place. He was “made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to His own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.”

We believe in the imputation of sin to the innocent Person of our covenant Head and Representative, in the bearing of the penalty by that substituted One and the clearing by faith of those for whom He bore the punishment of sin. Now we glory in this! We glory in it, not as men sometimes boast in a creed which they have received by tradition from their forefathers, for we have learned this Truth of God, each one for himself, by the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit and therefore it is very dear to us. We glory in it with no empty boast, but to the inward satisfaction of our own hearts we prove that satisfaction by the devout consecration of our lives to make it known.

We have trusted our souls to its truth. If it is a fable, our hopes are forever shipwrecked because our *all* is embarked in that venture. We are quite prepared to run that risk, content to perish if this salvation should fail us. We live upon this faith. It is our meat and our drink. Take this

away and there is nothing left us in the Bible worth having. It has become to us the head and front of our confidence, our hope, our rest, our joy. Instead of being ashamed to preach it, we wish that we could stand somewhere where all the inhabitants of the earth could hear us and we would thunder it out day and night! So far from being ashamed of acknowledging it, we count it to be our highest honor and our greatest delight to proclaim it, as we have opportunity, among the sons of men!

But why do we *rejoice* in it? Why do we *glory* in it? The answer is so large that I cannot do more than glance at its manifold claims on our gratitude. We glory in it for a thousand reasons! We fail to see anything in the doctrine of Atonement that we should *not* glory in. We have heard a great many dogs bark against it, but dogs will bay the moon in her brightness and, therefore, we mind not their howling. Their noise has sometimes disturbed, though never yet has it frightened us. We have not yet heard a quibble against our Lord or an argument against His atoning blood which has affected our faith the turn of a hair. The Scriptures affirm it, the Holy Spirit bears witness to it and its effect upon our inner life assures us of it.

The analogy between Jewish fasts and festivals and our Christian faith endorses it. There is a chasm that no man yet has been able to bridge without it. It lightens our conscience, gladdens our hearts, inspires our devotion and elevates our aspirations. We are wed to it and daily glory in it. In the Cross of Christ we glory because we regard it as a matchless exhibition of the attributes of God. We see there the love of God desiring a way by which He might save mankind, aided by His wisdom, so that a plan is perfected by which the deed can be done without violation of truth and justice. In the Cross we see a strange conjunction of what once appeared to be two opposite qualities—justice and mercy. We see how God is supremely just—as just as if He had no mercy—and yet infinitely merciful in the gift of His Son.

Mercy and justice, in fact, become counsel upon the same side and irresistibly plead for the acquittal of the believing sinner. We can never tell which of the attributes of God shines most glorious in the Sacrifice of Christ—they each one find a glorious high throne in the Person and work of the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world! Since it has become, as it were, the mirror which reflects the Character and perfections of God, it is meet that we should glory in the Cross of Christ and none shall stop us of our boasting! We glory in it, next, as the manifestation of the love of Jesus. He was loving inasmuch as He came to earth at all—loving in feeding the hungry, in healing the sick, in raising the dead. He was loving in His whole life—He was embodied charity, the Prince of philanthropists, the King of kindly souls!

But oh, His death!—His cruel and shameful death-bearing, as we believe He did bear the wrath due to sin, subjecting Himself to the curse, though in Him was no sin—this shows the love of Christ at its highest altitude and, therefore, do we glory in it and will never be ashamed to do so! We glory in the Cross, moreover, because it is the putting away of sin. There was no other way of making an end of sin and making reconciliation

for iniquity. To forgive the transgressions without exacting the penalty would have been contrary to all the threats of God! It would not have appeased the claims of justice, nor satisfied the conscience of the sinner.

No peace of mind can be enjoyed without pardon and conscience declares that no pardon can be obtained without an atonement. We would have distracted ourselves with the fear that it was only a reprieve and not a remission even if the most comforting promises had been given unsealed with the atoning blood. The instincts of Nature have convinced men of this truth, for all the world over *religion* has been associated with *sacrifice*. Almost every kind of worship that has ever sprung up among the sons of men has had sacrifice for its most prominent feature—crime must be avenged, evil and sin cry from the ground—and a victim is sought to avert the vengeance. The heart craves for something that can calm the conscience—that craving is a relic of the ancient Truth of God learned by man in primeval ages.

Now, Christ made His soul an offering for sin when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. With His expiring breath He said, “It is finished!” Oh, wondrous Grace! Pardon is now freely published among the sons of men, pardon of which we see the justice and validity! As far as the east is from the west, so far has God removed our transgressions from us by the death of Christ! This, and this, only, will put away sin! Therefore in this Cross of Christ we glory! Yes, and in it, alone, will we glory evermore! It has put away our sins, blessed be God, so that this load and burden no more weigh us down!

We do not speak at random, now. It has breathed hope and peace and joy into our spirits. I am sure that no one knows how to glory in the Cross unless He has had an experimental acquaintance with its peace-breathing power. I speak what I know and testify what I have felt. The burden of my sin laid so heavy upon me that I would sooner have died than have lived. Many a day and many a night I felt the flames of Hell in the anguish of my heart because I knew my guilt and saw no way of righteous forgiveness. Yet in a *moment* the load went from me and I felt overflowing love to my Savior! I fell at His feet awe-stricken that He should have taken away my sin and made an end of it. That matchless deed of love won my heart to Jesus! He changed my nature and renewed my soul in that same hour.

And oh, the joy I had! Those who have sunk to the very depths of despair and risen, in a moment, to the heights of peace and unspeakable joy, can tell you that they *must* glory in the Cross and its power to save. Why, Sirs, we must believe according to our own conscience! We cannot belie that inward witness. We only wish that others had been as deeply convinced of sin and as truly led to the Cross to feel their burden roll from off their shoulders as we have been! And then they, too, would glory in the Cross of Christ. Since then we have gone with this remedy in our hands to souls that have been near despair and we have never found the medicine fail. Many and many a time have I spoken to people so depressed in spirit that they seemed not far from the madhouse, so heavy was their sense of sin! Yet I have never known the matchless music of Jesus’ name in any case fail to charm the soul out of its despondency.

“They looked unto Him and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.” Men who, because they thought there was no hope for them, would have desperately continued in sin, have read that word, “hope,” written in crimson lines upon the Savior’s dying body and they have sprung up into confidence, have entered into peace and from that moment have begun to lead a new life! We glory in the Cross because of the peace it brings to every troubled conscience which receives it by faith—our own case has proved to our own souls its efficacy—and what we have seen in others has confirmed our confidence.

Yet we would not glory so much in the Cross were we not convinced that it is the greatest moral power in all the world. We glory in the Cross because it gets at men’s hearts when nothing else can reach them. The story of the dying Savior’s love has often impressed those whom all the moral lectures in the world could never have moved. Judged and condemned by the unanswerable reasoning of their own consciences, they have not had enough control over their passions to shake off the captivity in which they were held by the temptations that assailed them at every turn till they have drawn near to the Cross of Jesus! Then from pardon they have gathered hope and from hope have gained strength to master sin! When they have seen their sin laid on Jesus, they have loved Him and hated the sin that made Him to suffer so grievously as their Substitute.

Then the Holy Spirit has come upon them and they have resolved, with Divine strength, to drive out the sin for which the Savior died. They have begun a new life, yes, and they have continued in it, sustained by that same sacred power which first constrained them—and now they look forward to be perfected by it through the power of God! Where are the triumphs of infidelity in rescuing men from sin? Where are the trophies of philosophy in conquering human pride? Will you bring us harlots that have been made chaste; thieves that have been reclaimed; angry men of bear-like temper who have become harmless as lambs through scientific lectures? Let our amateur philanthropists who suggest so much and do so little, produce some instances of the moral transformations that have been worked by their sophistries!

No, they curl their lips and leave the lower orders to the City Missionary and the Bible Woman! It is the Cross that humbles the haughty, lifts up the fallen, refines the polluted and gives a fresh start to those who are forlorn and desperate! Nothing else can do it! The world sinks lower and lower into the bog of its own selfishness and sin. Only this wondrous lever of the Atonement, symbolized by the Cross of Christ, can lift our abject race to the place of virtue and honor which it ought to occupy! We glory in the Cross for so many reasons that I cannot hope to enumerate them all. While it ennobles our life, it invigorates us with hope in our death.

Death is now deprived of its terrors to us, for Christ has died. We, like He, can say, “Father, into Your hands we commend our spirit.” His burial has perfumed the grave! His Resurrection has paved the road to immortality! He rose and left a lamp behind which shows an outlet from the gloom of the sepulcher. The Paradise He immediately predicted for Himself and for the penitent who hung by His side has shown us how

quick the transition is from mortal pains to immortal joys! “Absent from the body, present with the Lord,” is the cheering prospect! Glory be to Christ forever and forever that we have this doctrine of “Christ crucified” to preach!

II. The second cross exhibits THE WORLD CRUCIFIED. The Apostle says that the world was crucified to him. What does he mean by this? He regarded the world as nailed up like a felon and hanged upon a cross to die. Well, I suppose he means that its character was condemned. He looked out upon the world which thought so much of itself and said, “I do not think much of you, poor World! You are like a doomed malefactor.” He knew that the world had crucified its Savior—crucified its God! It had gone to such a length of sin that it had hounded perfect Innocence through the streets. Infinite Benevolence it had scoffed at and maligned. Eternal Truth it had rejected and preferred a lie—and the Son of God, who was Love incarnate, it had put to the death on the Cross.

“Now,” says Paul, “I know your character, O World! I know you! And I hold you in no more esteem than the wretch abhorred for his crimes who is condemned to hang upon the gallows and so end his detested life.” This led Paul, since he condemned its character, utterly to despise its judgment. The world said, “This Paul is a fool! His Gospel is foolishness and he, himself is a mere babbler.” “Yes,” thought Paul, “a deal you know of it!” In this we unite with him. What is your judgment worth? You did not know the Son of God, poor blind World! We are sure that He was perfect and yet you hunted Him to death! Your judgment is a poor thing, O World! You are crucified to us.

Now, there are a great many people who could hardly endure to live if they should happen to be misjudged by the world or what is called “society.” Oh yes, we must be respectable! We must have every man’s good word, or we are ready to faint! Paul was of another mind. What cared he for anything the world might say? How could he wish to please a world so abominable that it had put his Lord to death? He would sooner have its bad opinion than its good. It were better to be frowned at than to be smiled upon by a world that crucified Christ! Certainly, its condemnation is more worth having than its approbation, if it can put Christ to death! So Paul utterly despised its judgment and it was crucified to him.

Now, we are told to think a great deal about “public opinion,” “popular belief,” “the growing feeling of the age,” “the sentiment of the period” and “the spirit of the age.” I should like Paul to read some of our religious newspapers! And yet I could not wish the good man so distasteful a task, for I dare say he would sooner pine in the Mammertine prison than do so. But, still, I should like to see how he would look after he had read some of those expressions about the necessity of keeping ourselves abreast with the sentiment of the period. “What?” he would exclaim, “the sentiment of the world! It is crucified to me! What can it matter what its opinion is? We are of God, little children, and the whole world lies in the Wicked One! Would you heed what the world, that is lying in the Wicked One, thinks of you or of the Truth of your Lord? Are you going to smooth your tongue and soften your speech to please the world that lies in the Wicked One?”

Paul would be indignant with such a proposition. He said, “the world is crucified to me.” Hence he looked upon all the world’s pleasures as so much rottenness, a carcass nailed to a cross. Can you fancy Paul being taken to the Coliseum at Rome? I try to imagine him made to sit on one of those benches to watch a combat of gladiators. There is the emperor—there are all the great peers of Rome and the senators. And there are those cruel eyes all gazing down upon men who shed each others’ blood! Can you picture how Paul would have felt if he had been forced to occupy a seat at that spectacle? It would have been martyrdom to him! He would have closed his eyes and ears against the sight of what Rome thought to be the choicest pleasure of the day!

They thronged the imperial city—they poured in mighty streams into the theater each day to see poor beasts tortured, or men murdering one another—that was the world of Paul’s day and he rightly judged it to be a crucified felon. If he was compelled to see the popular pleasures of today, upon which I will say but little, would he not be well-near as sick of them as he would have been of the amusements of the amphitheatre at Rome? To Paul, too, all the honors of the age must have been crucified in the same manner. Suppose that Paul settled his mind to think of the wretches who were reigning as emperors in his day! I use the word advisedly, for I would not speak evil of dignitaries, but really, I speak too well of them when I call them wretches! They seem to have been inhuman monsters—“tyrants whose capricious folly violated every law of Nature and decency,” to whom every kind of lust was a daily habit and who even sought out new inventions of sensuality, calling them new pleasures.

As Paul thought of the iniquities of Napoli and all the great towns to which the Romans went on their holidays—Pompeii and the like—oh, how he loathed them! And I doubt not that if the Apostle were to come here now, if he knew how often rank and title are apt to sink all true dignity in shameful dissipation and what flagrant profligacy is to be found in high quarters, he might as justly consider all the pomp and dignity and honor of the world that now is, to be as little worth as a putrid carcass hanging on a tree and rotting in the sun. He says, “The world is crucified to me—it is hanging on the gallows, I think so little of its pleasures and of its pomp.” Alike contemptuously did Paul judge of all the *treasures* of the world.

Paul never spent as much time as it would take to wink his eye in thinking of how much money he was worth. Having food and raiment, he was content. Sometimes he had scarcely that. He casually thanks the Philippians for ministering to his necessities, but he never sought to hoard up anything, nor did he live with even half a thought of aggrandizing himself with gold and silver. “No,” he said, “this will all perish with the using,” and so he treated the world as a thing crucified to him. Now, Christian, can you say as much as this—that the world, in its mercantile aspect as well as in its motley vices and its manifold frivolities, is a crucified thing to you? Hear what the world says. “Make money, young Man, make money! Honestly, if you can, but by all means make money! Look about you, for if you are not sharp, you will not succeed.

Keep your own counsel and rather play the double than be the dupe. Your character will rise with the credit you get.”

Now, suppose that you get the money, what is the result? The net result, as I often find it, is a paragraph in one of the newspapers to say that Esquire So-and-So's will was proved in the Probate Court under so many thousands. Then follows a grand squabble among all his relatives which shall eat him up. That is the consummation of a life of toil and care and scheming. He has lived for lucre and he has to leave it behind! That is the end of that folly. I have sometimes thought of the contrast between the poor man's funeral and the rich man's funeral. When the poor man dies, there are his sons and daughters weeping with real distress, for the death of the father brings sadness and sympathy into that house. The poor man is to be buried, but it can only be managed by the united self-denials of all his sons and daughters.

There is Mary at the service. She, perhaps, contributes more than the others towards the funeral, for she has no family of her own. The elder son and the younger brothers all pinch themselves to pay a little and the tears that are shed that evening when they come home from the grave are very genuine. They suffer and they prove their sorrow by rivaling one another in the respect they pay to their parent. Now you shall see the rich man die. Of course everybody laments the sad loss—it is the proper thing. Empty carriages swell the procession to the grave by way of empty compliment. The mourners return and there is the reading of that blessed document, the will. When that is read, the time for tears is over in almost every case.

Few are pleased. The one whom fortune favors is the envy of all the rest. Sad thoughts and sullen looks float on the surface, not in respect to the man's departure, but concerning the means he has left and the mode in which he has disposed of them. Oh, it is a poor thing to live for—the making of money and the hoarding of it! But still, the genius of rightly getting money can be consecrated to the glory of God. You *can* use the wealth of this world in the service of the Master. To gain is not wrong. It is only wrong when grasping becomes the main object of life and grudging grows into covetousness which is idolatry! To every Christian, that and every other form of worldliness ought to be crucified so that we can say, “For me to live is not myself, but it is Christ! I live that I may honor and glorify Him.”

When the Apostle said that the world was crucified to him, He meant just this—“I am not enslaved by any of its pursuits. I care nothing for its maxims. I am not governed by its spirit. I do not court its smiles. I do not fear its threats. It is not my master, nor am I its slave. By God's Grace the whole world cannot force me to lie, or to sin and I will tell the world the Truth of God, come what may.” You remember the words of Palissy, the potter, when the king of France said to him that if he did not change his religion and cease to be a Huguenot, he was afraid that he should have to deliver him up to his enemies? “Sire,” said the potter, “I am sorry to hear you say, ‘I am afraid,’ for all the men in the world could not make Palissy

talk like that. I am afraid of nobody and I must do nothing but what is right.”

Oh, yes, the man that fears God and loves the Cross has a moral backbone which enables him to stand and snap his fingers at the world. “Dead felon!” he says. “Dead felon! Crucifier of Christ! Cosmos you call yourself. By comely names you wish to be greeted. Paul is nothing in your esteem, but Paul is a match for you, for he thinks as much of you as you do of him, and no more.” Hear him as he cries, “The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” To live to serve men is one thing, to live to bless them is another, and this we will do, God helping us, making sacrifices for their good. But to fear men, to ask their leave to think—to ask their instructions as to what we shall speak and how we shall say it—that is a baseness we cannot tolerate! By the Grace of God, we have not so degraded ourselves and never shall. “The world is crucified to me,” says the Apostle, “by the Cross of Christ.”

III. Then he finishes up with the third crucifixion, which is, I AM CRUCIFIED TO THE WORLD. We shall soon see the evidence of this crucifixion if we notice how they poured contempt upon him. Once Saul was a great rabbi, a man profoundly versed in Hebrew lore, a Pharisee of the Pharisees and much admired. He was also a classic scholar and a philosophic thinker, a man of great mental powers and fit to take the lead in learned circles. But when Paul began to preach Christ crucified—“Bah,” they said, “he is an utter fool! Don’t listen to him!” Or else they said, “Down with him! He is an apostate!”

They cursed him. His name brought wrath into the face of all Jews that mentioned it and all intelligent Greeks likewise. “Paul? He is nobody!” He was *everybody* when he thought *their* way—he is *nobody* now that he thinks in God’s way. And then they put him to open shame by suspecting all his motives and by misrepresenting all his actions. It did not matter what Paul did, they were quite certain that he was self-seeking—that he was endeavoring to make a fine thing of it for himself. When he acted so that they were forced to admit that he was right, they put it in such a light that they made it out to be wrong. There were some who denied his Apostleship and said that he was never sent of God. Others questioned his ability to preach the Gospel.

So they crucified poor Paul one way and another to the fullest. They went further, still. They despised and they shunned him. His old friends forsook him. Some got out of the way, others pointed the finger of scorn at him in the streets. His persecutors showed their rancor against him, now stoning him illegally, other times, with a semblance of legality, dragging him before the magistrates. Paul was crucified to them. As for his teaching, they decried him as a babbler—a setter-forth of strange gods. I dare say they often sneered at the Cross of Christ which he preached as a nine-days’ wonder, an almost exploded doctrine, and said, “If you do but shut the mouths of such men as Paul, it will soon be forgotten.” I have heard them say in modern times to lesser men, “Your old-fashioned Puritanism is nearly dead! Before long it will be utterly extinct!” But we

preach Christ crucified—the same old doctrine as the Apostles preached and for this, by the contempt of the worldly wise, *we* are crucified!

Now, dear Christian Friends, if you keep to the Cross of Christ, you must expect to have this for your portion. The world will be crucified to you and you will be crucified to the world. You will get the cold shoulder. Old friends will become open foes. They will begin to hate you more than they loved you before. At home your foes will be the men and women of your own household. You will hardly be able to do anything right. When you joined in their revels you were a fine fellow—when you would drink and sing a lascivious song, you were a jolly good fellow—but now they rate you as a fool! They tell all you are a hypocrite and they slanderously blacken your character. Let their dislike be a badge of your discipleship and say, “Now, also, the world is crucified to me and I unto the world. Whatever the world says against me for Christ’s sake is the maundering of a doomed malefactor and what do I care for that? And, on the other hand, if I am rejected and despised, I am only taking what I always expected—my crucifixion—in my poor, humble way, after the manner of Christ Himself, who was despised and rejected of men.”

The moral and the lesson of it all is this—whatever comes of it, still glory in Christ! Go in for this, dear Friends, that whether you are in honor or in dishonor, in good report or in evil report—whether God multiplies your substance and makes you rich, or diminishes it and makes you poor—you will still glory in the Cross of Christ! If you have health and strength and vigor to work for Him, or if you have to lie upon a bed of languishing and bear in patience all your heavenly Father’s will, resolve that you will still glory in the Cross! Let this be the point of your glorying throughout your lives! Go down the steps of Jordan and go through Jordan, itself, still glorying in the Cross, for in the Heaven of Glory you will find that the blood-bought hosts celebrate the Cross as the trophy of their redemption!

Are you trusting in the Cross? Are you resting in Jesus? If not, may the Lord teach you this blessed privilege! There is no joy like it! There is no strength like it! There is no life like it! There is no peace like it! At the Cross we find our Heaven! While upon the Cross we gaze all heavenly and holy things abound within our hearts! If you have never been there, may the Lord lead you there at this very hour—and so shall you be pardoned, accepted and blest forever! The Lord grant that you all may be partakers of this Grace for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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THE CROSS OUR GLORY

NO. 1859

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 13, 1885,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“But God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”
Galatians 6:14.***

ALMOST all men have something in which to glory. Every bird has its own note of song. It is a poor heart that never rejoices. It is a dull pack-horse that is altogether without bells. Men usually rejoice in something or other and many men so rejoice in that which they choose that they become boastful and full of vainglory. It is very sad that men should be ruined by their glory and yet, many are. Many glory in their shame and more glory in that which is mere emptiness. Some glory in their physical strength, in which an ox excels them, or in their gold, which is but thick clay, or in their gifts, which are but talents with which they are entrusted. The pounds entrusted to their stewardship are thought, by men, to belong to themselves and, therefore, they rob God of the glory of them. O my Hearers, hear the voice of Wisdom, which cries, “He that glories, let him glory only in the Lord.” To live for personal glory is to be dead while we live! Be not so foolish as to perish for a bubble! Many a man has thrown his soul away for a little honor, or for the transient satisfaction of success in trifles. O men, your tendency is to glory in something—your wisdom will be to find a glory worthy of an immortal mind!

The Apostle Paul had a rich choice of things in which he could have gloried. If it had been his mind to have remained among his own people, he might have been one of their most honored rabbis. He says, in his Epistle to the Philippians, in the third chapter, “If any other man thinks that he has whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless.” He says that he profited in the Jews’ religion above many of his equals in his own nation and he stood high in the esteem of his fellow professors. But when he was converted to the faith of the Lord Jesus, he said, “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” As soon as he was converted, he forsook all boasting in his former religion and zeal, and cried, “God forbid that I should glory in my birth, my education, my proficiency in Scripture, or my regard

to orthodox ritual. God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul might also, if he had chosen, have gloried in his sufferings for the Cross of Christ, for he had been a living martyr, a perpetual self-sacrifice to the cause of the Crucified. He says, “Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool). I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times received I 40 stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness.” He was once driven to give a summary of these sufferings to establish his Apostleship, but before he did so, he wrote, “Would to God you could bear with me a little in my folly.” In his heart he was saying, all the while, “God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The great Apostle had yet another reason for glorying, if he had chosen to do so, for he could speak of visions and revelations of the Lord. He says, “I knew a man in Christ above 14 years ago. . . caught up to the third Heaven. And I knew such a man. . . how that he was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” He was in danger of being exalted above measure by reason of the abundance of these revelations and, therefore, he was humbled by a painful thorn in the flesh. Paul, when hard driven by the necessity to maintain his position in the Corinthian Church, was forced to mention these things—but he liked not such glorying—he was most at ease when he said, “God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Brothers and Sisters, notice that Paul does not here say that he gloried in *Christ*, though he did so with all his heart—he declares that he gloried most in “the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,” which, in the eyes of men, was the very lowest and most inglorious part of the history of the Lord Jesus! He could have gloried in the Incarnation—angels sang of it, wise men came from the far East to behold it. Did not the new-born King awake the song from Heaven of, “Glory to God in the highest”? He might have gloried in the life of Christ—was there ever such another, so benevolent and blameless? He might have gloried in the Resurrection of Christ—it is the world’s great hope concerning those that are asleep. He might have gloried in our Lord’s Ascension, for He “led captivity captive” and all His followers glory in His victory. He might have gloried in His Second Advent and, I doubt not, that he did, for the Lord shall soon descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God, to be admired in all them that believe.

Yet the Apostle selected beyond all these, that center of the Christian system, that point which is most assailed by its foes, that focus of the world’s derision—the Cross—and, putting all else somewhat into the

shade, he exclaims, "God forbid that I should glory, except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Learn, then, that the highest glory of our holy religion is the Cross! The history of Grace begins earlier and goes on later, but in its middle point stands the Cross. Of two eternities this is the hinge—of past decrees and future glories this is the pivot. Let us come to the Cross, this morning, and think of it till each one of us, in the power of the Spirit of God, shall say, "God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I. First, as the Lord shall help me, (for who shall describe the Cross without the help of Him that hung upon it), WHAT DID PAUL MEAN BY THE CROSS? Did he not include, under this term, first, the *fact* of the Cross? Secondly, the *Doctrine* of the Cross? And thirdly, the Cross of the Doctrine?

I think he meant, first of all, *the fact of the Cross*. Our Lord Jesus Christ did really die, upon a gallows, the death of a felon. He was literally put to death upon a tree, accursed in the esteem of men. I beg you to notice how the Apostle puts it—"the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." In his Epistles, he sometimes says, "Christ." At another time, "Jesus," frequently, "Lord," oftentimes, "our Lord"—but here he says, "our Lord Jesus Christ." There is a sort of pomp of words in this full description, as if in contrast to the shame of the Cross. The terms are intended, in some small measure, to express the dignity of Him who was put to so ignominious a death. He is Christ, the Anointed, and Jesus, the Savior. He is the Lord, the Lord of All, and He is, "our Lord Jesus Christ." He is not a Lord without subjects, for He is, "our Lord." Nor is He a Savior without saved ones, for He is, "our Lord Jesus." Nor has He the anointing for Himself, only, for all of us have a share in Him as, "our Christ." In all, He is ours, and was so upon the Cross.

When they bury a great nobleman, a herald stands at the head of the grave and proclaims his titles. "Here lies the body of William, Duke of this, and Earl of that, and Count of the other, knight of this order and commander of the other." Even thus, in deep solemnity, with brevity and fullness, Paul proclaims, beneath the bitter tree, the names and titles of the Savior of men and styles Him, "our Lord Jesus Christ." There are enough words here to give a four-square description of the honor, dignity and majesty of Him who has both Godhead and Manhood and "bore our sins in His own body on the tree." Be it forever had in reverent remembrance that He who died upon the Cross between two thieves counted it not robbery to be equal with God! By nature He is such that the creed well describes Him as, "Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God." Yet He "made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant. . .and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." I declare this fact to you in words, but I think them poor, dumb things. I wish I could speak this matchless truth in fire-flakes! The announcement that the Son of God died upon the Cross to save men deserves the accompaniment of angelic trumpets and of the harps of the redeemed!

But next, I said that Paul gloried in *the Doctrine of the Cross*, and it was so. What is that Doctrine of the Cross, of which it is written that it is “to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is the power of God and the wisdom of God”? In one word, it is the Doctrine of the Atonement, the Doctrine that the Lord Jesus Christ was made sin for us, that Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many and that God has set Him forth to be the Propitiation for our sins. Paul says, “When we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly.” And again, “Now once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” The Doctrine of the Cross is that of sacrifice for sin—Jesus is “the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.” “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The Doctrine is that of a full atonement made and the utmost ransom paid. “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” In Christ upon the Cross, we see the Just dying for the unjust that He might bring us to God—the Innocent bearing the crimes of the guilty that they might be forgiven and accepted. That is the Doctrine of the Cross, of which Paul was never ashamed.

This, also, is a necessary part of the Doctrine—that whoever believes in Him is justified from all sin. That whoever trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ is, in that moment, forgiven, justified and accepted in the Beloved. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” Paul’s Doctrine was, “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” And it was his constant teaching that salvation is not of works, nor of ceremonies, but simply and only by believing in Jesus! We are to accept, by an act of trust, that righteousness which is already finished and completed by the death of our blessed Lord upon the Cross. He who does not preach Atonement by the blood of Jesus does not preach the Cross! And he who does not declare justification by faith in Christ Jesus has missed the mark, altogether! This is the very heart of the Christian system. If our ministry shall be without blood, it is without life, for, “the blood is the life thereof.” He that preaches not justification by faith knows not the Doctrine of Grace, for the Scripture says, “Therefore it is of faith that it might be by Grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.” Paul gloried both in the fact of the Cross and in the Doctrine of the Cross.

But the Apostle also gloried in *the Cross of the Doctrine*, for the death of the Son of God upon the Cross is the *crux* of Christianity. Here is the difficulty, the stumbling block and rock of offense. The Jew could not endure a crucified Messiah—he looked for pomp and power! Multitudinous ceremonies and different washings and sacrifices—were these all to be put away and nothing left but a bleeding Savior? At the mention of the Cross, the philosophic Greek thought himself insulted and vilified the preacher as a fool. In effect, he said, “You are not a man of thought and intellect; you are not abreast of the times, but are sticking in the mire of antiquated

prophecies. Why not advance with the discoveries of modern thought?" The Apostle, teaching a simple fact which a child might comprehend, found in it the wisdom of God! Christ upon the Cross, working out the salvation of men was more to him than all the sayings of the sages. As for the Roman, he would give no heed to any glorying in a dead Jew, a *crucified* Jew! Crushing the world beneath his iron heel, he declared that such romancing would never win him from the gods of his fathers.

Paul did not budge before the sharp and practical reply of the conquerors of the world! He did not tremble before Nero in his palace. Whether to Greek or Jew, Roman or barbarian, bond or free, he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, but gloried in the Cross. Though the testimony that the one all-sufficient Atonement was provided on the Cross stirs the enmity of man and provokes opposition, yet Paul was so far from attempting to mitigate that opposition that he determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified! His motto was, "We preach Christ crucified." He had the Cross for his philosophy, the Cross for his tradition, the Cross for his Gospel, the Cross for his glory and nothing else!

II. But, secondly, WHY DID PAUL GLORY IN THE CROSS? He did not do so because he was in need of a theme, for, as I have shown you, he had a wide field for boasting if he had chosen to occupy it. He gloried in the Cross from solemn and deliberate choice. He had counted the cost, he had surveyed the whole range of subjects with an eagle eye and he knew *what* he did and *why* he did it. He was master of the art of thinking. As a metaphysician, none could excel him. As a logical thinker, none could have gone beyond him. He stands almost alone in the early Christian Church as a master mind. Others may have been more poetic, or more simple, but none were more thoughtful or argumentative than he. With decision and firmness, Paul sets aside everything else and definitely declares, throughout his whole life, "I glory in the Cross." He does this exclusively, saying, "God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross." There are many other precious things, but he puts them all upon the shelf in comparison with the Cross.

He will not even make his chief point any of the great Scriptural Doctrines, nor even an instructive and godly ordinance. No, the Cross is to the front. This constellation is chief in Paul's sky. The choice of the Cross he makes devoutly, for although the expression used in our English version may not stand, yet I do not doubt that Paul would have used it, and would have called upon God to witness that he abjured all other ground of glorying save the atoning Sacrifice—

***"Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood."***

He would have called God to witness that he knew no ambition save that of bringing glory to the Cross of Christ. As I think of this, I am ready to say, "Amen," to Paul and bid you sing that stirring verse—

***"It is the old Cross still,
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Its triumphs let us tell,***

***Hallelujah! hallelujah!
The Grace of God here shone
Through Christ, the blessed Son,
Who did for sin atone.
Hallelujah for the Cross!"***

Why did Paul thus glory in the Cross? You may well desire to know, for there are many, nowadays, who do *not* glory in it, but forsake it! Alas that it should be so, but there are *ministers* who ignore the Atonement! They conceal the Cross, or say but little about it. You may go through service after service and scarcely hear a mention of the atoning blood—but Paul was always bringing forward the expiation for sin—Paul never tried to explain it away. Oh the number of books that have been written to prove that the Cross means an example of self-sacrifice, as if *every* martyrdom did not mean that! They cannot endure a real *substitutionary* Sacrifice for human guilt and an effectual purifying of sin by the death of the great Substitute. Yet the Cross means that or nothing!

Paul was very bold. Although he knew this would make him many enemies, you never find him refining and spiritualizing—the Cross and the Atonement for sin are plain matters of fact to him. Neither does he attempt to decorate it by adding philosophical theories. No, to him it is the bare, naked Cross all blood-stained and despised! In this he glories and in none of the wisdom of words with which others vexed him. He will have the Cross—the Cross and nothing but the Cross! He pronounces an anathema on all who propose a rival theme—“But though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”

I take it that this was so, first, because Paul saw in the Cross *a vindication of Divine Justice*. Where else can the Justice of God be seen so clearly as in the death of God, Himself, in the Person of His dear Son? If the Lord Himself suffers on account of broken Law, then is the majesty of the Law honored to the fullest! Some time ago, a judge in America was called upon to try a prisoner who had been his companion in his early youth. It was a crime for which the penalty was a fine, more or less heavy. The judge did not diminish the fine. The case was clearly a bad one and he fined the prisoner the maximum fine. Some who knew his former relation to the offender thought him somewhat unkind to thus carry out the law, while others admired his impartiality. All were surprised when the judge quitted the bench and paid, himself, every farthing of the penalty! He had shown both his respect for the law and his goodwill to the man who had broken it. He exacted the penalty, but he paid it himself.

So God has done in the Person of His dear Son. He has not remitted the punishment, but He has, Himself, endured it. His own Son, who is none other than God, Himself—for there is an essential union between them—has paid the debt which was incurred by human sin. I love to think of the vindication of Divine Justice upon the Cross. I am never weary of it! Some cannot bear the thought, but to me it seems inevitable that sin must be punished, or else the foundations of society would be removed. If sin becomes a trifle, virtue will be a toy! Society cannot stand if laws are left without penal sanction, or if that sanction is to be a mere empty threat.

Men in their own governments, every now and then, cry out for greater severity. When a certain offense abounds and ordinary means fail, they demand exemplary punishment—and it is but natural that they should do so, for deep in the conscience of every man there is the conviction that sin must be punished to secure the general good. Justice must reign, even benevolence demands it! If there could have been salvation without an Atonement, it would have been a calamity—righteous men, and even benevolent men, might deprecate the setting aside of law in order to save the guilty from the natural result of their crimes.

For my own part, I value a just salvation. An unjust salvation would never have satisfied the apprehensions and demands of my conscience. No, let God be just even if the heavens fall! Let God carry out the sentence of His Law, or the universe will suspect that it was not righteous—and when such a suspicion rules the general mind, all respect for God will be gone! The Lord carries out the decree of His Justice even to the bitter end, abating not a jot of its requirements. Brothers and Sisters, there was an infinite efficacy in the death of such a One as our Lord Jesus Christ to vindicate the Law. Though He is Man, yet is He also God and, in His passion and death, He offered to the Justice of God a vindication not at all inferior to the punishment of Hell! God is just, indeed, when Jesus dies upon the Cross rather than that God's Law should be dishonored. When our august Lord, Himself, bore the wrath that was due for human sin, it was made evident to all that law is not to be trifled with. We glory in the Cross, for there the debt was paid, our sins on Jesus laid.

But we glory because on the Cross we have an unexampled *display of God's love*. "God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Oh to think of it, that He who was offended takes the nature of the offender and then bears the penalty due for wanton transgression! He who is Infinite, thrice holy, all glorious, forever to be worshipped, yet stoops to be numbered with the transgressors and to bear the sin of many! The mythology of the gods of high Olympus contains nothing worthy to be mentioned in the same day with this wondrous deed of supreme condescension and Infinite Love! The ancient Shasters and Vedas have nothing of the kind! The death of Jesus Christ upon the Cross cannot be an invention of men—none of the ages have produced anything like it in the poetic dreams of any nation! If we did not hear of it so often and think of it so little, we would be charmed with it beyond expression! If we now heard of it for the first time and seriously believed it, I know not what we would not do in our glad surprise! Certainly we would fall down and worship the Lord Jesus and continue to worship Him forever and ever!

I believe again, thirdly, that Paul delighted to preach the Cross of Christ as *the removal of all guilt*. He believed that the Lord Jesus on the Cross finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness. He that believes in Jesus is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the Law of Moses. Since sin was laid on Jesus, God's justice cannot lay it upon the believing sinner. The Lord will never punish the same offense twice. If He accepts a Substitute for me,

how can He call me to His bar and punish me for that transgression for which my Substitute endured the chastisement? Many a troubled conscience has caught at this and found deliverance from despair. Wonder not that Paul gloried in Christ, since it is written, "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." This is the method of salvation which completely and eternally absolves the sinner and makes the blackest offender white as snow! Transgression visited upon Christ has ceased to be, so far as the Believer is concerned. Does not Faith cry, "You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea"? O Sirs, there is something to glory in in this and those who know the sin-removing power of the Cross will not be hindered in this glorying by all the powers of earth or Hell!

Paul glories in it, again, as a *marvel of wisdom*. It seemed to him the sum of perfect wisdom and skill. He cried, "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" The plan of salvation by vicarious suffering is simple, but sublime. It would have been impossible for human or angelic wisdom to have invented it! Men already so hate it and fight against it that they never would have devised it! God, alone, out of the treasury of His Infinite Wisdom brought forth this matchless project of salvation for the guilty through the Substitution of the Innocent. The more we study it, the more we shall perceive that it is full of teaching. It is only the superficial thinker who regards the Cross as a subject soon to be comprehended and exhausted! The most lofty intellects will here find ample room and space enough. The most profound minds might lose themselves in considering the splendid diversities of light which compose the pure white light of the Cross! Everything of sin and justice, of misery and mercy, of folly and wisdom, of force and tenderness, of rage and pity on the part of man and God may be seen here. In the Cross may be seen the concentration of Eternal Thought, the focus of Infinite Purpose, the outcome of Illimitable Wisdom. Of God and the Cross we may say—

**"Here I behold His inmost heart,
Where Grace and vengeance strangely join;
Piercing His Son with sharpest smart
To make the purchased pleasures mine."**

I believe that Paul gloried in the Cross, again, because it is *the door of hope* even to the vilest of the vile. The world was very filthy in Paul's time. Roman civilization was of the most brutal and debased kind and the masses of the people were sunken in vices that are altogether unmentionable. Paul felt that he could go into the darkest places with light in his hand when he spoke of the Cross. To tell of pardon bought with the blood of the Son of God is to carry an Omnipotent message! The Cross lifts up the fallen and delivers the despairing. Today, my Brothers and Sisters, the world's one and only remedy is the Cross. Go, you thinkers, and get up a mission to the fallen in London, leaving out the Cross! Go, now, you wise men, reclaim the harlots and win to virtue the degraded by your perfumed philosophies! See what you can do in the slums and alleys without the Cross of Christ! Go talk to your titled reprobates and win them from their abominations by displays of art! You will fail, the most cultivated of you, even to win the rich and educated to anything like purity, unless your

themes are drawn from Calvary and the Love which there poured out its heart's blood!

This hammer breaks rocky hearts, but no other will do it. Pity, itself, stands silent. Compassion bites her lip and inwardly groans she has nothing to say till she has learned the story of the Cross. But, with that on her tongue, she waxes eloquent! With tears she entreats, persuades, prevails! She may but stammer in her speech—like Moses, she may be slow of utterance—but the Cross is in her hand as the rod of the Prophet. With this she conquers the Pharaoh of tyrannical sin! With this she divides the Red Sea of guilt! With this she leads the host of God out of the house of bondage into the land of promise which flows with milk and honey! The Cross is the standard of victorious Grace! It is the lighthouse whose cheering ray gleams across the dark waters of despair and cheers the dense midnight of our fallen race, saving from eternal shipwreck and piloting into everlasting peace.

Again, Paul, I believe, gloried in the Cross, as I often do, because it was *the source of rest* to him and to his Brethren. I make this confession and I make it very boldly, that I never knew what rest of heart truly meant till I understood the Doctrine of the Substitution of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, when I see my Lord bearing away my sins as my Scapegoat, or dying for them as my Sin Offering, I feel a profound peace of heart and satisfaction of spirit. The Cross is all I ever need for security and joy. Truly, this bed is long enough for a man to stretch himself on. The Cross is a chariot of salvation where we traverse the high road of life without fear! The pillow of Atonement heals the head that aches with anguish. Beneath the shadow of the Cross, I sit down with great delight, and its fruit is sweet to my taste. I have no impatience even to hasten to Heaven while resting beneath the Cross, for our hymn truly says—

***“Here it is I find my Heaven,
While upon the Cross I gaze.”***

Here is perfect cleansing and, therefore, a Divine security guarded by the Justice of God. And, therefore, a “peace of God, which passes all understanding.” To try to entice me away from the God's Truth of Substitution is labor in vain! Seduce me to preach the pretty nothings of modern thought? This child knows much better than to leave the substance for the shadow, the truth for the fancy! I see nothing that can give to my heart a fair exchange for the rest, peace and unutterable joy which the old-fashioned Doctrine of the Cross now yields me. Will a man leave bread for husks and quit the home of his love to dwell in a desolate wilderness? I dare not renounce the Truth of God in order to be thought cultured! I am no more a fool than the most of my contemporaries and if I could see anything better than the Cross, I would willingly grasp it as they—for it is a flattering thing to be thought a man of light and leading! But where shall I go if I quit the Rock of the atoning Sacrifice? I cannot go beyond my simple faith that Jesus stood in my place and bore my sin and took it away. This I must preach! I know nothing else! God help me, I will never go an inch beyond the Cross, for to me all else is vanity and vexation of spirit!

Return unto your rest, O my Soul! Where else is there a glimpse of hope for you but in Him who loved you and gave Himself for you?

I am sure Paul gloried in the Cross yet, again, because he saw it to be *the creator of enthusiasm*. Christianity finds its chief force in the enthusiasm which the Holy Spirit produces—and this comes from the Cross. The preaching of the Cross is the great weapon of the crusade against evil. In the old times, vast crowds came together in desert places, among the hills, or on the moors, at peril of their lives, to hear preaching. Did they come together to hear *philosophy*? Did they meet at the dead of night, when the hounds of persecution were hunting them, to listen to pretty moral *essays*? I think not! They came to hear of the Grace of God manifest in the Sacrifice of Jesus to believing hearts! Would your modern Gospel create the spirit of the martyrs? Is there anything in it for which a man might go to prison and to death? The modern speculations are not worth a cat's dying for them, much less a man!

A something lies within the Truth of the Cross which sets the soul aglow! It touches the preacher's lips as with a live coal and fires the hearer's hearts as with flame from the Altar of God. We can live on this Gospel—and for this Gospel die. Atonement by blood, full deliverance from sin, perfect safety in Christ given to the Believer call a man to joy, to gratitude, to consecration, to decision, to patience, to holy living, to all-consuming zeal! Therefore, in the Doctrine of the Cross we glory, neither will we be slow to speak it out with all our might!

III. My time has gone, or else I had intended to have enlarged upon the third head, of which I must now give you the mere outline. One of Paul's great reasons for glorying in the Cross was its action upon himself. **WHAT WAS ITS EFFECT UPON HIM?**

The Cross is never without influence. Come where it may, it works for life or for death. Wherever there is Christ's Cross, there are also two other crosses. On either side there is one and Jesus is in the middle. Two thieves are crucified with Christ and Paul tells us their names in *his* case—"The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." Self and the world are both crucified when Christ's Cross appears and is believed in! Beloved, what does Paul mean? Does he not mean just this—that ever since he had seen Christ, he looked upon the world as a crucified, hung up thing which had no more power over Paul than a criminal hanged upon a cross? What power has a corpse on a gallows? Such power had the world over Paul. The world despised him and he could not go after the world if he would—and would not go after it if he could! He was dead to it and it was dead to him and, therefore, there was a double separation!

How does the Cross do this? To be under the dominion of this present evil world is horrible—how does the Cross help us to escape? Why, Brothers and Sisters, he that has ever seen the Cross looks upon the world's pomp and glory as a vain show! The pride of heraldry and the glitter of honor fade into meanness before the Crucified One. O you great ones, what are your silks, your furs, your jewelry, your gold, your stars and your garters to one who has learned to glory in Christ Crucified! The old clothes which belong to the hangman are quite as precious. The world's

light is darkness when the Sun of Righteousness shines from the Cross! What do we care for all the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof when once we see the thorn-crowned Lord? There is more glory about one nail of the Cross than about all the scepters of all kings! Let the knights of the Golden Fleece meet in chapter and all the Knights of the Garter stand in their stalls, but what is all their splendor? Their glories wither before the inevitable hour of doom, while the glory of the Cross is eternal! Everything of earth grows dull and dim when seen by the light of the Cross!

So was it with the world's *approval*. Paul would not ask the world to be pleased with him, since it knew not his Lord, or only knew Him to crucify Him. Can a Christian be ambitious to be written down as one of the world's foremost men when that world cast out His Lord? They crucified our Master! Shall His servants court their love? Such approval would be all stained with blood. They crucified my Master, the Lord of Glory—do I want them to *smile* on me and say to me, "Reverend Sir," or, "Learned Doctor"? No! The friendship of the world is enmity with God and, therefore, to be dreaded! Mouths that spit on Jesus shall give me no kisses! Those who hate the Doctrine of the Atonement hate my life and soul—and I desire not their esteem.

Paul also saw that the world's *wisdom* was absurd. That age talked of being wise and philosophical! Yes, and its philosophy brought it to crucify the Lord of Glory! It did not know perfection, nor perceive the beauty of pure unselfishness. To slay the Messiah was the outcome of the culture of the Pharisee. To put to death the greatest Teacher of all time was the ripe fruit of Sadducean thought. The serious thoughts of the present age have performed no greater feat than to deny the Doctrine of satisfaction for sin! They have crucified our Lord afresh by their criticisms and their new theologies—and this is all the world's wisdom ever does. Its wisdom lies in scattering doubt, quenching hope and denying certainty—and, therefore, the wisdom of the world to us is sheer folly! This century's philosophy will one day be spoken of as an evidence that softening of the brain was very usual among its scientific men! We count the thought of the present moment to be methodical madness, Bedlam out of doors and those who are furthest gone in it are credulous beyond imagination! God has poured contempt upon the wise men of this world! Their foolish heart is blinded, they grope at noonday.

So, too, the Apostle saw the world's *religion* to be nothing. It was the world's religion that crucified Christ. The priests were at the bottom of it, the Pharisees urged it on. The church of the nation, the church of many ceremonies, the church which loved the traditions of the elders, the church of phylacteries and broad-bordered garments—it was this church, which, acting by its officers, crucified the Lord! Paul, therefore, looked with pity upon priests and altars and upon all the attempts of a Christless world to make up, by finery of worship, for the absence of the Spirit of God. Once see Christ on the Cross and architecture and fine display become gaudy, cheap things. The Cross calls for worship in spirit and in truth—and the world knows nothing of this.

And so it was with the world's pursuits. Some ran after honor, some toiled after learning, others labored for riches. But to Paul, these were all trifles since he had seen Christ on the Cross. He that has seen Jesus die will never go into the toy business—he puts away childish things. A child, a pipe, a little soap and many pretty bubbles—such is the world. The Cross, alone, can wean us from such play.

And so it was with the world's *pleasures* and with the world's *power*. The world, and everything that belonged to the world, had become as a corpse to Paul and he was as a corpse to it. See where the corpse swings in chains on the gallows. What a foul, rotten thing! We cannot endure it! Do not let it hang longer above ground to fill the air with pestilence. Let the dead be buried out of sight. The Christ that died upon the Cross now lives in our hearts. The Christ that took human guilt has taken possession of our souls and, therefore, we live only in Him, for Him, by Him. He has engrossed our affections. All our ardors burn for Him. God make it to be so with us, that we may glorify God and bless our age!

Paul concludes this Epistle by saying, "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." He was a slave, branded with His Master's name. That stamp could never be erased, for it was burned into his heart. Even thus, I trust the Doctrine of the Atonement is our settled belief and faith in it is part of our life. We are rooted and grounded in the unchanging Truths of God! Do not try to convert me to your new views—I am past it. Forget about me! You waste your breath. It is done—on this point the wax takes no farther impress. I have taken up my standing and will never quit it. A crucified Christ has taken such possession of my entire nature, spirit, soul and body, that I am henceforth beyond the reach of opposing arguments!

Brothers and Sisters, will you enlist under the conquering banner of the Cross? Once rolled in the dust and stained in blood, it now leads on the armies of the Lord to victory! Oh that all ministers would preach the true Doctrine of the Cross! Oh that all Christian people would live under the influence of it and we should then see brighter days than these! Unto the Crucified be glory forever and ever! Amen.

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GRAND GLORYING

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“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”
Galatians 6:14.

WITH that, “God forbid,” Paul makes a clean sweep of every other ground of boasting and casts himself upon the one only chosen object of his soul’s glorying. And yet, if you will think of it, Paul had, after the fashion of other men, many things in which he might have gloried. If it had so pleased him, he might have boasted of his pedigree, for he was “a Hebrew of the Hebrews.” He could trace his genealogy, as the pure Hebrews could, up to that great fountain of nobility—Abraham himself! If he had pleased, he might have boasted in the precision of the former ritual which he had practiced, for he could say that as touching the Law of God, he had been a Pharisee—a man observant of the minutest points of the very letter of the Law, careful for its doctrinal tittles, not allowing even the gnat to escape him, but straining after it with care. And yet the Apostle did not care to boast, either of his pedigree or of his ritualism. He casts them both aside and though he had once gloried in them, he now counted them but dross, that he might win Christ and be found in Him! Surely, if the Apostle had wished it, he might have gloried in his martyr life. He did once give a list of what he had suffered, and he added, “I have become a fool in glorying; you have compelled me.” Had he not been beaten with rods, shipwrecked, subject to perils from robbers, perils from false brethren, imprisonment and stones? And yet you never hear him glory in that wonderful martyr life of his! Among the Apostles, he was no less than the chief in that which he suffered, and yet he says, “God forbid that I should glory in it.” He might have gloried in the Revelation which he received. Who among us has ever seen or heard what Paul was made to see and hear when he was caught up into the third heavens to hear things which it is not lawful for a man to utter? He might, if he had chosen to boast, have boasted in this Revelation, but he did not do so. “God forbid,” said he, “that I should glory,” and that, “God forbid,” includes even that Revelation! Among scholars Paul might have taken an eminent position. He was well qualified to speak in the Areopagus, for even there, in that profound assembly, was probably not one with greater knowledge and of more subtle mind than he, who was once called, “Saul of Tarsus.” Read the Epistles, Brothers and Sisters! Why, the Apostle has

the instinct of Bacon and the insight of Sir Isaac Newton! The man seems to have looked through a question, where others would have looked round about it and have seen nothing. Yet, though he must have felt a human delight in the talents which God had given him—and must have known that he possessed them—he still says concerning them, “God forbid that I should glory.” He seems to take all that he had, all that he did, and all that he was, and put it all away—and come forward with no other theme upon his lips, and no greater love in his heart, except this—Jesus Crucified for the sons of men. Jesus to be great among the nations. Jesus, the slaughtered Lamb, to be made unto men their life from the dead, their salvation from going down into the Pit. “God forbid,” he says—that memorable speech, that eloquent declaration, that glorious self-denying, yet exalting resolve—“God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!” We shall be brief upon each point at this time, but the first enquiry must naturally be—

I. WHAT IS THIS CROSS IN WHICH PAUL RESOLVED TO GLORY?

You need not to be told, my Brothers and Sisters, that Paul set no store by the material cross, or by the “sign of the cross.” You know that the making of the sign of the cross, and the paying of religious reverence to that, is as great a superstition as the belief in witches and, perhaps, as men come to be enlightened, they will wonder how it is that some men could have thought that there could be more sanctity about a cross than about a circle or the parallelogram, for really there is no holiness in the sign of the cross, and I sometimes wish that some Christians would not countenance that emblem, since it seems to imply a superstitious reverence to that kind of thing. Paul meant no such thing. He would have abandoned in contempt any superstitious use of the cross or the crucifix, and he would do so now if he were here and I hope the result would be that, as at Ephesus they burned their conjuring hosts, so now men would put their chasubles, their albs and all their fripperies and upholstery together and burn them in one glorious pile as the result of the preaching of the true Cross of Christ!

What did the Apostle mean, then? He meant, in a single word, the great Doctrine of the Atonement offered for sin by the Son of God upon Mount Calvary. “The Cross” is the short term for “substitutionary suffering,” for “vicarious Sacrifice,” for the offering up of the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. The Apostle was never cloudy about this matter. Wherever he went, he preached that God was in Christ reconciling the world with Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. His declarations were always clear. “Him has God set forth to be a propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins, only, but for the sins of the whole world.” He was always saying that Jesus Christ took our sins and bore them in His own body on the tree—that He was punished instead of us, that the claims of Divine Justice were met by the death of the Redeemer, that He was made a curse for us that we might be enriched and blessed of God in Him—that He made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Paul’s great

master-point was that Jesus actually suffered to vindicate the Divine Justice by enduring, instead of us, the punishment due to our sins!

And he also meant by it that Gospel which springs out of the Cross, and which is contained in these few words, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." "He that believes on Him is not condemned." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." Paul told the people that the Son of God was made Man and suffered in human form to take away human guilt, and that whoever, the wide world over, would come and rest in what Christ had done, would be saved. This was the Gospel which he proclaimed in every place. For barbarian and Scythian, this was the Gospel! For the Greek and the Jew, the same! For the illiterate, for the learned, for the king and for the peasant, it was always his one theme—a bleeding Savior and a sinner looking to Him—a living Christ dying, that a dying world might live! This is that Gospel which we preach from Sabbath to Sabbath, which will save your souls, and which you delight to sing of in words like these—

***"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins!
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains."***

This was "the Cross" which Paul resolved to glory in!

II. WHAT WAS THERE IN THIS PARTICULAR DOCTRINE OR FACT FOR THE APOSTLE TO GLORY IN AT ALL?

The answer is, first, that *there is glory in the fact, itself*. It is a fact entirely by itself, unique, unparalleled. The mythology of the heathens had invented many, many strange things, but among them all there is nothing so beautiful, even if it were not true, nothing so perfect in its imagery, as this—that God, the offended One, should give up His Only Begotten in order that Justice might not be injured. At the same time, His mercy might have full sweep, that the Only Begotten should die that the offending ones might live! There is nothing like this in the whole range of human poetry! Men had fine poetic imaginings before, and there were Prophetic declarations of the coming of Christ, and they prophesied some wonderful things, but of all the poets of all the nations, it may be said that they never conceived anything like this—the offended One dies so that the offenders might live! "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God first loved us." "Beloved, behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us." That one fact that God descended from the royalties of Heaven, that He might take upon Himself the servitude of earth in the form of Man and offer Himself a Sacrifice for sin, reveals the Infinite Wisdom, together with the Infinite Love of God, besides casting a brilliant light upon all His other attributes. It stands a marvel of marvels, a wonder of wonders, in which the Believer may glory, glory as much as he will! You know we do not doubt about this fact. We hold it, no, we are sure of it, and it is a very great reality to us. I was passing, some years ago, a

Socinian chapel in this great London of ours, and I saw an announcement of the subjects upon which sermons were to be delivered. If I remember rightly, there was to be a sermon on the morning of one Sunday upon some political subject—and in the evening there was to be a sermon upon the crucifixion, but the word was spelt “*crucifiction*.” And I thought, “Ah, just so, and though you may not mean it, it is just that with you—it is nothing more to you than a mere fiction, but to us it is real.” We believe that the blood of Jesus really takes away sin. We believe that He really laid down His life to redeem us from our iniquity—and to us the most real, sublime, grand, soul-moving thing beneath Heaven, and even *in* Heaven is this—that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and died that He might save them! The Apostle, then, gloried in the fact as a fact.

And next, the Apostle gloried in the fact *viewing the simplicity of it*—the simplicity of the Doctrine which grew out of the fact. It is frequently said, “Oh, these evangelical preachers, these men that preach up Christ, these popular preachers—they are very shallow-brained men! They talk mere platitudes. They do not read the German philosophers, they do not go to the bottom of the thing and stir the mud—they are content with just telling the people really such plain and common things that you cannot expect enlightened people in this 19th Century to care to go and hear them.” It is a very odd thing that they are the only people who do go to hear them! That only shows, I suppose, that there are plenty of people who are shallow, too. But we boast, if in anything, in the sheer simplicity of this Truth of God that we preach. If the Cross of Christ were a marvelous riddle, the answer to which none could guess but a philosopher trained for 50 years, if we understood it so, we should feel as if it were scarcely worthwhile for us to tell it, since there would be so few that could be benefited by it! But we thank God that we have a simple Gospel to preach to you, because there are so many in this world who need saving quite as much as the wisest, but who could not be saved if the Gospel were not simple. I thank God that when Christ is preached in the Union House, He is believed there, and when Christ is preached to the most benighted nation, He is received there! And He is just as sweet and precious to those who cannot read as to those who are the best educated. No, we do not, and never will, blush because the Gospel is simply, “Believe and live.” We think that every statement of great truth, before it can do good to the heart, must be simple. It seems to us that its simplicity is a part of its grandeur—that it is more God-like, to give us a Gospel which can be spoken in few words by simple men, than to give us something involved and intertwined—the meaning of which we would never be able to guess! We thank God, dear Hearer, that it does not need many minutes to tell you what you must do to be saved! Believe in Jesus, that is, *trust* Him—trust Him with all your heart! Cast yourself flat upon Him—you cannot fall any lower when you are down there! Cast yourself on His arms, rely upon His merits, and you are saved! God forbid that we

should glory save in this very simplicity, which some persons so fiercely decry!

Paul gloried, and we glory, in the next place, *in the freeness and suitability of the Gospel*. The Apostle never found himself in a place where the Gospel was not suitable. Sometimes some of you young men who are here tonight may have to go out to supply pulpits, and you may be apt to ask yourselves and ask one another, "Well, what subject shall I take?" I answer you—wherever you go, preach Jesus Christ—and that will suit every congregation! And if it does not, the congregation that is unsuited by it will not be suited at all—and they ought to have twice as much of it till they *are* suited with it! Preach up Jesus Christ! No matter how noble the audience, or how poor, still preach the Atonement. Preach up the dying Savior, instead of men, and it never can be out of season. Those men who, for the sake of variety and freshness, run away from their Bibles, are like men who, for the sake of wealth, run away from a substantial business which brings them in their thousands in order to speculate where bankruptcy must be their only gain. Close to the Cross! There is no such variety as in that one theme! It is like a diamond with a thousand facets, each one reflecting its own sweet light. You shall preach Jesus Christ to the angels in Heaven throughout eternity and make known to them the unsearchable riches of God in Christ Jesus—and you will never exhaust the theme! What a blessing, though, that this Cross of Christ should be so suitable to every person we meet with! If you take the Cross of Jesus Christ into the condemned cell, there is nothing else that is so likely to awaken that slumbering soul! If you take it to our criminals—alas, that there are so many—it is the only balm of Gilead to them! Go with it to the lodging houses, and the back slums, and the street corners of St. Giles's, or where you will, and this story of the Man, Christ Jesus, who loved and died, touches all hearts!

You have heard of the Greenlanders. The missionaries thought they ought, first, to instruct them in the Doctrine of the Trinity, so they preached away to them of the Godhead, but the Greenlander did not care about it. But one of them, while interpreting, I think, the third chapter of John, came across that blessed passage, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life," and the Greenlanders stopped him and said, "Why did you not tell us that before?" "Oh, I thought I had better begin by telling you of some of the other Truths of God." "But we knew all those, or could have guessed them—why didn't you tell us this before?" From that moment the good Moravians lifted up Christ as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, and the eyes and hearts of the Greenlanders began to look to Him—and Jesus Christ was the Glory of that land! We may say of this Doctrine of the Cross, as David did of Goliath's sword, "There is none like it." It is suitable in all places, wherever we may be found.

Truly, Brothers and Sisters, Paul might well glory in the Cross if you will kindly remember *the great results which are sure to come from its*

constant and faithful preaching. There is no land where the Cross has been lifted up, but is the better for it. Even those countries in which we have been compelled to regard missions as a failure, have still received much blessing as the result. If the people have not been converted, yet still the bringing of the Light of God into contact with their thick darkness has done something, though not all that we could wish. See yonder South Sea Islands, where the savage is clothed and in his right mind. Go tonight, if you can, on the wings of imagination, to the Bechuana villages, where Mr. Moffat labored among the Bushmen, about the existence of whose souls even there was once some doubt, and see what has been done there! Yes, and even in this land, with all our sins, how different are we from our savage forefathers, and how can Edinburgh, and London, and Glasgow tell you how the putting down of a district church or chapel has turned the heathen population of these days into a Christian community! This is the great lever to uplift the masses. Where Jesus is preached, signs and effects follow in which we may well rejoice. How many a home that was once filthy and miserable has been cheered and comforted, now that father is a Christian! How many a man who used to reel in and out of the gin shops or the public houses, now delights to sing another song, and to drink of other wines on the lees, well refined! What changes Divine Grace is making among us! How some of us could tell of them as long as we live, we, ourselves, being changed! We will then say, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

You know, as I was last night turning over this text in my mind, I shut my eyes and saw—for you see a great deal more with your eyes shut than with them open sometimes—as I looked I thought I saw a Cross before me and it began to grow. I saw it as I had never seen it before. It grew upon me—grew every moment. I saw it go downward into the earth, and as its foot descended, graves began to open—for resurrection comes from the Cross—and Hell, itself, began to tremble, for nothing shakes the infernal kingdom like the Cross! Then I looked up, and the Cross had been growing till it reached up to Heaven, bearing with it tens of thousands of redeemed souls, and I thought of that verse—

***"In the Cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time!
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."***

I turned my eyes lower and I saw its transverse beams, and these began to stretch to the east and to the west, and they took away the sins of all God's people and carried them into the place of forgetfulness, where they never shall be found, while a shadow, broad as the universe, seemed to fall upon creatures of all kinds! And wherever it fell, the shadow dropped with the benedictions of Heaven. Oh, that Crucifixion of the Lord Jesus—how deep, how high, how broad! The imagination cannot conceive it, but the soul delights in it!

And then, as I seemed to look with eyes closed, I thought I saw in my vision a flock of doves, fluttered and afraid, and well they might be, for

there were archers after them and the sharp arrows all but pierced their breasts. No, some fell sorely wounded. And they flitted to the groves and they flew to the far-off sea, and to the wilderness, but the sharp shafts pursued them everywhere, and the doves found no rest for the soles of their feet. At last one day they lighted on the Cross, and they marked that every shaft fell short—and some that were shot at them with double force were splintered and broken—and fell upon the ground! Not a single dove was hurt, but all found shelter there. Lord, make me one of those doves! And may my soul escape the arrows of my spiritual foes. Let me find shelter on my Savior's precious Cross, for there is shelter there, and there, alone!

And then the picture changed and I saw before me the whole earth, as it now looks, without rain, and it was all parched and browned, and seemed ready to be burned. The plants hung down their heads and the flowers seemed to be pining for the tears of the angels to drop down upon them from Heaven, but nothing came. Yet I noticed that all along, wherever the shadow of the Cross fell, it was all verdant as in spring, and every flower seemed as if it did drink in the dew and opened its cup towards the light that streamed from the Cross. 'Twas all fertile there where the shadow of the Cross fell, but all barren elsewhere. And is it not so? Wherever there is the influence of the atoning blood, wherever the Cross is fully preached and received, every soul is blessed, happy and fruitful—but where it is not so, there is an arid waste on which the dew of Heaven falls not.

And while I thought I saw before me a caravan, and there were camels, and hundreds of men, the drivers of the camels, and they were all hot, and panting, and fainting. They went to the well and rolled away the stone, but they found no water there. So they went onward, ready to drop at every step. Before them they thought they saw a cooling stream, but it was a mirage, and they were mocked. But I thought I saw them suddenly halt at the foot of the Cross, and just at the bottom of it there sprang up a clear and crystal spring, and each one drank, and went on his way refreshed. And what are the sons of men, but a great caravan on the way to realms unknown? And where is there water for so much as one of them, except at the foot of the Cross? If they drink there, they live! If they drink not there, there is nothing for them.

Many other things passed before me, but I cannot detail them now, for we have spent too much time upon this second point and must pass to the third. The third point, very briefly discussed, is this—

III. IF WE DO GLORY IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST, HOW SHALL WE PROVE IT?

We must prove it *by trusting in the Cross*. The Atonement must have our only confidence, or else it were vain to say that we glory in it.

We must prove it, next, *by holding fast the Doctrine when others challenge it*. We must be confident about this vicarious Sacrifice of Christ, let others say what they may.

We must prove it *by our zeal in propagating it according to the best of our ability*. We must endeavor, as much as lies in us, to tell the good news to others, that whoever believes has everlasting life.

But there are some here who are called to the ministry and, therefore, to them let me say that we must prove that we glory in it most *by being prepared to suffer for it*. Any man who is called to the ministry may, if he will, take an example from yonder dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. There you see the Cross above the globe. You must put from this point on, the Cross above the world in all your calculations! To preach Jesus and to win souls—not to gain money or human applause—must be the way in which you prove that you glory in the Cross!

But the principal way is *by constantly preaching about it*. What shall I say to young men who are about to enter the ministry that shall be more useful to them than this? Keep to the Cross! Keep to the Cross! Always preach up Jesus Christ! Always preach up Jesus Christ! I think no sermon should be without the Doctrine of Salvation by faith in it. I would not close a single discourse without at least something about believing in Jesus and living. Oh, that our tongues would speak of nothing but Jesus! Oh, that we were something like Rutherford, who is said to have had a squeaking voice on every other subject, but when he began to speak of Christ, the little man would grow tall and his voice become full, so that the Duke, who was one of his hearers, shouted, "Now, Man, you're on the right string!" Oh, surely, this is a theme that might inspire the very dumb and make the dead to rise, to tell of Jesus Christ's most wondrous love!

I have thus, as well in the short time I had allowed, shown how we may glory in the Cross. But if we do so, according to the text, *we are not to expect to go to Heaven in silver slippers*, for the Apostle adds, "*By which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*" There are two crosses in that saying—there is the world crucified, there, and there is Paul crucified, here. What means he by this? Why, he means that ever since he fell in love with Jesus Christ, he lost all love for the world! It seemed to him to be a poor, crucified, dying thing, and he turned away from it just as you would from a criminal whom you might see hanging in chains—and would desire to go anywhere rather than see the poor being. So Paul seemed to see the world on gallows—hung up there. "There," he said, "that is what I think of you and all your pomp, and all your power, and all your wealth, and all your fame! You are on the gallows, a malefactor, nailed up, crucified! I would not give a fig for you! I would not turn on my heels to speak to you—all that you could give me would no more suit my taste than as if husks were given to me. Give them to your own swine and let them fatten thereon!"

You know the world is not crucified to "the successors of the Apostle," and all others who preach merely as a profession. They get their living out of it—they are endowed by the world—the State or the church pays them! The world is not crucified to them. That is the change that has come over the times, but to the first Apostle, the world was crucified. And

now observe the other Cross. There is Paul on that. The world thinks as little of Paul as Paul does of the world. The world says, "Oh, that hare-brained Paul! He was once sensible, but he has gone mad upon that stubborn notion about the Crucified One! The man is a fool." So the world crucifies him. It was something like the case of Luther, when he said, "There is no love lost between me and the Pope of Rome. He hates me and I also hate him with all my heart, and soul, and strength." So is it with the world and the genuine Christian. If he glories in Christ, he must expect to be misunderstood, misrepresented and attacked. And, on the other hand, he will say that he would sooner have the world's scorn than its honor! He would sooner have its hate than its love, for the love of the world is enmity against God. Blessed are you when they shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for Christ's sake and the Gospel's. Set your account, you Christians, upon rough weather and get seaworthy vessels that will stand a gale or two! Ask the Lord to give you Grace enough to suffer and endure for that precious Savior who will give you reward enough when you see Him face to face, for one hour with Him will make up for it all! Therefore, be faithful, and may the Lord help you thus to glory in the Cross of Christ. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
GALATIANS 4:12-31; 5:1-4, 19-26; 6:1-11.**

GALATIANS 4:12-31.

Verse 12. *Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as you are: you have not injured me at all.* He had told them the Gospel, and other teachers had come in and alienated their affections. He says, "Now I am just the same to you as ever I was. I wish you would have the same love to me."

13, 14. *You know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh you despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.* He dwells upon that. They had been so enthusiastic about his teaching when he first taught them, that he feels grieved that now they have gone aside to other teaching—not because it injured him, but because it injured them.

15. *Where is then the blessedness you spoke of?* When you said that you were happy to live in Paul's days, glad to listen to so simple and plain a teacher?

15, 16. *For I bear you record that if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Have I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?* Ah, there are many who have incurred enmity through speaking the Gospel very plainly, for the natural tendency of man is towards ceremony, towards some form of legal righteousness—he must have something aesthetic, something that delights his sensuous nature, something that he can see and hear, to mix up that with the simplicity of faith—and Paul was as clear as noon-

day against everything of that kind, and so the Galatians, at last, were angry with him. Well, he could not help that, but it did grieve him.

17. *They zealously court you, but not for good; yes, they would exclude you, that you might be zealous for them.* They would, if they could, turn you out of our love that you might run after them. These false teachers would shut us out of your hearts that your hearts might go after them.

18-21. *But it is always good to be zealous in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ is formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you. Tell me, you that desire to be under the Law, do you not hear the Law? Will you not listen to what the Law, itself, teaches? Here is a little bit from one of its first books, the book of Genesis.*

22, 23. *For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, and the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh. In the strength of Abraham.*

23. *But he of the freewoman was by promise.* In the power of God, born after both father and mother had ceased to be capable of becoming parents, born in the power of God!

24. *Which things are an allegory, for these are the two covenants: the one from the Mount Sinai, which genders to bondage, which is Hagar.* Those that are under the Law are the children, therefore, of the bondwoman—they are born slaves.

25. *For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.* It is old Judaism coming from Sinai, “This do, and you shall live,” and all the children that are born under it are children of nature—they are not the children of promise.

26. *But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.* This is Sarah, and they that believe are the Isaac-children, the children of holy laughter, born according to the power of God.

27-29. *For it is written, Rejoice, you barren that bears not: break forth and cry, you that travails not: for the desolate has many more children than she which has an husband, Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.* The child of Hagar could not stand the child of Sarah, and they that seek salvation by the works of the Law, and by outward ceremonies, cannot endure the children of faith.

30, 31. *Nevertheless what says the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.*

GALATIANS 5.

Verses 1-4. *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ had made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Be-*

hold, I, Paul, say unto you, that if you are circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole Law. Christ is become of no effect unto you whoever of you are justified by the Law; you are fallen from Grace. If you mean to have anything to do with salvation by works, get you gone—you are the children of the bondwoman!

Verses 19-21. *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, reveling, and such like—A black catalog, but sin is very prolific. We must take care that we avoid each one of these works of the flesh, or else we shall give no proof that we are led by the Spirit of God and possess the Grace of God.*

21. *Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Read over the list. Put the question to conscience, “Am I guilty of such things?” If so, do not suppose that the holding of orthodox Doctrine will save you, or that any kind of religious ceremony will save you! You must be delivered from these lusts of the flesh—these deeds of the flesh—or you cannot inherit the Kingdom of God!*

22, 23. *But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. Surely, neither human nor Divine! These are things which are commended on all hands. But if we do not have them—if they are not found in us—then we have not the Spirit, for if we had the Spirit, we would bear the fruit of the Spirit!*

24-26. *And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, A very common sin—wishing to shine. Whether we deserve to be honored or not, still wanting to be the lead horse in the team, and to take the leading place. “Let us not be desirous of vainglory.”*

26. *Provoking one another, envying one another. If each would strive to do the greatest deeds of love and each were willing to take the lowest place, then this evil would never again be known!*

GALATIANS 6.

Verse 1. *Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. When Christians fall into a fault, it is on account of their traveling slowly on the road to Heaven. Hence the expression, “If he is overtaken with a fault.” He would not have been overtaken if he had been traveling faster! If his heart had been quick in the ways of the Lord, he would have outstripped the temptation. Now, when a Brother falls into sin, it is too often the habit to push him down—to cast him out and forget him. But spiritually-minded persons must not do so. We must seek the restoration of the Brother or Sister. Is there not more joy*

over the sheep that was lost than over those that went not astray? Have we not the best reason to deal tenderly with wanderers, since we cannot tell that we may not need the same generous offices for ourselves? “Considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” He seems to take it for granted that we probably would, if we were tempted as the other Brother was.

2. *Bear you one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.* Help each other. If you have a light load, take a part of somebody else’s.

3. *For if a man thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.* Mainly deceives himself. Other people generally find it out. It is no use estimating your fortune at so many millions, for it will not make it so! And it is of no use estimating yourself at a very high price, because it does not make it so. “He deceives himself.”

4-5. *But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself, alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.* There are burdens of care and sorrow which we can help others to bear, but the burdens of responsibility each man must carry for himself. The load of service for the Master must be carried personally. And let us be glad to shoulder it, since Christ has done so much for us. And how else can we express gratitude but by serving Him?

6. *Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teaches in all good things.* If he gives you spirituals, do not suffer him to lack for temporals.

7, 8. *Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap. For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap—*What the flesh always comes to, by-and-by—

8. *Corruption.* *But he that sows to the Spirit—* By faith in Christ—by being led by the Spirit—

8-10. *Shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.* They have a first claim upon us. They are nearest of kin. They are our Brothers and Sisters in Christ. Let them have a Benjamin’s portion!

11. *You see how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand.* Paul did not often write his own Epistles. It is thought that he had a defect of the eyes. He generally employed a secretary. When he did write, he wrote generally in great capitals. I suppose that is what he meant. “You see how emphatic my writing is—what great characters I have made in writing to you.” Or he may have meant that for a letter, written by him, this was a lengthy one.

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

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TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**